

Mrs Louise Hunt
Senior HM Coroner
Birmingham and Solihull Areas
50 Newton Street
Birmingham
B4 6NE

Your re: 115215 - REX BROOK HALL (EB/RP)

2 December 2019

Dear Mrs Hunt

Rex Brook Hall – Deceased

I am writing further to your letter of 20 November 2019, addressed to Marc Seale, concerning the HCPC's response to the Report to Prevent Future Deaths sent on 29 November 2016. I am responding as Mr Seale is no longer the Chief Executive of the HCPC.

I must first apologise that I have not been able to retrieve a copy of any response sent to 2016/2017. In view of this please find a response to the actions taken relevant to the matters of concern raised.

We note the concerns raised regarding foundation level training for paramedics. We have taken significant steps within the sector to support the development of paramedic practice. In particular, in March 2018 we determined it necessary to raise the threshold level of entry to the Register to degree level (levels 6/9/10 on the relevant UK qualifications frameworks). The threshold level for entry to the Register for paramedics was changed to degree level for the following reasons:

- A large majority of respondents to the public consultation argued that degree level was necessary for safe and effective contemporary practice.
- The profile of paramedic education and training has continued to develop – Degree level programmes now account for almost half of all approved paramedic programmes.
- Degree level education and training is necessary to deliver the Standards of proficiency to the depth required for contemporary paramedic practice (see bullet point above). The descriptors of qualifications at level 6/9/10 articulate requirements for 'personal responsibility' and decision making in 'complex and unpredictable circumstances' which is consistent with what stakeholders told us about the contemporary requirements of paramedics in practice.

Whilst there were no significant changes to the standards of proficiency (SOPs) themselves, the nature of paramedic practice necessitated a raising of the level of learning required to achieve them, as articulated by the revised threshold level of entry. It is important to note that this change would not affect any current registrants who will not have trained to the new level. The new level will be applied from September 2021, at which point all training routes into the paramedic profession will be set at degree level (or equivalent).

The SOPs for paramedics set out the knowledge, skills and abilities individuals must meet and maintain to register with us, and practice safely and effectively as a paramedic. These standards have been revised periodically, to ensure they remain relevant to current practice for the paramedic profession. In relation to the specific points regarding the training of the paramedics in question, the SOPs for paramedics include specific reference to the need for paramedics to:

- understand the structure and function of the human body, together with knowledge of health, disease, disorder and dysfunction, relevant to the paramedic profession (13.1)
- understand the following aspects of biological science, including: human anatomy and physiology, especially the dynamic relationships of human structure and function and the musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, respiratory, digestive, endocrine, urinary, reproductive, integumentary and nervous systems (13.8)
- understand the following aspects of clinical science, including: pathological changes and related clinical features of conditions encountered in pre-hospital and out-of-hospital practice & physiological, pharmacological, structural, behavioural and functional changes in patient presentation (13.11)
- be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and effectively (14.3)
- be able to conduct a thorough and detailed physical examination of the patient using appropriate skills to inform clinical reasoning and guide the formulation of a differential diagnosis across all age ranges (14.12)

The SOPs were last revised and republished in 2014, and are applied to all levels of training currently in existence (and in existence at the time of the events in question), including any of those set at Foundation degree level. We approve education and training programmes that can demonstrate their curriculum and assessment ensures that all individuals who receive the final award leading HCPC registration have successfully met all the SOPs (including those highlighted above). It is on this basis

that all individuals are deemed eligible to apply with us for registration. Once registered, all registrants must continue to maintain their adherence to these standards to remain on the register, including showing evidence of their continuing professional development if audited. We are currently undertaking a review of the SOPs and will liaise with the College of Paramedics on the concerns raised in your report to explore whether any amendments should be made in this regard.

Where specific concerns are raised around an identifiable registrant's practice, we can investigate and if necessary consider their fitness to practise further. We can also investigate identified approved education and training providers, if there were concerns raised about the teaching and learning being provided. Should any specific concerns be raised as a result of your investigation, we will consider these and take appropriate action.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Barwick', written in a cursive style.

John Barwick
Interim Chief Executive and Deputy Registrar

