



Her Majesty's Area Coroner  
Ms Catherine McKenna  
The Phoenix Centre  
L/Cpl Stephen Shaw MC Way  
Heywood  
OL10 1LR

5<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Madam,

Natalie Jane Edgington  
Your reference: 68821  
Response to Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths

I write in response to the Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths (PFD) dated 11 January 2021 in which you highlighted two concerns which arose during the inquest into the death of Ms Edgington.

In what follows I set out the actions that have been taken by Turning Point in relation to your concerns. We were not an Interested Person in this inquest and therefore have not had full disclosure of all evidence before the Court which led to your concerns. However, I hope that this letter provides reassurance that Turning Point takes your concerns very seriously, has thoroughly reviewed the issues raised and has taken appropriate measures to ensure the risk of any future death connected with these issues is minimised as far as possible.

#### Concerns

*That prescribers should have full information about the nature and extent of a service user's liver disease in order to ensure that prescribing is within safe limits. The prescription to the Deceased was issued without relevant medical information that could have been obtained from the GP and/or an up to date liver function test. There is a risk associated with reliance on a service users self-reporting of his/her own medical history particularly against a background of non-attendance at medical appointments*

*The BNF recommends that consideration should be given to starting patients with a history of liver disease on a lower dose of methadone than the standard starting dose of 30mls. There was no evidence to suggest that any consideration was given to starting the Deceased on a lower dose.*



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## Response

Please find below the actions that we have taken within the organisation in relation to your concerns.

1) We have produced an educational support pack on *"The effects of hepatic dysfunction on the metabolism of methadone"*. I attach a copy of this document for your information. This was distributed on 26 January 2021 to all staff within the organisation who have a clinical role in relation to the treatment of substance misuse. Whilst the document as a whole is relevant to the concerns raised, I highlight particularly the recommendations for staff at page 6 of the document which include the following:

- " • start low and go slow with methadone titrations"*
- " • obtain a copy of the Summary Care Record (SCR) from the GP Practice prior to the Initial Medical Assessment (IMA)"*
- " • Consider the LFT results and other biochemical tests from the GP but understand their limitations: they should not be viewed in isolation. In general in the context of LFTs and other biochemical tests, drug modification in liver disease should be considered if
  - o the prothrombin time > 130% of normal or*
  - o if bilirubin > 100µmol/L"**
- " • Ensure the client understands how to recognise symptoms of liver dysfunction and clinicians can recognise them. If they present review the client as a matter of urgency and respond appropriately"*

2) We are producing a Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) assessment of the educational support pack referred to in point 1. This assessment will be rolled out at the end of March 2021 and will be monitored through the clinical supervision structure to ensure that the learning has been cascaded and embedded through all relevant sections of the organisation.

3) [REDACTED] (Clinical Director) and [REDACTED] (Chief Pharmacist) hosted a clinical session on prescribing Opioid Substitute Treatment (OST) (which includes methadone) safely on Thursday 14 January 2021. In attendance at this session was at least one clinician and one operational representative from every service under the Turning Point umbrella with the aim that that clinician then cascaded the learning within their own service (please see point 4 for further support for this process). Key points from this session included:

- Ensuring a Summary Care Record (SCR) is available at the Initial Medical Assessment (IMA) by requesting as early as possible from the GP Practice
- If a SCR is not available at the IMA, prescribers should follow up any clinical concerns presented at the IMA with the GP Practice prior to prescribing. Please note the absence of an IMA does not preclude prescribing but prescribers must make a case-by-case judgement based on the presentation and its clinical complexity.



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- Titration schedules must be reflective of the clinical case and not necessarily the same for all clients

4) The Turning Point Public Health and Substance Misuse Senior Clinical Governance Group published within their January 2021 monthly clinical brief a reminder to all clinical staff on prescribing OST safely. I attach a copy of this document for your information. You will see that the key areas included in this brief which are relevant to your concerns reflect those as set out in point 3 above.


5) Turning Point will carry out a national audit across all substance misuse services in relation to the medical information available to an OST prescriber at the point of prescription and the documentation of considerations/actions taken pending receipt of background information. This audit will take place in June 2021 to assess the impact of the learning as set out above.

6) We have made arrangements to provide every team within the organisation with an NHS.net email address. The work was completed on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020. This ensures that data can be shared securely and efficiently between Turning Point and NHS bodies/employees (such as a GP surgery).

I hope that the above has provided the necessary reassurances following your concerns. Thank you for raising them and I hope that I have demonstrated that Turning Point takes very seriously any concerns that are raised about the care and treatment of its service users.

Please do let me know on the details below if any of the above fails to provide the necessary reassurance or if it would assist to discuss any aspect further.

Yours sincerely



Medical Director  
Turning Point

Enclosures:

- 1) Educational support pack: *"The effects of hepatic dysfunction on the metabolism of methadone"*
- 2) Public Health and Substance Misuse Senior Clinical Governance Group January 2021 clinical brief