



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Minister of State for Public Health and Patient Safety

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

HM Coroner Jyoti Gill
Coroner's Court, 1 Mount Tabor Street, Stockport SK1 3AG

17 August 2026

Dear Ms Gill,

Thank you for the Regulation 28 report of 17 June 2026 sent to the Department of Health and Social Care about the death of Catherine Kirkham. I am replying as the minister with responsibility for primary care.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the circumstances of Mrs Kirkham's death, and I offer my sincere condolences to her family and loved ones. The circumstances your report describes are deeply concerning, and I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention.

The report raises concerns over the operability of IT systems used by doctors in secondary care to access GP patient records, the failure to accurately record clinical information relating to Mrs Kirkham's visits to Tameside General Hospital, and the several missed opportunities to diagnose and treat Mrs Kirkham for tetanus.

In preparing this response, my officials have made enquiries with NHS England and the UK Health Security Agency to ensure we adequately address your concerns.

The 10-year health plan sets out our commitment to making improvements at the interface between primary and secondary care. This includes work to improve IT through initiatives such as increasing access to shared care records and developing greater interoperability of electronic patient records (EPRs).

In addition, the government is proposing a Single Patient Record (SPR) to unify patient data from multiple sources into one easy-to-access platform for patients and clinicians. By creating a single or unified health record, that is more navigable, clinicians will have the data they need when treating patients. Frontline staff will be able to make more informed decisions, reducing risk.

It is the responsibility of the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) to maintain and update public health guidance, including on the need for ascertaining an individual's vaccination status following a potentially tetanus-prone wound. However, it is the responsibility of NHS

England to ensure this guidance is implemented, including the design of triage systems and the use of prompts and decision-support mechanisms.

In considering your report, officials within the Department of Health and Social Care have made enquiries with NHS England and concluded that NHS England are better placed to address your concerns directly. I am advised that NHS England will therefore provide you with a full and comprehensive response on the concerns you have raised.

I hope this response is helpful. Thank you again for bringing these concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely,

