



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From Maria Caulfield MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
Mental Health and Women's Health Strategy*

*39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU*

[REDACTED]

James Dillon
Assistant Coroner, Mid Kent and Medway
Coroner Service Team
Cantium House
Sandling Road
Maidstone ME14 1XD

10 May 2024

Dear Mr Dillon,

Thank you for the Regulation 28 report to prevent future deaths of 13 November 2023, about the death of Roger Adrian Stevenson. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for mental health.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Roger's death, and I offer my sincere condolences to his family and loved ones. The circumstances your report describes are concerning and I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention. Please accept my sincere apologies for the significant delay in responding to this matter.

The report raises concerns over the provision and coordination of mental health support for vulnerable people, who may not be in regular contact with mental health services.

I note that you have also addressed matters of concern to the Chief Executive of NHS England, and I would expect her response to address the concerns raised around local issues.

We recognise that the demand on NHS mental health services has risen significantly, and this means that some people may face waiting times that are much longer than we would like. Through the NHS Long Term Plan, we are committed to expanding and transforming mental health services in England so that more people can get the help and support that they need. As part of this, we are set to reach nearly £1 billion additional funding invested by 2023/24 (compared to 2018/19) to transform community mental health services for adults with severe mental illness.

In July 2021, NHS England published the Care Programme Approach (CPA) Position Statement which sets out a new approach to delivering safe and high-quality care, including improving care co-ordination. This approach includes having a named key worker for all service users with a clear multidisciplinary team approach to both assess

and meet the needs of service users, to reduce the reliance on care co-ordinators and to increase resilience in systems of care. It also includes better support for and involvement of carers as a means to provide safer and more effective care.

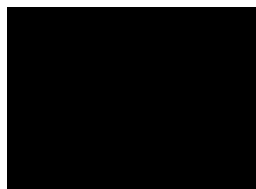
The Government is committed to improving urgent mental health services. We have now made emergency mental health support through NHS111 available everywhere in England. For those with severe needs or in crisis, 24/7 urgent mental health helplines are already available in all areas of the country. These crisis lines currently take around 200,000 calls a month. Linking these through to NHS111 will provide a consistent route for people to access support across the country. Delivering this commitment will enable anyone experiencing mental health crisis to access assessment and, if appropriate, onward referral and treatment at any time of the day by calling NHS111.

In addition, there are now around 600 new or expanded crisis alternative services in England such as crisis cafes, safe havens, crisis houses, providing alternatives to A&E or psychiatric admission. We are also investing a further £150 million in mental health urgent and emergency care infrastructure across 2023/24 and 2024/25, to fund new mental health ambulances and a range of new and improved facilities, including crisis cafes, crisis houses, urgent mental health assessment and care centres, health-based places of safety and the redesign and refurbishment of some existing suites and facilities including in emergency departments. 99 of these schemes have now been completed.

With regard to your concerns around staffing shortages, the government is not able to comment on staffing levels locally, as responsibility for the staffing and operations of mental health services lies with the relevant trust. However, we do recognise the wider need to increase capacity in NHS mental health services. Nationally, we are making positive progress on our ambition to grow the mental health workforce by an extra 27,000 staff between 2019/20 and 2023/24. We delivered three quarters of this (around 20,800) by December 2023 with further growth expected to have been achieved once the full year figures for 2023/24 are available. Furthermore, our NHS Long Term Workforce Plan sets out an ambition to grow the mental health, primary and community care workforce by 73% by 2036-37, building on existing national plans to further grow the mental health workforce to improve access to services and quality of care.

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

Yours sincerely,



MARIA CAULFIELD MP