

Ms Alison Mutch
HM Senior Coroner for Manchester South
Coroner's Court,
1 Mount Tabor Street,
Stockport
SK1 3AG

[REDACTED]
9th February 2021

Dear Ms Mutch,

Re: Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths – Mr Leslie Harris (died 21 May 2020)

Thank you for your Regulation 28 Report dated 9th December 2020 concerning the death of Leslie Harris on 21st May 2020. Firstly, I would like to express my deep condolences to Mr Harris's family.

The regulation 28 report concludes Leslie Harris's death was a result of COVID 19 pneumonia acquired whilst an inpatient at Stepping Hill Hospital, contributed to by the complications of an accidental fall.

Following the inquest, you raised concerns in your Regulation 28 Report to NHS England regarding there is a risk that future deaths will occur unless action is taken. The inquest heard that Mr Harris was moved to a ward where other patients were in isolation from COVID-19 due to the interpretation of the Public Health England guidance about management in these circumstances. As a result of reflection and concerns, the trust have changed their policy and such movement no longer takes place.

Your report states that the guidance from PHE has not been amended and it was unknown how other trusts were choosing to interpret the guidance and as such putting potentially vulnerable patients at risk of developing COVID-19 whilst an inpatient.

The national IPC guidance ([COVID-19: Guidance for the remobilisation of services within health and care settings Infection prevention and control recommendations](#)), is published by Public Health England (PHE). NHS England and NHS Improvement are a contributor to the guidance development in accordance with their role as a

commissioner with a duty to promote a comprehensive health service under the NHS Act 2006.

The national IPC guidance is updated regularly as and when new scientific evidence emerges. An updated version was published on 20 August 2020 providing examples of how organisations can safely manage patients/individuals' treatment and care and reduce COVID-19 risks by the use of 3 specific COVID-19 risk pathways (high, medium and low risk) depending on whether the patient/individual has tested positive for COVID or is likely to have COVID, has not yet been tested or is awaiting the result of a COVID test or has tested negative for COVID.

The latest version, published on 21 January 2021, adds to the August guidance by taking into account evidence on new variant strains and amendments have been made to strengthen existing messaging and provide further clarity where needed, including updates to the care pathways to recognise testing and exposure.

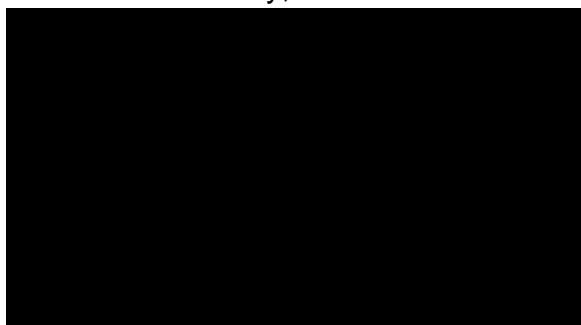
The IPC measures recommended within the guidance are underpinned by the National Infection Prevention and Control Manual (NIPCM) practice guide and associated literature reviews [National Infection Prevention and Control Manual: Home \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/nipcm/) The content is consistent with the administrative measures outlined in WHO IPC during healthcare when coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is suspected or confirmed: Interim Guidance, June 2020.

The principles in the guidance apply to all health and care settings. Its implementation should be underpinned at provider level by risk assessments that take into consideration the patient, environment, procedure and task being undertaken by any member of health care staff, and through safe systems of working: administrative, environmental and engineering measures/controls that need to be adopted to reduce the risk of transmission, including: personal protective equipment, hand hygiene, social distancing, cleanliness/decontamination of the environment and equipment, ventilation and separation and segregation of patient and staff within the high, medium and low risk pathways.

Further updates may be made to this guidance as new evidence on COVID-19 emerges and as the pandemic phases/levels change.

Thank you for bringing these important patient safety issues to my attention and please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any further information.

Yours sincerely,



**National Medical Director
NHS England and NHS Improvement**

