NHS 75
Sandwell and West Birmingham
NHS Trust

NHS
Birmingham and Solihull
Mental Health
NHS Foundation Trust

Legal Department
Uffculme Centre ,
52, Queensbridge Road
Birmingham
B13 8QY

Date: 21 December 2023

Mrs A Samuel,
Assistant Coroner,
Birmingham and Solihull Areas,
Steelhouse Lane,
BIRMINGHAM B4 6BJ

Dear Mrs Samuel,

RE: Andrew Bowles

Thank you for your Prevention of Future Deaths letter of the 31 October 2023 raising the concerns you have around the sharing of information between the two trusts on the front line, specifically in relation to the accessing of electronic patient records. We have worked together to try and address your concerns and therefore felt that it would be beneficial to provide a joint response in regard to the matters arising from your PFD.

We would like to begin by assuring you that the staff in Accident and Emergency do work closely with the Psychiatric Liaison Team to ensure the safe care of patients. For some time the permanent staff in the Psychiatric Liaison Team (PLT) based at City Hospital Accident and Emergency Department (A&E) have been able to access the electronic records and also contribute to the records of the Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust. This has been crucial in keeping not just the A&E and PLT staff up to date but also the Ward staff, if a patient is admitted.

In the past any "bank staff" (temporary staff) who were on shift would ask a member of the permanent team to access the records, so that they could review them prior to seeing a patient and would also ask permanent staff to update the records, following their review. Following the PFD, a joint meeting has taken place between the two trusts, and we have been able to identify that a number of the bank staff are regularly working bank shifts within the PLT. Therefore these staff will now be allocated access to hospital records. This will improve matters considerably in this area.

There are a small number of staff who may be called in from agencies when there are no other staff available. As these staff may be new to the team and/or to both trusts and only working one shift, it is unlikely that an account is set up immediately for them with the Hospital. In these exceptional circumstance, when the local induction takes place, they will be advised of the processes in place for them to speak with other permanent team members to access the City Hospital notes. They will review them prior to speaking with the patient and also update the records with their assessment after. Now that BSMHFT bank staff also have access to the

notes, there will be more staff with access to the records available to support this. They will also be able to update hospital staff with their reviews and fully support staff through joint working. Any issues will be monitored through clinical governance at BSMHFT.
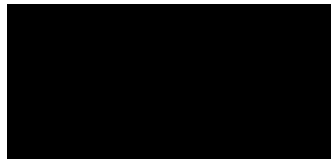
Please be assured, we did explore all possible options including providing a generic log on for agency only staff who may be carrying out one shift. However from an information governance perspective it would not be possible to ascertain who had inputted the information and therefore there would be no traceability or accountability in place, if any problem arose. This is contra to the lawful processing of confidential information. Therefore the only option available was to strengthen the number of PLT staff who have access to the City Hospital records to address any concerns going forward and ensure smooth working.

We would like to assure you that we are working very closely together to ensure that all patients receive the right care at the right time. We appreciate that sharing of information is crucial for this to take place and so are working to resolve this problem as a matter of urgency. We hope this offers you full reassurance in respect of the issues you have raised.

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive
BSMHFT

Chief Executive
Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust