

Private & Confidential

Ms Hamilton-Deeley
HM Senior Coroner for Brighton & Hove
The Coroner's Office
Woodvale, Lewes Road
Brighton
BN2 3QB

Swandean
Arundel Road
Worthing
West Sussex
BN13 3EP

29 March 2019

Dear Ms Hamilton-Deeley

The late Bethany Tenquist

Thank you for your letter dated 21 March 2019 which I received after sending you my letter of 22 March 2019.

I will write to you separately to formally respond to the Regulation 28 Report but hope that the content of my letter of 22 March provided you with some immediate reassurance regarding the concerns that you have about Caburn Ward. In the meantime, I wanted to respond to the two points that you raised in your letter regarding communication with the Police.

As I said in my letter of 22 March, neither I nor anyone else here at the Trust was aware of the negative experience that [REDACTED] reported to you. I was very surprised when I first heard of his experience as it was at odds with the excellent working relationship I'd understood we had with the Police. Therefore, in addition to immediately asking for the matter to be looked into, and personally contacting [REDACTED] and our Police Liaison Officer, [REDACTED] I have also, today, spoken with the Chief Constable. He has assured me that he has also understood the relationship between our respective services to be strong and without issue. Whilst reassuring, I, of course, recognise and accept that [REDACTED] experience wasn't the positive one we would all want. It is however out of context and at odds with the excellent working relationship we have between our respective organisations. Our Deputy Chief Nurse, [REDACTED] is now overseeing the provision of information to [REDACTED] and I confirm that she is already in email communication with him to ensure that he is accommodated in every way appropriate.

I am pleased to say that I have today received confirmation from [REDACTED] that the Police investigation is now back on track. [REDACTED] and the Chief Constable have both assured me that [REDACTED] was not suggesting that there was anything deliberate or obstructive in him not being able to access the information earlier. Our review confirms this too. However, it is clear that there are some lessons that can be learnt regarding

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

communication pathways. The Chief Constable and I have discussed this and agreed it is timely that we will work to improve these pathways to enable the Police investigation teams to know who to contact for information and vice versa. Whilst this is an isolated event and not one we have previously experienced I am confident that our learning from this will reduce confusion and assist both services.

Regarding the ward's communication with the Police on the night of Bethany's hanging, it was very disappointing to hear that this did not happen; particularly, given the Trust's established working relationship with Sussex Police. I wholly appreciate that by not informing them they did not have the opportunity to immediately secure evidence. Where an unexpected death occurs, The Trust's policy is clear that staff need to ensure that Police are called. However, our review of this issue has found that the guidance given to staff, where a patient survives but the prognosis is poor, lacks clarity. Sometimes, as was the case on 7 March, the ambulance service makes that contact with the Police, but if that does not happen then our expectation is that the ward staff make the call. We have never had any other case where Police have not been alerted following a serious incident but, because it did not happen in Bethany's case, our guidance to staff is now in the process of being improved upon and I confirm that it will be circulated to all inpatient units so that all ward staff are wholly clear of their responsibilities.

I hope that the content of this letter provides further assurance but if I can clarify anything further for you please do not hesitate to contact me. I also look forward to having the opportunity to meet with you at some point soon.

Yours sincerely

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

Samantha Allen
Chief Executive