



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From Maria Caulfield MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department of Health & Social Care*

*39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU*

André Rebello OBE
Senior Coroner
HM Coroner's Court
Gerard Majella Courthouse
Boundary Street
Liverpool
L5 2QD

9 May 2024

Dear Mr Rebello,

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report to prevent future deaths dated 27 June 2023 about the death of Stephen Norman Richardson. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for mental health and patient safety.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Stephen's death and I offer my sincere condolences to his family and loved ones. The circumstances your report describes are concerning and I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in responding to this matter and I am grateful for the extension you have granted.

In preparing this response, Departmental officials have made enquiries with NHS England and the Care Quality Commission.

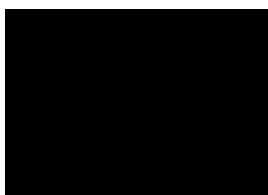
Your report raises concerns over the availability of acute psychiatric beds to treat patients in the community suffering with serious mental disorders requiring inpatient treatment.

I understand that NHS England, in conjunction with Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board, has already carefully considered the matters of concern in your report and has provided you with a comprehensive response setting out the actions being taken to improve care quality and patient safety and on the specific concern around availability of beds.

From a national perspective I would add that, under the NHS Long Term Plan, the NHS forecasts that, between 2018/19 and 2023/24, spending on mental health services has increased by £4.7 billion in cash terms, compared to the target of £3.4 billion set out at the time of the NHS Long Term Plan in 2019. This includes introducing new models of care in the community as part of the community mental health framework, which is replacing the care programme approach. These models of care provide improved access to a wide range of services including improved physical health care, trauma-informed care, and support for those with self-harm and substance misuse problems, giving adults with severe mental illnesses greater choice and control over their care and supporting them to live well in their communities, avoiding the need for an inpatient admission where possible.

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

Yours sincerely,



MARIA CAULFIELD