

Mr Bedford

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Inspector [redacted]
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06 August 2014

Mr P Bedford
Senior Coroner for Berkshire
Yeomanry House
131 Castle Hill
Reading Berkshire
RG1 7TA

Dear Mr Bedford.

Ref: PJB Church

I am writing in response to your request for explanation about what action Thames Valley Police proposes to take following receipt of the Regulation 28 report from Assistant Coroner Mr Ravi Sidhu, who presided over the inquest into the death of Mr Stephen Church.

Thames Valley Police were not directly involved in the original incident involving Mr Church, his detention under S136 Mental Health Act nor his subsequent care prior to his death on 13th May 2011. However, as the force lead in Mental Health for Thames Valley Police I take responsibility for co-ordinating the publication of an interagency joint working protocol for managing mental health in the Thames Valley Area. This protocol was subject to discussion during the inquest.

The interagency protocol is drafted in consultation with all the statutory partner organisations and once completed is signed by the Chief Executives or Heads of Service for each agency.

Re-drafting of the current protocol has been waiting for the publication of the Crisis Care Concordat from the Department of Health and actually also the findings of this inquest. The new draft relating to detention under S136 MHA is now in the consultation phase and will take into account all the elements of the incident that resulted in the death of Mr Church.

In addition to this the Chief Executive of Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, Mr Julian Emms, has already consulted with relevant organisations to agree a

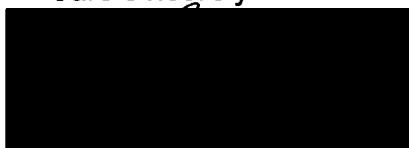
local declaration and action plan to meet the expectations of the Crisis Care Concordat. Thames Valley Police will be signatories to this declaration once agreed.

The specific concern raised by Mr Sidhu that related to the protocol suggests that there was insufficient knowledge and understanding about it among staff members of the psychiatric liaison service and the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Thames Valley Police has no direct responsibility or influence for their understanding as responsibility for dissemination and training of the protocol lies with the individual organisations concerned. However, once the amended version has been agreed, Thames Valley Police is committed to work together with the other organisations named within the Regulation 28 report to assist with joint training and awareness. Our own staff will be informed of the need to ensure that other organisations are aware of its existence whenever an incident occurs and to support partner agencies in understanding the individual responsibilities.

While British Transport Police have indicated that they are unable to be signatories to individual protocols as they are a National Force, Thames Valley Police will make every effort to ensure their awareness and understanding of the Thames Valley protocol.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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Thames Valley Police Mental Health Lead