

Department of Education and Quality

2nd Floor Stewart House
Russell Square
London
WC1B 5DN

By Email:

Sean Horstead,
HM Assistant Coroner,
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

30th April 2021

I write in response to your report of 3rd March 2021, made under the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013 (“the Regulations”). May I begin by extending my sincere condolences to Miss Hart’s family following her tragic death from Anorexia Nervosa (AN). Every death is a tragedy and whilst your report is difficult reading, we have shared it widely in our organisation so that our staff can see the impact on families and ensure our focus remains on working with partners and families to improve Eating Disorder services.

Your report raises concerns regarding the training of doctors and other medical professional regarding eating disorders (ED). As you note, the 2017 Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) Report, *Ignoring the alarms*, made recommendations regarding training for doctors about eating disorders. This recommendation was more recently reiterated in the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) *Follow-up Report*, published in 2019. Whilst there are many reports detailing widespread issues for patients and families, many in HEE have experience of services as clinicians who are working on solutions and have contributed to this response.

To respond to your concerns, I will first clarify Health Education England (HEE)’s role, and how we work with partners to plan, recruit, educate and train the health workforce. I will also provide an update on the measures that HEE has taken in response to the PHSO and PACAC recommendations regarding education in eating disorders.

Health Education England (HEE) is the executive non-departmental public body responsible for promoting high quality education and training for the healthcare workforce in England. We fund and manage the highest quality education and training to deliver high quality health professionals who work effectively in multi-disciplinary teams for the benefit of patients. As well as planning for and training our future workforce, we are committed alongside employers and other stakeholders to the development of the current NHS workforce.

The standards for medical education in the UK are set by the independent professional regulator, the General Medical Council (GMC). Each individual medical school sets its own undergraduate medical curriculum, which must meet the standards set by the GMC, who then monitor and check to make sure that these standards are maintained. The curricula for postgraduate specialty training are set by individual royal colleges and faculties, and the GMC approves curricula and assessment systems for each training programme.

HEE funds clinical placements for undergraduate doctors and pre-registration healthcare students, and commissions postgraduate medical training in England. We set our expectations for the quality of the educational environment in our multi-professional Quality Framework. The overarching objective of Framework is to promote inter-professional learning and to support and facilitate service transformation that meets current and future patient needs.

We also have a key role in supporting service development and delivery of the NHS where key priorities, including ED, require additional post qualification training and education support to the system. We have several mechanisms to do this, including system transformation, workforce development funding and continual professional development (CPD) programs.

Doctors in training

Our Postgraduate Deans and Foundation School Directors manage the quality of postgraduate medical education and work with employers to design training programmes that equip doctors with the skills they need to provide high-quality patient care. Since the publication of the PHSO and PACAC reports, HEE has introduced changes to medical education to improve mental health awareness across the medical profession. This includes HEE commissioned learning resources for medical students and Foundation 1 and 2 doctors provided in partnership with BEAT and the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

As set out in *Stepping forward to 2020/21: The Mental Health Workforce Plan for England*, published in July 2017, HEE is working with the Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych) to address the fill rates in psychiatry specialty training. Part of this work has resulted in an increase in the number of doctors in the Foundation Programme working in a four-month psychiatry post to 47% nationally in 2018, and HEE continues to work with the RCPsych to improve on this.

HEE is also working to develop and pilot enhancements to GP training. One of the priorities for this reform is to enhance the delivery of the mental health elements of the GP Specialty Curriculum. This includes increasing GP trainee time in General Practice to 24 months from 18 months and ensuring that all GP trainees are able to gain enhanced experience in the treatment of mental health in primary care settings.

Wider clinical workforce

For the wider healthcare workforce, HEE's National Mental Health Programme has undertaken a project to scope eating disorder training nationally, mapping what currently exists in order to understand existing training and professional presence/skills across the Eating Disorders pathway. We know that all of us in the NHS need to do more to facilitate patient access to high quality safe interventions, particularly between physical and mental healthcare, and between general and specialist services.

Stepping Forward to 2020/21: The Mental Workforce Plan for England (HEE 2017) set out a high level roadmap and reflected the additional staff required to deliver mental health service transformation based on best evidence. The December 2020 data, which is the latest available, demonstrates that the mental health workforce has increased by 14,480 WTEs since March 2016, many of whom will be delivering care for eating disorder services across the different pathways.

The 2020 Mental Health Implementation Plan (MHIP) builds on the ambition to grow the workforce by a further 27,460 by 2024. In addition to the Stepping Forward and MHIP workforce

growth targets, education programmes are being commissioned to upskill the existing workforce working with children and adults in psychological therapies and eating disorder treatments. This training is provided across the whole of the mental health workforce ranging from specialist practitioners such as in CBT in eating disorders, teams via Whole Team Training and general awareness such as upskilling junior doctors and nurses.

Many of the expanded workforce will be delivering psychological interventions for people with an eating disorder, the growth of which has been complimented by the HEE provision of 4,500 adult Improving Access to Psychological Therapies practitioners. For children and young people we have recruited 700 new practitioners and trained 3,400 existing NHS staff between 2016 and 2021. HEE has also increased the number of clinical psychologists in training by 25% in 20/21 and 21/22. A psychological professions workforce plan is in train which will map the further expansion of, psychological therapies and related roles to guide local workforce planning and education provision.

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of eating disorder education and training needs, in 2019 HEE commissioned an England wide benchmarking report, to inform the planning and discharge of future training commissions and to develop a comprehensive compendium of training., This is now being used to support regional system leaders and local services to manage training in response to local need, drawing on learning resources already available and further training opportunities via HEE commissions.

The additional commissions we subsequently made included Cognitive Behaviour Therapy specifically for eating disorders, delivered via whole team training from late 2020. This training covers the whole range of expertise, including ED specialists (70 trained) as well as well as other staff delivering care in eating disorders services (270 trained to date).

To further support the expansion of psychological therapies provision, in March 2021 HEE commissioned the development of a national curriculum and commissioning specification for the Maudsley Model of Anorexia Nervosa Treatment for Adults to enable a nationally consistent approach.

HEE has also commissioned BEAT to develop a programme for all nursing staff to gain confidence to understand, respond compassionately, and appropriately signpost clients with eating disorders.

Further to this, in support of the whole workforce, HEE has developed the 'Psychological Interventions for People with Eating Disorders: A competence framework in partnership with University College London, which is aimed at all health workers, trainers and supervisors, clinical managers and service commissioners to guide workforce capability development and enhance patient safety. In 2021/22, HEE will be working with NHSE/I to develop physical health check training relating to eating disorder, that is supported by the *Physical Health Competency Framework for Mental Health and Learning Disability Settings* (HEE December 2020)

HEE is currently working with NHSE/I within a joint eating disorder expert advisory group to ensure effective planning for future commissioning activities and determine the workforce requirements of eating disorder services across the demographic. This work will include the urgent development of an education and training commissioning framework agreement.

E-Learning for Health

In addition to the above, HEE runs an e-learning platform called e-Learning for Health (e-LfH), working in partnership with the NHS and professional bodies to support patient care by providing e-learning to educate and train the health and social care workforce.

HEE has a range of high quality training available via its e-Learning arm, e-Learning for Healthcare, around eating disorders, particularly on its MindEd programme, which is targeted at professionals and their families. This training, which is available nationally and accessible 24/7, includes, but is not limited to:

- Anorexia and Bulimia
- Eating Disorders in Young People
- Combining therapies to support young people with an eating disorder.

These titles include a new programme for medical students and foundation doctors, developed in response to the PHSO investigation into avoidable deaths from eating disorders in partnership with RCPsych and the eating disorder charity, Beat. The programme, launched in March this year, is designed to ensure that all medical students and foundation doctors are trained to understand, identify and respond appropriately when faced with a patient with a possible eating disorder. A full list of eating disorders materials hosted by HEE e-LfH is appended to this response.

I hope this response provides you with the assurance that HEE is committed to taking the learning from the tragic death of Avril Hart and is working proactively with partners to better equip the healthcare workforce to recognise, diagnose and treat patients with eating disorders, to improve experiences and outcomes and ultimately save lives. This includes work to expand the mental health workforce, to enhance medical education pathways and produce doctors with a greater understanding of mental health and wellbeing, and to develop world-class eating disorders education resources.

Yours Sincerely,

National Director of Education & Quality and Medical Director