



Department of Health & Social Care

Minister of State for Health (Secondary Care)

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Ms Melanie Sarah Lee
Assistant Coroner
Inner North London
St Pancras Coroner's Court
Camley Street
London N1C 4PP

14 January 2026

Dear Ms Lee,

Thank you for the Regulation 28 report of 4 December 2025 sent to the Secretary of State regarding the death of Lina Piroli. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for urgent and emergency care.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Ms Piroli'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. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in responding to this matter.

The report raises concerns over A&E waiting times, hospital bed availability, and specialist care for the elderly. In preparing this response, my officials have made enquiries with NHS England and I understand they will be responding to your concerns in full.

The Government acknowledges that urgent and emergency care (UEC) performance has not consistently met expectations in recent years. However, we are committed to ensuring patients receive the highest standard of service and care from the NHS. That is why our 10-Year Health Plan set out commitments to restoring waiting standards to those set out in the NHS Constitution by the end of this Parliament.

We are taking serious steps to achieve this. Our Urgent and Emergency Care Plan for 2025/26 focuses on improvements to deliver better UEC performance both daily and during winter pressures, ensuring more patients receive timely and clinically appropriate care. We are aiming for 78% of patients to be seen in 4 hours this year, meaning over 800,000 people will receive more timely care. Key actions to help achieve this include:

- Investing £250 million into expanding same day and urgent care services, helping avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital and supporting faster diagnosis, treatment and discharge for patients.
- Increasing the number of patients receiving urgent care in primary, community and mental health settings.

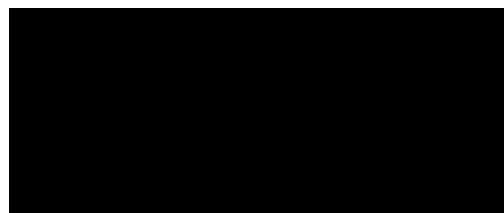
- Introducing new clinical operational standards for the first 72 hours of care to support better hospital flow. These set minimum expectations for timely review, availability of advice, and coordinated care when multiple specialist teams are involved.
- In the longer-term, our 10 Year Health Plan will increase the urgent care capacity outside hospital through new neighbourhood health services, reducing demand pressures on A&E.
- Improve hospital flow, with a focus on reducing the number of patients waiting more than 12 hours and making progress towards eliminating corridor care.
- Increasing bed capacity by reducing the average length of stay for patients requiring an overnight emergency admission by at least 0.4 days returning closer to pre-pandemic levels.

Despite increasing demand, A&E 4-hour performance has improved, showing the measures we are taking are already having a positive impact. In England, the latest NHS figures show that in November 2025, 4-hour A&E performance improved to 74.2%, up from 72.2% in November last year.

Regarding specialist care for the elderly, we recognise that older people are particularly vulnerable to long waits and delayed discharges. We are therefore investing in specialist frailty pathways, expanding the community workforce, and embedding elderly care expertise throughout urgent and emergency care. Initiatives such as frailty Same Day Emergency Care units, rapid front-door frailty team input, and integrated neighbourhood teams are designed to ensure older people receive timely, specialist assessment and support. We are also working to increase the number of geriatricians and frailty specialists, and to strengthen collaboration between hospital and community services, so that discharge planning starts earlier and transitions are safer. These actions are part of our wider commitment to transform care for older people and to ensure that the NHS meets the needs of an ageing population.

I hope this response provides reassurance that the Government is taking meaningful action to improve urgent and emergency care services. Thank you once again for bringing these concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely,



MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH