



Maritime & Coastguard Agency

Bay 2/03
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Tel: +44 (0)20 3817 2064
Email: [REDACTED]@mcga.gov.uk

Mr Andrew J Cox
Acting Senior Coroner for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly
The New Lodge
Newquay Road
Penmount
Truro
TR4 9AA

Your ref: 12879
Our ref: CE 16/2020

2 October 2020

By email only: cornwallcoroner@cornwall.gov.uk

Dear Mr Cox

Thank you for your letter of 7 August to [REDACTED] enclosing the Regulation 28 Preventing Future Deaths report for Anthony John Williamson who tragically lost his life in a kayaking accident off the coast of Cornwall in May this year.

In response to your causes for concern, I can reassure you that since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic, there has been no reduction in the service HM Coastguard provide for search and rescue purposes. Our network of Coastguard Operations Centres maintained emergency provision for the UK coast throughout national lockdown and we continue to do so. COVID secure environments are in place both in the control rooms and for our volunteer Coastguard Rescue Teams when responding to incidents. These arrangements are continually reviewed in line with updated guidance and are closely monitored. Working with contractors who provide the Search and Rescue Helicopter capability for UK Search and Rescue, we have ensured appropriate procedures have been implemented and followed, linking with our own clinical Governance Board requirements.

I am aware that because of the pandemic a risk-based approach has been taken by the RNLI to the deployment of lifeguards. However, the RNLI who provide most lifeguard services in the UK will be able to address this point in more detail. The RNLI maintained communication and shared plans throughout this transition period with HMCG regarding the provision of a lifeguard service and their arrangements with Local Authorities.

HM Coastguard have been working closely since the start of the pandemic with Surf Life Saving GB (SLSGB) who run a programme of Beach Safety services that range from the full lifeguarding provision to providing the public with advice about how to keep safe, by raising awareness of the risks. The SLSGB volunteers are providing a service in some areas in the evenings after RNLI/other lifeguards have left for the day as an



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additional facility for the Coastguard (RNLI lifeguards normally work from 10am to 6pm and only at certain times of the year).

To help provide extra surveillance as a Category 1 responder throughout the busy summer season, we have been deploying more HM Coastguard vehicle patrols to high risk areas to keep a look out for any incidents at the coast enabling a swift response to search and rescue if required.

Also working with the National Water Safety Forum, (HMCG is a member) guidance was produced providing information¹ for beach and landowners to help maintain the safety of the public and staff on beaches during COVID-19.

Information about beaches, the facilities available and safety measures are the responsibility of the landowners, the majority of which are local councils and the National Trust. Details about the facilities available and safety measures in place can be found on most beach owners' websites.

The MCA fully supports your aim to prevent future deaths from drowning on the beaches in Cornwall. We want the public to enjoy them safely by taking personal responsibility by having an awareness of the risks.

Yours sincerely



Assistant Director
Her Majesty's Coastguard Policy & Standards

¹ <https://nationalwatersafety.org.uk/advice-and-information/covid-19/>