Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

[redacted]
Minister for Sport, Tourism, Place and Digital Government
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
[redacted]

20 October 2026

Nicholas Walker
HM Area Coroner for Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton
[redacted]

[redacted]

Dear Mr Walker,

Thank you for your Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths dated 1 September 2026, following the inquest into the tragic death of Hayley Pamela Dowell. I wish to express my deepest sympathies to her family and loved ones for their loss. I am writing to respond to the matters of concern raised in your report as the Minister for Sport, Tourism, Place and Digital Government.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is responsible for promoting inbound and domestic tourism within the United Kingdom.

Policy responsibility for advice for UK citizens travelling overseas rests with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Responsibility for health policy, and clinical standards within the UK rests with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

As your report has also been issued to the Secretary of State for Health, I understand that DHSC will provide a separate response addressing the medical, clinical and health data aspects raised during the inquest.

Whilst my department is proposing no independent policy or regulatory action within its portfolio, cross-government efforts are actively underway across responsible departments to address the risks and concerns highlighted in your report.

The FCDO leads the *Travel Aware* public guidance initiative, which includes targeted guidance on medical tourism and cosmetic procedures undertaken overseas (*Surgery abroad – cut out the risk*). This campaign explicitly warns citizens of the significant risks involved in undergoing medical treatment abroad, including differing clinical standards and qualifications outside the UK, the risks of pressure tactics, quick decision-making and package deals that combine surgery with holidays.

In relation to destination-specific advice, the FCDO travel advice highlights the risks of medical tourism in its travel advice at Health - Turkey travel advice - GOV.UK. It specifically recommends that "If you are considering travelling to Turkey for medical, surgical or dental treatment: discuss plans with your UK doctor, dentist or clinician before going ahead; and do your own research - private companies have a financial interest in booking your treatment and their literature should not be your only source of information." While the FCDO does not give any endorsement of the competence or suitability of any practitioner or facility, there is a link to the Turkish Ministry of Health list of approved medical providers. The FCDO also advises travellers to ensure they have appropriate insurance. Standard travel insurance policies may not cover elective medical procedures abroad, associated complications, extended stays, or medical repatriation. Travellers should check carefully that they have suitable cover before making arrangements for treatment overseas.

The FCDO's overseas travel advice pages are kept under review, with updates deployed periodically to address emerging trends and risks.

To ensure this information reaches travellers effectively through commercial and industry channels, my depertment will liaise with the FCDO and key travel industry bodies to explore how official guidance and warnings can be effectively shared with travel operators and partners across the industry network.

My department will continue to liaise with the FCDO and DHSC to support the alignment of public messaging where appropriate across government digital channels.

Thank you for bringing these important concerns to the attention of government.

Yours sincerely,

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Minister for Sport, Tourism, Place and Digital Government