



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

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

*39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU*

[REDACTED]

HM coroner Caroline Jones  
Coroner's Service  
Lawrence Court  
Princes Street  
Huntingdon  
PE29 3PA

[REDACTED]

16 April 2024

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your letter of 20 December 2023 about the death of Mr Gregor Lynn. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for Health.

Firstly, I would like to say how very saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mr Lynn's death, and I offer my sincere condolences to his family and loved ones. The issues that your report highlights are very concerning, and I am grateful to you for bringing them to my attention.

In preparing this response, Departmental officials have made enquiries with NHS England (NHSE) and have been informed that Professor Sir Stephen Powis, the National Medical Director for NHSE, responded to you in detail about the serious issues raised in your report.

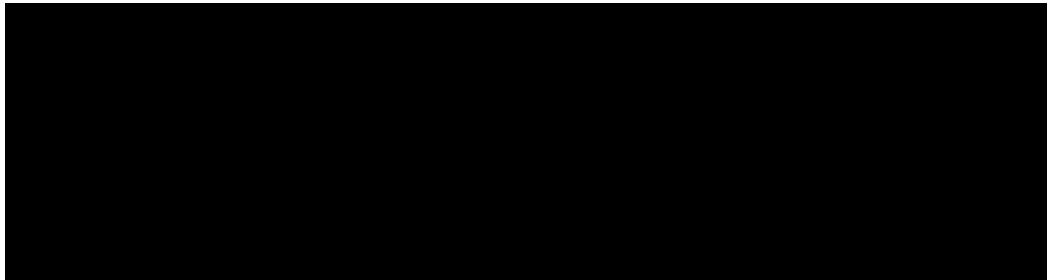
I do hope that [REDACTED]' response addresses some of your concerns. Professor Powis highlights existing clinical guidelines produced by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) relating to the identification of people with symptoms that could be caused by cancer, and appropriate investigations within primary care settings. NICE has also issued a document specifically relating to referral for suspected skin cancer. [REDACTED] also notes that NHSE has raised your concerns directly with the Integrated Care System (ICS) relevant to this case (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough), who have reviewed their policy for benign skin lesions and updated GPs about this while reminding them of existing national guidance relating to suspected skin cancer.

With regard to your concern about charging for additional activities by independent sector providers, it is reasonable that they should be able to charge for services which are not provided under contracts with the NHS. Ultimately, it is for independent sector

providers to design services and corresponding fees for self-funding patients. However, I would like to reiterate that the safety of all patients, irrespective of whether they are treated in the NHS or the independent sector, is a top priority for the government. Patients who opt to self-fund their care also retain their right to access NHS care.

All providers of healthcare are regulated by the Care Quality Commission and follow a set of fundamental standards of safety and quality, below which care should never fall. In addition, doctors in the UK are regulated by the General Medical Council (GMC), who are responsible for ensuring that medical professionals have the necessary skills and knowledge to join the medical register. All doctors must register with the GMC, hold a licence to practice, and meet the regulator's expected standards, including the '*Good medical practice*' standards, which states that doctors "must provide a good standard of practice and care... (and) refer a patient to suitably qualified practitioner when this serves their needs." There are also existing routes to raise concerns regarding the professional conduct or behaviour of individual doctors through the GMC - [Concerns about doctors - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](http://www.gmc-uk.org).

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



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