



Department
of Health &
Social Care

From Nadine Dorries MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Mental Health,
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Your Ref: 15961
Our Ref: PFD-1197564

Mr Kevin McLoughlin
HM Senior Coroner, West Yorkshire (Eastern District)
HM Coroner's Office and Court
71 Northgate
Wakefield WF1 3BS

29th January 2020

Dear Mr McLoughlin,

Thank you for your correspondence of 29 November 2019 to Matt Hancock about the death of Miss Leah Louise Cambridge. I am replying as Minister with responsibility for cosmetic regulation.

Firstly, I would like to say how very sorry I was to read of Miss Cambridge's death and the circumstances that led to this tragic event. I can only begin to imagine the pain and heartache this will have caused to those who knew and loved Leah, and I hope her family will accept my sincere condolences.

I share your concerns about the risks associated with undertaking cosmetic procedures abroad and in particular, the gluteal fat grafting procedure, commonly known as the 'Brazilian Buttlift', for which I understand the risks are considerably greater than other cosmetic procedures.

The Department is awaiting the findings of research and advice being prepared by the US-based Inter-Society Gluteal Fat Grafting Task Force into the Brazilian Buttlift procedure. In the meantime, we strongly urge consumers to do their research before opting for a cosmetic surgery procedure, and to choose a doctor regulated by the General Medical Council (GMC) in the UK. Further information is available at [NHS.UK/cosmetic-procedures](https://www.nhs.uk/cosmetic-procedures).

In relation to your specific concerns, I can advise the following.

With regard to regulation, in England, any hospital or clinic providing cosmetic surgery must be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Hospitals and clinics must make sure all staff hold the appropriate qualifications, competence, skills and experience to safely perform their job. Where an inspection has been completed, the CQC publishes

quality ratings online. CQC guidance on the scope of registration is available on its website¹.

In the UK, only doctors registered with the GMC may perform cosmetic surgery. Some surgeons will also be on a specialist register (e.g. plastic surgery) with the GMC.

The Royal College of Surgeons (RCS) operates a cosmetic surgery certification scheme. The scheme, which is voluntary, provides recognition to surgeons who have the appropriate training, qualifications and experience to perform cosmetic surgery. The certification scheme is designed to identify to patients those surgeons who have acquired the right training and experience to operate safely, and to help patients choose their surgeon wisely. The certification scheme is underpinned by GMC and RCS guidance on cosmetic surgery².

The GMC has published guidance on the professional standards expected of all doctors³. The GMC also publishes ethical guidance for doctors who perform cosmetic procedures. This includes guidance on responsible marketing, informed consent and assessing the best interests of the patient before agreeing to undertake a procedure⁴. It is essential that patients are fully informed about the procedure, the associated risks are made clear and there is a period for reflection before consent is obtained.

The Department will be updating existing guidance about surgical fat transfer procedures, which the Brazilian Buttlift falls under, to reference the procedure. The Department is liaising with stakeholders to check the latest clinical information and expects the updates to guidance to be made by March 2020.

Once the Inter-Society Gluteal Fat Grafting Task Force into the Brazilian Buttlift procedure has reported its findings, the Department will review whether further information should be published on the procedure.

Finally, it is not within the Department of Health and Social Care's remit to restrict or impose conditions on companies who facilitate cosmetic surgery holidays abroad. However, we strongly recommend that people do not travel abroad for cosmetic surgery as the clinics and surgeons may not be subject to the same levels of regulation, safety and training as in the UK. The standards set by the GMC and the RCS represent good practice and where someone is considering a cosmetic procedure abroad, we urge them to carefully consider the standards of care that apply in the country where the procedure will be carried out.

¹

https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20151230_100001_Scope_of_registration_guidance_updated_March_2015_01.pdf

² <https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/standards-and-research/standards-and-guidance/service-standards/cosmetic-surgery/professional-standards-for-cosmetic-surgery/>

³ <https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/good-medical-practice>

⁴ <https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/cosmetic-interventions>

I hope this reply is helpful. Thank you for bringing these concerns to my attention.

yours, Nadine.

NADINE DORRIES

