

19 March 2021

Mr Zak Golombeck
HM Area Coroner
HM Coroner's Office
Exchange Floor
The Royal Exchange Building
Cross Street
Manchester
M2 7EF

Sent via email

Dear Mr Golombeck,

I write in response to your Regulation 28 Report, dated 27 January 2021, regarding the tragic death of Michael Chahwanda. I would like to express my sincere condolences to his family.

We have considered the circumstances surrounding Michael's death and the 2 key areas of concern raised in your report, which I will respond to in turn.

- 1. To: The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and Department of Health and Social Care and The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence: To consider an amendment to the Red Book to include specific advice for Vitamin D supplementation in the postnatal period to be given by the attending Health Visitor. Such advice would be consistent with national guidance.**

NICE's guideline on [vitamin D: increasing supplement use among at-risk groups](#) (PH56) recommends that the developers of personal child health records (the 'red book') should add specific questions about the use of vitamin D supplements (see recommendation 8).

The red book ([Personal Child Health Record \(PCHR\)](#)) is currently overseen by a multi-disciplinary group hosted by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH). Therefore, we consider the RCPCH will be best placed to consider amendments to the current content of the publication with regards to vitamin D supplementation.

However, as the red book is becoming digitalised, NICE will liaise with NHSX and NHS Digital to obtain closer alignment between the digital content and NICE's evidence-based guidance.

NICE also has a guideline on [postnatal care up to 8 weeks after birth \(CG37\)](#). This guideline includes advice on breastfeeding, and the management of common and serious health problems in women and their babies after the birth, and is currently in the process of being updated. The [updated draft guideline](#) includes the following new recommendation:

Inform women that vitamin D supplements are recommended for all breastfeeding women.

The draft guideline also cross-references to NICE's guideline on [vitamin D: increasing supplement use among at-risk groups \(PH56\)](#).

We expect to publish the updated postnatal care guideline on 13 April 2021.

2. To: Department of Health and Social Care and The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence: To consider an amendment to the guidelines so that there is a directive for women (particularly those with an increased skin pigmentation and those who are breast-feeding) to take Vitamin D supplements. Also, to consider the provision of Vitamin D to women and babies who are at an increased risk of Vitamin D deficiency.

We consider that NICE's current guideline on [vitamin D \(PH56\)](#) appropriately highlights the increased risk of vitamin D deficiency and the need to take vitamin D supplements in the population groups you refer to.

Recommendation 8 highlights the importance of ensuring health professionals recommend vitamin D supplement use among [specific population groups](#) (including infants and children aged under 4, breastfeeding women, and people with dark skin) whenever possible, and gives examples of when this could take place, such as during routine appointments and health checks, including antenatal and postnatal appointments.

The guideline [glossary](#) defines specific population groups as follows:

Although the entire population of the UK are at risk of having a low vitamin D status, evidence was only considered in regard to increasing the supplement use for these specific population groups:

- All pregnant and breastfeeding women, particularly teenagers and young women.
- Infants and children under 4 years (breast fed, non-breast fed and mixed fed).
- People over 65.
- People who have low or no exposure to the sun. For example, those who cover their skin for cultural reasons, who are housebound or confined indoors for long periods.

- People who have dark skin, for example, people of African, African–Caribbean and South Asian origin.

All population groups are currently advised to take a supplement that meets 100% of the reference nutrient intake for their age group. The reference nutrient intake levels are noted above.

All infants and young children aged 6 months to 3 years are advised to take a daily supplement containing vitamin D in the form of vitamin drops. But infants who are fed infant formula will not need them until they have less than 500 ml of infant formula a day, because these products are fortified with vitamin D. Breastfed infants may need drops containing vitamin D from 1 month of age if their mother has not taken vitamin D supplements throughout pregnancy. ('Vitamin D – advice for supplements for at risk groups – letter from the UK Chief Medical Officers' Department of Health).

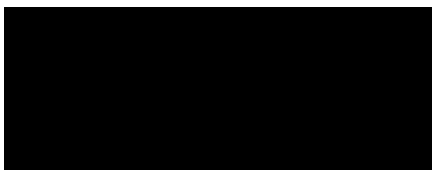
NICE recommends that the Department of Health should work with manufacturers to ensure vitamin D supplements are widely available for specific population groups including children aged under 4; pregnant and breastfeeding women; and people with dark skin, for example, people of African, African-Caribbean or South Asian family origin (see recommendation 1).

In addition, recommendation 6 focuses on how local authorities should improve accessibility, availability and uptake of Healthy Start supplements, such as by considering offering them free to all pregnant and breastfeeding women and children aged under 4 years.

While it is not mandatory to apply the recommendations made in PH56, they do represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, professionals and practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients or the people using their service.

We do not consider that PH56 needs to be amended as a result of your correspondence. However, the issues raised by your report will be further considered when the guideline is next considered for review.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the Chief Executive.

Chief Executive