

Thursday, 17 September 2026

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Robert Cohen
Assistant Coroner for Cumbria
HM Coroner's Courts
Allerdale House
Workington
Cumbria
CA14 3YJ



Dear Mr Cohen,

Thank you for your Prevention of Future Deaths Report following the inquest into the death of Isla Alma McVeigh.

Firstly, on behalf of North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust, I would like to extend our sincere condolences to Isla's family following their tragic loss. We have carefully considered the findings of the inquest and the concerns raised within the Prevention of Future Deaths Report. We recognise the importance of ensuring that the learning arising from this case is fully embedded across our services and are committed to implementing the necessary actions to strengthen clinical practice, safeguarding processes, professional curiosity, and multi-agency working in order to reduce the risk of similar incidents occurring in the future.

We have reviewed the matters of concern raised by you, namely:

- Clinicians' understanding of codeine dependence and the risks associated with prescribed opioid use.
- The need for greater professional curiosity in relation to opioid dependence and misuse.
- Understanding and application of safeguarding referral thresholds and escalation processes.

The Trust accepts the concerns identified within the Prevention of Future Deaths Report and has developed a comprehensive action plan to address these. The action plan is structured around four key learning themes: Recognition of Codeine Dependence and Opiate Misuse Risk; Professional Curiosity Around Substance Use; Understanding Safeguarding Thresholds and Escalation; and Care of Babies with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome.

Key actions include:

- Mandatory safeguarding, professional curiosity, and opioid dependency awareness briefings for maternity, neonatal, and paediatric staff.

Pillars Building, Cumberland Infirmary, Infirmary Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 7HY
01228 523444 www.ncic.nhs.uk

Safe, high quality care **every time**

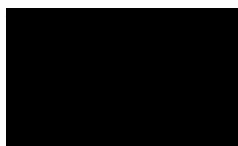
- Incorporation of simulation-based learning and case studies arising from the Coroner's findings into annual training programmes to strengthen recognition of opioid dependency, safeguarding assessment and escalation of concerns.
- Review and update of clinical guidance relating to the management of pregnant women using prescribed and non-prescribed opioids.
- Enhanced safeguarding supervision processes to support reflective learning and professional curiosity.
- Explore the safeguarding threshold with the wider safeguarding partnership and implement changes in practice to local policy.
- Review of neonatal abstinence syndrome care pathways and strengthening of discharge processes, including safeguarding review and safe sleep considerations.
- Auditing of cases involving neonatal abstinence syndrome to provide assurance regarding safeguarding assessments, referral decisions and escalation practice.

Delivery of the action plan will be overseen through the Trust's governance arrangements, with progress monitored by the Patient Safety Group and reported through established quality and safety structures.

We are committed to working collaboratively with safeguarding partners to ensure that the lessons identified from this tragic case result in meaningful and sustained improvements in practice, thereby reducing the risk of similar events occurring in the future.

Please find enclosed the Trust's detailed action plan in response to the Prevention of Future Deaths Report.

Yours sincerely,



Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Medical Director and Responsible Officer
For and on behalf of North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust