

Paul Scott, EPUT

By email: [paul.scott25@nhs.net](mailto:paul.scott25@nhs.net)

2 March 2023

Dear Paul,

I write further to our meeting on 15 February, and to your correspondence to the Inquiry on 18 January and 2 February, and to a number of local MPs on 19 January.

I am glad that you found our meeting on 15 February useful and am encouraged to hear that the Trust will endeavour to do all it can to support staff engagement with the Inquiry.

I thought it would be helpful to follow up from that meeting in which we discussed the scope of the Inquiry's investigations, so that there is no further confusion on the part of the Trust. During the meeting we discussed that the Inquiry is examining the care and treatment of mental health inpatients, including investigating the deaths of individuals who died in circumstances that were unexpected, unexplained, or self-inflicted (as detailed in the [explanatory note](#) published on our website in August 2021).

You accepted during our meeting on 15 February that the assertion you made in the letter dated 18 January to me and in your subsequent letter to MPs, that the Inquiry's focus should only be suicide, was incorrect. As you know, I believe it is essential that the Inquiry is able to examine all relevant mental health inpatient deaths. This cannot be limited to suicide and must include where an individual has died from physical health causes, or where a cause of death has not been clearly established or recorded by the Trust.

The Inquiry will continue to use the most up to date figure provided by your Trust to my team, of individuals whose deaths you identified fall within our Terms of Reference. The number of individuals included in EPUT's most recent submission to the Inquiry is just below 2,000.

I understand that the Trust received a Freedom of Information (FOI) request in relation to the letter sent to me on 18 January. I am disappointed that in responding to this FOI request the Trust did not use that opportunity to correct your misunderstanding on the number of individuals whose deaths relate to the Inquiry's scope. I am further disappointed that steps were not taken in response to recent press queries received by the Trust to correct your statement in the letter.

I don't propose to comment or respond to the rest of your letter. However, I would note that I do not find it constructive for the Trust to be making assertions about the work of the Inquiry.

In the future, I must ask that every effort be made by the Trust to ensure that its communications in relation to the work of the Inquiry are accurate.

Due to the importance of transparency to the work of the Inquiry and the fact that your letter 18 January has already been made public, I have made this an open letter and I have asked that a copy be published on our website.

Yours faithfully



**Dr Geraldine Strathee**

**Chair of the Essex Mental Health Independent Inquiry**

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