



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*The Rt Hon. Andrew Stephenson CBE MP
Minister of State*

*39 Victoria Street
London
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5th March 2024

Dear Debbie,

Thank you for your letter of 15 November 2023 about the death of Calogero Di Blasi. I am replying as Minister with responsibility for Health and Social Care.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Calogero Di Blasi's death and I offer my sincere condolences to their 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.

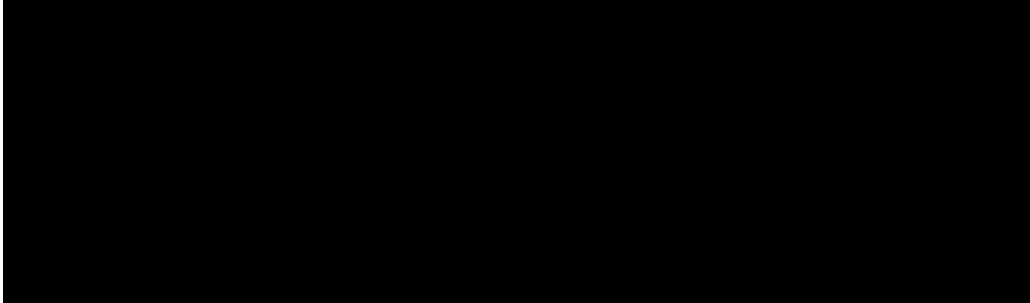
In preparing this response, Departmental officials have made enquiries with NHS England. The matters of concern you raise relate to the local management and implementation of national policies and procedures. As such, I requested NHS England liaise with the North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) responsible for University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust.

From advice received from NHS England, my understanding is that the ICB has looked into the circumstances of Mr Di Blasi's death and acknowledges the findings set out in the coroner's report. I understand that the ICB has made several recommendations to the Trust to address the issues in question which I hope will help the trust to ensure that the events leading up to Mr Di Blasi's death will be avoided in the future of care of other patients. I understand the Trust also plan to write directly to you setting out action they have planned, and taken locally, in response.

Since the death of Mr Di Blasi, NHS England and the Department have reformed cancer waiting time standards, following a clinically led review. This has replaced the two-week wait standard with the Faster Diagnosis Standard (FDS) for patients to get a cancer diagnosis or all-clear within 28 days of an urgent referral. The FDS moves focus away from process to deliver a clear clinical outcome – either diagnosing or ruling out cancer. This represents an improvement on the preceding 2-week wait standard, which was simply to “see a specialist” and addresses the coroners concerns, as the new standard takes into account times for reporting and reviewing diagnostic procedures. The reform also consolidated cancer standards from nine to three to reduce bureaucracy of reporting against a large number of standards.

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

Kind regards,



**THE RT HON ANDREW STEPHENSON CBE MP
MINISTER OF STATE**