

Mr Siddique
Senior Coroner
Black Country Coroner's Service
Coroners Court,
Jack Judge House,
Halesowen Street,
Oldbury, B69 2AJ

Trust Headquarters
Delta Point
Greets Green Road
West Bromwich
B70 9PL

11 January 2021

Dear Mr Siddique

On 15 December 2020, at the conclusion of the inquest into the death of Lisa Grant, you asked me to discuss with the Trust (and respond within 28 days) as to whether any alternatives to an evac chair could/should be placed at Hallam Street Hospital e.g. a scoop. Please see my response below.

Background

Lisa was on the first floor of Hallam Street Hospital when she collapsed and required extrication down the stairs to the ambulance. There is no lift available. In this incident, as Lisa was in cardiac arrest, the options available to safely move her whilst minimising interruptions to chest compressions was on a scoop or stretcher.

As the ambulance crew needed to move Lisa down a flight of stairs, a scoop would have offered the safest level of transportation as it secures the patient in a fixed position more so than a stretcher and as the patient lies flat, it minimises the interruptions to chest compressions.

Stretchers are primarily used for transport over level ground and are physically heavier than a scoop to lift; therefore, not practical to be manually handled by crew up or down stairs.

On the CCTV footage of the incident, the ambulance crew can be seen placing the scoop onto the stretcher, which was at the bottom of the stairs, to transport Lisa to the awaiting ambulance.

Evac chairs were installed at Hallam Street Hospital after Lisa's death to enable patients to be brought downstairs in the event they cannot walk. However, an evac chair would not have been an option to use to move Lisa, as it would not have been possible to maintain effective chest compressions.

You enquired whether an alternative, e.g. a scoop, should be installed at Hallam Street Hospital.

Response

This question has now been raised with the Trust Resus Committee and advice and guidance has also been sought from third sector emergency services and resuscitation services.

The Trust responds that once ambulance crews attend any emergency, it is their responsibility to risk assess the environment, situation and clinical presentation of the patient and how best to move an individual, if conveyance to the ambulance is necessary. As a mental health trust, our staff are trained in



initial life support and CPR to maintain life while emergency services are on their way and the Trust feel that our staff are not experts in moving patients during trauma.

Manual handling requirements and skills for ambulance crews are **significantly** different to that of staff working within a hospital or clinic setting and ambulance crews have a responsibility to regularly check and maintain any equipment they may be required to use when responding to an emergency call. As such, the Trust would anticipate that when undertaking manual handling interventions, which significantly increases the risk to the individual, the ambulance service would only use equipment they know is fit for purpose.

The Trust would recommend leaving the extrication phase to the ambulance service. The ambulance service can call upon Hazardous Area Response Teams and/or the Technical Rescue Teams from the fire service if there is a complex extrication. The ambulance service also has bariatric lifting capability, which they can draw upon.

Conclusion

The Trust recognises that the evac chair would not have been suitable in this incident or similar incidents and the Trust has considered whether to install a stretcher or a scoop. However, the Trust have concluded that the ambulance service must be responsible for the extrication of a patient and should be responsible for providing (and maintaining) their own extrication equipment.

The Trust recognise that staff must ensure that when calling 999 for an ambulance they confirm if the patient is bariatric, in a confined space or on the first floor. This will be included in future training and an email will go out to all staff to ensure awareness. This will help to ensure the ambulance service responds appropriately and brings the correct extrication equipment.

If you have any further concerns or require further clarity on any on the points raised, please do not hesitate to come back to me and I will happily provide you with a response.

Yours sincerely


General Manager, Sandwell Mental Health Services

Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

