



Department
of Health &
Social Care

From Caroline Dinéage MP
Minister of State for Care

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Your Ref: APW/YD/416-2018

PFD-1150542

Mr Alan Peter Walsh
HM Coroner's Court
Paderborn House
Howell Croft North
Bolton BL1 1QY

19th November 2018

Dear Mr Walsh,

Thank you for your correspondence of 26 September to Matt Hancock about the death of Mrs Angela Mary Jackson. I am replying as Minister with portfolio responsibility for patient safety and hospital care quality.

Firstly, I would like to say that I was very saddened to read of the circumstances surrounding Mrs Jackson's death. Please pass my condolences to her family and loved ones.

Your report raises concerns about the absence of documented pathways for the treatment of aortic aneurysms nationally. My officials have made enquiries with NHS England, as commissioner of specialised services, and I am able to offer the following information.

Service specifications have been published for vascular surgery¹ that make clear the need for networked arrangements and agreed pathways for specialised vascular services with non-arterial services, though they do not address the cross over with cardiac surgery.

You will be interested to know that work has been commissioned for the national cardiac and vascular clinical reference groups to address the surgical management of aortic aneurysms (including descending thoracic aneurysms) and produce a service


¹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/specialised-commissioning-document-library/service-specifications/>

specification for this sub-group of patients. The service specification is expected to be produced over the next year.

The matters of concern raised in your report that relate to the role of specialised centres will be considered as part of this work. For example, the work will identify which hospitals offer this particular intervention, the role of the specialist teams and their responsibility for communicating with referring units and having clear pathways in place.

The service specification will form part of the contract between NHS England specialised commissioning and the hospitals commissioned to provide vascular and cardiac surgery services.

I hope this information is helpful. I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention.

yours

CAROLINE DINENAGE