



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Karin Smyth MP
Minister of State for Health (Secondary Care)

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Our ref: PFD – 25-10-07 - NUNN

HM Coroner Penelope Schofield
West Sussex, Brighton & Hove Coroner Service
County Hall North,
Chart Way,
Horsham,
West Sussex,
RH12 1XH
033 022 25560

By email: coronersofficers@westsussex.gov.uk

19th January 2026

Dear Ms Schofield,

Thank you for the Regulation 28 report of 07 October 2025 sent to the Secretary of State about the death of Imogen Alice Nunn. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for Secondary Care.

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

Clinicians who are fluent in British Sign Language (BSL) provide a significantly better experience for deaf patients compared to non-BSL-speaking clinicians relying solely on interpreters. The report raises concerns over a shortage of BSL-proficient clinicians, and insufficient efforts being made to recruit and retain these professionals.

In preparing this response, my officials have made enquiries within this department and NHS England to ensure we adequately address your concerns.

I have carefully considered the situation. The safety of all patients is a top priority for the government. All providers of healthcare are regulated by the CQC and follow a set of fundamental standards of safety and quality, below which care should never fall.

NHS England does not currently commission British Sign Language (BSL) training at a national level. However, we recognise the fundamental importance of ensuring clinicians and NHS staff have the skills to communicate effectively with all patients. To support this, NHS England provides planning guidance and works closely with Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to help them plan and deliver training that reflects local needs. ICBs commission

services within their budgets and planning frameworks, ensuring provision is tailored to the health priorities and population requirements of their area.

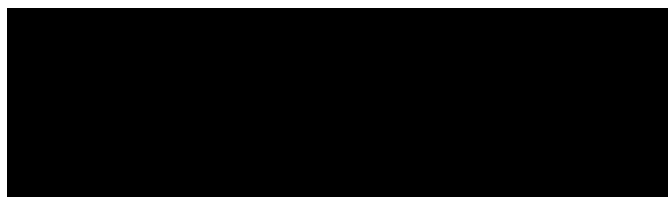
Individual NHS Trusts and other employers are responsible for determining staffing levels and workforce composition. They are best placed to understand their services and the needs of their patients in order to deliver safe and effective care. I would expect South West London & St George's Mental Health Trust, and all other NHS Trusts to ensure that their staffing arrangements, including weekend cover, are appropriate, following the tragic death of Ms Nunn.

ICBs and other care providers already have a duty through the Health and Social Care Act 2008¹ to regularly review the number of staff and skill mix needed to safely meet the needs of people using their services. Given Ms Nunn's tragic death and the experience of other deaf service users, that may include access to a variety of interpreters.

In our 10 Year Health Plan we committed to publishing a new 10 Year Workforce Plan. Our workforce plan will ensure the NHS has the right people in the right places to deliver the best care for patients.

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

Yours sincerely,



MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH

¹ *Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 – Regulation 18*