



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Minister of State for Health (Secondary Care)

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

HM Assistant Coroner Hassan Shah
HM Coroner for the County of Northamptonshire,
The Guildhall,
St Giles' Square,
Northampton
NN1 1DE

30 May 2025

Dear Mr Shah,

Thank you for the Regulation 28 report of 14th March 2025 sent to the Secretary of State / the Department of Health and Social Care about the death of Mr Dominic Martin Philip. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for medicine regulation and prescribing.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mr Philip'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. Thank you for the additional time provided to the department to provide a response to the concern/s raised in the report.

The report raises the following concerns:

- Testing for an allergic reaction to contrast medium is not carried out in advance of usage.
- Mr Philip had come into contact with lidocaine (which Mr Philip had disclosed an allergy to) without explanation.
- Safety controls around obtaining lidocaine within a clinical setting. Lidocaine is not a controlled drug and so it does not need a double signature to be removed from a hospital storage facility and it is not subject to stock checks to identify anomalies.

Having reviewed these concerns, it is my view that the other agencies with which you have shared the report are best placed to respond directly to the issues you have raised, which are relevant to their respective areas. We did however contact NHS England, and I have shared below the organisation's comments.

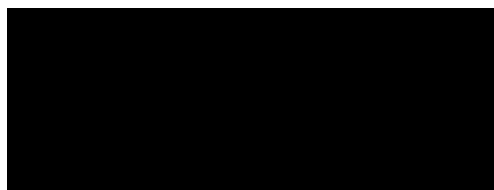
In regard to your concern about safe and secure handling of medicines in healthcare settings, NHS England has provided the following information. In general the trust senior leadership team has overall accountability for the safe and secure handling of medicines in the organisation. It needs to ensure that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements are

met. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society has published comprehensive professional guidance that covers all aspects of the safe and secure handling of medicines in healthcare settings. Safe and secure handling of medicines is also referenced by the Care Quality Commission as part of its regulatory function. The trust Chief Pharmacist (or equivalent) will usually have delegated responsibility for medicines governance within the organisation. However, operationally, safe and secure handling of medicines in wards and Departments is the responsibility of the senior ward or department manager (usually the lead nurse). Their responsibilities include agreeing and managing stock levels of medicines that will be kept in the ward or department (in discussion with the trust's pharmacy team) and ensuring that access to them is restricted as per local governance arrangements. As you have written to the University Hospitals of Northamptonshire NHS Group, I expect that the Trust will address this specific concern.

As you may be aware, lidocaine is a prescription only medicine (POM) and as such should be stored in a locked cupboard in a room that can also be locked. There may be a small number of exceptions for medicines that may be needed in an emergency situation. However, these should be risk assessed and documented in local medicines policies and procedures. Given that lidocaine is not a controlled drug, there is no legal requirement for a register to be kept nor for a record of access to be made. The advent of automated medicines storage cabinets which are increasingly being implemented (some with biometric only access) in trusts will make it easier to monitor medicines use and provide a more robust audit trail. However, they are not universally available in all trusts.

I hope this response is helpful. Thank you for bringing these concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely,

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MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH