

Dear Sir

Inquest touching on the death of Jason Pulman

On behalf of NHS Arden & Greater East Midlands Commissioning Support Unit (AGEM CSU), I am responding to your Report to Prevent Future Deaths (hereafter “your Report”) dated 30 April 2024 concerning the death of Jason Pulman, reported on 19 April 2022. I would like to express my deep condolences to Jason’s family and AGEM CSU would like to assure Jason’s family and HM Coroner that the concerns raised have been carefully considered and reflected upon.

AGEM CSU have had the opportunity to respond after viewing NHS England’s response and as they have noted, NHS England commissions AGEM CSU to manage the administration of the national waiting list for Children and Young People’s Gender Services on behalf of NHS England.

AGEM CSU can confirm that we hold no clinical records relating to Jason as the historical waiting list did not transfer to AGEM CSU until May 2023. The presumption is therefore that his clinical records would have been held by the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust.

Background to AGEM CSU’s role as a Referral Management Service.

In June 2021, NHSE commissioned AGEM CSU to provide an interim referral holding service for NHS Tavistock and Portman Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS). This service was to accept and hold referrals from non-NHS Trust referral routes i.e., GPs Schools, Local Authorities (LA) with the aim of relieving the pressure on GIDS. In October 2022, this was expanded to include all referrals into the service and GIDS no longer received any new referrals.

The physical waiting list transfer, of patients that are not under treatment by GIDS, to the CSU was finalised in May 2023. A patient’s place on the waiting list is based on chronological order to produce a single national waiting list of Children and Young People waiting to be seen by gender services.

The Children and Young Person’s Gender National Referral Support Service (CYP-GNRSS) provides an administrative referral management and does not see patients. Patients and referrers are advised that should a patient require clinical support, this should be provided via their GP or other local clinician. The AGEM CSU website does contain information related to where help can be sought.

You have raised the following Matters of Concern that relate to AGEM CSU:

The Arden and GEM has provided an update on its website entitled the “National Referral Support Service for the NHS Gender Incongruence Service for Children and Young People”. This states “The NHS understands it isn’t easy having to wait a long time to be seen by gender services, and young people may need some extra support with their mental wellbeing while they wait. The NHS is offering this support, if needed, through local Children and Young People Mental Health Services (CAMHS). People will be contacted to ask if they are happy for their details to be shared with their local CYPMH/CAMS service so they can speak to a professional about how they are feeling. This support offer is voluntary and the peoples place on the Children’s and Young People Gender Service will not change. This service will be contacting parents, children and young people on the waiting list by email or post to ask if they wish to access this support between April and May 2024.”

From April 2024 NHSE have established a process whereby all children and young people who are on the waiting list for CYP gender services are contacted by the CSU on behalf of NHSE and offered an assessment by their local NHS Mental Health Services; NHS England has put additional funding into local mental health systems for this purpose. All children and young people who are identified with mental health needs will receive ongoing support from their local services while they remain on the waiting list for CYP gender services. More than a third of patients on the waiting list have consented to be seen by their local mental health service. For consented patients, the CSU will be sending referral information to each CYP MH provider starting towards the end of June 2024. The website was updated in April 2024 to reflect this new supportive offer. As Jason passed away before this supportive measure was put in place, he unfortunately could not access this support.