



Department
of Health &
Social Care

████████████████████
*Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
for Public Health and Prevention*

39 Victoria Street
London
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████████████████████
Mr Christopher Morris
HM Area Coroner
Manchester South
████████████████████

12 June 2026

Dear Mr Morris,

Thank you for the Regulation 28 report of 28th April 2026 sent to the Department of Health and Social Care about the death of Joseph William Cooper. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for Public Health and Prevention.

I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mr Cooper'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.

Firstly, your report raises concerns over the current provision of treatment and support for those with co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions. We know that people with co-occurring substance use and mental health needs too often do not receive the integrated, person-centred care they require and deserve. I want to assure you that the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is taking action on this issue to improve the standards of care and integration of services for those with co-occurring substance use and mental health needs. In December 2025, DHSC and NHS England (NHSE) jointly published the Co-occurring Mental Health and Substance Use Delivery framework: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/co-occurring-mental-health-and-substance-use-delivery-framework>.

Alongside national actions that DHSC and NHSE are beginning to deliver, the delivery framework includes recommended actions on how the entire health system can also work together to improve coordinated care. These recommended actions include an ask for services and clinicians to develop multidisciplinary teams to encourage collaborative case management, establish joint working protocols and referral pathways between drug and alcohol services and mental health services to ensure the provision of holistic and coordinated care.

The national actions in the delivery framework include the commitment to publish guidance on the statutory duty to co-operate issued under the Health and Care Act 2012. This statutory guidance, which is currently in development, will define how commissioners and services should work together to achieve positive health outcomes for people with co-occurring needs and enable better joint working between mental health services and drug and alcohol services.

Secondly, regarding your concerns raised regarding sharing information and data between services and clinicians, the delivery framework also states that all service providers need to work together with all relevant local services to agree data sharing arrangements that reflect the needs of people with a co-occurring mental health and substance use need. This is also in line with the NICE guidance recommendations on information sharing, 1.4.6 and 1.4.7. Work is ongoing alongside NHSE and sector partners to overcome the challenges and barriers to data sharing between services.

Furthermore, the upcoming introduction of the Single Patient Record will allow patient information to be more easily shared with patients and their relevant health and social care providers (such as GPs, hospital doctors, social care workers and others involved in their direct care). The Single Patient Record will provide a single record of patient needs and history, consistently across the NHS and social care in England.

Lastly, your report also raises concerns of the availability of alcohol via online delivery services. The Licensing Act 2003 regulates the sale and supply of alcohol and states it is an offence to knowingly sell or attempt to sell alcohol to a person who is under the age of 18 and/or intoxicated, or to allow a sale of this kind to take place.

The government are aware of increasing concerns relating to rapid online alcohol delivery, which can, as in the case of Mr Cooper, contribute to individuals experiencing increased alcohol harm. Consumer purchasing habits have evolved in recent years, particularly with a notable growth in alcohol sales made via online platforms and rapid delivery services. We recognise the new challenges this brings from a regulatory and health perspective, particularly when managing sales of alcohol to those who are intoxicated.

We are keen to explore this further to better understand the changes that are taking place, how current licencing rules apply to home alcohol delivery services, and the impact they are having, and to examine the wider relationship between the licensing regime and alcohol related health harms. The Minister for Crime and Policing in the Home and myself, as Minister for Public Health and Prevention, will shortly be convening a roundtable to discuss this issue further.

Thank you for bringing these concerns to my attention. I want to assure you my department recognise these issues and are continuing to work closely together to improve integrated care for those with substance use issues. I hope this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

