

OUR SERVICES

Urgent and Emergency Care
Patient Transport Service
NHS 111



Andre Rebello HM
Senior Coroner
Liverpool and Wirral

BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Mr Rebello,

Regulation 28 report

Thank you for your letter dated 25 November 2022 sent following the conclusion of the inquest touching the death of Mr Battle.

I know that you will share my response with Mr Battle's family and I firstly want to express my sincere condolences to his family.

NWAS' core purpose is to save lives, prevent harm and offer services which optimise the likelihood of positive patient outcomes. It is of deep regret that on this occasion NWAS was unable to attend to Mr Battle as quickly as it should have and I am extremely sorry for that. NWAS takes all adverse events very seriously and it undertook an internal investigation into the attendance on Mr Battle.

Through the Regulation 28 report, you have requested that NWAS considers your matters of concern and have suggested that action is taken to prevent future deaths occurring in the future. By this letter, I will address that concern as far as I'm able to do so.

Shared resources between Merseyside Police and NWAS.

Through the oral evidence that was before you during the inquest, you are aware that in other areas of the North West region there are initiatives in place for NWAS, a mental health service and a local Police force to share a mental health triage car. As you correctly identify in your report, those arrangements do not exist in Liverpool. However, the Psynergy model to which you refer is the only model of its type within the

North West Region and is reflective of the particular demands of that geographical area.

The NHS long term plan (2019/20 to 2023/24) makes a commitment to pursuing an ambitious transformation of mental health care, including the improvement of ambulance responses to those patients who need urgent and emergency assistance in respect of their mental health. Indeed, initiatives such as mental health response vehicles form part of this model of improvement.

The NHS Long Term plan is clear in its recommendation that the response to mental health problems (including response vehicles) is to be health led as they are health related issues. In the financial year ending 2022/23, NHSE released an amount of capital funding for which ambulance trusts, in partnership with their regional Integrated Care Board ("ICB") and local mental health trusts, have tendered in order to purchase the mental health response vehicles. The staffing for such response vehicles is separately funded through the Mental Health Investment Standards, which is attached to the NHS Long Term Plan. Within the North West, the scope, specification and operating model of the mental health response vehicles is reviewed and agreed by a pan North West steering group, chaired by the NHSE regional mental health lead, which includes all of the regional ICBs, NWAS and mental health trusts. It is necessary to work together in partnership with one another in order to achieve the commitments made within the NHS Long Term Plan.

Police forces have similarly introduced response vehicles in order to provide further assistance to individuals with mental health needs but in relation to policing matters, for example, for the purpose of detection and prevention of crime and reducing the number of patients inappropriately detained under s136 Mental Health Act. Funding for these police vehicles is not derived from the Department of Health and Social Care/NHS but via the local Police and Crime Commissioner.

You have asked that NWAS, Merseyside Police and the local mental health trusts work together in concert and share community mental health crisis intervention resources for the good of the community.

NWAS and Merseyside Police provide each other with invaluable support and assistance on a daily basis. However, the demands faced by each service are very different, as too are the nature of the calls meaning that the call triage systems, categorisation and dispatch processes are distinct from each other. It is crucial that the respective mental health response vehicles reflect and meet the needs of the two very different services.

NWAS, Merseyside Police, local authorities and the local mental health trusts are members and participants of the Crisis Concordat which collectively reviews mental health demand, incidents, local systems and practices in order to improve the outcomes for patients with mental health needs in the local communities. The Crisis Concordat brings together local authorities, mental health trusts and the emergency services into one environment. Through the Crisis Concordat, a suite of mutual training and education sessions have been introduced which are continuing. All participants of the Crisis Concordat are committed to working together to improve the outcomes for the local community.

Beyond the Crisis Concordat, NWAS and the Merseyside Police come together again at the Regional Police Forum at which strategic, operational challenges and collaborative working opportunities are identified, discussed and agreed. NWAS has recommended that the incident involving Mr Battle be tabled for further discussion at the next forum. Should any further learning be identified at that forum, I would be very happy to share that with you if it would assist.

I am sorry that you felt it necessary that there was cause to issue a Regulation 28 report and I hope that, by this letter, I have addressed your concerns. Should you require any further clarification or information, please do not hesitate to contact me or the Trust's Head of Legal Services, [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Chief Executive