

This guidance is attached as Appendix 1 and stipulates the circumstances under which medical review must be sought. It should ensure that Orthopaedic surgeons are involved in the care of any patient care who attends with symptoms that may suggest a DVT, that a thorough review is undertaken and that any indicated medical treatment is given in a timely manner.

Please be assured that the relevant departments in the Trust are reviewing the situation in order to see how we should proceed in order to prevent a similar tragedy from occurring.

In addition to the staff guidance that has been put in place, the patient information leaflets issued by the Plaster Room have been reviewed. The current information given to patients includes an instruction to make contact with the plaster room / emergency department if there is any increase in pain/swelling, any change in sensation (tingling or numbness) or the extremities change colour. In this case the existing patient leaflet was effective as the contained information caused the patient to return to the Plaster room.

However, the leaflets do not specifically mention the risk of a deep vein thrombosis. In addition, the leaflets do not currently include specific information regarding the importance of maintaining mobility whilst having a limb in a cast. I will therefore ensure that the leaflets are updated in line with the NPSA guidance on suggested minimum mobilisation time which in turn can help prevent the complications of immobility, including thrombosis.

I am also aware that due to the nature of ad hoc attendances, patient's medical records are usually not available when the practitioners review patients with cast issues. Previously the practitioners were only making a brief record of the attendance detailing the name, date of birth and the action taken. Following this case, the practitioners are now recording more clinical detail in their notes including the presenting concerns, any assessment made, the discussion with the patient, the intervention required and the advice given. This improved documentation will have the added advantage of demonstrating the thorough nature of the practitioners review.

I hope you will agree that the above measures will minimise the risk of a recurrence of the tragic outcome to Mrs Bird and reassure you of our commitment to improving services for our patients.

Yours sincerely



Nick Carver
Chief Executive

cc NHS England

