



Caroline Topping
Assistant Coroner
Surrey Coroner's Service
HM Coroner's Court
Station Approach
Woking, Surrey
GU22 7AP



24 September 2025

Dear Caroline Topping

Re: Regulation 28 Prevention of Future Deaths: Tracey Ostler

Thank you for sharing the Regulation 28 report on prevention of deaths arising from the coroners' inquest for Tracey Ostler. I am very sorry to hear of the circumstances of Tracey's death and my thoughts are with her loved ones.

I understand the report finds that paramedics attending Tracey did not appreciate that she may have lacked capacity to refuse lifesaving treatment.

The report also identifies a need for paramedics to receive better training on how to undertake a thorough capacity assessment – both as students and throughout their continuing professional development.

I am writing to set out our role and the measures we have in place to ensure paramedics receive adequate training and support on this issue. We are keen to help ensure that lessons are learned from this tragic case.

Our role

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) is a statutory regulator of healthcare and psychological professions governed by the Health Professions Order 2001. We regulate the members of 15 professions, including paramedics. We maintain a register of professionals, set standards for entry to our Register, approve

education and training programmes for registration and deal with concerns where a professional may not be fit to practise. Our role is to protect the public.

It is not our role to set curricula or design training courses. That is the role of other bodies.

Standards of Proficiency (SOPs)

Our standards of proficiency are profession-specific and must be met by all registrants within each given profession in order to become registered and to remain on the Register. Our standards of proficiency for paramedics are published on our website. These set out our expectations that paramedics must:

2.7 understand the importance of and be able to obtain valid consent, which is voluntary and informed, has due regard to capacity, is proportionate to the circumstances and is appropriately documented

2.8 understand the importance of capacity in the context of delivering care and treatment.

These are the threshold (entry-level) standards we consider necessary to protect the public, and set clear expectations of our registrants' knowledge and abilities when they start practising. Once on the Register, registrants must continue to meet the [SOPs] that apply to their scope of practice.

The College of Paramedics (COP) builds on the paramedic SOPs with a further level of detail within their curriculum. This includes reference to models of patient assessment and the ability to describe and demonstrate exploration of a patient's mental capacity.

Our SOPs complement other sets of standards, such as our standards for conduct, performance and ethics, and policies and guidance from employers and professional bodies. We also recognise the valuable role played by professional bodies in providing guidance and advice about good practice.

How we review SOPs

We keep our standards under continual review, considering their impact and whether, they continue to reflect current best practice. We aim to conduct a periodic review of the standards every five years. The most recent updates for each profession came into effect on 1 September 2023 and were formed after extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders, including employers, professional bodies, educators and individual registrants.

The current versions of our SOPs became effective for our registrants and for new cohorts on education and training programmes from September 2023. We will further

consider changes to the paramedic SOPs when SOPs as a whole are next reviewed, with this expected to take place during 2027-2028.

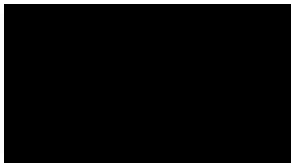
Our Standards of Training and Education Providers

It is our role to approve programmes of education and training for student paramedics to ensure they deliver the outcomes described in our standards of proficiency. Providers must demonstrate how they meet our Standards of Education and Training (SETs) to achieve approval.

We are currently reviewing our Standards of Education and Training (SETs), which set out how education providers must prepare learners for professional practice. These outcome-focused standards ensure education providers are appropriately organised to deliver high-quality education and training. We plan to launch a public consultation on proposed changes this autumn.

I hope this is helpful in clarifying our role and the action we are taking to address the issues raised by the report.

Yours sincerely,



Chief Executive and Registrar