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The Coroner's Court
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Dear Madam

Re: University of Bristol response to Regulation 28 Report

Thank you for your report dated 2 May 2019.

In respect of the concerns outlined in your report:

1. Sharing Changes to University Practices with the Sector:

As you will be aware from evidence provided by the University for recent inquests, the University has carried out significant changes to its Support Services over the last two years. This has involved significant investment and continuing review of processes and structures for supporting students.

The University has collaborated with other Universities, Mr James Murray and the charity Papyrus through the forum of Universities UK to produce a guide entitled "Suicide Safer Universities". The guide describes the University's ongoing collaboration with Public Health England and Bristol City Council (as the lead organisations for suicide prevention in the general population) to develop a suicide prevention policy which has now been published. The University has shared its mental health and wellbeing strategies with sector colleagues, and provided support to other institutions where student deaths have occurred. As the issue of student mental health is a serious ongoing issue, the University will continue to share information on best practices with other universities, Public Health England, student representatives and local authorities

2. Pre-registration Mental Health Disclosure

The University notes the Learned Coroner's concern at the potential for applicants to feel any declaration of mental health difficulties may adversely affect their application to Universities.

In addition to disclosures made by applicants on their UCAS forms, the University communicates with prospective students prior to enrolment and encourages them to

contact Disability Services about any mental health or other disabilities to ensure they can access appropriate support.

The University is supporting UCAS in its endeavours to find alternative ways of encouraging declarations and reducing the barriers to declarations about extenuating or mitigating circumstances as well as any mental health concerns, or other disabilities.

The University also provides regular prompts to applicants and students during their time at the University about the benefits of disclosing any mental health difficulties and reassures them that this will have no impact on their application or studies but will be used to support them.

Our Accommodation Office sends a pre-arrival online induction to students. This covers important accommodation information (fire safety, recycling etc), and also introduces students to the Residential Life team and the support services available.

In this induction we also ask students to answer one question about how they are feeling about coming to university; excited, nervous but looking forward to it, or really apprehensive/worried. We use this information to ensure that the Residential Life Team have additional information about students who may require additional support.

3. Formal University Process for Reviewing Student Deaths

The University currently convenes a standing committee (the Suicide Prevention and Response Group (SPRG)) quarterly to maintain oversight of policies and practice relating to student suicides. When there has been a student death the group puts in place an Incident Response Team which meets regularly following the event to co-ordinate internal and external communications, plan for provision of support for those students and members of staff who have been affected, liaise with relevant family members, and act as a mechanism for collating relevant information.

Together with colleagues from the University of the West of England and Public Health England, the SPRG has undertaken an audit of student deaths by suicide to identify possible factors that can inform prevention strategies.

As part of its role from September 2019 the SPRG will oversee the undertaking of a serious incident review for every suicide or serious attempted suicide involving a high mortality method or admission to intensive care. This will be based on practice in the NHS and other HEIs. An incident review report will include relevant information about the student, their interactions with the University and noting what went well in providing support and where there is possibility for improvement. Should a death occur, information gathered about the student will also be added to our suicide audit tool which aims to identify any trends over time that may inform future suicide prevention. It will also form the basis of information provided to assist with Coroner's Inquests.

Yours sincerely



**Professor Hugh Brady
Vice Chancellor & President
University of Bristol**