



André Rebello OBE
Senior Coroner Liverpool and Wirral Area

SK/HJF

20 January 2023

Dear André

I am responding to your recent correspondence pertaining to the death of Mr Battle.

I note that you are inviting Merseyside Police and NWAS to consider joint operability of mental health triage cars. I understand that you have heard evidence as to the existence of a joint operability programme in Blackpool but were unaware of the services available in Merseyside.

Within the Merseyside Police force area the force has three mental health triage cars. At the time of writing these cars operate as follows:

- Wirral Car - 7 late shifts (12.00-00:00 hrs) & 3 day shifts Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday (0800-1600)
- St Helens and Knowsley car - 7 late shifts (1500-0100). Day shifts are currently suspended due to staffing issues on NHS side
- Liverpool and Sefton - 7 day/late shifts a week 1030-0100. The Liverpool and Sefton car addressed 53.4% of demand across the force.

In considering our response we sought to understand from Lancashire Constabulary how the joint operability model works in Blackpool and have been informed as follows:-

Synergy is commissioned by Local Integrated Care Board (ICB, the new name for NHS Commissioners), and covers Blackpool and Fylde & Wyre operating 1600 – 0000, 7 days a week. The car is staffed with a Response Officer, Paramedic & Mental Health Practitioner. The Synergy car can respond to mental health related police incidents and NWAS mental health related incidents. Which agency's incident the car responds to, is decided by the staff in the car at the time.

Therefore, the Synergy model does not mean that the police (in company with a MH practitioner) are servicing NWAS incidents (and vice versa). What it does mean is that, often at incidents there is a professional that is not required e.g. an NWAS incident with no policing purpose has an officer attend with NWAS and the practitioner.

Synergy does not have a written remit and Lancashire Constabulary do not have data to identify the split in demand between police/NWAS incidents that it deploys to.

Chief Constable



Lancashire Police have stated that if they were informed of a case similar to that of Mr Battle and NWAS have it as a Cat 3 and have not identified any threat to life, there is no requirement for the police. In my view the way to address this issue would be through the information gathered and the risk assessment during the initial call to NWAS.

Merseyside Police when setting up this service and indeed though review of the service and best practice, have looked at and considered inter-operability models with NWAS, however, they are not considered within this area to be the best use of personnel, as effectively it would lead to a vehicle crewed by three personnel, one of whom would almost always be surplus to requirements and indeed I would suggest that there will be more resource available if the current model is maintained.

I am aware that in Merseyside, NWAS have emulated the police model and they have three designated cars for Merseyside. I am aware that the cars have funding for 7.5 hours per day but it is the aspiration of the NWAS trust to operate them 12 hours per day. I understand the hours of deployment are 0800 – 2000 Monday to Thursday and 1000 – 22.0 Friday to Sunday.

When both the NWAS cars and the Merseyside Police cars are on duty there is communication between the practitioners in the vehicles so that the most clinically effective use of resources can be made.

As you may be aware the demand on all of the emergency services has led to a nationally advocated Right Care Right Person model being developed. The adoption of this model means the appropriate state agency is deployed and that each of police, NWAS etc resources can be deployed as appropriate.

In this case based on the information that the police have from your report there would not have been a requirement for police attendance.

Merseyside Police are committed to working effectively with Blue Light partners, however, having considered the issues and discussed them with NWAS we do not believe that a joint operability model is appropriate for the Merseyside communities that we serve.

Yours sincerely

Chief Constable

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