



Department
of Health &
Social Care

From Maria Caulfield MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Department of Health and Social Care



Nadia Persaud
East London Coroners
Adult Learning College
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1 December 2022

Dear Ms Persaud,

Thank you for your letter of 9 June 2022 about the death of Shirley Alice Moloney. I am replying as Minister with responsibility for Mental Health and I thank you for the additional time allowed.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mrs Moloney's death and I offer my sincere condolences to her family and loved ones. The circumstances your report describes are very concerning and I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention.

In preparing this response, departmental officials have made enquiries with NHS England and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Whilst there was no evidence that a lack of care contributed to Mrs Moloney's death, we recognise the areas of concern you have identified that could contribute to future deaths. We are committed through the NHS Long Term Plan to offering more NHS support in care homes to ensure there are strong links between care homes, local general practices and community services.

You have raised concerns around the resourcing of older age psychiatric teams. We recognise the need to increase capacity in NHS mental health services, including community mental health services for older adults, due to the increasing demand for services. The mental health workforce increased by 5,900 full-time equivalent staff in December 2021 compared to December 2020, and by over 11,800 compared to December 2010. However, we know there is more to do to ensure we have sufficient numbers of healthcare staff to deliver our aims for high quality, accessible mental health services for all ages. We therefore aim to expand the mental health workforce by an additional 27,000 healthcare professionals by 2023/24 (compared to 2019/20).

Furthermore, through the NHS Long Term Plan, we are investing at least £2.3 billion additional funding a year to expand and transform mental health services in England by 2023/24. This will enable an extra two million people to be treated by NHS mental health services by 2023/24. This includes new integrated community models, giving 370,000 adults and older adults with severe mental illness greater choice and control over their care and support to live well in their communities by 2023/24.

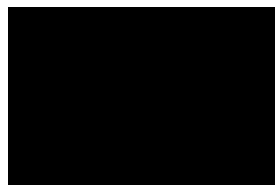
We are also committed to setting clear standards for patients requiring access to community mental health treatment. NHS England has consulted on the potential to introduce five new waiting time standards as part of its clinically led review of NHS Access Standards. These include a proposal that adults and older adults presenting to community-based mental health services should start to receive help within four weeks from referral. NHS England published the outcomes of that consultation in February, and we are now working with them on the next steps.

With regard to your concerns around a lack of adequately trained staff in care homes, and a lack of establishments suitably designed for dual physical/mental health needs. The quality, delivery and availability of a suitable care provider sits within the responsibility of the local authority and the CQC. Where concerns on quality or safety are identified, the CQC have a wealth of enforcement powers available and will take swift action to ensure the safety of service users. Under the Care Act 2014 local authorities are responsible for achieving a responsive, diverse and sustainable market of service providers that can provide high quality, personalised care and support, to best meet the needs of people.

In addition, the CQC and local authorities also have a responsibility to monitor the quality of care provided and minimise the risk of service interruption or failure. Following assent of the Health and Social Care Act 2022 earlier this year, the CQC will be responsible for inspecting local authorities against their Care Act duties from April 2023. The CQC will review, assess and report on council regulated adult social care functions under Part One of the 2014 Care Act, such as prevention, information and advice, market shaping and support services.

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

Kind regards,



MARIA CAULFIELD MP