



Department of Health & Social Care

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
Health Innovation and Safety

39 Victoria Street
London
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HM Coroner Andrew Hetherington
Coroner's Office
Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF

19th December 2025

Dear Mr Hetherington,

Thank you for the Regulation 28 report of 23 June 2025 sent to the Department of Health and Social Care about the death of [REDACTED]. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for data and technology.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of [REDACTED] death, and I offer my sincere condolences to the family and those who loved her. 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.

The report raises concerns relevant to the Department of Health and Social Care over there not being a single accessible system for weights, height and BMI, and a lack of clarity regarding oversight of care in an outpatient setting.

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

There are two BMI tools; one designed for use with adults aged 18 and over and the other for children and young people 17 and below.

NHS England has prepared within its NHS.UK guidance, advice for parents and families on this topic (<https://www.nhs.uk/health-assessment-tools/calculate-your-body-mass-index/calculate-bmi-for-children-teenagers>) which states it should not be used if they have

an eating disorder and gives further advice for those who have (<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/eating-disorders/advice-for-parents/>).

The plotting of height and weight for children commences at birth and results are entered into the parent held 'Red Book' and plotted on a centile chart which is intended to stay with the child throughout their lifetime. The digital Healthy Child Programme intended to digitise the 'Red book' commenced in 2019 with the goal of ensuring information could be shared more easily with parent and professionals alike. However, due to the extreme demands of COVID on the digital programmes and necessary reprioritisation, the digitisation of the Red Book was paused in 2021/22 but is again being discussed in NHS England in light of both the Single Patient Record (SPR) developments, described below, and incorporating newer technologies.

Currently the Summary Care Record (SCR) contains a summary of a patient's health information recorded on their GP record. This includes sharing information such as allergies, adverse reactions and medications for all patients - except where patients have opt-out – and for approximately 89% of the population also includes additional information relating to their medical, surgical and psychological history. The SCR is available to health and care professionals. Patients can access similar information about themselves via the NHS App along with all medical consultations.

Secondary Care Providers can upload care plans and other clinical documents to the National Record Locator (NRL) developed and maintained by NHSE. The NRL is expected to integrate with local shared care records services and other suppliers which will result in broader and more consistent access for all health care providers.

It is recognised by NHS England that the joining up of records to achieve easy access to all the information by clinicians and 'patients/their guardians' remains a challenge and NHS England with the Department of Health and Social Care is currently executing a substantial programme of work to increase the interoperability and sharing of all patient records, including medical history, investigations and vital patient measurements (Blood pressure, Height and Weight etc) and would include centile charts in paediatric services. This has been outlined in the Government's 10 Year Plan and the ambition to develop a 'Single Patient Record.

I agree that ensuring health and care professionals have access to a single source of digital information about the patients they are treating and caring for is vitally important to delivering the best care possible. The Department of Health and Social Care, and NHS England have programmes of work underway which should assist in preventing future deaths connected to this issue.

NHS England is currently executing a substantial programme of work to increase the interoperability and sharing of all patient records, including medical history, investigations and vital patient measurements (Blood pressure, Height and Weight etc). This has been outlined in the Government's 10 Year Health Plan and the ambition to develop a single patient record.

The Government's 10 Year Health Plan commits to the delivery of a SPR. This will provide a comprehensive patient record, bringing together all of a patient's medical records into one place which will help prevent unfortunate incidents where fragmented and disjointed information prevents treatment from being provided on time.

Introducing a SPR will give clinicians all the data they need when treating patients. By having access to all relevant information about a patient, frontline staff will be able make more informed decisions and deliver the best care at the time it is needed. We are aiming for the record to begin processing information by 2028.

Thank you for bringing these concerns to my close attention.

Yours sincerely,



**Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
for Health Innovation and Safety**