

**Heidi Connor**

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**National Medical Director**

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12 October 2023

Dear Mrs Connor

Thank you for your letter to NHS England ( [REDACTED] ) dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023, regarding Alexandra Briess' case. Before responding to your letter, NHS England would first like to express our deep condolences to Alexandra's family.

We wish to provide you with assurances that there have been active discussions with various stakeholders on the concerns raised around anaphylaxis and the need to improve data collection, understanding, and research of anaphylaxis cases.

By way of some initial context, specialised allergy services are commissioned by NHS England. Expert advice on allergy is provided by NHS England's Immunology and Allergy Clinical Reference Group (CRG). The CRG consists of a group of senior clinicians from across the NHS with expertise in delivering clinical allergy and immunology services as well as representatives from primary care, public health and patient groups. The CRG also provides advice on innovation, horizon scanning, service reviews and how we can reduce variation and deliver increased value. In addition, it also leads on the development of clinical commissioning policies, service specifications and quality standards.

Through Patient and Public Voice (PPV) members, it also helps to ensure that any changes to the commissioning of specialised services involves patients and the public. Specialist allergy services are defined according to the following specialist allergy service specification: [B \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk). This service specification is currently under review by the Immunology and Allergy CRG.

In regard to recent developments, following a debate in parliament in May this year (<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2023-05-11/debates/295069F8-79F3-40C9-B96C-DEF92C9F14C4/AllergyAwarenessWeek>), there has been a preliminary agreement to establish an Expert Advisory Group for Allergy (EAGA) that would be jointly chaired by a representative of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the National Allergy Strategy Group (chaired by [REDACTED]). Dr [REDACTED] National Specialty Advisor (NSA) for Specialised Immunology and Allergy at NHS England) has been invited to represent the CRG on this group where there will also be representation from other key stakeholder organisations. If established, one of the aims of this group will be to identify priority areas for DHSC, NHSE and others

relating to allergy that require policy change or development and advise on how to best achieve improved outcomes.

NHS England's National Patient Safety Team is also working closely with the UK Fatal Anaphylaxis Registry to develop a mechanism for sharing relevant patient safety anaphylaxis incidents with them and this work is ongoing.

The British Society for Allergy & Clinical Immunology (BSACI) has also recently established the Perioperative Allergy Network Steering Committee which looks to address recommendations made in the National Audit Project 6 anaphylaxis report. At the end of August 2023 they published recommendations on referral for assessment of suspected anaesthesia related allergy: Perioperative Allergy Network recommendations of suspected anaesthesia related allergy - BSACI. The BSACI should be able to provide further information on this if required.

Additionally, the Royal College of Physicians Improving Quality in Allergy Services accreditation programme (IQAS) <https://www.igas.org.uk/> was set up to improve the quality of allergy services across the UK. The programme independently measures services against national standards with the aim of reducing variation across the country, promotes quality improvement through highlighting areas of best practice and areas for change and demonstrates the service's dedication to improvement, patient safety and reducing risk. The programme includes domains relating to clinical care and performance. The current IQAS standards (2019) are due to be revised in 2024 and NHS England has been assured by the IQAS clinical lead that horizon scanning means that perioperative anaphylaxis services will be front and centre of the review. The Royal College should be able to provide further information on this, should you require it.

NHS England's NSA for Specialised Immunology and Allergy and the CRG has provided assurances that they recognise the importance of the issues relating to investigation and follow up of perioperative anaphylaxis as highlighted in your Report and will be taking points raised into consideration in the development of the specialised allergy service specifications and commissioning policies.

NHS England has also been in touch with our DHSC counterparts regarding their response to you, and we hope that you will hear from them shortly.

I hope that this is helpful to you and please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any further information.

Yours sincerely,



National Medical Director