



NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin
NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

HM Assistant Coroner Kelly Dixon
Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent
Coroner's Service

Wellington Civic Offices,
Larkin Way, Tan Bank,
TF1 1LX

Monday 17th August 2026

Dear Assistant Coroner Dixon,

Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths

Deceased: Graham Keith Hollis
Date of Report: 1 July 2026

Thank you for your Prevention of Future Deaths Report issued under Regulation 28 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013 following the inquest into the death of Mr Graham Keith Hollis.

The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB) recognises the concerns raised regarding the availability of Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) assessments for care home residents in East Staffordshire and welcomes the opportunity to outline the actions taken and planned in response.

Response to the Matter of Concern

The concern identified by the Court relates to evidence that the Speech and Language Therapy service was unable to undertake face-to-face assessments of care home residents because of workforce shortages, and that this position remained unchanged at the time of the inquest.

The ICB commissions Speech and Language Therapy services from University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust (UHDB) for Care Homes in East Staffordshire and requires providers to maintain safe and effective services for the populations they serve. During the period in question, UHDB experienced significant workforce challenges within the Speech and Language Therapy service which affected its ability to provide assessments to some care home residents.

Actions Taken

The ICB became aware of the workforce capacity issues through established contract management and oversight arrangements with UHDB. The matter has been reviewed through regular contract meetings and provider assurance processes, with the Trust required to report on service performance, risks and mitigation plans.



Whilst recruitment and retention challenges have affected the provider's ability to fully staff the service, interim arrangements have been implemented to ensure clinical support remains available pending restoration of full service capacity. These arrangements include:

- Provision of specialist advice and guidance by the Speech and Language Therapy service to care homes through remote support mechanisms, including email advice.
- Ongoing escalation routes for complex cases where specialist input is required.
- Continued monitoring of service capacity, waiting times and clinical risk through routine commissioner-provider oversight arrangements.
- Review of the effectiveness of interim pathways to ensure that care homes continue to have access to specialist advice while workforce shortages are addressed.

Future Actions

The ICB recognises the importance of timely access to specialist swallowing assessments for care home residents and has therefore:

- Continued to hold UHDB to account through contractual performance management processes regarding workforce recovery and service capacity.
- Commenced planning for recommissioning of the service within the community, with consideration being given to service resilience, workforce sustainability, responsiveness for care home residents and arrangements for managing periods of reduced staffing capacity.
- Ensured that lessons arising from this Prevention of Future Deaths report will inform future commissioning intentions and service requirements for SALT services.

Conclusion

The ICB acknowledges the Coroner's concerns and recognises the importance of ensuring access to appropriate specialist SALT assessment for care home residents. While the staffing challenges experienced by the provider have not yet been fully resolved, the ICB has maintained oversight through its contractual mechanisms, supported interim advice arrangements to mitigate risk, and is progressing recommissioning activity designed to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of the service in the future.

We trust this response provides assurance regarding the actions taken and planned by the Integrated Care Board



Yours sincerely,



Chief Nursing Officer
NHS Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent ICB
NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin ICB

