



To: Ms Catherine Wood, Area Coroner for  
Kent and Medway

**Kent County Council**  
**Corporate Complaints**  
County Hall  
Maidstone, Kent  
ME14 1XQ



## **RE: Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths**

This report has been prepared in response to a request from the coroner for a Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths dated 10 February 2026 in respect of the death of Mr Liam Andrew Sutton.

Firstly, I would like to offer my condolences to the family and friends of Mr Sutton.

### **Processes and challenges at the time of the death**

Kent County Council's Short Term Pathways Team is a team of social care staff who support the hospital discharge pathways. The team works in partnership with Medway NHS Foundation Trust and based on a hub and spoke model, is part of the Integrated Discharge Team working at Medway Maritime Hospital. The team is also a partner in the Medway Hospital Transfer of Care Hub which is a system-level coordination point that includes a multi-agency team of health, social care and voluntary sector agencies.

KCC attends daily Transfer of Care Hub meetings, Monday to Fridays, where discussions take place regarding patients with the most complex discharge support needs to agree the most appropriate discharge pathway for those individuals.

At the time of Mr Sutton's death, KCC operated a Discharge to Assess model and home first approach in line with national statutory discharge guidance, [Hospital discharge and community support guidance - GOV.UK](#). The Local Authority continues to operate this model.

There is a significantly lower number of people leaving Medway Maritime Hospital from KCC's boundary areas and with KCC commissioned support than from partner and neighbouring authorities. KCC typically receives an average of around 11 referrals per week to support people with discharge from Medway Hospital. This level of demand has remained consistent from the time preceding the death of Mr Sutton until present day.

The number of bed days lost due to people occupying acute beds who have No Criteria to Reside attributable to KCC is typically below 5% of the total bed days lost at any given time. This has also remained fairly consistent from the time preceding the death of Mr Sutton until present day.

Over 95% of people whose discharge is supported by KCC, are discharged back to their own home with an enablement service provided by Kent Enablement at Home. This is KCC's in-house service that provides assessment and enablement support for people in their own home.

For the particular week that Mr Sutton died KCC received almost twice the average number of referrals from Medway Hospital and the majority of these people were discharged home with a service delivered by Kent Enablement at Home.

### **Current processes and challenges and change made.**

During this period, the team was running with a 20% vacancy factor. The vacancy factor combined with the increase in demand led to an increase in the time from referral to discharge for these people which was an average of 3.8 days during the week that Mr Sutton died. A recruitment campaign and efficiencies created within Kent Enablement at Home's referral processes has reduced the timescale for people discharged with home care support to 1.8 days. This has been consistent for the last three months and is in line with key performance indicators set by Medway Hospital of a 48-hour timescale for discharge back to a person's own home.

A small number of people are discharged to a short-term bed where they receive a period of enablement and/or assessment of their longer-term care and support needs. The majority of these people are discharged to KCC's Adult Short Stay Services which are in-house enablement beds. During the month of December 2024 when Mr Sutton died, KCC identified one person who required support from this pathway and the time for discharge to be facilitated from the time of referral was 6 days. Since the time of Mr Sutton's death, improvements have been made to the referral processes for this pathway, and the current average transfer of care time is 3 days.

### **Ongoing challenges beyond the control of the Council**

Despite the improvements made to the length of stay for people with No Criteria to Reside attributable to KCC, our data clearly shows that 50% of referrals experience delays beyond the control of KCC. The main reasons for these delays are availability of discharge documentation, medication, and

transport availability. These delays are reported in Medway Hospital's No Criteria to Reside report and KCC continue to work with the trust in identifying themes and trends that delay hospital discharge.

**Improvements identified**

KCC continues to review hospital discharge practice and guidance in collaboration with system partners. The local authority is currently undergoing a review of the Short-Term Pathways practice and processes, and the commissioning of hospital discharge services. KCC will continue to focus on the principles of Discharge to Assess and home first with the ambition of further increasing timely discharges into Pathway 1 home-based services.

Yours sincerely,



Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health  
Kent County Council