



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From Nadine Dorries MP
Minister of State for Patient Safety,
Suicide Prevention and Mental Health*

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Mr Graeme Irvine
HM Assistant Coroner, Inner North London
Poplar Coroners Court
127 Poplar High Street
London E14 0AE

21 April 2021

Dear Mr Irvine

Thank you for your letter of 29 January 2021 about the death of Thiago Araujo. I am responding as Minister with responsibility for mental health and suicide prevention and I am grateful for the additional time in which to do so.

I would first like to say how deeply saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mr Araujo's death and I offer my most heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones at this difficult time.

In relation to the concerns you raise about the use of Section 135(1) of the Mental Health Act, it is not clear from your report whether the delay professionals expected lay in the magistrate issuing a Section 135(1) warrant; in securing an approved mental health practitioner and a doctor to be present when the officer actions the warrant; or in securing two doctors to carry out an assessment under the Act after the patient has been taken to hospital. However, we expect local organisations, including the police, local authority services, and the NHS, to have robust systems and agreements in place to ensure these actions are carried out swiftly.

I am aware that the Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust has provided a response to your report in which it has explained the action that is being taken to improve the responsiveness of the assessment process involving the police and Approved Mental Health Practitioners. I have also been advised that the Trust has taken further learnings from the findings of your investigation, in particular, in relation to decision making and communication with carers when patients are discharged from the Crisis service due to non-engagement; as well as greater assurance that carers and families are routinely being offered the support and information they need.

It is essential that the Trust and local partners take action to learn from Mr Araujo's death to improve the safety and quality of care locally.

My officials have brought your report to the attention of the CQC which, as you will know, is the independent regulator for care quality in England responsible for monitoring and inspecting health and care services against the fundamental standards of quality and

safety, with the ability to take action where providers of services are not meeting their legal obligations.

I would like to assure you that we are taking action nationally to ensure that people with severe mental illnesses and people in crisis can access timely support.

We remain committed to expanding and transforming mental health services in England. This commitment is backed by an additional £2.3 billion by 2023/24 through the NHS Long Term Plan. This funding will ensure that at least 370,000 adults with severe mental illness have greater choice and control over their care and are supported to live well in their communities by 2023/24.

On the wider matters of your report, you may wish to note that we are working with a broad range of stakeholders to tackle emerging suicide methods, including the use of chemicals such as Mr Araujo took, and a process has been established with a range of stakeholders and across Government to rapidly flag emerging methods and take actions through a multi-agency approach. This includes but is not limited to, limiting access to the method, reducing or removing material that promotes its use as a method of suicide, and providing clearer warnings of risk.

With specific regard to the chemical that Mr Araujo used, officials have met other Government departments and bodies, academic experts on suicide prevention and self-harm, and third sector stakeholders, to look at how to tackle the use of this and similar chemicals in suicides.

Officials are informed through these meetings that the chemical used in this case is covered by existing guidance from the Home Office on the sale of explosives precursors and poisons. The Home Office regularly engages with suppliers of such chemicals to provide detailed guidance in relation to any additional safeguarding steps they may wish to take. Generally, online marketplaces maintain their own policies on prohibited items, many of which will include a prohibition on the sale of poisons. It is the seller's obligation to check that items they are listing are permitted by their own policies and to take any action where it is appropriate.

Significant progress has already been made on limiting the availability of the chemical used in this case, for example, in tackling supply of the chemical for non-industrial use. A chemicals supplier is working with Government to alert us of suppliers of this chemical on a number of large, online retail platforms. I am aware also that eBay has decided to prohibit globally the sale of this chemical after receiving a report of its potential use as a suicide method, and it has improved its block filter algorithms to ensure there are no similar listings.

In addition to work within Government, Samaritans are working regularly with the media to educate and improve how incidents of suicide are reported. This includes working with the media on how it reports novel suicide and, in this case, the importance of omitting details that raise awareness of suicide methods.

We are aware also that there are websites that promote, or provide information on, suicide methods. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published its

Online Harms White Paper¹, which set out a range of legislative and non-legislative measures detailing how the Government is planning to tackle online harms, including harmful materials on self-harm and suicide.

On 15 December 2020, DCMS published its response to the White Paper consultation, setting out how the proposed legal duty of care on online companies will work in practice and gives them new responsibilities towards their users. DCMS also announced that the Government has asked the Law Commission to examine how criminal law will address the encouragement, assistance and incitement of self-harm.



NADINE DORRIES

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR PATIENT SAFETY, SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL
HEALTH**

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper>