

Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths – Karen Jane Bingham



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Authorising Officer		
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Executive Summary:

This report has been written in response to actions outlined within section 5 of HM Assistant Coroner’s regulation 28 report following the investigation and inquest into the death touching Karen Jane Bingham.

HM Assistant Coroner’s request for response to key areas of concern as follows:

1. Police training in respect of mental health does not provide information as to the type of behaviours associated with common mental health conditions.
2. Those responsible for the dispatch of emergency services in the police and ambulance services do not have a sufficient understanding of the triaging and dispatching processes used by each other’s service nor their response times.

Surrey Police response

(In respect of the order in which the points appear above):

1. Guidance is currently available via an APP on all officers’ Mobile Data Terminals entitled “Mental Health Guide”. This will be updated to ensure the comprehensive section on signs and indicators of mental health conditions is at the top of the page and the first thing available for officers to refer to. This will be closely followed with contact details for further assistance and advice which includes out of hours service available for all officers when faced with a potential mental health situation. The guidance also includes initial engagement advice, flowcharts detailing process and advice for officers who are considering sectioning an individual.

The Force is also publishing further details in relation to the roll out of mental health first aiders via the Occupational Health Unit which will give a clear list of support available to officers to help them identify and deal with mental health issues both with their own staff and when dealing with the public. Line managers are also to be delivered training on recognising mental health conditions which they will cascade to their own teams.

The Contact Centre (where all 101 and 99 calls into Force are received) are including a one day training session for all of their staff on common mental health conditions later in 2020 to help those dealing with the public over the telephone recognise signs and symptoms.

There is a revised online Mental Health training package which is to be mandated for all officers and staff to refresh their knowledge and skills in this area, including recognising common behaviours in those with mental health conditions. This will feature an input from SECamb's Clinical Operations Manager on NHS Pathways and response times. This will also be supplemented by training input at officers' annual officer safety refresher training during the autumn.

2. In the summer and autumn of 2018 (since Karen's death) all staff from the Contact Centre and Force Control Room (resource dispatch) received training from South East Coast Ambulance (SECamb's). This included input on NHS Pathways (as described during the inquest), Ambulance Response Programme (categories of response and associated time frames) and their Operational Business Plan Surge (which protects calls with the highest clinical need where there is excess demand).

To supplement the training a number of staff "exchanges" between Surrey Police and SECamb's to gain a better understanding of the roles of their respective contact and dispatch functions.

A quarterly meeting is held between the senior managers of Surrey Police's Force Control Room, and SECamb's Emergency Operations Centre to discuss any matters which may impact respective services including any themes from incident reviews (albeit these meetings have been postponed during the current Covid-19 pandemic).

A new Decision Support Flowchart, to help police officers and Contact Centre staff identify the appropriate NHS Pathway when dealing with members of the public (e.g. 999, 111, GP etc), has been agreed across Surrey, Sussex and Kent with a planned implementation date of October 2020.