



Crwner Gogledd Cymru (Dwyrain a Chanol)
North Wales (East and Central) Coroner

FAO Lynne Neagle AM
Chair of Committee into Perinatal Mental Health

18 August 2017

Dear Ms Neagle,

Thank you for your letter of the 7th of August.

I am very pleased to note the inquiry by the National Assembly regarding perinatal mental as you have of course already been made aware of the inquest which I conducted in relation to the death of Mr Stephen Priestley's daughter Shanice.

Whilst it would be inappropriate for me to make comment upon matters which may stray into the political arena I can confirm that in the course of my investigation it became clear that there were considerable shortcomings in the provision of support to young women such as Shanice at an incredibly difficult time in their lives. I raised the concerns of both myself and her family with the Health Board in relation to the action which was being taken by them to address the problems and they provided me with certain reassurances around recruitment and the formation of a specialist panel to seek to assist with these problems.

Once the inquest had been concluded they continued (at my request) for a short period to update me on a monthly basis in relation to this matter and as a result it was not necessary for me to issue a regulation 28 report for the prevention of future deaths. In general terms however my conclusion at the time was that more work, resources and personnel would be required if a robust service was to be established and maintained and I welcome the committee's interest in and hopefully their support for such a service.

It must always be remembered that in cases such as Shanice's there was the loss of not one, but two lives and I firmly believe that had help and support been available, then her death and that of her unborn child may have been avoidable.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely,


JOHN GITTINS
HM Senior Coroner for North Wales (East & Central)

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