NHS
England

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[redacted]

12 October 2026

Dear Mr Appleton,

Re: Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths - Francis Conlin who died on 7th October 2024.

Thank you for your Report to Prevent Future Deaths (hereafter "Report") dated 17th August 2026 concerning the death of Francis Conlin on 7th October 2024. In advance of responding to the specific concerns raised in your Report, I would like to express my deep condolences to Francis's family and loved ones. NHS England is keen to assure the family and yourself that the concerns raised about Francis's care have been listened to and reflected upon.

Your report raises concern that the NHS England Secure Environment Assessment Tool (SEAT) National Clinical Template for Court, Release and Transfer Out template does not include any pre-release questions or prompts related to the mental health of the detained person who is being released.

In 2019 NHS England developed a core suite of clinical templates for use within the Health and Justice Information System (HJIS) across the custodial pathway, from reception through to release. These templates cover key clinical assessments required to ensure comprehensive assessments and compliance with national requirements and guidelines, such as NICE.

There are two templates that support the release of prisoners back to the community setting:

- Release Planning: This is the key document used to support planning of a patients release back to the community ensuring continuity of care through the gate. This document does include specific prompt questions on detainee's mental health and ongoing needs.
- Court, Release and Transfer Out Screen (designed to support the release/transfer of a patient and can act as a checklist that should be completed on the day of release).

The Release Planning Template (see Annex A) has a 'Concerns/Referrals' tab which includes identified need for referrals to mental health services and substance misuse

services. This is the template that should have been used in the release planning process for Francis Conlin.

The RECONNECT care after custody service seeks to improve the continuity of care of people leaving prison with an identified health need who would otherwise struggle to engage with community services. This involves working with the patient during the release planning stage to support their transition and engagement with community based services, thereby safeguarding health gains made whilst in prison.

The Release Planning template includes a tab for post release support including information and a link to a referral form for RECONNECT service. The RECONNECT service both pre-release and community post release was available at HMP Doncaster and in Middlesborough at the time Francis was released.

The findings, information and any learning from this Report will be shared with the lead healthcare commissioners for HMP Doncaster and Middlesborough RECONNECT service to ensure the learning from this case has been actioned. All Preventing Future Deaths relating to health and justice are shared with all health and justice commissioning teams as part of our Learning from Deaths work.

I would also like to provide further assurances on the national NHS England work taking place around the Reports to Prevent Future Deaths. All reports received are discussed by the Regulation 28 Working Group, comprising Regional Medical Directors, and other clinical and quality colleagues from across the regions. This ensures that key learnings and insights around events, such as the sad death of Francis, are shared across the NHS at both a national and regional level and helps us to pay close attention to any emerging trends that may require further review and action.

Thank you for bringing these important patient safety issues to my attention and please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any further information.

Yours sincerely,



National Medical Director
NHS England