

IN THE SURREY CORONER'S COURT

IN THE MATTER OF:

**The Inquest Touching the Death of Christopher Dominic BOUGHTON
A Regulation 28 Report – Action to Prevent Future Deaths**

	<p>THIS REPORT IS BEING SENT TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• [REDACTED], Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, National Police Coordination Centre, 2nd Floor, 10 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0NN – [REDACTED]
1	<p>CORONER Ms Anna Loxton, HM Assistant Coroner for Surrey</p>
2	<p>CORONER'S LEGAL POWERS I make this report under paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 5 to The Coroners and Justice Act 2009.</p>
3	<p>INVESTIGATION and INQUEST The inquest into the death of Christopher Dominic Boughton was opened on 16th December 2021. It was resumed and evidence was heard on 7th and 8th July 2022, when it was concluded.</p> <p>I found the medical cause of death to be:</p> <p>1a. Suspension</p> <p>I determined that Mr Boughton took his own life by hanging in a wooded location in Oxshott, Surrey, at some point between being dropped off in the vicinity by a taxi on the morning of 3rd November 2021 and when he was found deceased by friends searching for him on the morning of 5th November 2021. He was reported missing to Police by his Partner and subsequently by his Father just after midnight on 4th November 2021. He was found by friends searching known areas that he liked to visit in the vicinity of where his mobile phone indicated he was located.</p>
4	<p>CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DEATH</p>

	<p>On the morning of 3rd November 2021, Mr Boughton left his home in Lambeth, seemingly to attend his office in London for work. He had told his partner the previous day that he felt he was having a breakdown and that he had no way out of this situation. He did not arrive at work and was reported missing by his Partner and then his Father just after midnight on 4th November 2021. The investigation was assigned to the Metropolitan Police Service (“MPS”).</p> <p>On the evening of 4th November 2021, phone cell site data showed Mr Boughton’s mobile phone to be in the Leatherhead area. An email was sent by MPS to Surrey Police (“SP”) using non-urgent email addresses, attaching a map showing an area measuring 3,126 metres in Leatherhead, Surrey, and MPS tasked SP to “send a unit to search the area”. SP deployed a unit to check car parks and train stations in the area but without success.</p> <p>At 04.52am, MPS were able to ascertain from financial enquiries into Mr Boughton’s accounts and resulting enquiries with Uber that Mr Boughton had been dropped off by taxi at Fair oak Lane at the Junction with The Avenue in Oxshott on the morning of 3rd November 2021. Again, this information was sent by MPS to SP via non-urgent email addresses, but was responded to within 10 minutes, with SP iCAD being re-opened and updated at 5.06am with the location where Mr Boughton had been dropped off and a request to check this area.</p> <p>MPS indicated they considered the investigation should now be transferred to SP, but SP awaited the written transfer form from MPS. Family and friends of Mr Boughton organised a search of the area, with knowledge of his known favourite locations, and he was found, obviously deceased, at 8am, prior to SP undertaking a further search.</p>
5	<p>CORONER’S CONCERNS</p> <p>The evidence of Detective Inspector [REDACTED], Tactical and Policy Lead for MPS, highlighted a concern that in tasking and transferring investigations between bordering Police forces, there is a lack of ownership and discussion between officers at Inspector level or above between forces, which would ensure effective tasking and, when necessary, smooth transfer of investigations. Requests were made by email and CAD, without discussions between officers.</p> <p>This was confirmed in the evidence of Detective Chief Constable [REDACTED] of SP, who stated that from her perspective there was a lack of feedback from SP to manage MPS’ expectations regarding a search for Mr Boughton.</p> <p>In respect of the initial search, this meant that SP did not advise MPS that they considered the search request unfeasible given the extent of land outlined and the limitations on searching wooded areas during winter night hours.</p> <p>In respect of the request for a further search with more precise location detailed provided, MPS did not disclose all of the information available</p>

	<p>regarding Family and friends potentially being able to assist in finding the location based upon where Mr Boughton used to visit. There was no feedback from SP regarding when a search might take place, leading MPS to consider deploying its own search team.</p> <p>Whilst contact telephone numbers for Officers at MPS and SP were provided on the CAD, there is no evidence that direct contact was made between the forces to discuss the investigation and how best to move this forward. A SP officer recorded on the CAD that until the transfer document was received from MPS, SP were unable to arrange a search or contact the specialist search team.</p> <p>Whilst DI ██████ gave evidence that he is aware the NPCC is reviewing issuing guidance around tasking and transfers between bordering Police forces, at present there appears to be no requirement for appropriate Police Officers to make telephone contact between forces to ensure effective tasking and transferring, in addition to the required written requests. This means an opportunity to discuss and pass on all relevant information between forces may be lost.</p> <p>The MATTERS OF CONCERN are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The lack of any detailed requirement for telephone discussion between appropriate police officers on sending through written tasking requests and considering transfers of investigation means that an opportunity to discuss and ensure smooth transition and passing on of relevant information is lost. This may cause delay in effective action being taken by the tasked Force, or (in the case of transfers) by the Force to whom it is considered a transfer will be made. <p>Consideration should be given to whether any steps can be taken to address the above concerns.</p>
6	<p>ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN</p> <p>In my opinion action should be taken to prevent future deaths and I believe that the people listed in paragraph one above have the power to take such action.</p>
7	<p>YOUR RESPONSE</p> <p>You are under a duty to respond to this report within 56 days of its date; I may extend that period on request.</p>

	<p>Your response must contain details of action taken or proposed to be taken, setting out the timetable for such action. Otherwise you must explain why no action is proposed.</p>
8	<p>COPIES</p> <p>I have sent a copy of this report to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. See paragraph 1 above2. [REDACTED]3. [REDACTED], Legal Department, Metropolitan Police Service4. [REDACTED], Weightmans LLP for Surrey Police5. The Chief Coroner <p>In addition to this report, I am under a duty to send the Chief Coroner a copy of your response.</p> <p>The Chief Coroner may publish either or both in a complete or redacted or summary form. He may send a copy of this report to any person who, he believes, may find it useful or of interest. You may make representations to me at the time of your response, about the release or the publication of your response by the Chief Coroner.</p>
	<p>Signed:</p> <p>ANNA LOXTON</p> <p>DATED this 29th day of July 2022</p>