

Speech: Who cares for our NHS carers?

I want to talk today about Lauren Phillips.

Lauren wasn't always going to be doctor.

She was a talented violinist. She had been invited to join the Bristol Symphony Orchestra. She had huge talents and amazing opportunities. She had choices.

She also had a powerful vocation. She came from an NHS family. Her father is a doctor. Her uncle and aunt are doctors. Her mother works for the NHS.

Lauren's father, Jonathan, said: "She chose medicine over music because she had a strong sense of social justice and felt she could help people and give something back to society."

So that vocation, plus her remarkable talents, led her to becoming a doctor at Southmead Hospital in Bristol, a hospital that I know well.

But the job took its toll. The hours. The work-life balance. The pressures.

It wore her down. Gradually, Lauren became more withdrawn, and then one day she didn't turn up for work.

Her car was found a 100 miles away on a beach in Devon. Her body has never been found.

Lauren's father said:

During the short time she worked for it the NHS succeeded in sapping Lauren's strength. Undermining her self-confidence. Attacking her professionalism. And devaluing her commitment.

It was not there to give her the help and support she needed to stay alive.

He's right. And I want to apologise. As Secretary of State, and on behalf of the entire leadership of the NHS, I'm sorry.

I want to say sorry to Lauren's parents, and the families of every other member of the NHS family, who we didn't do enough to help when they needed us most.

We can never know all the reasons why someone decides to take their own life. But, hand on heart, it's impossible to say we did enough to care for Lauren.

Across the NHS, we don't do enough to care for our carers. And for that I am sorry.

Now, I don't want anyone to point fingers and blame people.

That's not what Lauren's father wants either. He knows first-hand the unique difficulties of being on the NHS frontline. But he also believes, as I believe, that "you can't look after your patients, unless you look after your own wellbeing".

Instead, there is something else I want us to take from this tragedy. I want us to take resolve to make the changes needed so we can care for our carers, not just in pockets, but throughout the NHS.

So I welcome [today's report from Health Education England](#). And I look forward to working with the NHS to put the recommendations into practice.

There's no silver bullet. But just because there's no one solution, let's not fall into thinking there's no solution.

There are 3 things in particular from the report I want to draw out.

First, something that Lauren's father said has really stuck in my head.

Jonathan believes just being able to play the violin with an orchestra would have made an enormous difference to her mental and emotional wellbeing. But Lauren couldn't commit to a few hours a week for rehearsals because she never knew what hours she was going to be working.

I felt that was shocking, and desperately sad. Rota practices like these are antediluvian.

I have doctors in my family who sometimes can't make an incredibly important event, not because they're unexpectedly stuck caring for a patient whose life is on the line – that happens and is an important part of the job – but because the 'rota says no'.

Now, we've changed the rules at a national level to allow for modern, smart rotas. Well-led trusts have embraced those changes, but they haven't been rolled out everywhere. And that has got to change.

Second, the report makes it clear that we need to place as much importance on the care of the carers as the patients.

I firmly believe this is the right thing to do.

Adam Kay recently said that working in the NHS: "You're forced to build an emotional forcefield because no one is caring for the carers."

He's right. I pay tribute to the work Adam has done to highlight some of these problems, using humour to make people listen. I was actually reading Adam's book when I became Health Secretary, and it's shaped how I think of things.

But I didn't reach the last chapter until after I was in this job. And the anguish and the pain in that last chapter hit me like a kick in the stomach.

So thank you Adam. Keep fighting the good fight. Because no one should have to build an emotional forcefield around themselves. And no one can do their job properly if they do.

And the third thing I want to draw out is that, to recruit and retain more staff, we need to change the culture of the NHS.

Why is it that when 1.3 million people have devoted their lives to caring for others, the collective system is uncaring to some? We need to change a culture of carrying on regardless, not asking for help, not looking for signs of burn-out among our colleagues, thinking everything's OK as long as someone turns up for work and does their job.

That isn't good enough.

No one, no government, no party owns the NHS. We're merely custodians, looking after it, to pass it on, fit for the future, to the next generation.

I feel that duty every morning when I awake. Because I care. I care deeply about the NHS.

It's been there for me, and my children. It was there for my grandparents.

Staff at Southmead Hospital, where Lauren worked, saved the life of my sister.

The tragedy of what happened to Lauren has a personal poignancy for me, because Lauren could have been one of the A&E doctors when my sister was brought in with a serious head injury. And my whole family owe a huge debt of gratitude to Lauren's colleagues.

It horrifies me that those brave doctors and nurses, who face trauma every day, could be going through what Lauren went through.

So, throughout the NHS we must act, and I promise you, I will do all I can to protect and pass on this great British institution to future generations in a better condition than I found it.

And the only way we can do that is by caring better for our carers.

By looking after the people who look after us.

By making sure that when somebody needs help, there's someone they can turn to, someone they can talk to.

By valuing our NHS staff.

By building a just, caring culture.

Apologising when we get it wrong, and learning from our mistakes.

Because the NHS isn't run by people, the NHS is people.

And I will do everything in my power to give you the support you deserve.

News story: RAF Engineer becomes first ever UK female military three-star Commander

The RAF has today announced that it has appointed its first ever female three-star officer. Sue Gray, a Royal Air Force engineer, has been promoted to the rank of Air Marshal, making her the most senior female military officer in the British Armed Forces, and once more proving that gender is no obstacle for a career in the military.

Air Marshal Gray will shortly take up the role of Director General of the Defence Safety Authority. Here she will lead the way in overseeing the independent organisation, empowered by charter from the Defence Secretary, to undertake the roles of regulator, accident investigation and Defence Authority for safety.

56-year old Air Marshal Gray joined the Royal Air Force in August 1985 and has worked in a variety of roles within the RAF including: engineering on VC10 Transport aircraft, an extensive period with the Joint Helicopter Force during which time she deployed on both Gulf Wars, tours within the Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S) organisation, leading the Combat Clothing Project Team and more recently leading the department delivering engineering and logistics support for fighter, training and Remotely Piloted aircraft for all of the Armed Services.

In June 2016, she was appointed Air Officer Commanding Number 38 Group with responsibility for circa 3,000 personnel, across multiple disciplines (including Engineering, Logistics, Aviation Medicine & Catering). Air Marshal Gray takes up her new appointment in March.

Air Marshal Sue Gray said:

I am incredibly proud to be the most senior female military officer in the British Armed Forces. Throughout my career I have been fortunate to have a job that was more of a way of life, working with likeminded people in an exciting and rewarding environment. As an Engineer Officer in the Royal Air Force I am part of a team, who succeed together. I have been privileged to lead highly successful teams, military and civil service, through some challenging situations on operations and back at home.

She added:

As the RAF's Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths champion, I have a lot of contact with the younger generation – who never fail to impress me and fill me with confidence for the future.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This is an historic moment as we see the most senior female appointment in the British military. Air Marshal Gray's career shows that with hard work, skill and determination, gender is no obstacle to achieving the top ranks in the Armed Forces.

Having served in Iraq as the Chief Engineer for the Joint Helicopter Force, I hope that young girls will look up to Air Marshal Gray and see that a career in the Armed Forces will offer them every opportunity to succeed, irrespective of their gender and background.

Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier said:

I offer my most sincere personal congratulations to Air Marshal Gray on her promotion and I wish her every success in her important new role leading the Defence Safety Authority. Her promotion is proper recognition of her outstanding contribution to the RAF and Defence, as an engineer, as a leader and as a superb role model.

[News story: Call for evidence: An inspection of the handling of complaints by the Home Office's Borders, Immigration and Citizenship System \(BICS\)](#)

My statutory remit includes monitoring and making recommendations for improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of the Home Office's handling of complaints about its performance of its asylum, immigration, nationality and customs functions, and I have just begun an inspection on this topic.

I am now inviting anyone with relevant knowledge and experience to write to

me by 6 March 2019 with their evidence.

How well a public body handles complaint about the service it provides, and about the conduct of its staff, is rightly regarded as a key performance measure, and has a significant impact on public perceptions of its work. Good complaint handling means being customer-focused, being open and accountable, acting fairly and proportionately, and putting things right, and I am keen to hear to whether its 'customers' believe the Home Office is achieving these standards.

Please note that I am not empowered to investigate individual complaints or to intervene with the Home Office on behalf of complainants. There are other avenues for this, such as the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. However, I am interested in individual cases to the extent that they illustrate or point to systemic problems.

Please email the Chief Inspector: chiefinspector@icibi.gov.uk

or write to:

ICIBI
5th Floor
Globe House
89 Eccleston Square
London SW1V 1PN

Please note that submissions may be cited in the final report.

[Press release: Government urges businesses to prepare for changes to animal imports and exports in a no-deal Brexit](#)

New guidance has been published today to ensure import and export trade in animals, animal products, fish, food and feed can continue in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

This guidance will help to minimise disruption for users and allow the continued movement of goods, while helping to maintain our biosecurity, food safety and high standards of animal welfare.

In the event of no deal, to continue to export to the EU we will need to be listed by the EU as a third country. Negotiations are under way to secure

this listing and we are confident it will be in place before we leave the EU.

In a no-deal exit the process for exporting and importing the products above but will change in the following ways:

- As we've said previously, businesses exporting all animals, animal products and fish to the EU will now need to apply for an Export Health Certificate (EHC) before they export. This will make them the same as businesses who export these goods to the rest of the world who already have to apply for EHCs. They will also need to make sure their trade route passes through a Border Inspection Posts when entering Europe as well as being aware of wider customs requirements. The [guidance](#) and certificates are available for download from today ahead of use on exit day.
- For those businesses importing to the UK, there will not be any new checks or requirements but importers will need to notify authorities using a new process. Businesses will need to use a new system called [the Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System' \(IPAFFS\)](#). This will help to minimise disruption for users, allow the continued movement of goods and help to maintain our biosecurity and food safety.
- Businesses importing animals and animal products from within the EU will need to use a separate interim system until the summer.

Food and Animal Welfare Minister David Rutley said:

Our top priority remains delivering a negotiated deal, but it is the job of a responsible Government to ensure we are prepared for all scenarios, including no deal.

If you or your business export or import animals and animal products or imports high risk food and feed you will need to prepare for a number of changes in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Our new guidance pages on gov.uk make clear what you need to do to be ready to continue to trade after we leave the EU.

To summarise the [guidance published today](#), those who export animals, animal products, fish, should:

- Download [EHC certificates](#);
- Arrange inspections by an authorised signatory for the EHC, such as an Official Veterinarian (OV), in advance of exports;
- Familiarise themselves with a new [helpful tool](#) to find authorised signatories in England, Scotland and Wales
- Review the current list of EU Border Inspection Posts on [GOV.UK](#) to help plan their journeys; and

- If exporting most fish and fish products between the UK and EU you will need a catch certificate. Guidance is available at [exporting and importing fish if there's no Brexit deal](#).

Those who import animals, animal products, fish, food and feed should:

- Read [the guidance](#) about how to import when the UK leaves the EU;
- If importing high-risk food and feed not of animal origin, ensure that those consignments enter the UK at a Designated Point of Entry (DPE) which are available on the [Food Standards Agency's website](#);
- If importing from the rest of the world via the EU, make sure that those consignments enter the UK at a Border Inspection Post (BIP) or a Designated Point of Entry (DPE); and
- If importing most fish and fish products between the UK and EU you will need a catch certificate Guidance is available at [exporting and importing fish if there's no Brexit deal](#).

The IPAFFS system, which will replicate the EU Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) process currently used by importers to notify authorities of imports of animal products, and high-risk food and feed from non-EU countries, will be operational for businesses importing from outside the EU on Day 1. Businesses importing animals and animal products from within the EU will need to use a separate interim system until the summer.

[News story: Civil news: backdating powers now available for civil cases](#)

Regulations giving the Director of Legal Aid Casework (DLAC) the discretion to backdate the effect of certain legal aid determinations are now in force.

We have also closed the 'out of hours' service. This service can no longer be used to obtain urgent determinations from caseworkers on emergency representation.

When can the backdating power be used?

The new backdating power gives the LAA a discretion to backdate an:

It will only be possible to use backdating powers where applications are made as soon as reasonably practicable and we are satisfied that:

- it was in the interests of justice for the services to be carried out before the date of the determination
- the services could not have been carried out as controlled work

For determinations made on review or following an appeal DLAC can also consider whether it is appropriate to backdate having regard to all the circumstances. This includes information available to the provider when the application for services or a review was made.

How do I request a backdated determination?

When applying for legal aid that you want backdated you should include this request in the merits report on CCMS. You should provide the following information:

- date you want the determination to take effect from
- brief justification on why it is appropriate to backdate, with reference to the requirements in the regulations

You can also ask for the effect of a determination to be backdated at any point by submitting a case enquiry. This should include the information set out above.

Are there any transitional provisions?

Yes, the new power is only available for applications for a determination submitted on or after 20 February 2019 i.e. after midnight on 19 February 2019.

This includes applications for an amendment made on or after this date, even if the original certificate was issued earlier.

Are you issuing guidance about this power?

We have updated relevant Client and Cost Management System user guides to reflect the new process.

When will the 'out of hours' service close?

The last day of operation for this service was 19 February 2019. Providers are no longer able to contact caseworkers to obtain a determination using this service.

Further information

[Civil Legal Aid \(Procedure\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2019 \(SI 2019/130\)](#) – the regulation making these changes

[CCMS website: managing live cases](#) – to download 'Backdating Powers' guidance