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Private and Confidential

Mr J Dixey
Assistant Coroner
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15 August 2024

Dear Mr Dixey

Letter to prevent future deaths

Thank you for your letter dated 24th June 2024 regarding Mr Liam Paul McCarlie who sadly died on 2nd April 2023. We understand that you sent the letter to NHS Northamptonshire ICB (ICB) due to your concerns about the approach the ICB has taken alongside East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) to provide mental health support to patients. In addition, you enquired about the possibility of Northamptonshire providers sharing mental health data with EMAS.

Prior to your letter, the ICB and Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT) worked with EMAS to review the approach to providing mental health support to patients. In the latter part of 2023, we put in place a mental health crisis service to support the ambulance service to have access to MH practitioners within an hour of the call being received. This is run by NHFT, is in operation 24/7 and has received over 3,000 contacts in 12 months, with over 800 deployments to date. This is in addition to NHFT staff being located in the police control room.

EMAS also continue to include mental health workers in their call centre, with a 24/7 service with 2 clinicians being on shift at any given time. To support the service, escalation is available from EMAS and NHFT to the mental health crisis line for advice and guidance.

Your second question focussed on whether mental health data could be utilised prior to ambulance attendance to support decision making. Having reviewed the current approach with EMAS they confirm that call centre staff do not have access to patient clinical data beyond the information stated on the call. However, attending ambulance crews do have access to patient GP data whilst on-scene via a system called GP Connect.

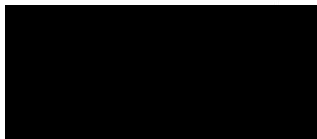
The ICB has been working closely with EMAS and NHFT to explore how best to share the entire patient record, including mental health data, with the ambulance service at every stage of the patient journey from initial call to attendance on-scene.

EMAS have in the past attempted to deploy access to mental health records via other regional mental health Trusts who work off varying systems. This has proved complex with challenges identifying which systems to access dependent on the patient's location within the region, and highlighted risks relating to multi system use within the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). This has also proved challenging to enact in terms of time and resource to undertake licensing agreements, access, and training. As a result, access to these systems was not pursued further. EMAS are committed to working with the ICB and NHFT to identify the correct solution at pace, notwithstanding National work being undertaken in relation to alignment of systems that can be accessed by all.

In July 2024 the National Ambulance Mental Health Group met, where it was identified that there would be varying risks in relation to regional providers undertaking a multi system approach. This was escalated to the National Ambulance Service Medical Directors Group as an area of concern. In the interim, whilst it has been explored and discussed, the possibility of access to mental health records via SystemOne for EMAS, the implications on the clinicians within EOC and the potential impact on patient care have led us to review whether this is the correct direction of travel. We are keen to implement a regional response to accessing mental health records within EOC to ensure consistency across the East Midlands. In the meantime, the response work from NHFT and the 24/7 mental health clinicians within EOC should mitigate against any risk in relation to correct response.

Thank you for raising your concerns with the ICB. We continue to work alongside NHFT and EMAS to improve the service and care we provide to our patients and to learn from tragic circumstances such as those in your letter.

Yours sincerely




Chief Medical Officer Northamptonshire ICB




**Medical Director
East Midlands Ambulance Service**