

Anne Pember
HM Coroner for the County of Northampton
10 Whitworth Road
Northampton
NN1 4HJ

11 August 2017

Dear Madam

Re: Dianne Jane MACRAE (deceased) – Letter to prevent future deaths

Further to your report to prevent future deaths made under Paragraph 7, Schedule 5, of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and Regulation 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, I am writing to provide you with our response.

I note your concerns about the need for all persons caring for a patient undergoing routine lumbar decompression and discectomy to be aware that internal haemorrhage is a rare but recognised complication of surgery. I also note that no concerns have been raised about the conduct of any individual nurse involved in the care provided to Mrs Macrae.

We are the UK regulator of registered nurses and midwives. Our principal functions are to establish the standards of education, training, conduct and performance for nurses and midwives and to ensure their maintenance. Our overarching objective is to protect the public, including by promoting and maintaining both proper professional standards and public confidence in the professions we regulate.

We are currently undertaking a wholesale review of our education standards, including the pre-registration standards of proficiency that nurses must meet before being registered with us. We intend that these new standards of proficiency for registered nurses will include specific standards relating to patient assessment and the management of patient deterioration. We are undertaking a full public consultation on the draft standards, which is due to conclude on 12 September 2017, following which we will carefully review the feedback we receive from our stakeholders before finalising the standards. We will also take into account the concerns you have raised in your report about complications of surgery.

Please note that as there are currently about 612,274 nurses and midwives on our register working in many different areas of practice across the UK, it is not our usual practice to issue specific clinical advice to nurses and midwives about individual cases. Such clinical advice may be more appropriately raised by relevant employers or on occasion by the Department of Health, NHS England (or the NHS leadership in the

devolved administrations) , or the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). We will be sharing our response with the Department of Health.

If you have any further concerns arising from this case which you consider fall within the NMC's regulatory remit and which I have not addressed in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jackie Smith
Chief Executive and Registrar