



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

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

*39 Victoria Street  
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SW1H 0EU*

Miss N Persaud  
HM Coroner  
Coroner's Court  
124 Queens Road  
Walthamstow  
London  
E17 8QP

9 May 2024

Dear Miss Persaud,

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report to prevent future deaths dated 30 August 2023 about the death of Allison Vivian Jacome Aules. 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 Allison's death and I offer my sincere condolences to her 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 significant delay in responding to this matter.

I understand that NHS England, North East London Integrated Care Board and North East London NHS Foundation Trust have each already carefully considered the matters of concern in your report and have provided you with comprehensive responses setting out the actions being taken to improve care quality and patient safety.

I recognise your concerns regarding the resourcing of children and young people's mental health services and I acknowledge that we are facing a significant increase in demand for children and young people mental health services. I can assure you that, from a national perspective, the Government is working hard towards addressing this.

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. Spend specifically on children and young people's mental health services has increased from £841 million in 2019/20 to just over £1 billion in 2022/23.

NHS England is working to support an increase in access to high-quality children and young people's mental health services. NHS England's priorities and operational planning guidance for 2024/25 sets out the aim to increase the number of children and young people aged 0-25 years accessing transformed models of community mental health to 345,000 by the end of March 2025 compared to 2019.

We are also making positive progress on our ambition to grow the mental health workforce by an extra 27,000 staff between 2019/20 and 2023/24. We delivered three quarters of this (around 20,800) by December 2023 with further growth expected to have been achieved once the full year figures for 2023/24 are available. In December 2023, there were nearly 149,000 full time equivalents in the mental health workforce. This is over 10,300 more (7.5% increase) since December 2022.

The number of full-time equivalent psychiatry consultants working in all NHS trusts and other core organisations in England has increased by 8.7% from 4,121 in September 2010 to 4,479 in September 2023.

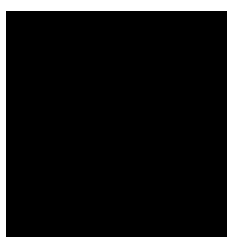
We are committed to attracting, training, and recruiting the mental health workforce of the future as well as retaining and re-skilling our current workforce. We are also continuing to increase our education and training commissions (across all mental health training programmes) alongside continuing to develop new roles and using existing roles to transform service delivery and enhance service user experiences. The NHS aims to meet this commitment through a range of different training programmes, including:

- continued workforce growth, through the commissioning of wellbeing practitioners and children and young people's talking therapies training programmes;
- supporting existing workforce development through upskilling training opportunities, for example Service Leadership training;
- supporting the implementation of mental health support teams in schools and colleges through the commissioning of education mental health practitioner (EMHP) training and supervision;
- supporting initiatives to ensure widening participation in the workforce; and
- ensuring workforce development and training for staff in inpatient settings, including development of the children and young people's mental health inpatient competency framework.

I would add that we published a new 5-year Suicide Prevention Strategy for England on 11 September with over 130 actions that we believe will make progress towards our ambition to reduce the suicide rate within two and a half years. The strategy is a call to action for national and local government, the health service, the VCSE sector, employers and individuals to work together to help prevent suicides.

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

Yours sincerely,



**MARIA CAULFIELD**