



Department
of Health &
Social Care

From [REDACTED]
*Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
Patient Safety, Women's Health and Mental Health*

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Our ref: [REDACTED]

Mrs Charlotte Keighley
Assistant Coroner
Cheshire Coroner's Court
Museum Street
Warrington
Cheshire
WA1 1JX

By email: [REDACTED]

17th September 2024

Dear Mrs Keighley,

Thank you for the Regulation 28 report of 23 July 2024 sent to the Department of Health and Social Care about the death of Nathan Tesla George Scantlebury. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for Patient Safety and Mental Health.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Nathan's death and I offer my sincere condolences to his family and loved ones. The circumstances your report describes are concerning and I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention.

Your report raises concerns over the lack of suitable placements available for high risk children with complex mental health needs.

In preparing this response, my Departmental officials have made enquiries with NHS England and Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board and I understand that NHS England will address your concerns in more detail in its response. We will work with colleagues at NHS England to ensure the appropriate steps are taken to avoid a repetition of this tragedy.

As your report highlights, the number of mental health inpatient beds required to support a local population is dependent on both local mental health need and the effectiveness of the whole local mental health system in providing timely access to care and supporting children with complex mental health needs like Nathan to stay well in the community, therefore reducing the likelihood of an admission being necessary. I am committed to ensuring this Government acts to ensure patients have access to community services and instances like this one can be prevented.

The model of inpatient mental health care is being re-designed to enable the move to a more community-based provision of care, where children and young people can access appropriate mental health support in a timely, effective, and person-centred way, at home or close to home and in the least restrictive environment.

As part of our mission to build an NHS that is fit for the future, we will recruit an additional 8,500 mental health workers to reduce delays and provide faster treatment which will also help ease pressure on busy mental health services. To help reduce the lives lost to suicide, these new workers will be specially trained to support people at risk. More broadly, we will modernise the Mental Health Act to give greater choice, autonomy, enhanced rights and support, and ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect throughout treatment.

I am advised by colleagues in NHS England and Cheshire and Merseyside (Integrated Care Board) that the local provision of suitable placements for children with complex mental health needs remains a key focus for the ICB. Its intentions to design and develop Appropriate Places of Care where there are gaps in its current support offer for children and young people with the most complex needs are set out in its *Children and Young People's Mental Health Plan for 2024-26 - NHS Cheshire and Merseyside*, published in August 2024, and which is available at: [Children and Young People's Mental Health Plan for 2024-26 - NHS Cheshire and Merseyside](#).

I hope this response is helpful. Thank you for bringing these concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the sender.A black rectangular box redacting the contact information of the sender.