



Department of Health & Social Care

*From Helen Whately MP
Minister of State for Care*

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[REDACTED]

HM Coroner Joanne Kearsley
The Coroner's Office,
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[REDACTED]

17 May 2024

Dear Ms Kearsley,

Thank your letter of 17 August 2023 to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Steve Barclay, about the death of Luke Matthew Brooks. I am replying as Minister with responsibility for urgent and emergency services. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in responding to this matter. I would like to assure you that the Department is mindful of the statutory responsibilities in relation to prevention of future deaths reports and we are prioritising responses as a matter of urgency.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mr Brooks' death, and I offer my sincere condolences to his family. It is vital that we learn from incidents, where they are identified, to improve NHS care. I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention.

The report raises concerns about the advice North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust (NWAS) gave to Mr Brooks which was to advise people who describe the symptoms of chest pain not to make their own way to A&E. Your report raised a concern that although NWAS had revised this policy other ambulance services may have similar policies.

In preparing this response, my officials have made enquiries with NHS England (NHSE). NHSE has confirmed, after engaging with ambulance trusts in England, that no such blanket policies are in place. NHS111 calls are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. There may be instances where patients may be advised not to go to A&E on their own, including:

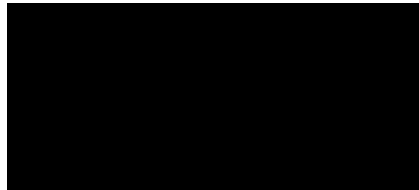
- Where patients with chest pain have no alternative but to drive themselves to A&E, then it may be recommended that patients wait for an ambulance in order to protect themselves and other road users;

- Where an ambulance service clinician recommends that moving a patient (e.g. if extremely unwell or at risk of collapsing) may do more harm by going to A&E than waiting for the ambulance to arrive on scene.

In addition, all patients calling 111 where it has been decided they need an ambulance, will be given interim advice which includes what to do should their condition worsen.

Thank you for bringing these concerns to my attention.

Yours,



HELEN WHATELY