



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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Miss Lorraine Harris
East Riding of Yorkshire and City of Kingston Upon Hull
Coroner's Service
The Guildhall
Alfred Gelder Street
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5 April 2024

Dear Miss Harris,

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report to prevent future deaths dated 28th September 2023 about the death of Mr Scott James Donoghue. I am replying as Minister with responsibility for Mental Health and Women's Health Strategy.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mr Donoghue's death, and I offer my sincere condolences to his family and loved ones. The circumstances your report describes are very concerning and I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention.

The report raises concerns over the lack of consistency in staff dealing with Mr Donoghue's care and the importance of having continuity of staff which requires additional funding, recruitment of appropriate staff and an ability to retain staff at local level. I also acknowledge the important work undertaken by services such as Home-Based Treatment Teams in supporting and providing help to those in need.

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

Continuity of care is a top priority for NHS England and local services, and they have made significant strides in minimising staff turnover to ensure patients do not experience frequent changes in their care teams. Effective communication and collaboration between the Crisis Resolution Home Treatment Teams (CRHTT) and the Community Teams are ongoing, ensuring a seamless transition of care. Patient engagement remains at the forefront of their approach, fostering open communication to understand their needs and concerns. Continuous training and education for CRHTT members focus on identifying signs of distress and suicide risks and they are actively collaborating with other mental health and social services to offer holistic patient care with all age urgent mental health helplines in place in every area to support people in mental health crisis.

Following the last inspection of Humber Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's Home-Based Treatment Team in 2019, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated the trust as good overall. The key question 'safe' was rated as requires improvement. The Trust submitted an action plan to explain how it would comply with its legal obligations following the publication of the report and, in line with its usual practice, the CQC uses the information received to monitor providers of health and social care services and take appropriate regulatory action when needed.

The CQC also requested information from the trust regarding the death of Scott James Donoghue and the trust provided a copy of the serious incident investigation report on 09/02/2023. The Trust carried out its own investigation and has since developed an action plan and lessons learnt. The CQC is monitoring the implementation of this through its engagement with the trust.

The Government is expanding and transforming NHS mental health care. We recognise the wider need to increase funding, which is why between 2018/19 and 2023/24, NHS spending on mental health has increased by £4.7 billion in cash terms as compared to the target of £3.4 billion set out at the time of the NHS Long Term Plan. All integrated care boards are also on track to meet the Mental Health Investment Standard for 2023/24 so that their investment in mental health services increases in line with their overall increase in funding for that year.

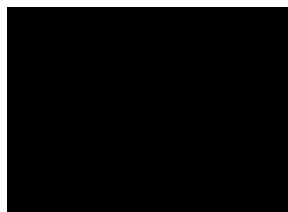
The Government is also investing in the recruitment and retention of more mental health workers. As of December 2023, there were 148,951 full time equivalents, which is 33,402 more than December 2019 (a 29% increase). We are also continuing to increase our education and training commissions (across all mental health training programmes) alongside continuing to develop new roles and using existing roles to transform service delivery.

The NHS is also committed to improving access to community mental health services. By the end of 2023/24, it is expected that 370,000 more adults and older adults with severe mental health problems will have been supported within newly transformed models of care in line with the vision set out in the Community Mental Health Framework.

Finally, we published a new 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. As part of the Strategy, we have identified a number of groups for consideration for tailored or targeted action at a national level, including people in contact with mental health services.

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

Yours sincerely,



MARIA CAULFIELD