



Private and Confidential

Mr Paul D Smith
HM Senior Coroner for the
coroner area of Greater
Lincolnshire

Trust Headquarters

1 Horizon Place
Mellors Way
Nottingham Business Park
Nottingham
NG8 6PY

02 February 2026

Dear Mr Smith

Re: Report regarding the case of Mr Robert Shaun Gracey deceased.

I am writing to you in response to the concerns that you highlighted to the East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust following the inquest hearing into the sad death of Mr Robert Shaun Gracey that concluded on 18 December 2025.

Thank you for your Regulation 28 report regarding the absence of a locally agreed protocol for the management of suspected Acute Behavioural Disturbance (ABD) incidents in Lincolnshire.

I am aware that you will share my response with Mr Gracey's family, and I firstly wish to express my sincere condolences to them.

The Trust acknowledges the concerns raised by you and I would like to offer the following clarifications and commitments.

The concerns highlighted in your report have been reviewed and discussed by the Trust's Incident Review Group, which convenes twice a week to consider issues raised through complaints/concerns raised, incident reporting, inquests and Regulation 28 reports. This process ensures that lessons are identified and appropriate actions are taken to address any systemic or procedural shortcomings.

Matters of Concerns raised on 18 December 2025

Although the letter issued on 24 July 2019 by Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) Twist, on behalf of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), clearly

recommended that police forces develop established ABD protocols with their local ambulance ensuring suspected ABD incidents are treated as medical emergencies with a Category 1, eight-minute response standard, no such protocol has yet been implemented in Lincolnshire.

Under the current NHS Pathways system, ABD does not have its own allocation pathway and a referral for ABD will only be allocated a Category 2 response in the absence of police restraint.

ABD Protocols

We acknowledge the recommendation, referenced above, made by DAC Twist on behalf of the NPCC in the letter dated 24 July 2019.

Current Position

The Trust operates under NHS Pathways (NHSP), a nationally mandated triage system that determines clinical priority based on structured questioning during the 999 calls.

ABD is treated as a medical emergency; however, NHSP does not currently include a specific ABD protocol that automatically assigns Category 1 status (7 minutes). ABD has a specific answer stem within NHSP. This limitation means that suspected ABD cases are triaged according to presenting symptoms rather than a standalone ABD category at the time of the call being made. The police should always, at the earliest opportunity, contact 999 for any patient that they believe to be experiencing ABD symptoms.

Our clinical teams within our Emergency Operations Centre review ABD presentations from the police which can then be flagged for higher priority within existing NHS Pathways constraints if required. The Trust also has guidance for call handlers and clinicians to ensure suspected ABD cases are escalated promptly.

The Future

As NHS Pathways is a nationally mandated triage system, this is not something that the Trust can change individually and would require a change to the national triage system. This would need to be initiated by NHS England.

In addition, the Trust recognises that there is not currently a national pathway for ABD, however the Trust has in place a process for a response to ABD as governed by the Emergency Call Handling Protocols that was ratified by the

Trust's Clinical Governance Group in October 2023 when the Trust went live with NHS Pathways.

The Trust currently operates across six counties within the East Midlands, creating logistical hurdles when ensuring policies and response protocols are consistent across multiple counties and multiple police forces. The Trust will, however, continue its participation in the Police Regional Clinical Governance Forum to align training and response protocols for ABD.

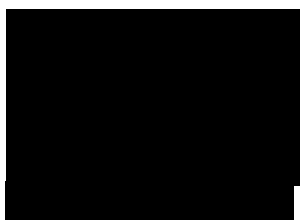
The Trust will also continue to work with regional police forces and health partners to explore the development of a single joint operational framework for ABD management.

In the meantime, The Trust will continue to review its internal clinical guidance to ensure consistency with police training and national best practice.

The Trust's core purpose is to respond to patient needs in the right way, developing our organisation to become outstanding for patients and staff, and collaborating to improve wider healthcare. We always aim to deliver safe, effective, compassionate care for patients, embedding a culture of compassion and continuous improvement. We are committed to improving the recognition and response to ABD incidents.

Thank you for highlighting this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Yours sincerely



Chief Executive