



# Department for Transport

From the Secretary of State

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5 February 2025

Dear Mr Arrow,

## **Prevention of Future Deaths Notice**

Thank you for your report of 13 December 2024 (Case Reference [REDACTED]) made under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and the Coroner's (Investigations) Regulations 2013, following the inquest conducted into the death of Jean Langan.

The Department for Transport (DfT) are deeply saddened by the circumstances of Jean Langan's death, and we would like to extend our condolences to her family and friends.

We will learn from this tragic event and are taking action to mitigate the risk posed to members of the public, staff and flight crew at hospital helicopter landing sites (HHLs) across the UK. Since 2020, there have been three downdraft events in the UK (excluding the Derriford Incident) investigated by the Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB). These all involved air ambulances operating on scene away from HHLs, with two resulting in injuries to members of the public. The DfT is aware of the risks posed by rotary aircraft and will continue to endeavour to mitigate these as far as possible.

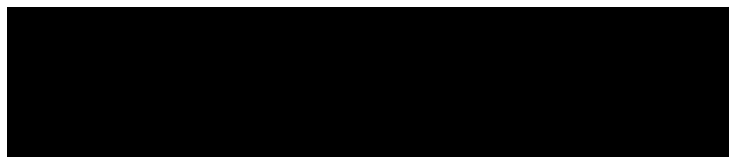
Hospitals are responsible for the safety of HHLs located on their grounds. The DfT is responsible for overseeing the safety only of licenced helipads. Currently, all HHLs are unlicensed. This means they do not have to comply with CAA's CAP 1264 guidance for hospital helicopter landing areas.

However, we are determined to play our part in reducing the risk at these sites as far as possible. We are also acting on the AAIB's recommendation to strengthen oversight of HHLSs. In conjunction with the CAA and industry, the DfT is currently considering whether to legislate to ensure safety at all HHLSs. This would be a long-term (2-4 year) project requiring secondary legislation.

The DfT has carefully considered your report and its recommendation to develop a database of HHLSs. It is the responsibility of hospitals to procure and maintain any database. We will assist DHSC, hospitals and the NHS by developing options for a database that meet your and the AAIB's recommendations. We have already started this work. DfT is the co-chair of the Onshore Leadership Group (OnSLG), a forum of rotary operators including air ambulances, Bristow Helicopters and utility operators. This has helped us to investigate how a dynamic and comprehensive database of all HHLSs can be established. We have also spoken to the supplier of the offshore helipad database, and the existing supplier of mapping software to much of the air ambulance and SAR communities. The DfT also participates in several other industry-wide forums such as the NHS HHLS Group, the New Hospital Programme HHLS Forum and the Air Ambulance Operation Director's Group.

We understand that the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) will respond on your recommendation to ensure each HHLS has an accountable manager. We also understand that DHSC will work with NHS England to implement the demands in Bristow's letter of 6th of December 2024. A named accountable manager is essential to the establishment and maintenance of an HHLS database, and the DHSC is working with national health authorities to ensure that each HHLS has a named and competent accountable manager.

Yours sincerely,

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**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT**