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**Chief Executive**

[www.haringey.gov.uk](http://www.haringey.gov.uk)

Chief Executive Nick Walkley



**Haringey Council**

David Ridley  
Coroner for Wiltshire and Swindon  
28 Endless Street  
Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP1 1DP

Your ref:

Date: 23 July 2015

Our ref:

Direct dial: 020 8489 2648

Email: [REDACTED]

By email and post

Dear Mr Ridley,

Regulation 28 report touching the death of Mary Elizabeth Grace Stroman

Thank you for your letter dated 21st May 2015 and also for the extension of time granted until Friday 24th July 2015 to respond to your report. I recognise that the series of actions and decisions from Haringey Children's Services could have been different and it is important that lessons are learned from this tragic case. I fully appreciate that it would not be acceptable to seek a further deferment of my response to you. Therefore I am responding today directly on behalf of the local authority, whilst acknowledging that the issues you have raised may well be further addressed in the SCR (Serious Case Review) when it is completed by late September.

I welcome you raising the two specific points and I am keen to share our learning and subsequent actions with you. In response to 'the delay in decision making, processes as regards funding the long term therapeutic placement', I recognise that there were delays in the decision to fund the placement and I also accept that Children's Services management, including the overall oversight and direction, of this case could have been better. Systems are now much improved, including;

- Strengthened management and oversight over decision making in our cases, including the timeliness of assessments. This, alongside other indicators of quality are reviewed and further scrutinised by the Director of Children's Services in weekly performance meetings with all Heads of Service.
- Importantly there has also been a significant improvement in joint working with partner agencies. The functioning of the Complex Care Panel (which looks at cases of this nature) has been refreshed with revised membership, including the lead commissioner from Haringey Commissioning Group. This has enabled more effective information sharing and will lead to increased timely and informed decision making relating to our joint funded placements.

In terms of the decision to 'temporarily terminate the placement at Tumblewood in the autumn 2013', I fully accept that Children Services decision to suspend the placement could have been better managed; in particular Islington CCG should most certainly have been consulted before any decision was made.

The report you provided has been a valuable opportunity to reflect and gain some essential learning points which have resulted in a number of improvements to ensure that this type of situation does not arise again.

- At the point of making a placement, we make it clear to parents and partners that we will only make placements in an establishment that are graded good or outstanding by Ofsted and if the establishment grade at any stage changes to inadequate, we will complete a risk assessment and consult with partners and also parents to make an informed decision (based on the particulars of each individual case).
- An Independent Review Manager at the six monthly review meeting checks that there is a clear plan for the young person including contact and holiday arrangements.

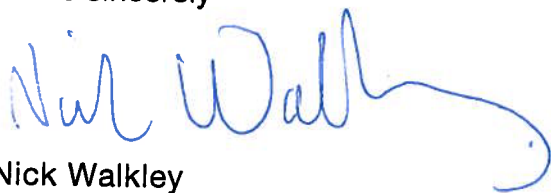
In terms of the wider partnership, given that in this case there was disagreement between Children Services and health partners, I am assured by the Director of Children Services that there is an ongoing and concerted effort to bring partners closer together, to work as effectively as possible, to enable the best outcomes for children and families.

I note that it is acknowledged in your report that there is no direct causal link between the delays and the temporary suspension and the tragic incident. Despite this, we sincerely regret that our management of the case was not as effective and timely as it should have been.

Whilst Children Services have taken steps to apply the learning and address issues raised, there may be further findings and recommended actions arising from the SCR report. These will be shared with staff to ensure lessons are learnt with urgency as part of our continued programme of improvements. Once I have received the organisation response to the SCR, I would be happy to share the findings and action plan with you.

Again, I thank you for your report and for bringing these issues to my attention.

Yours sincerely



Nick Walkley  
Chief Executive

Independent Chair, Haringey LSCB