

Mr William Wragg MP
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee



Sent by email only

pacac@parliament.uk

29 June 2023

Dear Chair,

I am writing to share our latest report on patient safety, *Broken trust: Making patient safety more than just a promise*, which I have laid before Parliament today. A copy is enclosed.

The report shares findings of the qualitative analysis we undertook of over 400 NHS complaint investigations PHSO closed over the past three years. We identified 22 cases where we found that a death was – more likely than not – avoidable.

The cases we have analysed highlight persistent clinical failings but also failures to respond to patients and families in a compassionate way when they raise complaints. It is unacceptable that families who have already been through acute suffering have to experience additional pain as a result of inadequate, defensive and insensitive responses from NHS organisations when they raise concerns.

The report sets out our recommendations to improve patient safety. These include better support for families affected by harm; embedding cultures that promote honesty and learning from mistakes; getting the right oversight and regulatory structures to prioritise patient safety; and an evidence-based and long-term workforce strategy that has cross-party support.

A number of recommendations are addressed to the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England. We are asking the Department and NHS England to write to you, along with the Chair of the Health and Social Care Select Committee, within six months of the publication of this report to provide an update on progress against these recommendations.

I look forward to exploring how the Committee can support PHSO in scrutinising the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England in the delivery of these recommendations.



To arrange a meeting to discuss this further, please contact my Private Secretary Faye Glover at faye.glover@ombudsman.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

Rob Behrens

Rob Behrens CBE
Ombudsman and Chair
Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman



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