

Chief Executive's Office
Chief Executive & Director - Environment: John Wood

RECEIVED

12 AUG 2014



Hertfordshire

Coroner's Office
District of Hertfordshire
The Old Courthouse
St Albans Road East
Hatfield
Hertfordshire
AL10 0ES

Hertfordshire County Council
CH 0238, County Hall
Hertford SG13 8DE
Fax: [REDACTED]
Tel: [REDACTED]
Minicom: [REDACTED]
Contact: [REDACTED]
My ref: JW/MGB/1651HCS
Your ref:
Date: 7 August 2014

Dear Mr Thomas

Re: Stephen Mark Amer (Deceased)

Thank you for your letter of the 25 July 2014, issued under Regulation 28 (paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 5 of the Coroner and Justice Act 2009, following the inquest into the death of Mr Stephen Amer.

I have had the opportunity to discuss the tragic death of this gentleman and the important observations and recommendations you have raised in your letter with the Director of the Health & Community Services department.

During the inquest, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] referred to a new protocol which was being developed with our health partners. We entirely agree with your recommendation that consent arrangements should be included to allow patient information to be shared with social care services (your first bullet point on page 2 of your letter).

Hertfordshire County Council recognises the value of this recommendation which will also support and promote the appropriate exchange of information as we move towards further integration of health and social care services and the new responsibilities set out in the Care Act (2014). We will develop and introduce a consent form by the 20 October 2014.

We also understand that where there is a change of plan, in this case, reflecting the clearly expressed view of Mrs Amer that she wished to return to her home, that the change of plan is given to the relevant person, in particular the carer. I refer to your second bullet point on page 2 of your letter and in the light of this tragic case, the department has issued a practice instruction to social care staff to create or update a separate carer's assessment. This must consider the impact of the decision on the carer and set out in detail the support they will require to continue caring if that is their wish. The assessment must also address contingency plans if for any reason they become unable to care for the vulnerable person. The County Council will share this new requirement with health colleagues and request that they follow the same practice when they arrange hospital discharges of vulnerable patients or carers outside of social care referral arrangements.

The method of communication must indeed be considered carefully (your third recommendation). Whilst carers and relatives may choose not to take up the opportunity of a face to face meeting to discuss discharge arrangements, this remains the preferred and most effective method of communicating care arrangements. This arrangement provides a better opportunity to discuss and clarify every aspect of care and any associated concerns. It is recognised that mounting pressure on NHS hospital beds can result in very limited notice of discharge. We will share your conclusions with local hospital trusts in an effort to ensure that they allow sufficient time to discuss discharges with relatives / carers face to face.

I would like to thank you for your recommendations which we formally accept. We will introduce the revised arrangements outlined above and will share these with our health partners within Hertfordshire. We will also take the opportunity to share your observations and recommendations more widely with other local authorities through the network of practice development meetings organised by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of John Wood.

John Wood
Chief Executive & Director – Environment



**CORONER'S OFFICE
AREA OF HERTFORDSHIRE**

The Old Courthouse, St Albans Road East, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, AL10 0ES

DX: 100702 Hatfield

Tel: 01707 292780 Fax: 01707 897399 E-mail: coroner.service@hertfordshire.gov.uk

MR EDWARD THOMAS Senior Coroner **MR GRAHAM DANBURY** Deputy Coroner
Dr FRANCES CRANFIELD, ALISON GRIEF, EDWARD SOLOMONS Assistant Coroners

19 August 2014

Mr John Wood
Chief Executive & Director - Environment
CH 0238 County Hall
Hertford
SG13 8DE

Your Ref: JW/MGB/1651HCS

Our Ref: 00229-2014

Dear Mr Wood,

Re: Stephen Mark AMER, deceased

Dear Mr Wood

Thank you very much indeed for your letter of the 27th July and for your prompt response to my Regulation 28 letter. I have circulated copies to the Interested Persons according to my list.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Edward G Thomas
Senior Coroner