

17 February 2024

Dear Amanda Pritchard,

Re: NSFT Deaths Crisis

It is now 3 months since we wrote to you and one month since you replied saying you would reply soon.

Since our original letter we calculate, based on the Grant Thornton report figures, that up to another 140 patients/service users of NSFT will have lost their lives. We are being contacted daily by bereaved families and families of people who need, but cannot get, a service from NSFT. There have also been coroners' inquests and PFDs issued where deaths are occurring in similar circumstances to those subjects of previous PFDs of those under the care of NSFT:

<https://www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk/statement-from-suffolk-user-forum-14-february-2024/>

<https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/23154765.nhs-trust-brings-new-pharmacy-boss-patients-death/>

<https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/23889102.former-wymondham-teacher-38-dies-hit-train/>

There have also been several deaths and suicides of patients/service users which have been reported in the national media:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/jan/21/mental-health-trust-deaths>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/31/costessey-deaths-show-need-for-inquiry-into-local-nhs-trust-say-families>

In the period since we wrote the call for an independent statutory public inquiry has come from the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC):

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c2v4l3n8plpo>

Suffolk Healthwatch have withdrawn from the NSFT deaths review action plan group as have the authors of the Forever Gone report, which is led by a bereaved parent, because they have lost confidence in the handling by NSFT and the Norfolk and Suffolk ICBs:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-68022949>

<https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/bury-st-edmunds/news/they-failed-in-their-duty-of-care-concerns-over-unaccount-9350045/>

Just to be clear, this is **the biggest deaths crisis in the history of the NHS** and it is your responsibility as you have failed to transform this failing mental health trust despite 4 failed CQC inspections over the last decade. We have been campaigning for 10 years now bringing our concerns about unnecessary deaths to your attention. NSFT remains in special measures, requiring improvement, but the current turnaround plan (like all those before) is having no impact on frontline services and patient/service user/family member/carer experiences. In fact, from the feedback we get from these groups and staff, things are getting worse. Top-down imposed solutions from NHSE have failed. This must stop now! You must stop doing more of the same and engage with the people on the receiving end and other stakeholders in this crisis to plot a way forward.

We are bemused by your failure and complacency to stem the deaths and turn this dysfunctional organisation round. In desperation we have turned to the police to investigate the deaths and suicides and are gathering evidence to present to them to investigate. We have reminded the CQC of their health and safety executive powers and demanded they use these to end the deaths.

A service user has informed us that NHSE are carrying out an “independent” report on NSFT for NSFT. Unsurprisingly, the investigators informed the person that their investigation has been hampered by NSFT failing to provide them with the details of people with whom they can speak. It also appears that this team are under the impression that the CQC spoke to us during the 2023 inspection. They did not. We have not been contacted by your staff to contribute.

Campaign members and bereaved families wish to meet with you face to face as a matter of urgency to explore how we can coproduce a way forward and end this crisis once and for all. We expect a reply by return.

Yours sincerely,

Committee of the Campaign to Save Mental Health Services in Norfolk and Suffolk