



Department
of Health

Philip Dunne MP
Minister of State for Health

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Mr Alan P Walsh
Area Coroner – Manchester West
HM Coroner's Court
Paderborn House
Howell Croft North
Bolton BL1 1QY

24 January 2017

Dear Mr Walsh

Thank you for your letter of 11 November 2016, following the inquest into the death of Ms Karen Ann Thorne. I was sorry to hear of her death and wish to extend my condolences to her family.

Some of the matters you raise are for the Trust. For the concerns you raise about the shortage of radiologists, Department of Health officials have contacted Health Education England about its plans to recruit more trainees into radiology. I understand Health Education England is working in partnership with NHS England and a range of professional bodies to develop a shared vision and strategy for the diagnostics workforce. Clinical Radiology is a priority area.

Clinical radiology includes the sub-specialty of neuroradiology, and has been one of the five large specialty reviews undertaken by Health Education England in 2016. Health Education England is committed to recruiting more trainees into diagnostics, including radiologists, and the number of commissioned trainees, in clinical radiology, has increased from 1,053 in 2013/14 to 1,144 in 2016/17. This includes an increase of 32 in training posts for 2016. However, increases this year in training numbers will not have an impact on available consultant workforce supply until 2023 at the earliest.

HEE is working with service providers and commissioners on alternative workforce models for delivery of diagnostic services. This includes enabling radiographers and sonographers to develop advanced practitioner skills and career structures to undertake reporting thereby freeing radiologist time for more specialised work.

I hope that this information is useful. Thank you for bringing the circumstances of Ms Thorne's death to our attention.

Yours sincerely
Philip Dunne
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