



**METROPOLITAN  
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Date: 06.01.2023

I am the Deputy Assistant Commissioner for the Directorate of Professionalism in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). I write to provide the response on behalf of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to the matters of concern addressed to the MPS in the Report to Prevent Future Deaths dated 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022.

On behalf of the MPS may I first of all express my sincere condolences to Mr Brown's family. Our thoughts and sympathies are very much with them.

Matter of Concern 1

**There is insufficient reference to other road users and pedestrians and their safety in the Metropolitan Police Service Police Driver & Vehicle Policy - Vehicle and Equipment Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).**

Response

The MPS Police Driver and Vehicle Policy – Vehicle and Equipment SOP provides guidance to officers and staff on the use of vehicles and equipment provided by the MPS and supports safe driving within the MPS. It details clearly the step-by-step processes that should be undertaken when using MPS vehicles and the equipment carried either in or on the vehicle, and informs officers / staff of any risks associated with the process. Although this SOP is predominantly focussed on the required actions of MPS officers and staff when using police vehicles and equipment, in relation to the use of warning equipment (blue lights, sirens, headlamp flashers), guidance is provided to officers and staff concerning the safety of other road users and pedestrians.

Specifically, section 1.55 of the MPS Police Driver and Vehicle Policy – Vehicle and Equipment SOP contains the following statements:

*'The use of warning equipment does not give a police vehicle the right of way but the driver may, however, take advantage of any precedence offered by other road users and pedestrians, if it is safe to do so.'*

I can confirm that the MPS have carefully considered the Coroner's concerns and whether there are any helpful amendments which we could make to the policy. However, on this occasion it was agreed that any amendment would make the policy too prescriptive. As outlined in the evidence to the Court during the inquest, police driving is based on the Highway Code and Road Craft, both of which are focussed on the safety of road users and pedestrians. A delicate balance must therefore be struck as to the level of detail within the MPS policy to ensure that it is not unworkable.

## Matter of Concern 2

**The Metropolitan Police Service Police Driver & Vehicle Policy - Vehicle and Equipment Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is too open to interpretation in the section on "silent approach" in section 1.55 Warning equipment – (sirens, blue lights and headlamp flasher) and the first three paragraphs of section 1.57 Blue Lights. The scope or threshold of the exception in the two sections is not clear and it is also not clear whether the exception in the latter section applied to response drivers.**

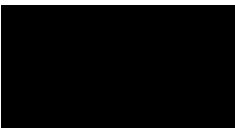
Police drivers deal with a wide range of incidents on a daily basis, each with their own set of unique circumstances resulting in drivers facing numerous decisions regarding their driving response choices and the different methods that can be used, whether that be the use of full warning equipment, part warning equipment or a silent approach. **The use of this equipment cannot be prescriptive as the decision whether to make use of any exemptions or use warning equipment will always rest with the driver who is responsible for ensuring the vehicle is driven in a safe manner in line with their training and skill level.**

It would not be possible to provide a prescriptive list to police drivers of all foreseeable circumstances that it would be appropriate to use a 'silent approach'. Accordingly the threshold is not set in the policy because it would restrict officers in using their professional judgement, during dynamic situations, as to the most appropriate manner of driving when responding to an incident.

The use of exemptions (observing speed limits, observing keep left / right signs, complying with traffic lights (including pedestrian controlled crossings and red X matrix signs) for a policing purpose, is only available to Response level drivers and above. Basic drivers are not afforded the use of exemptions for a policing purpose and this is documented within the Vehicle and Equipment SOP, People SOP and within the MPS internal website pages

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely



**Deputy Assistant Commissioner**