



## Department of Health & Social Care

Catherine Wood  
Assistant Coroner  
Coroner Service Team  
Cantium House  
Sandling Road  
Maidstone  
ME14 1XD

July 2022

Dear Ms Wood,

Thank you for your letter of 12 March 2022, to the then Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Sajid Javid, about the death of Samuel Alban-Stanley. I am replying as Minister with responsibility for Care and Mental Health and thank you for the additional time provided.

I would like to begin by offering my deepest condolences to the family of Samuel. It is, of course, vital that we take learnings, where they are identified, to improve NHS care, and I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention.

In preparing this response, my officials made enquiries with NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Care Quality Commission. I am further advised that the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care System has also provided a detailed response to your report.

At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, people with serious underlying health conditions, such as Samuel, were advised to follow shielding measures. We recognise that such measures had an impact on many people's mental health and wellbeing. However, urgent action was needed at the time to suppress the Covid-19 virus, prevent the NHS from becoming overwhelmed, and ultimately save lives. These measures were kept under constant review and were removed as soon as it was considered safe to do so.

I am sorry to hear that Samuel was not offered the care and treatment that he needed to keep him safe, and for the poor communication between the agencies that were supposed to provide this care. The North East London Foundation Trust is now working with the Kent and Medway ICS and the local authority to learn lessons from this report and what happened to Samuel. Training has been put in place for all relevant staff so that they are aware of the signs and impacts of Samuel's condition. They have also introduced reviews for high complexity cases that may not meet the criteria for neurodevelopmental services, to ensure the needs of patients in the future are addressed.

You may wish to know that under the Equality Act (2010), health and social care organisations must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged. Commissioners are responsible for ensuring the provision of services based on the local needs of their population, including for people with learning disabilities, mental health problems and complex physical needs. Commissioners should take into consideration any relevant guidance, such as those published by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence in designing their local services.

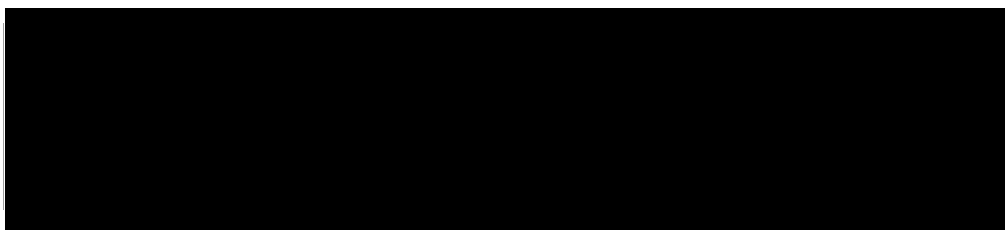
More broadly, the NHS Long Term Plan, published in 2019, includes a commitment that by 2023/24 children and young people with a learning disability and/or who are autistic with the most complex needs will have a designated keyworker. As a result, the Children and Young People's keyworker programme, a four-year multi-million-pound investment by NHS England and NHS Improvement, and full coverage of the key-working service across England, is expected by 2024. Keyworkers will ensure that these children and their families get the right support at the right time. They will also ensure that local systems are responsive to fully meeting the young people's needs in a joined-up way and that, whenever it is possible to provide care and treatment in the community with the right support, this becomes the norm.

I understand from your report that a Care (Education) and Treatment Review (C(E)TR) was suggested locally, however, not implemented in Samuel's case. You may wish to note that the C(E)TR policy, which sets out when a C(E)TR should be offered, relates to people of all ages with learning disabilities, autism, or both, that are facing potential admission to, or are patients in, any specialist learning disability or mental health hospital, and who are the commissioning responsibility of NHS England or the Integrated Care Systems.

Finally, I would add that this Department is not able to comment on issues relating to school support or children's social care. You may, therefore, also wish to raise your concerns directly with the Department for Education, at the below address:

Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

I hope this response is helpful. Thank you for bringing these concerns to my attention.



**GILLIAN KEEGAN**