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Our Ref: MEG/AP/KLG/Ellis

10 August 2016

Dr D Skipp
Assistant Coroner, West Sussex
Coroner's Office
West Sussex Record Office
Orchard Street
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1DD

Dear Dr Skipp

RE: Regulation 28 Report – Valerie ELLIS

Thank you for your letter dated 16 June 2016 under cover of which you enclosed a formal copy of the Regulation 28 report to Prevent Future Deaths.

The Trust has welcomed the opportunity to build upon the work already in place to ensure that patients prescribed Apixiban receive the very best information about the potential side-effects. Despite the absence of national guidance, the Trust has continued to strive to develop a system to ensure that both counselling and a warning card provide patients and their carers with a firm understanding of the risks, as well as the benefits, of this and other new oral anticoagulants (NOAC).

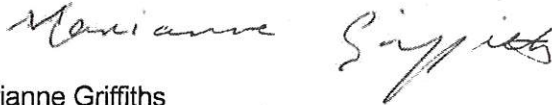
As you will be aware, the Trust launched the NOAC alert card in October 2015 and introduced a Standard Operating Procedure to enable pharmacy staff to be fully apprised of the new system and to support the distribution of the warning card. In addition, daily reminders generated by the electronic prescribing software ensure that new patients are identified. It is hoped to strengthen the system still further by placing a further NOAC card in the medication bag given to patients on discharge and to ensure that all discussions with relatives and carers regarding the new drug are documented.

The Trust has been extremely saddened by Mrs Ellis's death and is keen to ensure that the potential for both local and national learning can be fully maximized. While the prescription and risks associated with NOACs will continue to be monitored and discussed at Medical Clinical Governance and Thrombosis committee meetings, the Trust's Medication Safety Officer has initiated discussions with NHS England Medication Safety Division meeting co-ordinator to ensure that the matter is discussed and debated at both regional and national medication forums. Locally, the introduction of the generic NOAC information leaflet within Primary care has been submitted to the Coastal Clinical Commissioning Group for the benefit of all NOAC patients in the local area.

The Patient First initiative sits at the very heart of the Western Sussex NHS Foundation Trust's vision of continuous improvement and provides a framework for reviewing each stage of a patient care process. While the above actions seek to address the former inadequacies of the counselling process, it is intended to adopt this methodology to review the entire NOAC process. The standards are being captured in the revised policy for prescribing and administration of anti-coagulants. The policy includes that newly initiated patients are consented by the medical staff as treatment is initiated and receive written information and counselling during the stay and at discharge from nursing and pharmacy staff. Concurrently plans are underway for the establishment of a multi-disciplinary group to design and introduce mechanisms to ensure the policy is embedded in practice including actions to formalize electronic recording of counselling discussions, an initiation checklist for use by prescribers and patient leaflets to support the NOAC card. Mrs Ellis's family has been invited to be part of this group and we very much hope that, in time, they will wish to be involved. The Trust's incident reporting system will provide an invaluable tool to assist future audits to measure the effectiveness of these new initiatives.

We hope that the above provides sufficient assurance that the Trust continues to strive to ensure that patients prescribed Apixiban are carefully counselled and have the reassurance of a NOAC card to ensure timely help and advice can be obtained, as and when necessary.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marianne Griffiths".

Marianne Griffiths
Chief Executive