

Ms Anita Bhardwaj
Area Coroner for Liverpool and Wirral
Gerard Majella Court House
Boundary Street
Liverpool
L5 2QD

16 December 2019

Dear Ms Bhardwaj

Re: Regulations 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths Ceara Marie Thacker

I write further to the Regulation 28 report dated 30 September 2019 and received 1 October 2019, following the inquest you conducted into Ceara's death. Please note that whilst your Regulation 28 letter was addressed to the NHS Improvement Patient Safety Team, NHS England and NHS Improvement are operating as a single organisation, and in responding to your Regulation 28 letter I have drawn on the insight of clinical and policy members of our mental health team. It would be helpful to us if any future Regulation 28 letter related to action in NHS England and NHS Improvement's sphere of responsibilities was directed to us jointly at the contact address and email above.

In your letter you asked us to consider action related to requesting consent from young people to involve parents/family in their mental health care plan. You recognised some young people may refuse to give this consent, but we agree this does not detract from the importance of consistently seeking it. Whilst your concern was particularly directed at young adults, we agree it is important for anyone accessing mental services.

There is clear existing guidance on the importance of seeking consent to involve family and friends.¹ Because of this we will focus our action to prevent future deaths on steps that would help ensure it is more reliably and consistently considered. This is potentially a complex undertaking, given the range of electronic patient record systems used in mental health services, and differing patient groups with different needs that need to be reflected within formats used to record information across a range of mental health services, and the need to work within the relevant legal frameworks, including giving due regard to information governance law, the Mental Capacity Act and the Mental Health Act. The NHS England & NHS Improvement mental health programme team will work with our partners in

¹ Some of the key sources include:

- *Consensus statement on information sharing prevention*: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/271792/Consensus_statement_on_information_sharing.pdf
- *Confidentiality and Information Sharing*: https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/better-mh-policy/college-reports/college-report-cr209.pdf?sfvrsn=23858153_2
- *The Triangle of Care*: https://professionals.carers.org/sites/default/files/thetriangleofcare_guidetobestpracticeinmentalhealthcare_engl_and.pdf

NHSX and NHS Digital to bring together key stakeholders to scope whether it would be possible to routinely prompt seeking consent to involve families within electronic clinical record systems. We will also explore if the completion of those prompts can be directly linked to national datasets, as this would open the potential for measurement and for targeting improvement support where it is most needed.

We will also continue to link with Health Education England who deliver a range of workstreams focused on improving the skills of all staff working in mental health services,² as these skills underpin sensitive and challenging discussions with service users and care plans that genuinely engage family support. Our Long Term Plan work to transform community mental health care, including for young adults, has a specific focus on improving co-produced personalised care and support planning, in which carer and family involvement is important.

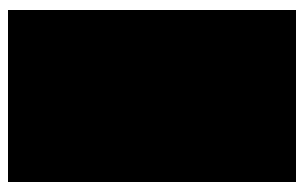
Increasingly universities are routinely asking for consent to contact students' parents if support is felt to be needed, through registration questions phrased to ensure students understand the need for this. We are currently working with Universities UK to develop information sharing guidance and a consensus statement on when information can be shared without breaching confidentiality, and expect Universities UK to open consultation on draft guidance in the near future.

One of the actions to prevent future deaths that you directed to NHS Improvement was related to the content of first aid courses for members of the public. The NHS does not determine the content of public first aid courses. We understand the appropriate body to consider action would be the British Red Cross who are a direct provider of first aid training and whose curriculum is the basis for most first training provided by a range of independent training organisations in workplaces, etc. They can be contacted at contactus@redcross.org.uk

I hope that the information I have provided regarding how NHS England and NHS Improvement have responded to the concerns you raise will be some small comfort to Ceara's parents, family and friends in their terrible loss. If you share this letter with them, please also share my sincere condolences.

I am very grateful to you for bringing to my attention the circumstances surrounding Ceara's death.

Yours sincerely



**National Medical Director
NHS England and NHS Improvement**

² An outline of Health Education England's mental health programmes can be seen here: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/mental-health>

