



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

*From Maria Caulfield MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
Department of Health & Social Care*

*39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU*

Mr J Bennett  
HM Area Coroner for Birmingham and Solihull  
The Birmingham and Solihull Coroner's Court  
Steelhouse Lane  
Birmingham  
B4 6BJ

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1 May 2024

Dear Mr Bennett,

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report to prevent future deaths dated 23/11/23 about the death of Philip Malone. I am replying as Minister with responsibility for Mental Health.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mr Malone's death, and I offer my sincere condolences to their 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 available psychiatric bed capacity in Birmingham and Solihull.

In preparing this response, I have noted the responses received from the organisations to which you issued your report, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust and Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board.

My officials have informed me that the Trust remains committed to developing capacity and pathways to ensure they are able to meet the needs of the population. The Trust initiated a 12-month project with Grant Thornton Consultancy to address local bed shortages and reduce reliance on out-of-area hospital beds. The trust has made progress in developing bed capacity by implementing a locality model linking hospital beds to local mental health teams, enhancing gatekeeping processes, and tracking clinical activity to reduce inappropriate admissions.

Birmingham and Solihull NHS Foundation Trust and Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board are working collaboratively to increase mental health inpatient bed capacity.

At a national level, through the NHS Long Term Plan we have provided record levels of investment to expand and transform NHS mental health services and increase the workforce. The long-term aim set out within the Plan is to improve community support for those with serious mental illness to avoid the need for an inpatient admission where possible. We are set to reach nearly £1 billion additional funding invested by 2023/24 (compared to 2018/19) to transform community mental health services. However, we recognise that community-based care will not always be appropriate for those with more complex needs. Major expansion in funding for community mental health services commenced in all areas in 2021/22, which has been key to managing pressures on inpatient beds.

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

Yours sincerely,



**MARIA CAULFIELD**