

BY EMAIL:

Philip Barlow
HM Assistant Coroner
Inner South London

Department of Education and Quality

2nd Floor
Stewart House
Russell Square
London
WC1B 5DN

11th June 2021

Dear Sir,

Ella Adoo Kissi-Debrah – Regulation 28 Report

I write in response to your report of 20th April 2021 made under the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013 (“the Regulations”). Please may I start by offering my sincere condolences to Miss Adoo Kissi-Debrah’s family following her tragic death from asthma contributed to by exposure to excessive air pollution.

Your report raises concerns regarding medical and nursing professionals’ communication of the adverse effects of air pollution on health to patients and their carers. We note your report states that these concerns need to be addressed at both undergraduate and postgraduate education levels.

To respond to your concerns, I will clarify Health Education England (HEE)’s role and responsibilities in the education and training of the medical and nursing workforce. I will also highlight interventions that HEE is taking to address healthcare professionals’ awareness of the health impacts of air pollution.

HEE is a non-departmental public body accountable to the Secretary of State and Parliament. We are part of the NHS and work with partners to plan, recruit, educate and train the health workforce. We serve the people of England by educating, training and developing healthcare professionals. We support undergraduate and postgraduate health education and training for around 240,000 students and trainees across 350 different roles, including doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, healthcare scientists, pharmacists, and physiotherapists. We also provide planning, transformation and development support to the NHS workforce, for now and the future.

Undergraduate medical and nursing education

The standards for medical and nursing education in the UK are set by the respective independent professional regulator, the General Medical Council (GMC) and Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC).

Each individual medical school and university sets its own undergraduate curriculum, which must meet the standards set by the GMC and NMC, who then monitor and check to make sure that these standards are maintained.

HEE funds clinical placements for undergraduate doctors and pre-registration nursing students in England. We set our expectations for the quality of the educational environment in our multi-professional Quality Framework. The overarching objective of the Framework is to promote inter-professional learning and to support and facilitate service transformation that meets current and future patient needs.

Postgraduate medical education

The curricula for postgraduate specialty training are set by individual medical Royal Colleges and faculties, and the GMC approves curricula and assessment systems for each training programme. The Academy Foundation Programme Committee coordinates and facilitates the work of the medical Royal Colleges and faculties to produce the curriculum for the Foundation Programme, the first two years of postgraduate medical training.

HEE commissions postgraduate medical education and training places in England. We set our expectations for the quality of the educational environment in our multi-professional Quality Framework. Our Postgraduate Deans and Foundation School Directors manage the quality of postgraduate medical education and work with employers to design training programmes that equip doctors with the skills they need to provide high-quality patient care.

HEE continues to deliver a number of medical education reform proposals to improve the efficacy and flexibility of our medical education system. Building upon the findings of the *Future Doctor* engagement programme, HEE are working with stakeholders and partners to develop a wraparound professional development offer in postgraduate medical training to enhance the generalist skills of doctors. By embedding generalism in training, we aim to better equip doctors to understand and address the population health and care needs of the communities they serve, including to recognise and evaluate the environmental determinants of health.

Postgraduate nursing education

HEE supports the Continual Professional Development (CPD) of Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Professions (AHP) in post-registration practice, within acute, mental health, community and primary care settings. An individual practitioner's professional development should align to their specialist or generalist field of practice and be considered alongside the priority care pathways/areas of the Integrated Care System (ICS) or local trust, these being identified at a regular developmental review. Given the number of specialist practitioners across the domains of Nursing, Midwifery and AHP, environmental determinants are generally addressed at this stage in their educational and career development with a number of specialist courses supporting the CPD agenda.

In response to Concern 3 raised in your report, HEE will write to the relevant medical Royal Colleges, GMC and NMC to highlight that improving awareness of the impact of air pollution on health should be considered when developing curricula.

I hope that this response provides you with clarity of HEE's role and responsibilities in the education and training of the medical and nursing workforce and gives you the assurance that HEE is committed to taking the learning from the tragic death of Ella Adoo Kissi-Debrah.

Yours sincerely,



Professor 
National Director of Education & Quality and Medical Director