



October 2023

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the guilty verdict in the trial of former neonatal nurse, Lucy Letby.

I would like to send my deepest sympathy to all the parents and families impacted by the horrendous events that took place at the Countess of Chester Hospital.

Letby was charged with the murder of seven babies and the attempted murder of ten other babies between June 2015 and June 2016 while she worked as a neonatal nurse at the Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. The jury found her guilty of seven counts of murder and seven counts of attempted murder, and not guilty of two counts of attempted murder. Verdicts were not reached on six counts of attempted murder. As you may have seen, the Crown Prosecution Service is seeking a retrial on one count of attempted murder.

Following the verdict, the Government is setting up an independent, statutory inquiry to ensure vital lessons are learned and to provide answers to the parents and families impacted. The inquiry will investigate the wider circumstances around what happened at the Countess of Chester Hospital, including the handling of concerns and governance. It will also look at what actions were taken by managers, regulators and the wider NHS, and the inquiry will have the powers to compel witnesses to give evidence.

Furthermore, NHS England is taking a number of immediate steps including reiterating to staff the availability of speak up and whistleblowing processes; the need for systems to respond swiftly and robustly to any concerns raised; and the importance of suitable monitoring and follow up with appropriate governance and leadership. It is critical that families have confidence in the quality and safety of maternity and neonatal services, both now and in the future.

As part of the continued response to this case, the Police have arrangements in place to support families who have been impacted, including psychological support and family liaison officers. The Trust has arrangements in place for those families who are users of the Trust's neonatal and transitional care services, and it is also providing parents with opportunities to discuss any issues or concerns.

Cheshire Police has launched an investigation into corporate manslaughter at the Countess of Chester Hospital, which will determine whether any criminality took place in decision making by senior leadership in relation to the cases involving Lucy Letby between June 2015 and June 2016. I understand that Cheshire Police is not investigating any individuals for gross negligence manslaughter at this stage.

I understand the concerns about the cost of Lucy Letby's trial, and the legal aid that she has received towards her defence. However, this reflects the significant complexity of the trial, the



Chris Heaton-Harris

Member of Parliament for Daventry
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 7048

number of charges and Lucy Letby's decision to contest those charges. It is important to recognise that anyone facing a Crown Court trial is eligible for legal aid, but that applicants are required to pay contributions up to the entire cost of the defence if they are convicted of at least one offence they have been charged with.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY