



Department of Health & Social Care

*From Minister Helen Whately
Minister of State for Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU*

[REDACTED]

Alan Anthony Wilson
Senior Coroner for Blackpool & Flyde
PO Box 1066
Blackpool
FY1 1GB

[REDACTED]

14 June 2024

Dear Mr Wilson,

Thank you for your letter of 1 September 2023 to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regarding the death of Harold Derek Pedley. I am replying as Minister with responsibility for urgent and emergency care. Please accept my sincere apologies for the significant delay in responding to this matter. I would like to assure you that the Department is mindful of the statutory responsibilities in relation to prevention of future deaths reports and we are prioritising responses as a matter of urgency.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mr Pedley's death and I offer my sincere condolences to his family and loved ones. It is vital that where Regulation 28 reports raise matters of concern these are looked at carefully so NHS care can be improved. I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention.

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

I understand that Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board have responded to you directly on the specific actions being taken locally to address the concerns you have raised. Further, the CQC has advised my officials that they continue to have regular engagement with Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to monitor waiting time performance and risk.

Your report highlights a delay following a GP referral from primary to secondary care. NHS England has confirmed that all referrals to Emergency Departments and secondary care should have an accompanying letter to inform staff of the concerns and patient history. Hospitals should also have access to the Summary Care Record; a national database that holds electronic records of important patient information, intended to provide a summary of patients' GP records. Further developments are ongoing to make referrals to secondary care more efficient.

Your report also raises concerns about long A&E wait times and the pressures on staff, specifically due to bed availability. As the Minister responsible for urgent and emergency care services, I recognise the significant pressures the NHS is facing and the impact on waiting time for patients. In January 2023, NHS England published a two year 'Delivery plan for recovering urgent and emergency care services' with a target for this year to improve A&E wait times to a minimum of 78% of patients being admitted, transferred, or discharged within four hours by March 2025. An update to this plan has now been published, to build on learnings

from the first year and to continue to support systems to improve performance and reduce waiting times. The plan is available at:

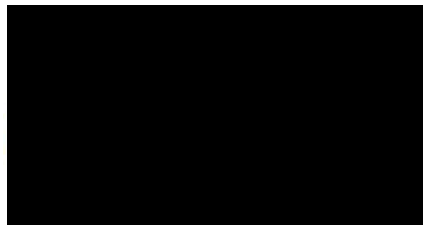
https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/PRN01288_ii_Delivery-plan-for-recovering-urgent-and-emergency-care-progress-update-and-next-steps-May-2024.pdf

To improve patient flow and bed capacity within hospitals, £1 billion of dedicated funding was provided to increase staffed core hospital beds by 5,000 compared to 2022/23 plans. In addition, to improve capacity of the local system, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (LTHNFT) and East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust (ELHNT) received £15 million and £4.9 million respectively from a £250 million programme to increase NHS capacity in 2023/24.

Since publication of the plan in January 2023, there have been improvements in performance. In April 2024, 79.8% of patients at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust A&E were admitted, referred, or discharged in 4 hours, an increase of 0.9ppt from March 2024.

Thank you once again for bringing these concerns to my attention.

Yours,



HELEN WHATELY