



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Minister of State for Care

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

HM Area Coroner Chris Morris
Coroner's Court,
1 Mount Tabor Street
Stockport
SK1 3AG

19 September 2025

Dear Mr Morris,

Thank you for the Regulation 28 report of 29 July 2025 sent to the Secretary of State about the death of Mr Leslie Thompson. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for hospital discharge.

First, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mr Thompson'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.

This report raises concerns regarding the poor availability of core physiotherapy services in hospitals, particularly on evenings and weekends, and the impact this can have on hospital discharge delays. You are right to identify the increased risk to patients who are medically ready for discharge caused by such delays, and this government is committed to addressing this issue and ensuring that people do not spend longer than necessary in hospital.

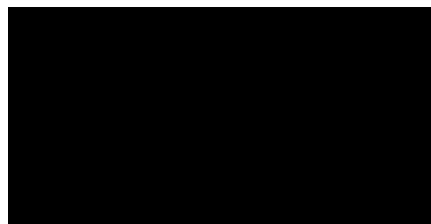
To achieve this, we are strengthening partnerships between the NHS and social care to ensure patients receive the support they need for timely and effective hospital discharge. This is part of the wider shift of care towards prevention, community-based and digitally enabled care outlined in the 10 Year Health Plan published this summer. To facilitate this collaborative approach, every acute hospital has access to a care transfer hub. These hubs bring together health service, social care, the voluntary sector and housing to coordinate complex discharges and ensure patients receive the most appropriate care in the right setting at the right time.

These hubs are expected to operate seven days a week to ensure that delays in coordinating hospital discharges are minimised. Systems should therefore seek to optimise the operating hours of the hub by ensuring rotas allow for sufficient cover to facilitate necessary weekend discharges, and there is appropriate cover from pharmacy and hospital transport services during the working hours of the hub. This should mitigate instances where patients experience discharge delays caused by internal hospital processes, which was a priority set out in the Urgent and Emergency Care Plan for 2025/26.

Furthermore, the Better Care Fund (BCF) is a key part of our plan to address discharge delays, especially where they are caused by a lack of a necessary service such as physiotherapy. The BCF supports Integrated Care Boards and local authorities to deliver joined-up health and social care, and this year, the BCF will provide £9 billion to help ensure patients receive appropriate and timely care in the right place, with shared accountability for discharge planning. Starting in the financial year 2026/27, we will reform the BCF to ensure consistent joint NHS and local authority funding for those services that are essential for integrated health and social care, such as hospital discharge, intermediate care, rehabilitation and reablement.

Thank you for bringing these concerns to my attention. I hope this provides reassurance that we are taking meaningful action to address these issues and strengthen services relevant to hospital discharge across the country.

Yours sincerely,



MINISTER OF STATE FOR CARE