



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From Neil O'Brien MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Primary Care and Public Health
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[REDACTED]

Mrs Dianne Hocking
His Majesty's Assistant Coroner for Leicester City and South Leicestershire
HM Coroner's Office
Leicester City Council
115 Charles Street
Leicester
LE1 1FZ

10 January 2023

Dear Mrs Hocking,

Thank you for your letter of 31 March 2022 about the death of Fadzai Chitakunye. I am replying as Minister with responsibility for Primary Care and Public Health, and I am grateful for the additional time in which to do so.

I wish to begin by saying how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mrs Chitakunye'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.

General practice is the cornerstone of our NHS and Government is committed to helping staff deliver for patients. The 2016 General Practice Forward View¹ strategy provided support for practices to build the capacity and capabilities required to meet patients' needs. As part of the GP Forward View, a key aspect included investment in technology to improve patient care and work to increase the electronic transfer of records between practices.

The NHS Long Term Plan², published in 2019, sets out further ambitions for general practice and builds on the GP Forward View. The Plan includes digital transformation programmes and technology opportunities to improve and support NHS care, including better access by clinicians to electronic/digital health records.

You may wish to note that the General Medical Services (GMS) GP Contract requires practices to use GP2GP for transferring electronic health records. NHS Digital provides the GP2GP service, which allows patients' electronic health records to be transferred directly, securely and quickly between their old and new practices, when they change practices. The GP2GP process is an automated 'pull' and transfer of the patient's digital medical record that is activated when a patient is registered on their new general practice medical system

¹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/gpfv.pdf>

² <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/nhs-long-term-plan-version-1.2.pdf>

and there has been a successful match to the national Personal Demographics Service database. Patients expect general practices to have their medical records and the GP2GP system helps patients' health records to arrive soon after a new patient practice registration. NHS Digital manage and maintain the GP2GP service and continue to improve and develop the system.

You may also wish to note that Primary Care Support England (PCSE) provides administrative and support services for NHS primary care on behalf of NHS England, and is responsible for the movement of paper medical records. It can take up to two weeks for a new practice to receive a patient's physical medical record. PCSE manage a secure delivery service to enable the medical record to be moved correctly, a tracking label is automatically generated and sent to the old practice and delivery arranged. PCSE have an online tracking system to allow practices to track the status of inbound records, view a list of outbound record requests and see what records need to be prepared for transfer. The length of time it takes for a patients' records to get to their new practice is mainly dependent on how quickly the old practice releases the physical record.

Finally, NHS Digital also provide the Summary Care Records (SCR) service. SCRs provide an alternative option if healthcare professionals are unable to access a patient's full GP clinical system record. SCRs are an electronic record of important patient information, created from general practice clinical system medical record, and they can be viewed and accessed by authorised healthcare professionals involved in a patient's direct care from local regional and national healthcare system anywhere in England. The SCR includes the following information: current medication, allergies, previous bad reactions to medicines, name, address, date of birth and NHS number, and may also include, significant medical history, reason for medication, anticipatory care information, end of life care information, immunisations.

I hope this response is helpful.



NEIL O'BRIEN MP