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Assistant Coroner
East Riding of Yorkshire and
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Coroner's Service
The Guildhall
Alfred Gelder Street
Hull
HU1 2AA

National Medical Director
NHS England
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
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3rd March 2026

Dear Coroner,

Re: Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths – Patricia Irene Walker

Thank you for your Report to Prevent Future Deaths (hereafter "Report") dated 28th January 2026 concerning the death of Patricia Irene Walker (date of death not specified in the Report but in or around February 2025). In advance of responding to the specific concerns raised in your Report, I would like to express my deep condolences to Patricia's family and loved ones. NHS England is keen to assure the family and yourself that the concerns raised about Patricia's care have been listened to and reflected upon.

Your Report raised concerns that staffing was sub optimal, and remains so, on Ward 90 at Hull Royal Infirmary as recruitment is difficult. This means that TAG nursing care is not always possible and patients are at an increased risk of falls.

We note that your Report has also been sent to Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, who would be best placed to respond to your concerns from a local perspective. NHS England has endeavoured to address your concerns as far as we are able to, but consider the issues in this case do fall outside of our usual role and remit.

Staffing / recruitment concerns and TAG nursing care

It is important to acknowledge that this incident occurred within a busy frailty ward where nurses and doctors must manage multiple acutely unwell patients.

Although the term "TAG nursing care" was used in your Report, it is unclear exactly what this refers to as this has not been stated within your Report and NHS England was not a party to the inquest, and so has not heard any evidence on this particular issue. There are, as far as we are aware no nationally standardised or formally recognised definitions of TAG nursing care within NHS England, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance, or wider UK professional nursing literature.

For this response, 'TAG' has been understood as a locally defined model related to the abbreviation for a Triage Assessment and Goal setting approach that helps to identify and prioritise patients based on the severity of their illness, acute episode, or condition.

NHS provider organisations have a statutory duty to ensure that services are staffed safely and appropriately to meet the clinical needs of patients. Each Trust or NHS organisation is responsible for its own recruitment and therefore any further queries in this regard will be better addressed by Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

Across all national guidance (see "Supporting Guidance" below), evidence demonstrates that inadequate staffing increases fall rates, delays detection of deterioration, and reduces the ability to deliver safe, preventative care.

National frameworks highlight that safe staffing must be aligned to patient acuity (severity and urgency of a patient's condition), dependency, and clinical risk, especially in high risk populations such as older adults with frailty.

Frail older adults are at high risk of falls and prevention is a key nursing responsibility. Nurses should perform falls risk assessments on admission, and regularly thereafter, and implement the required nursing interventions to prevent and mitigate the risk of falls.

For frail, high risk patients, adequate registered nurse presence is essential to deliver enhanced care observations and provide cognitive and psychological care, assist with mobility support, and regularly assess and implement the required interventions to support patient safety and care quality.

Safe staffing tools should be used alongside professional judgement to ensure responsive allocation. Areas caring for frail older adults require enhanced staffing models due to higher dependency.

Supporting guidance

[National Quality Board guidance \(2016\)](#) on safe staffing sets out the expectations for providers in ensuring safe, sustainable, and productive workforce planning and sets expectations for Board-level assurance on safe staffing.

[NICE Guideline NG249 \(2025\)](#), relevant to falls assessment and prevention, outlines best practice including identification of people at high risk of falls; comprehensive falls assessments covering gait, balance, cognition, continence, medications, vision, and environmental factors; tailored interventions to reduce risk and continued engagement in falls-prevention strategies.

To ensure high standards of care, [the Nursing and Midwifery Council](#)'s safe staffing guidelines state that staffing must reflect skill mix, patient need, and safe ratios, and that organisations, not individuals, are responsible for ensuring safe, appropriate staffing levels.

Regional response

The NHS England North East and Yorkshire Regional Team have liaised with Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust regarding your Report. Whilst the Trust will be responding directly to the Coroner in separate correspondence, they have advised the Regional Team of steps they have already taken regarding staffing. At the Trust's February Board meeting, a business case was presented to propose an increase to nursing staff following a safer nurse staffing review.

I would also like to provide further assurances on the national NHS England work taking place around the Reports to Prevent Future Deaths. All reports received are discussed by the Regulation 28 Working Group, comprising Regional Medical Directors, and other clinical and quality colleagues from across the regions. This ensures that key learnings and insights around events, such as the sad death of Patricia, are shared across the NHS at both a national and regional level and helps us to pay close attention to any emerging trends that may require further review and action.

Thank you for bringing these important patient safety issues to my attention and please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any further information.

Yours sincerely,



National Medical Director
NHS England