

Sally Robinson

East Riding and Hull Coroner's Service
The Guildhall
Alfred Gelder Street
Hull
HU1 2AA

National Medical Director

NHS England
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London
SE1 8UG

2 April 2024

Dear Coroner,

Re: Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths – Ethel Doreen Reed who died on 2nd March 2023

Thank you for your Report to Prevent Future Deaths (hereafter "Report") dated 8th February 2024 concerning the death of Ethel Doreen Reed on 2nd March 2023. In advance of responding to the specific concerns raised in your Report, I would like to express my deep condolences to Ethel's family and loved ones. NHS England are keen to assure the family and the coroner that the concerns raised about Ethel's care have been listened to and reflected upon.

In your Report you raised the concern that H130 at Hull Royal Infirmary had no established permanent staff and was placed under significant pressures. You raised that other wards opened during winter pressures may have the same issues, using agency staff without a fixed team in place and with a lack of visible leadership, posing risk to patients.

While staffing is the responsibility of individual Trusts, growing the healthcare workforce is one of NHS England's chief priorities and we were pleased to achieve the government target of having 50,000 more nurses working in the NHS by November last year than in 2019. Nurse, Allied Healthcare Professionals, and wider health and care vacancies remain a pressing concern which we are addressing through the delivery of the [NHS Long Term Workforce Plan](#), offering flexible routes into the professions including apprenticeships and working with employers to support retention of the current workforce.

Winter remains a challenging period for NHS organisations, amidst significant existing pressures. Recovery plans, such as those for [urgent and emergency care](#) (UEC) and [primary care](#), together with broader strategic and operational plans have also provided a firm basis to support NHS organisations to prepare for challenging winter periods. In July 2023, NHS England wrote to Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and Trusts setting out the national approach to [2023/24 winter planning and delivering operational resilience](#). This set out four areas of focus for health systems:

1. Continuing delivery of the UEC Recovery Plan and ensuring that high-impact interventions are in place.

2. Completing operational and surge planning to prepare for different winter scenarios.
3. ICBs to ensure **effective system working across all parts of the system**, including acute trusts and community care, elective care, children and young people, mental health, primary, community, intermediate and social care and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector.
4. Supporting the workforce and their wellbeing to deliver over winter.

NHS England has engaged with Humber and North Yorkshire (ICB) on the concerns raised around the care delivered to Ethel. Following an internal multi-disciplinary inspection of the ward, we are advised that Hull Royal Infirmary has made improvements, taken learning from patient experience, and addressed recommendations. They have confirmed that there is now an established team on Ward H130 including leadership, nursing and medical teams. Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust has provided assurance that learning from the opening of H130 has been undertaken and informed a planned methodology for opening additional capacity on an urgent basis safely. The Trust is now over-recruited against its nursing staff and can use this resource as required, reducing the need for bank and agency staff. We would refer you to the Trust for further information.

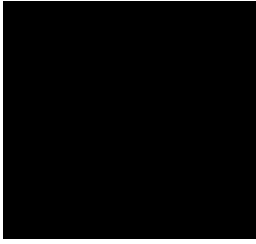
Your Report also raised a concern around the Lorenzo electronic patient record keeping system not auto-populating the identification of the author of any changes made in the immediate discharge letter after it has been finalised. NHS England no longer have a contract with Dedalus (Lorenzo system) and therefore the relationship sits directly with the Trust(s) and supplier.

We are advised that the Trust have informed the supplier of this issue, and they are working on a solution which displays the identification of the author of the Immediate Discharge Summary (IDS) relating to the amendment. The system currently provides a full audit trail of access and amendments to the system, the solution would either display all amendments or force the author of the amendment to be displayed when the form is finalised and distributed. In the meantime, communications have been sent to staff to reinforce the process that needs to be followed when completing IDS's for patients using the Trust's Electronic Patient Record (EPR) on Lorenzo. We understand that the Trust's Digital Team are also in the process of exploring further system functionality that may improve the current process and help to mitigate further issues.

I would also like to provide further assurances on national NHS England work taking place around the Reports to Prevent Future Deaths. All reports received are discussed by the Regulation 28 Working Group, comprising Regional Medical Directors, and other clinical and quality colleagues from across the regions. This ensures that key learnings and insights around preventable deaths are shared across the NHS at both a national and regional level and helps us pay close attention to any emerging trends that may require further review and action.

Thank you for bringing these important patient safety issues to my attention and please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any further information.

Yours sincerely,



National Medical Director