



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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Ms Jacqueline Devonish
HM Senior Coroner
The Cheshire Coroner's Service East and West Annexes
Town Hall
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15 November 2023

Dear Ms Devonish,

Thank you for your letter of 4 September 2023 to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care about the death of Emma Louise Morrissey. I am replying as Minister for Mental Health and Women's Health Strategy.

Firstly, I would like to say how deeply saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Ms Morrissey's death. I appreciate how distressing her unexpected death must be for family and loved ones, and I offer my heartfelt condolences. It is vital that we take the learnings from what happened to her in order to prevent future deaths.

On receipt of your report, the UK Government expressed our concerns to the Turkish Ministry of Health, given the circumstances surrounding Ms Morrissey's death.

More broadly, my officials are investigating the issues surrounding global medical tourism. Our efforts to understand the consequences of international health tourism are global, but we have a strong interest in Türkiye given it is a key destination for healthcare tourism for UK nationals.

The Department has been consulting with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, NHS England, the Devolved Governments and other relevant stakeholders to obtain a better picture of the impact of medical tourism on patient safety and the NHS. My officials will also be visiting Türkiye shortly to meet with their counterparts. The intention is to discuss the regulatory framework, and the protections that are in place for UK nationals, and to identify concrete areas where the UK and Turkish authorities should work together to reduce the risks to patients in the future.

Specifically, I have noted in your report the lack of standard pre-assessment questions provided to Ms Morrissey in Türkiye. This meant the clinicians failed to address family medical history and her associated cardiac risk. We remain aware countries providing healthcare tourism often conduct pre-assessment checks that may not match UK

regulatory standards and we want to encourage all providers treating UK nationals to meet international best practices on pre-operative procedures whenever possible. Such transparency and standardisation are important to reduce potential risks to patients and improve patient care in the UK and overseas.

I also noted your remarks on Ms Morrissey's inadequate embalming prior to the repatriation of her body. My officials will ensure that Turkish authorities understand the public health risks when bodies are not appropriately embalmed and lobby that further action is taken to ensure that there is no repeat of what happened to Ms Morrissey.

The Government is considering how we can most effectively communicate with those considering medical treatment abroad, to ensure people are better informed about the risks ahead of surgery and understand the need to ensure appropriate aftercare, including considering when it may be safe to travel home.

I hope this response is helpful in setting out how seriously the UK Government is taking the issues raised in your report.

Yours sincerely,



MARIA CAULFIELD