

IN THE MATTER OF THE LAMPARD INQUIRY:

**OPENING STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

1. As the Government department with responsibility for the health service and oversight of NHS England (NHSE), the Department of Health and Social Care “the DHSC” welcomes the commencement of the public hearings of this Inquiry. DHSC is committed to assisting and cooperating with the Inquiry to enable it to fulfil its terms of reference.
2. In the aftermath of these opening statements, and at the very start of the public hearings, the Inquiry will be rightly focussed on all those who have suffered whether by bereavement or otherwise as a result of their treatment. To all of those affected by bereavement the Department extends its deepest sympathy. It also acknowledges that for many, this Inquiry, for which some have long campaigned, is not about policy, legislation or guidance but about meaningful change and accountability.
3. By way of explanation and background, the Department’s role is to support and advise the Government’s health and social care ministers (including the Secretary of State) by shaping policy, assisting in the setting of the strategic direction for the health and care system and implementing agreed policy often through oversight of our operational arms length bodies (“ALBs”). These include the three main areas that the Department oversees in England: the National Health Service (“NHS”), public health, and adult social care.
4. NHSE has day-to-day responsibility for the NHS in England. and supports and oversees the commissioning of health services and, since its merger with NHS Improvement (“NHSI”), has responsibility for specific oversight of healthcare providers.
5. The DHSC also has a significant role to play in the development of policy in relation to mental health and patient safety and recognises that where care falls short, all involved, including the policy teams at departmental level, must learn from any failings or mistakes in order to improve care across the NHS and protect

patients in the future. Every patient deserves to be treated in an environment where they receive high quality care and are treated with dignity and respect. In addition, their families and carers deserve to be reassured that their loved ones are safe and are receiving kind, compassionate and therapeutic care in accordance with the current legislation, codes of practice and therapeutic guidance.

6. The Department remains determined to work with others to transform and improve mental health care and will continue working to ensure people right across the country receive the care they need. It looks forward to assisting the Inquiry and to endeavour to promote safe, high-quality care for anyone who requires treatment for their mental health.

ANNE STUDD KC

21 August 2024