



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

Minister of State for Care

39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU

HM Coroner Alison Mutch  
Coroner's Court,  
1 Mount Tabor Street,  
Stockport  
SK1 3AG

04 September 2025

Dear Ms Mutch,

Thank you for the Regulation 28 report of 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025 sent to the Department of Health and Social Care about the death of Doreen Swann. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for Hospital Discharge and Social Care.

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

This report highlights concerns regarding the impact of limited social care capacity on delays in hospital discharge, and the detrimental effects this can have on individual patient outcomes and broader hospital performance. Importantly, the report identifies that this issue is not unique to Tameside General Hospital. I note this report has also been shared with the hospital and I welcome their engagement with the findings.

As you rightly point out, delayed hospital discharges reduce the number of available hospital beds, causing longer waits in emergency departments and cancellations of planned treatments or surgeries. This puts pressure on the whole system, making it harder to provide timely and effective care.

This Government is committed to addressing delayed discharges to ensure hospitals can operate safely and efficiently and people do not spend longer than necessary in hospital beds. As set out in the Hospital discharge and community support guidance, when a patient needs support from social care services to aid discharge, NHS Trusts should inform the relevant local authority of this need as early as possible in the patient's hospital stay, to allow local areas to co-operate on the person's discharge planning.

To facilitate this collaborative approach, care transfer hubs are available to all acute trusts. These hubs bring together health service, social care, the voluntary sector, and housing to coordinate complex discharges. Their aim is to ensure that patients receive the most appropriate care in the right setting, at the right time. By enabling timely and appropriate discharge, they help reduce the risks associated with prolonged hospital stays, such as loss

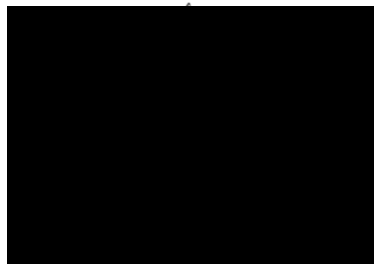
of independence and increased falls risk, while promoting recovery and patient safety. We are strengthening partnerships between health and social care, as part of the wider shift toward prevention, community-based and digitally enabled care, in line with the 10 Year Health Plan.

The Better Care Fund (BCF) is a key part of our plan to address these delays, particularly when they are caused by a shortage of suitable social care, by supporting Integrated Care Boards and local authorities to deliver joined-up health and social care. This year, the BCF will provide £9 billion to help ensure patients receive the right care in the right place, with shared accountability for discharge planning.

Additionally, the Spending Review includes over £4 billion additional funding for adult social care by 2028-29, compared to 2025-26, helping local authorities improve services and meet their duties under the Care Act 2014.

Thank you again for bringing these concerns to my attention. I hope this provides reassurance that we are taking meaningful action to improve discharge processes and strengthen adult social care provision across the country.

Yours sincerely,



**MINISTER OF STATE FOR CARE**