

Executive Corridor  
Darlington Memorial Hospital  
Hollyhurst Road  
Darlington,  
DL3 6HX

[REDACTED]

18<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Mrs. Janine Richards,  
Assistant HM Coroner,  
County Durham

Dear Mrs. Richards,

**Re: Mr. Stanley Cummins**

We are writing in response to your request for the Trust to take action in relation to the lack of comprehensive evidence provided to you at inquest that lessons had been learnt in relation to the accepted failings in the care of Mr Cummins, and in particular:

- the failure by the District Nursing team to provide appropriate offloading advice and recommendations to family and carer's in accordance with NICE guidelines, once pressure damage to the heel had been identified, or
- to escalate these issues as needed to other services and professionals to prevent future deaths,

which you issued to County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust following Mr. Cummins inquest held on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

The Trust would like to offer, its sincere condolences to Mr. Cummins' family for their loss. We take very seriously the concerns which you have raised and have provided a detailed response below along with an action plan with clear timeframes (Appendix A).

An action has been taken to ensure that nurses complete a visit and reassessment for patients admitted to care homes for intermediate care within 72 hours of their admission. This is part of the Urgent Community Response (UCR) criteria. This will facilitate the District Nurses to be involved in MDT care around nursing needs as a high majority of these beds in hours are commissioned in residential care and therefore this patient group may not have identified nursing needs before admission to a care home. All intermediate care patients will now be admitted through Community Crisis process requiring an assessment by a nurse before admission, and a new care plan will be launched when a patient is admitted to a care home for a nurse review within 72 hours. This will identify any input or recommendations.

The wound assessments and care plans in SystmOne are being reviewed and updated to include photography and advice re: off-loading and onward referrals.

Study days have been booked for key staff in all community nursing teams for June 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> 2024. This will include the launch of the updated assessments and care plans, equipment updates, incident reporting updates and the use of heel off-loading.

The new wound assessments have been coded to facilitate audit. The audit will be completed twice a year, commencing November 2024 (allowing time for the new process time to be embedded) and will include a number of specific wound types for example heel pressure ulcers and appropriateness of plans of care.

Work has commenced with both equipment suppliers and Podiatry to source a choice of heel off-loading devices as currently there is only the option of one choice of heel off-loading device.

Patient/carer information leaflets are also being developed regarding off-loading.

We trust that the measures already implemented and those planned are sufficient to address the concerns you have highlighted. However, please feel free to contact us if you need any additional information or have further queries.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Name]  
**Executive Director of Nursing**

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Name]  
**Executive Medical Director**

cc. [Redacted Name], CEO  
[Redacted Name], Associate Director of Nursing, Patient Safety and CNIO