

Ms Caroline Topping
HM Assistant Coroner for Surrey
Surrey HM Coroner's Court
Station Approach
Woking
GU22 7AP

National Medical Director
NHS England
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London
SE1 8UG

21 November 2024

Dear Coroner,

Re: Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths – Charne Nikita Petit who died on 12 May 2023

Thank you for your Report to Prevent Future Deaths (hereafter "Report") dated 26 September 2024 concerning the death of Charne Nikita Petit on 12 May 2023, sent to the Chair of NHS England. I am responding on behalf of the organisation in my capacity as National Medical Director but would like to assure you that the Chair has also been sighted on this response and has reviewed your Report. In advance of responding to the specific concerns raised in your Report, I would like to express my deep condolences to Charne's family and loved ones. NHS England are keen to assure the family and the Coroner that the concerns raised about Charne's care have been listened to and reflected upon.

Your Report raises concerns over a national shortage of mental health beds. The number of mental health 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 people to stay well in the community, therefore reducing the likelihood of an admission being necessary.

In some local areas there is a need for more beds. This is being addressed in part through investment in new units and additionally as part of a whole system approach. This was supported by the [NHS Long Term Plan](#) (LTP), which saw an additional £2.3bn funding invested in mental health services from 2019/20 – 2023/24, around £1.3bn of which was for adult community, crisis and acute mental health services to help people get quicker access to the care they need and prevent avoidable deterioration and hospital admission. NHS England's 2024/25 priorities and operational planning guidance continues this focus on improving patient flow as a key priority – with systems directed to reduce the average length of stay in adult acute mental health wards and in order to deliver more timely access to local beds.

To address the wider system issues that impact on health services, a further £1.6bn has been made available via the better care fund from 2023-25. This funding can be used to support mental health inpatient services as well as the wider system which should help to reduce pressures on local inpatient services so that those who need to access beds can do so quickly and locally.

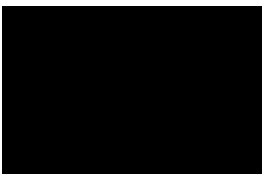
This is being supplemented by a further £42m recurrent investment from 2024/25 for all ICBs in the country to recommission inpatient care in line with local models that provide the best evidence of therapeutic support

It is appropriate that Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust respond to your first concern regarding Charne not being properly medicalised or observed, as well as their inpatient mental health provision. I note that your Report was also addressed to the Trust and NHS England has asked to be sighted on their response to the Coroner. We have also engaged with Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System, who we are aware are working with and monitoring improvements with the provider.

I would also like to provide further assurances on national NHS England work taking place around the Reports to Prevent Future Deaths. All reports received are discussed by the Regulation 28 Working Group, comprising Regional Medical Directors, and other clinical and quality colleagues from across the regions. This ensures that key learnings and insights around events, such as the sad death of Charne, are shared across the NHS at both a national and regional level and helps us to pay close attention to any emerging trends that may require further review and action.

Thank you for bringing these important patient safety issues to my attention and please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any further information.

Yours sincerely,



National Medical Director