

National Medical Director  
NHS England & NHS Improvement  
Skipton House  
80 London Road  
London  
SE1 6LH

Miss Emma Brown, HM Area Coroner  
Birmingham and Solihull  
Coroner's Court  
50 Newton Street  
Birmingham  
B4 6NE

29<sup>th</sup> June 2021

[REDACTED]

Dear Miss Brown,

**Re: Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths – Pardeep Singh PLAHE,  
12th August 2020.**

Thank you for your Regulation 28 Report (hereafter 'report') dated 4 January 2021 concerning the death of Mr Plahe on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020. Firstly, I would like to express my deep condolences to Mr Plahe's family.

The report concludes Mr Plahe's death was 'by misadventure' and that Mr Plahe died as a result of:

- 1a Hypoxic brain injury *due to*
- 1b Self inflicted injury to neck

Following the inquest, you raised concerns in your report to NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) about the following points, in summary:

- An intermittent technical issue with the EMIS System which resulted in a booked telephone consultation for Mr Plahe with a GP, not taking place
- The potential for this technical issue, which does not just affect the Ashfield Surgery, to create a risk to life at other surgeries across the country.

My Primary Care colleagues have made enquiries into the five specific areas of concern and can respond as follows:

**Concerns 1 & 2:**

- *On the 10th August at 17:30, hours before he inflicted the fatal wound to his neck, Mr. Plahe had a telephone consultation scheduled with his GP at the Ashfield Surgery. Due to a technical issue with the EMIS system the consultation list of the GP due to speak to Mr. Plahe did not update so he did not realise the appointment had been added to his list and did not call Mr. Plahe. Practitioners at the surgery had realised that the system was intermittently not updating consultation lists on or around the 30th July 2020 and had raised the issue with*

*EMIS on the 4th August 2020. To date a solution to correct this intermittent problem has not been identified. Evidence was given at inquest that it does not just affect the Ashfield Surgery but has occurred at other surgeries across the country.*

- *Particularly for telephone consultations (where there will not be a patient physically present in the surgery to query why they have not been seen), the fact that the consultation lists do not always update creates a risk to life as a consultation could be missed for a patient with a medical emergency.*

### **Response**

The underlying technical issue was with the EMIS system. The EMIS system is part of the national [GPIT Futures system and service framework](#) between NHS Digital and suppliers of IT systems and services to GP Practices.

NHS Digital have advised that EMIS are taking a number of actions “to remove the risk of similar incidents occurring in the future”. I understand that these actions have been set out in the response which EMIS provided directly to the concerns raised. In summary, these actions are:

- A Safety Advisory Notice (SAN) was sent out to all GP Practices and Clinical Services on 3 February 2021, advising organisations and users of the issue, the actions that need to be completed, and a link to direct them to further information if required.
- EMIS also included this as a priority message on the EMIS Web RSS (customer information) feed.
- Development of a solution to mitigate the risk to all GP Practices and Clinical Services using the appointment book functionality.

Given the action already being taken by EMIS, my Primary Care colleagues consider that there is no further action for NHSE/I to take at this time.

### **Concern 3:**

- *It is not known whether all GP Surgeries using EMIS have raised an alert that this error can occur.*

### **Response**

EMIS have identified in their response to you “an increase in reports of this issue” and noted that they have updated their self-help information, raised awareness of the issue via the article “*Why isn't my Appointment Book refreshing?*” and updated the EMIS Web homepage information feed in order “to ensure this was visible to all EMIS Web organisations and users as of 23/12/2020”.

### **Concerns 4 & 5:**

- *To mitigate the risk of missing appointments the Ashfield Surgery has identified that if practitioners log out of the EMIS system and then log back on the consultation list will update. Therefore, all practitioners are advised to log out and log back in before completing their consultation lists. However, on one occasion since Mr. Plahe's death a locum GP carrying out a list at the surgery did not know to do this and missed an appointment.*

- *The methods to mitigate this risk are vulnerable to human error if the practitioner is unaware of the need to log out of EMIS and log back in or if they forget to do so.*

### **Response**

Following Mr Plahe's death, the Ashfield Surgery carried out a Significant Event Analysis (SEA) to identify learning and actions to avoid the risk of similar incidents. I am advised that, as a result, the practice highlighted in their induction packs for GP trainees and locums the screen refresh issue and instructions to log out and back in to the EMIS system.

Further mitigation of the risk, for all affected practices, will be addressed via the action being taken by EMIS to develop a solution within the EMIS System, as set out in EMIS's direct response to these concerns. This solution is expected to be released in September 2021. I have been advised by NHS Digital that, by way of assurance, they have agreed with EMIS that the solution will be reviewed jointly by NHS Digital and EMIS clinicians.

Given the action already being taken by EMIS to develop and roll-out a solution to the identified issue, my Primary Care colleagues consider that there is no further action for NHSE/I to take at this time.

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