



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

Mr Andrew J Cox  
Acting Senior Coroner for Cornwall  
and Isles of Scilly  
The New Lodge  
Newquay Road  
Penmount  
Truro  
TR4 9AA

4<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Dear Mr Cox,

Thank you for your letter of 10 November 2022, to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Steve Barclay, regarding the death of David Morganti, Winnie Barnes-Weeks, Robert George Conybeare and Anthony Reedman. I am replying as a Minister with responsibility for Health and Secondary Care.

Firstly, I would like to begin by offering my deepest condolences to the families of David, Winnie, Robert and Anthony. 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, Departmental officials have made enquiries with NHS England and NHS Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Board (ICB).

The Department has received correspondence from the ICB (see Annex A), which addresses the issues regarding the capacity of intermediate care beds in the county; identifies options for mitigating delays to discharge; ongoing GP pressures in primary care; and appropriate levels of staffing.

The report raises concerns about the long ambulance waiting times and identifies issues with handing over patients to hospitals. You may wish to note that we have focussed on these issues in our delivery plan for recovering urgent and emergency care services, published on 30 January 2023.<sup>1</sup> The plan aims to deliver one of the fastest and longest sustained improvements in emergency waiting times in the NHS's history, including bringing down A&E and ambulance wait times significantly over the next year, and down towards pre-pandemic levels within two years. Backed up by a £1 billion dedicated fund, the plan will include the delivery of 800 new ambulances.

Building on the additional capacity we have put in place this winter, the UEC Recovery Plan commits to increasing the permanent bed base by 5,000 for next winter, helping reduce pressure in A&E so that ambulances can get swiftly back out on the road.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/B2034-delivery-plan-for-recovering-urgent-and-emergency-care-services.pdf>

As part of the recovery plan, we are also expanding community services including falls, frailty and community response teams to better support vulnerable people and reduce unnecessary hospital trips.

The NHS is also focussed on reducing the numbers of ambulance handover delays to hospitals. Alongside direct improvement support to the most challenged trusts, an additional £250 million was made available to enable the NHS to buy up beds in the community to safely discharge thousands of patients from hospital, and capital for discharge lounges and ambulance hubs. These measures have helped improve flow through hospitals and reduce ambulance handover delays. This is on top of the £500 million already invested last year.

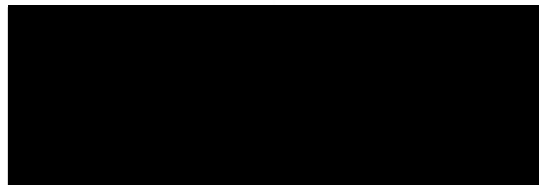
We recognise that discharging people once they no longer need acute care improves their outcomes and reduces the risk of medical complications. To improve rates of safe hospital discharge and increase patient flow, the government is making available up to £2.8 billion this year and £4.7 billion in 2024-25 to support adult social care and discharge. This is alongside £700 million invested this winter, on top of £1.6 billion over the next two years, to support timely and safe discharge from hospital into the community.

The Department is also working with NHSE on several important initiatives to embed best practice for discharging patients from hospitals. This includes the 100-day challenge, which is helping acute trusts improve patient flow based on using 10 best practice initiatives and the Six National Discharge Frontrunners, which are piloting new approaches to discharge.

General practice like many parts of the NHS is under pressure and the Government's Primary Care Recovery Plan will respond to the challenges facing the sector, it is currently being drafted and will be published in the coming weeks. We are also working with the NHS and Health Education England to grow the general practice workforce.

I hope that this response is helpful and thank you again for bringing these important issues to my attention.

Yours Sincerely,



**WILL QUINCE MP  
MINISTER OF STATE**