

Our services:

Emergency and urgent care
Non-emergency patient transport
NHS 111



**North West
Ambulance Service**
NHS Trust



Ms J Kearsley
HM Senior Coroner
Manchester North Coroner's Service
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10 December 2019

Dear Ms Kearsley,

Inquest touching the death of William Oliver

I write in relation to the Regulation 28 report that you issued at the conclusion of the inquest touching the death of William Oliver.

I know that you will share this response with Mr Oliver's family and I firstly want to express my sincere condolences to his family.

The Trust is committed to providing the right care, at the right time and in the right place but I fully acknowledge that on this occasion, the Trust did not provide Mr Oliver with an ambulance as quickly as it should have done and I am extremely sorry for that. The Trust takes all adverse events very seriously and the Trust undertook a thorough internal review into the attendance on Mr Oliver.

Through the Regulation 28 report you have requested that Nwas consider your matters of concern and have suggested that action is taken to prevent future deaths. By this letter, I will address those concerns as far as I am able to do so.

1. Meal Break Policy and Shift rostering

The Trust needs to find a balance between maintaining resource availability in order to respond to incidents whilst at the same time complying with health and safety legislation and ensuring the crews are appropriately dined and rested in order to deliver a high standard of care.

Roster review

Through the written and oral evidence which was before you during the inquest, you are aware that the Trust has been working in partnership with external consultants and is undertaking a wholesale review of the Trust's shift and roster arrangements. The roster review has been ongoing since May 2019 and has required consultation with both the Trust's employees and Unions since the changes which the review will effect are significant and will substantially change the operational working arrangements by staggering shift start times and shift lengths.

Headquarters: Ladybridge Hall, 399 Chorley New Road, Bolton, BL1 5DD

Chairman: Peter White

Chief Executive: Daren Mochrie QAM



Delivering the right care, at the right time, in the right place; every time

The roster review allows the Trust to maximise the availability and use of existing resources, identify where investment is best placed and also lead to a redistribution of its fleet so that vehicles are located in the areas where they are needed most.

Together with our lead commissioners, the Trust is committed to completing the roster review and particularly the use of detailed demand profiling to align the workforce to meet the expected levels of demand.

The Trust plans to commence the implementation of the revised shift start times/lengths, within Greater Manchester, in February 2020.

Pilot: Meal Break Policy

In addition to the roster review, in July 2019 following consultation with our commissioners, the Trust commenced an executive lead review of the meal break policy which has seen the formulation of a focus group encompassing representatives from HR, operations and the medical directorate.

The focus group has reviewed the current working practices and the control room guidance linked to meal break management. Within the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) the task of managing meal breaks falls to the dispatchers who, during periods of high demand, naturally focus on the management of incidents and ambulance dispatch which, consequently, leads to crews being dined outside of the meal break window.

Through the work of the focus group, a pilot has been devised which will take the management of the meal break away from the dispatcher and also see a mandatory staggered stand down of resources throughout the meal break window.

The pilot has received approval from the Trust's Executive Leadership Committee and is already being trialed from within the Cheshire and Mersey EOC. The intention is that through this mandatory stand down, the number of crews being dined outside of the meal break window will be reduced to the lowest possible level and maintain resource availability.

Additional Investment

Aside from the work highlighted above, following the demand and capability assessment that was referred to in the Trust's written evidence, the Trust has received significant additional investment from its commissioners. As a result of that investment, the Trust will be putting an additional 250 paramedics into the service between now and March 2020.

I am sorry that you felt that there was cause to issue a Regulation 28 report and I hope that I have addressed your concerns by this response. If it assists, the Trust will be more than willing to provide you with an update at the conclusion of the pilot.

If you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me or the Trust's Head of Legal Services.

Yours sincerely,



DAREN MOCHRIE QAM, MBA, Dip IMC RCSEd, MCPara
Chief Executive