Trust Headquarters
Health and Wellbeing Centre
Sandwell General Hospital
Lyndon
West Bromwich
B71 4HJ

[redacted]

Mrs J Lees
HM Area Coroner
Black Country Coroner's Court
Jack Judge House
Halesowen Street
Oldbury B69 2AJ

[redacted]

15th October 2026

**Re: Mr Rudder (deceased)**

Dear Mrs Lees,

Thank you for your Prevention of Future Deaths report of 28 August 2026 raising the concerns you have regarding the following points within the Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust policy regarding community catheterisation:

- Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust provided its Clinical Guideline for Urethral Catheterisation within Acute and Community Settings. Section 3.5.1 requires a nurse practitioner in the community to stop the procedure and seek medical advice where a catheter cannot be easily passed because of the risks posed to the patient.

We have taken appropriate steps to address your concerns and have undertaken a review of local and national guidance to support policy revisions. No national guidance was identified to guide the number of attempts to be made prior to seeking advice. Local benchmarking was also undertaken to align with local providers. The guideline has been updated (pages 12,15,17 and 19) and is going through final ratification. There is a longer term piece of work to create a pathway with our acute care colleagues to define the patient journey to avoid patients waiting for long periods in A&E.

You also raised concerns regarding the completeness of information on transfer or handover to the community team:

- Community practitioners may be undertaking invasive procedures without access to relevant medical records or previous clinical history held by another Trust.

The Community team have created a new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and referral form that is required to be completed prior to accepting the referral from both internal and external teams. This was communicated to the community teams on 10 September 2026 and is now in use.

- Concerned that community practitioners appear to be required by local guidance to seek clinical advice where they do not have access to relevant medical records or previous clinical history held by another Trust.

- Concerned that the clinicians from whom advice is sought may themselves lack access to those records and therefore be required to provide clinical advice without the benefit of potentially relevant information concerning the patient's medical history, previous catheterisation difficulties, underlying conditions or prior treatment.

- The evidence heard at Inquest suggests that limitations on the sharing and accessibility of patient records across NHS Trust boundaries may hinder informed clinical decision-making during invasive procedures and when responding to complications arising from those procedures.

Interoperability of NHS Digital systems continues to challenge all providers. Due to the large number of systems used within the region, it is not possible for SWB to drive the digital solution for information sharing. There are national initiatives which are seeking to resolve some of these issues and SWB commit to supporting these initiatives and solutions as they become available. In the meantime, as detailed above, SWB have created an SOP and referral form to ensure that pertinent information is shared appropriately.

I trust this information will provide you with reassurance regarding the concerns raised in your report, however, if I can assist with anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



[redacted]
**Group Chief Executive**