

Dorset County Hospital

Williams Avenue Dorchester Dorset DT1 2JY

10 June 2024

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Mr B Allen H M Assistant Coroner for Dorset The Coroner's Office for the County of Dorset Town Hall Bournemouth BH2 6DY

Dear Mr Allen,

Thank you for your letter dated 28 May 2024, in relation to the inquest into the death of Christine Rita Booker. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere condolences to Mrs Booker's family.

I am extremely sorry for the family's loss, and I am mindful that this will have been more distressing for the family due to the circumstances that led to Mrs Booker's death, and the subsequent inquest.

Your report details one matter of concern in relation to there being no provision of out of hours interventional radiology at Dorset County Hospital.

You are concerned that patients requiring this potentially urgent and life-saving intervention, who live in West Dorset require transfer to Royal Bournemouth Hospital for treatment. Your concern is that this exposes them to a potentially considerable delay in treatment and therefore an increased risk of death.

We have reviewed the findings of the inquest, and the recommendations as stated in the Preventing Future Deaths report and can confirm that the Trust does not provide a 24/7 emergency service for specialist interventional radiology for embolization. This is a specialised service commissioned by NHS England, provided by University Hospitals Dorset from their site at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital for both Dorset County Hospital and Salisbury Hospital. 24/7 specialised interventional radiology services are not available in every local hospital because they are delivered by specialist teams who have the necessary skills, experience and volume of work to maintain safe standards of care across wider geographical areas.

The commissioned pathway of care, for those requiring emergency specialist interventional radiology who attend Dorset County Hospital, is for 'blue light transfer' to the Royal Bournemouth Hospital, or other tertiary centre, via the ambulance service or in time critical situations by helicopter.

Therefore we understand that the regulation 28 notice sent to Dorset County Hospital should be addressed to NHS England as the service commissioner, and we have also made them aware of this (NHS England's regional medical director is also copied into this response letter).

The Trust is committed to continuous learning from any incident to strengthen the services for which it is responsible. Therefore we are carrying out an investigation of the management of this case as it pertains to Dorset County Hospital and will request sight of the report from the Winterborne Circle Hospital. In conjunction with UHD we are auditing the transfer times for interventional radiology between the two sites and our compliance with 'decision to transfer' standards. We will continue to monitor the service to ensure timely clinical decision making and access to services are in place for all current and future patients.

I hope that the arrangements detailed provide you with assurance that the Trust has mechanisms in place to learn from and monitor our services as well as clinical decision making, so that we ensure patients have access to timely and safe care.

Finally, I would like to end by reiterating our sorrow and condolences to the family of Mrs Booker for their loss.

Yours sincerely,



Chief Executive

Copy to:

, Medical Director, NHS England South West ■, Chief Executive, NHS Dorset