



Department  
of Health

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27 April 2015

Dear Mr Bennett,

Thank you for your letter to Dame Sally Davies following the inquest into the death of Alan Jones. I was very sorry to hear of Mr Jones' death and wish to extend my sincere condolences to his family.

Mr Jones was a patient in Wales. You have sent your report to NHS Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government as the appropriate bodies to respond to your concerns in this case. In addition, the Royal College of General Practitioners will be interested in the issues you raise.

The Department of Health in England has however no responsibility for operational matters for general practice in Wales. My comments therefore relate to the points you make about EMIS and GP record systems as they apply in England. Your concerns focus on both the capability and accessibility of EMIS as an electronic patient record system used in general practice, and the apparent lack of training for GPs in the use of this system and other such systems.

Evidence given at the inquest clearly highlighted issues with the use of the electronic data on the patient record system:

- A lack of adequate training on the use of the software systems. This meant that important clinical information could not be made available easily. The expert GP gave evidence that this training deficit was not uncommon.
- A failure in the software programmes themselves either to highlight important diagnosed conditions as an alert, when the patient record is opened or to prevent any further steps being taken to navigate the programme (and make any entries) without consciously closing the "alert" first.

In England GP practices have freedom to choose and implement their own IT systems and there are a number of GP systems available, including EMIS. This scheme is known as the GP Systems of Choice (GPSoC) through which the NHS funds the provision of GP clinical IT systems in England.

GPSoC includes all the leading GP clinical IT systems in use in England. Following the introduction of GPSoC, practices can choose between systems provided either by their Local Service Provider (LSP) or by suppliers contracted to offer systems on the GPSoC Framework.

The GPSoC Framework offers a number of benefits for GP Practices.

- Greater choice of centrally and locally-funded IT systems and services
- Central funding for patient facing services required to meet GMS contract obligations.
- Opportunity to hold Principal System suppliers to account, through GPSoC, for the delivery of service improvement plans.
- Centrally-funded training for National Services such as the Electronic Prescription Service, GP2GP and the Summary Care Record.

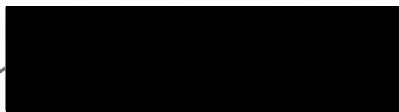
Further details about the GPSoC Framework and the systems available can be found on the GPSoC website:

<http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/gpsoc>

The GPSoC is also available in Wales. However I understand that Welsh requirements are not the same as English GPSoC requirements, with the result that, for example, alert and message functions may vary.

I hope that this response is helpful and I am grateful to you for bringing the circumstances of Mr Jones' death to my attention.

Yours sincerely

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**TAMARA FINKELSTEIN**