

**NHS Devon**  
Aperture House  
Pynes Hill  
Rydon Lane  
Exeter  
EX2 5AZ  
01392 205 205

**NHS Devon Response to Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths**

**To: HM Coroner Mr Spinney**

**In the matter of: William Northcott**

**Coroner's Case Reference:** [REDACTED]

**Date of Regulation 28 Report: 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

**Date of NHS Devon Response: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

Dear Mr Spinney,

NHS Devon acknowledges receipt of the Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths following the inquest into the tragic death of William Northcott, case reference **744577**. We extend our sincere condolences to William's family and loved ones. This letter sets out NHS Devon's response to the matters of concern you have identified.

**Matters of Concern and Responses**

**Concern 1:**

Approximately 40% of patients prescribed Clozapine under the care of Devon Partnership NHS Trust receive their monthly phlebotomy service via GP surgeries, often delivered by staff who may not be specifically trained in recognising Clozapine-related side effects. This may result in reduced opportunities to reinforce awareness of red flags and when to seek medical help. The Coroner notes this may also reflect a broader national concern.

**Response:**

In the 2025/26 financial year, NHS Devon will be cascading additional funding to Devon Partnership NHS Trust to support the implementation of more Clozapine clinics. This will increase capacity and allow more patients to receive their care from specially trained professionals. The clinics provide vital opportunities to reinforce education around Clozapine side effects and risks, including red flags and when to seek urgent medical attention. We believe this will reduce variability in patient care and improve overall safety for individuals receiving Clozapine.

**Concern 2:**

William was found post-mortem to have significant cardiac abnormalities, including left ventricular hypertrophy, which had not been identified in life. While the risk of myocarditis is highlighted in policy, cardiomyopathies such as LVH receive less focus. ECGs may not be sufficient to detect these, and echocardiograms are not currently required at initiation or during treatment with Clozapine. The Coroner raised concern that similar risks may be present nationally.

**Response:**

NHS Devon is aware that clinical leads from Devon Partnership NHS Trust are in active discussions with the Royal College of Psychiatrists to consider new and emerging national evidence, including the findings set out in The Williams Protocol. NHS Devon will ensure that the outcomes of these discussions, and any changes to national policy, are shared and implemented within local systems.

As a commissioner, NHS Devon is guided by national clinical standards and protocols. Should there be an update in national guidance concerning cardiac monitoring of Clozapine patients, NHS Devon will support Devon Partnership NHS Trust to implement those changes to improve patient safety.

**Concern 3:**

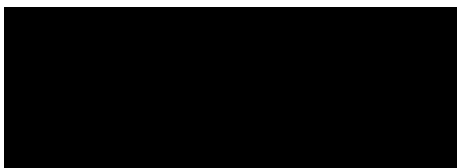
Patients with treatment-resistant schizophrenia typically receive support from multiple teams and agencies. During the inquest, it became apparent that communication between professionals was, at times, suboptimal. The Coroner seeks assurance that Devon Partnership NHS Trust is working to improve internal and cross-agency communication.

**Response:**

As this concern is directed specifically to Devon Partnership NHS Trust, NHS Devon has not provided a direct response. However, we remain fully committed to integrated working across systems and continue to collaborate with Devon Partnership NHS Trust and wider partners to promote high-quality, coordinated care for people with complex mental health needs.

In summary, NHS Devon takes seriously its responsibility to commission safe and effective services. We are committed to working in close partnership with Devon Partnership NHS Trust and other agencies to address the issues you have raised and to ensure learning and improvements are made that will help prevent future deaths.

Yours sincerely,



Primary Care Medical Director, NHS Devon