

26 January 2024

**Private and Confidential**

████████████████████  
**Chief Executive**

Ms Sarah Clarke  
Assistant Coroner for Brighton, Hove and  
West Sussex  
Sent by email:  
████████████████████

**Chief Executive's Office**  
Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation  
Trust  
18 Mole Business Park  
Randall's Road  
Leatherhead  
KT22 7AD

Dear Ms Clarke

**Alice Litman (deceased)**  
**Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths**  
**Response from Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust ("the Trust")**

Thank you for the Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths (PFD report) dated 5 December 2023, in relation to the inquest touching the death of Alice Litman. I have considered the report carefully, together with the Trust's Chief Medical Officer, the Chief Nursing Officer, the Director of Education and other senior colleagues from the relevant divisions.

In the PFD report, you highlighted a number of concerns relevant to a variety of organisations involved in Alice's care and treatment.

We have reflected on those concerns which are relevant to the Trust and have outlined below the steps that have been taken and are being taken to address these.

**The knowledge and training for those in the mental health setting for managing and offering care to those in the transgender community.**

Together with the Chief Nursing Officer, I met with Alice's parents in December 2023 to discuss the steps that the Trust can take to implement learning from Alice's death and the subsequent inquest. This included discussion about a mandatory training package for all staff which will help them in their approach with working with people from the transgender community. Recognising the importance of consultation with those with lived experience and their families, ██████████ have kindly agreed to co-produce this with the Trust and other relevant external agencies. We would like to thank them for the information they have already sent us around organisations we may wish to work with. We also acknowledge that, for the training to remain impactful, it will require regular review and update.

Our Director of Education is working with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Business Partner in order to identify and approach relevant external organisations to assist us in our development of the training

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offer. It is also intended that people with lived experience will be involved in co-producing this training with a view to supporting both those who use our services and their carers. The importance of delivering age specific training is acknowledged and, as such, we will be developing co-produced training specifically for clinicians working with under 18s and young adults.

### **The lack of provision of mental health care for those waiting for gender affirming treatment.**

We recognise concerns around the lack of mental health provision for those awaiting gender affirming treatment and note that you have written to NHS England in this regard. In relation to our own services, we are committed to raising awareness of the heightened risk associated with those waiting for gender affirming treatment and ensuring that our services are more responsive to the needs of the people they support.

The Trust is also part of the Surrey Suicide Prevention Strategy [Appendix GW1], which is a multi-agency collaboration between health, local government, people with lived experience and the voluntary/community sector. Within the priorities for 2023-2026 is the improvement of emotional wellbeing in particular groups, including the LGBTQI+ community. Our Chief Nursing Officer co-chairs the Surrey Suicide Prevention Strategy Group with our Public Health colleagues. In addition, we are a member of the Surrey Adult Mental Health Alliance alongside several third sector community organisations providing emotional and wellbeing support. In learning from the inquest touching upon Alice's death, we will work with our third sector partners to increase their awareness of the heightened risk to those in the transgender community awaiting gender affirming treatment.

### **The lack of clarity for clinicians who are in place to support young transgender individuals in the Mental Health Setting.**

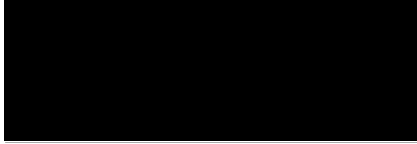
A further priority of the Surrey Suicide Prevention Strategy is to reduce attempted suicide amongst children and young people. It is intended that the bespoke mandatory training offer for those working with under 18's and young adults will assist clinicians to better support young transgender people in the mental health setting.

We recognise the need to work effectively with community and third sector organisations to enable appropriate and effective signposting. One way in which we do this is through our involvement with the Adult Mental Health Alliance, bringing together experts from across the sector and presenting an opportunity to share ideas around improving care pathways for young transgender individuals. The Trust has a Supporting People who are Trans Policy which contains an extensive list of third sector organisations. Following the meeting with Alice's parents, the Trust is reviewing, and adding to, this list of organisations. The strengthened policy will be shared in the Communications e-bulletin sent to all staff and incorporated into the mandatory training offer.

A key aspect of the Trust's five-year strategy, announced in July 2023, is to strengthen involvement with people who use services, their families, and carers. It is our aim that co-production is part of everyday practice at every level across the Trust. In March 2023, the Experience and Participation Team established a working group with people who use our services, their families and carers to develop a co-production framework. This framework will enable the Trust to have a standardised approach to involving and co-producing services across the Trust. As part of this, the Trust is working to build wider connections with our seldom heard communities, including those who are transgender to ensure any new developments across the Trust meet the needs of the people who use our services.

On behalf of the Trust, I would like to offer our sincere condolences to Alice's family for their loss and to thank them wholeheartedly for sharing their experience and views with us. This has greatly assisted us in reflecting upon our approach to supporting the transgender community and we hope that our actions outlined above assures you and Alice's family and friends that we have learnt, and continue to learn, from her death.

Yours sincerely,



  
**Chief Executive**