

27

April 2018

Mr Andrew A Haigh
HM Senior Coroner
Coroner's Office
No1 Staffordshire Place
Stafford
ST16 2LP



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Secretary of State

Dear Mr Haigh,

Thank you for providing me with a copy of your Regulation 28 report of 27 February regarding the death of Mr Adrian King in Egypt and for alerting me to the difficulties Mr King's family say they experienced in communicating with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

Consular staff were in daily contact with Mr King's family from 25 May 2017. But I accept that more effort should have been made to reach out to the family more quickly once they were notified of Mr King's admittance to Al Kouter hospital in Hurgada on 22 May 2017. The Consular Regional Operations Manager and consular staff have since been reminded of the policy guidance and best practice and to ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner for all cases. If the family wish to provide more detail of the dates and times where they were not able to get hold of a member of the Consular team we will of course investigate further.

In line with our consular policy, the support to Mr King's family from our staff in Cairo and London included contacting the hospital, insurance company and Mr King's father, brother and friend. On 28 May, our embassy's Consular Warden visited Mr King and sought updates from the hospital manager and the doctors overseeing Mr King's care at El Queseri hospital. I understand that these updates were shared with Mr King's family.

From reviewing the details of these contacts it is clear that the insurance company's refusal to cover Mr King's medical costs stem from a pre-existing condition that they told us had not been declared to them. As consular staff are not medically trained they are not able to change decisions made by insurance companies or hospitals. So it appears that even if FCO officials had been in contact with the family sooner, it would not have affected the decisions made by the hospital and insurance company in Mr King's case.

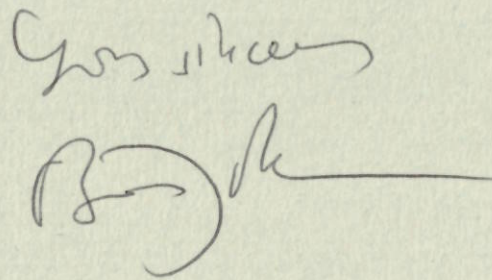
Whether or not consular officers can influence treatment decisions in foreign hospitals, it is very important to me that British people are able to make contact with our consular staff when they need our support. Since July 2017 all consular calls to

the FCO in London and to British embassies and consulates are answered at one of our in-house Consular Contact Centres.

These centres provide a 24-hour, seven day a week service for British people anywhere in the world, usually for the cost of a local or national phone call. They will directly help the caller if possible, or ask a member of the consular staff in the relevant country to provide in-person help when that is necessary. They can also provide information and advice about the consular services available at our embassies and consulates.

The FCO's Consular Strategy 2016-2020¹ sets out our commitment to reducing the number of preventable consular cases before they happen, and helping to minimise the risk to British people overseas. One of our current prevention priorities is to encourage an increased proportion of British travellers and expats to take out appropriate travel insurance before they travel. This includes using communications campaigns to sensitise British people to the need to purchase insurance that is valid for the activities they are undertaking overseas. We are also strengthening our relationships with the insurance industry, and identifying opportunities for joint-working to improve the insurance offer for British nationals.

For more details on the standard of consular assistance that family members can expect following the hospitalisation of a loved one overseas, please refer to our guide² for British people overseas.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Boris Johnson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

THE RT HON BORIS JOHNSON MP

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/519687/Consular_Services_2016-2020.pdf

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584047/FCO_Brits_Abroad_web130117.pdf