



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

*From Maria Caulfield MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Primary Care and Patient Safety*

*39 Victoria Street  
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Miss Joanne Kearsley  
HM Senior Coroner, Manchester North  
HM Coroners Court  
Floors 2 and 3, Newgate House  
Newgate  
Rochdale  
OL16 1AT

22 November 2021

Dear Miss Kearsley,

Thank you for your letter of 18 May 2021 addressed to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, received by this Department in August 2021, about the death of Bruce Lee Houghton. I am replying as Minister with responsibility for Primary Care and I am grateful for the additional time in which to do so.

Firstly, I would like to say how sorry I was to read the circumstances of Mr Houghton's death and I offer my sincere condolences to his family and loved ones.

In preparing this response, Departmental officials have brought your concerns to the attention of NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI).

I am advised that GP practices are expected to review patient medication on a regular basis as part of the primary medical services provided under the GP contract.

In addition, Primary Care Networks (PCN's) are required under the Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service<sup>1</sup>, to offer Structured Medication Reviews to patients. Guidance on the requirements is available<sup>2</sup>, and sets out how patients should be identified and how Structured Medication Reviews may be implemented. You may wish to note that the guidance does not specifically state these must be annual reviews.

Structured Medication Reviews are a National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) approved clinical intervention to help people who have complex or problematic

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<sup>1</sup> [NHS England » Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service \(DES\) Contract Specification 2020/21 – Primary Care Network Entitlements and Requirements](#)

<sup>2</sup> [NHS England » Structured medication reviews and medicines optimisation](#)

polypharmacy. They are designed to be a comprehensive and clinical review of a patient's medicines and detailed aspects of their health. They are delivered by facilitating shared decision-making conversations with patients aimed at ensuring that their medication is working well for them.

Structured Medication Reviews should be holistic and personalised, tailored around the patients' clinical and individual needs. The health literacy and holistic needs of the patient should be taken into account, and Structured Medication Reviews should consider all the medicines a patient is taking or using.

NHSEI has also published advice on the role of clinical pharmacists working with PCN's in facilitating Structured Medication Reviews<sup>3</sup>.

I am aware that the Uplands Medical Practice, Whitefield, has advised in its response to your report that it has introduced a standardised medication review template that includes a prompt to routinely trigger an enquiry as to whether the patient is taking any over-the-counter medicine. I also note that the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership is supporting the Medical Practice to make sure that medication reviews are consistently and regularly carried out, and taking steps to ensure the learning from Mr Houghton's death, is shared across Greater Manchester, including the importance of patients receiving a Structured Medication Review conducted by GPs or PCN pharmacists.

I hope this response and these actions address your concerns in this area.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maria'.

**MARIA CAULFIELD**

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<sup>3</sup> [NHS England » Structured medication reviews and medicines optimisation](#)