



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

[REDACTED]

Ms Victoria Davies
Area Coroner
For the coroner area of Cheshire

28 March 2024

Dear Ms Davies,

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report to prevent future deaths dated 28th December 2023 regarding the death of Mr Adrian Brendan Gallagher. I am replying as Minister with responsibility for suicide prevention at the Department of Health and Social Care.

Firstly, I would like to say how deeply saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mr Gallagher's death. Whilst I know that it will come as little comfort to his family, I nevertheless hope they will accept my heartfelt condolences.

The Government remains extremely concerned about the prevalence of abhorrent suicide and self-harm content online, and sadly, we are aware of the content that you have raised.

We keep under constant review what the most appropriate actions are to take to reduce the harm caused by publications like the [REDACTED]. In doing this, we work closely with other government departments, charities and experts to review actions regularly and continue to monitor the impact. This includes learning lessons from international examples where these are relevant.

I welcome your decision to write to Amazon to flag these concerns. My officials continue to work with the police and suicide prevention charities to revisit the conversations they have had with online marketplaces on the sale of harmful publications. I would be interested to see a copy of Amazon's response to you should they reply, to support those conversations.

The Government is taking a leading role in tackling methods of suicide, collaborating with partners across the world in policy, law enforcement and society more broadly to limit access, and share research, evidence and lessons learned. This includes seeking to tackle at source the suppliers of harmful substances for the purposes of suicide.

The Department of Health and Social Care leads a cross-sector, cross-government working group to tackle emerging methods, working with those partners. As a result of this group, there are now over thirty actions in place to reduce awareness and limit access to methods of suicide, including the one used by Mr Gallagher. The group meets regularly and remains vigilant to any further methods that we receive intelligence on, and will not hesitate to act should it be required.

As a Government, we are committed to tackling online safety and reducing the prevalence of harmful suicide and self-harm content.

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) will respond outlining how the Online Safety Act will address illegal and harmful self-harm and suicide content. The Department of Health and Social Care will continue to work closely with DSIT and Ofcom to support this work. We will also continue our support of programmes such as the Samaritan's Online Excellence Programme, which provides support and guidance for some of the biggest online platforms.

To close, we want to assure you that online safety and tackling methods of suicide are critical components of the Suicide Prevention Strategy, and we, alongside our expert advisory group, will continue to do what we can to prevent future deaths of this manner.

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

Yours sincerely,



MARIA CAULFIELD