

H G Mark Bricknell
HM Senior Coroner: Herefordshire

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Dear H G Mark Bricknell,

Re: Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths

We have taken the time to closely review the Regulation 28 Report and consider our response. We will now endeavour to respond to the points raised in the report.

1. Triage documentation was not fully completed

Hereford Medical Group uses an online system to record patient communication and online triage form submissions. These can either be completed by patients and submitted electronically or for patients who are unable to access the online form, these can be completed by a Receptionist on behalf of the patient. In this instance the information was recorded by a receptionist but unfortunately, the form did not save correctly; the Receptionist subsequently recognised this and went back retrospectively to re-complete the form by memory.

For information, 15% of online triage forms are completed by Receptionists on behalf of patients. Where further information is required from a patient then there is a system in place to support this.

We also noted learning from this event and have since implemented a new process whereby if an online form was not available for a clinician, they are able to arrange to listen to the phone call.

2. The patient was not telephoned as requested and as advised they would be

We have reviewed the transcript of the telephone call dated 27th April 2023. The receptionist advised the daughter-in-law that the surgery would be in touch within 5 working days. The reason for this timescale is to allow for the form to be triaged by the GP to determine whether an urgent, soon or routine appointment is most appropriate. It would appear from your report that the patient's daughter-in-law interpreted this as a Doctor would be calling the patient within 5 days.

A transcript of the relevant part of the call is given below for your reference.

HMR reception	Ok that's lovely
Caller	Should I expect him to expect a call today or will it be over the next couple of days?
HMG reception	So this form that we have completed will go across to the doctor and we will be in touch within 5 working days with what the doctor would like to do.
Caller	Ok no problem that's fine no worries, I'll just tell him to expect a call. That's fine thank you very much.
HMG reception	Yes, It should be next week, because we have the Bank Holiday obviously so that might slow things up slightly alright.
Caller	That's alright, no worries. Thank you for helping me. Thank you. Take care
HMG reception	Bye

When patients complete a triage form they are asked to indicate their preference for contact including phone or SMS. We have updated the protocols that the team follows and the reception team, who usually undertake the actions indicated following triage, now telephone the patient in the first instance to advise on the GPs triage decision.

3. The inquest was advised the triage Doctor was not aware of the waiting time for a routine appointment (4-6 weeks) nor did he consider the transcript of the telephone call

We have taken significant measures to reduce the wait time for routine appointments by increasing the number of available routine appointments. The wait for a routine appointment is under continuous review and our current wait is around approximately 4 weeks. In future, this information will be communicated to all staff on a weekly basis using the staff newsletter.

All triaging GPs are aware of how to find appropriate triage appointments. Calls are not routinely transcribed at the practice; when the Significant Event Analysis (SEA) meeting took place we ensured that a copy of the transcription was available to confirm what the receptionist advised was reflected in the call. We believe that nothing was discussed in the telephone call that would have influenced the triaging outcome.

4. The deceased died on the 5th June 2023. The inquest was told that a significant event meeting on 9th August 2023 had indicated a review of protocol criteria for triaging patients with mental health problems was being undertaken. The inquest was held on the 27th September 2023 and no revised protocol was advised.

We can confirm that the triage protocol was reviewed as part of the Significant Event meeting on 9th August 2023. No significant changes were seen to be needed from the GP triage protocol except for

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making sure that triaging GPs are aware of the next available routine and soon appointment slots. However, as part of regular and ongoing training for GPs, one of the lunchtime sessions over the next month will be on Mental Health. In addition, the next protected education time in January will be focused on triaging, including clinical considerations and the triage process and protocols.

To conclude, the practice has reviewed the Prevention of Future Deaths report and I trust that the answers to the specific concerns that you raise in the report have been addressed.

If there are any further questions that arise as a result of this response then I would be pleased to address them.

Yours sincerely,


Managing Partner

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