



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Minister of State for Health (Secondary Care)

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Our ref:

HM Coroner Graeme Irvine
East London Coroner's Court
Queens Road
Walthamstow
London
E17 8QP

By email:

22nd October 2024

Dear Mr Irvine,

Thank you for the Regulation 28 report of 27th August 2024 sent to the Secretary of State about the death of Dave Yola Onawelo. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for urgent and emergency care.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mr Onawelo'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. In particular, your report raised concerns over patient congestion in the local emergency department, and the triaging and level of care provided.

The Government is clear that patients should expect and receive the highest standard of service and care from the NHS. You have raised the concerns about the care Mr Onawelo received directly with the responsible NHS body, the Barts Health NHS Foundation Trust. I understand the trust will be responding to you directly on the steps they are taking locally; this includes action to help improve the awareness and care provided in the emergency department for patients with sickle cell anaemia, and action to increase the number of nurses to help support increased patient demand in the emergency department.

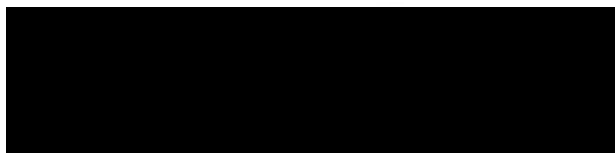
Turning to your concerns on patient congestion and the pressures on the NHS more generally. This government is committed to returning NHS services to the safe operational waiting time standards set out in the NHS Constitution. In doing so, we will be honest about the challenges facing the health service and serious about tackling them. As a first step, the Health Secretary ordered an independent investigation of NHS performance to provide an assessment of the issues and challenges it faces. This reported on 12th September 2024 and the investigation's findings will feed into the government's work on a 10-year plan to radically reform the NHS and build a health service that is fit for the future.

In the short-term, a range of action is being taken by the NHS this year to improve urgent and emergency care performance. This includes maintaining capacity gains in acute hospital beds and ambulance hours on the road achieved in 2023-24, increasing the productivity of

acute and non-acute services across bedded and non-bedded capacity, and directing patients to more appropriate services in the community where these can better meet their needs.

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

Yours sincerely,



MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH