

3 May 2019

07 MAY 2019

Ms Penelope Schofield
Senior Coroner for West Sussex
County Record Office
Orchard Street
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1DD

Swandean
Arundel Road
Worthing
West Sussex
BN13 3EP

Dear Ms Schofield

Re: Inquest into the death of John Peter Richardson

Thank you for your letter dated 8 March 2019 enclosing your Report to Prevent Future Deaths under Regulation 28 Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013. I write to formally respond and to provide you with details of the action taken by the Trust as a result of the concern that you have raised.

Following Mr Richardson's tragic death, the Serious Incident Investigator, Lorraine Biddle, met with me to go through all the failings she identified. She did this because of the level of her concern, because she knew that I would want oversight and so that I could contact the family at the earliest opportunity. I was pleased to hear that the Jury agreed with her findings and that you were satisfied with the measures that we put in place to address matters. This was a particularly sad case and I have, since the Inquest, met with Mr Richardson's wife and one of his daughters to offer a personal apology and provide ongoing assurance as to the actions that have been taken.

Following receipt of your letter, we have given considerable further thought as to how best we might improve our staff's understanding of the principles to be followed when voluntary patients leave the wards. The decision we have taken is to include guidance in our new Acute Care Operational Policy. I have enclosed a copy of that guidance for your information. As you will see, it covers both s.17 leave as well as the principles that need to be applied to voluntary patients. Presenting the guidance in this way was considered to be preferable to any further stand alone policy. It is hoped that this will be highly accessible and provide immediate access to the key principles, coupled with signposting to other documents if more information is required.

Chair: Peter Molyneux

Chief Executive: Samantha Allen

Head office: Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Swandean, Arundel Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 3EP

www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk

A teaching trust of Brighton and Sussex Medical School

I hope that the content of the enclosed addresses your concern and provides you with complete reassurance. However, if any further clarification is required or I can assist further in any way then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Allen', written in a cursive style.

Samantha Allen
Chief Executive