



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

Minister of State for Health (Secondary Care)

39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU

HM Coroner Ellie Oakley

25 July 2024

Dear Ms Oakley,

Thank you for the Regulation 28 report of 16 April 2025 sent to the Secretary of State / the Department of Health and Social Care about the death of Abdulrahman AlAjmi. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for elective care.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mr AlAjmi's death and I offer my sincere condolences to their family and loved ones. The circumstances your report describes are concerning and I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in responding to this matter. Thank you for the additional time provided to the department to provide a response to the concerns raised in the report.

The report raises concerns over an absence of systems or structures to ensure that patients arriving in the United Kingdom for medical treatment can be safely received and be properly treated.

In preparing this response, my officials have made enquiries with NHS England, the Care Quality Commission and the Home Office to ensure we adequately address your concerns.

**Suggested reply**

The Private Healthcare Information Network (PHIN) report that over 10,000 non-UK nationals were treated in the UK through privately funded treatment in independent sector and NHS facilities in 2023, with most episodes of care delivered without incident.

Most independent healthcare service providers must register with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). This would include those providers running independent hospitals. The CQC have a quality statement under their assessment framework '*Safe systems, pathways and transitions*,' which assesses whether safety and continuity of care is a priority throughout people's care journey. This happens through a collaborative, joined-up approach to safety that involves patients along with staff and other partners in their care. The approach includes referrals, admissions and discharge, and where people are moving between services.

During an assessment the CQC considers how risks to patients are identified and managed across their care journey. The CQC look for evidence of effective oversight to keep people safe. The CQC would also look at provider policies in relation to their admission criteria to ensure they are clear about what type of health conditions and co-morbidities they can and cannot admit into their service.

In this instance it is clear the provider in England with whom treatment was arranged received misleading information from a third-party medical professional based in a different jurisdiction.

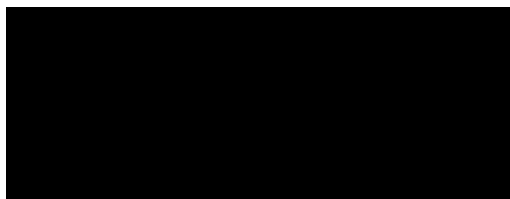
Specialist care (including private care) in England usually requires a detailed medical history, referral letter, relevant test results and informed consent. Private hospitals accepting referrals for patients from overseas must adhere to clinical and regulatory safety guidelines shaped by NHS England, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and the British Medical Association (BMA). There are also specific protocols and partnerships in place due to the formal healthcare agreements between the Kuwaiti government and certain UK private providers. Ultimately, it is important that all providers accepting incoming patients can as far as possible, assure themselves of the on the accuracy of medical information used in decisions to admit.

As noted in the report, there is limited recourse for any provider, NHS or independent, to undertake proceedings against a medical professional based in a third country.

The private facility accepting the referral did have the facilities in place to provide the intensive care required in these circumstances. Although not relevant in this case , cost recovery procedures exist where patients who are overseas visitors are admitted as inpatients following an initial presentation at an accident and emergency (A&E) facility, ensuring the NHS recoups the costs of the services it provides.

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

Yours sincerely,

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**MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH**