



Heidi J Connor
Senior Coroner for Berkshire
Berkshire Coroner's Office
Reading Museum and Town Hall
Blagrave Street
Reading
RG1 1QH



27 June 2024

Dear Ms Connor

Report to Prevent Future Deaths E Mercer 26.04.2024

We note the content of your Regulation 28 report for the prevention of future deaths related to the death of Ellen Mercer.

We send our sincere condolences to the family.

You note prolonged delay to be admitted to hospital, and the consequent delay in receiving prophylactic therapy for venous thrombo embolism. This may have resulted in fatal pulmonary embolism. You also note that current guidance is for this to be assessed within 24 hours of admission. In the current circumstances with substantial delays in patients being admitted from emergency departments, sometimes for more than 24 hours, this creates delays in treatment that can be life-saving.

We note that the Royal College of Emergency Medicine has produced guidance on the clinical responsibility for patients who have been accepted for admission. Unfortunately this guidance was produced without endorsement from admitting specialities, and therefore may not have been widely implemented.

Each hospital will differ in the delays for admission, and the relative capacity of clinical teams.

In the current context of delays for admission we do not believe that timing interventions from admission is appropriate, and these should be modified as timings from attendance or speciality referral. Each hospital should have a local policy that agrees on clinical responsibility for patients waiting for admission in Emergency Departments.

In light of this case we will produce a Safety Alert for Physicians, and also liaise with NHSE England National Clinical Director for Urgent and Emergency Care, National Clinical Director for Patient Safety and The Society for Acute Medicine.

Yours sincerely

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Clinical Vice President