



[REDACTED]
Chief Constable

FAO: Penelope Schofield

Senior Coroner for West Sussex

21st December 2022

Dear Ms Schofield,

Sussex Police Response to Regulation 28 - Issues arising from the death of Jade Hutchings

Thank you for including us within the scope of this notice. I welcome it, as it is vital that Sussex Police, and indeed all public authorities, learn from such tragic incidents as this and strive to improve where appropriate.

I will deal with your concerns sequentially:

Inadequate Police training on Mental Health

1.1 - 'During the course of the Inquest officers involved in dealing with Jade (and in particular around the exercise of their Section 136 powers on 21/5/20) acknowledged that they had received very little mental health training. Some officers could not recall any additional training provided since their initial training when they first joined the force'.

Response

Sussex Police recognise that at the time of Jade's death in May 2020, the provision of Mental Health training for Police Officers and staff was limited to their initial training. The level of training has been significantly developed in the intervening two years and has been enhanced both at entry level and through continued professional development.

The contents of both syllabuses are detailed below.

Current Training Delivered to Officers Upon Joining Sussex Police

Mental health training is provided to all Student Officers in Sussex during their initial training programme. In December 2020 the initial training package was enhanced and again updated in March 2022. The training being delivered to all new officers joining Sussex Police at the time of writing (December 2022) is set out below.

Face-to-Face input on Mental Health Awareness and Powers covers topics including:

- What is mental health
- Stigma around mental health
- Mental health statistics
- Learning Disabilities





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- Autism
- Section 136 Mental Health Act 1983
- Section 135 Mental Health Act 1983
- Mental Capacity Act 2005

In addition to this, there is an online 'Vulnerability' section within the programme, which requires Student Officers to read about the Mental Health Act, Mental Health Codes of Practice and the Mental Capacity Act. They look at how mental ill health can make someone vulnerable and are required to research partner organisations that support people with poor mental health.

The update in March 2022 brought the addition of:

- Including mental health under disabilities when discussing the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act links to neurodiversity but not specifically mental health.
- Effects of societal, cultural, and personal (e.g., ethnicity and mental health) influences and the conflict such influences can cause (this is specifically under conflict management).

1.2 The officers admitted that although they were aware of the Sussex Police mental health guide they had not read it in full.

The Sussex Police Mental Health Guide was been relaunched on the Sussex Police internal website which is available to all staff. It has also been added to apps which are available on mobile devices provided to all frontline staff. Resources designed to be easily accessible to support officers at the point of need and provide a quick and readily available reference point include the "Crewmate" and "Quick links" apps, which are both available to officers and staff on their Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) this makes the information accessible whilst attending incidents. Some of the resources available on "Crewmate" are:

- Suicide Intervention
- Mental Health Guide Sussex, and an additional 1-page guidance document that instructs officers how to manage s136 detentions
- S136 MHA A&E Response Guide
- Full Mental Health Guide
- Safeguarding Guide



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1.3 The expert police witness, [REDACTED], told the Inquest that in his view the online training provision that we were told was being rolled out in Sussex was not sufficient. None of the officers involved in this case had yet undertaken this online training. It was his opinion that officers should be provided with the nationally recognised two-day training course written by the College of Policing, the course is available for all Police forces to be rolled out locally. This training had not been adopted by Sussex Police.

Response

The comments and concerns of the Expert Police Witness, [REDACTED] in relation to Sussex officers undertaking the College of Policing (CoP) two-day training course, have been carefully considered. The College of Policing do not deliver a two-day classroom-based learning course but do offer a 'Mental Health Programme' (published in October 2021) intended to support the Police Service to develop and deliver their own 'in house' training programme. The College of Policing recommend a 'target audience' for each module of their Mental Health Programme and individual forces are given discretion as to who would be more appropriate to attend specific parts of the programme; for example, the target audience for developing a strategic response to mental health is aimed at Inspectors and above up to and including NPCC and police staff equivalent.

Two, specific elements of the programme are targeted at First Responders:

1. The College of Policing e-learning module. – Mental Health and the Police
This module has already been included in our CPD programme and all response officers must have completed this as part of the CPD schedule in 2022.
2. E-Learning Mental Health Legislation / Providing a response to Mental Health Incidents (Classroom based) / Responding to Suicide
In 2021, the Sussex Police internal 'e-learning' package included all of these elements.

With the implementation of the additional training courses detailed above, our mental health training provision for officers and frontline staff has improved significantly since Jade's tragic death in May 2020. We also continually look to identify any improvements that can be made to support our officers and staff in dealing with mental health incidents.

It is important to note that Police Officers are not Mental Health Practitioners, and it is not their police role to have an in-depth knowledge of all mental health conditions and circumstances. Whilst the policing responsibility should predominantly be the prevention and detection of crime, it is highly likely that Police officers and Police staff will encounter people who are vulnerable due to mental health. This could be in a criminal justice capacity such as a victim, witness or suspect of a crime and also in a health care capacity when exercising police powers to support health care agencies. It is of course incumbent that Police Officers are aware of their powers under s136 and s135 of the Mental Health Act (1983); Mental Health Codes of Practice and the Mental Capacity Act (2005), and this is incorporated into existing training.





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Continued Professional Development (CPD) – Mandatory Programme

This is a mandated programme for Sussex Police response teams, with time for completion embedded into the officer's shift pattern. The training is a mixture of virtual webinars and e-learning courses. It is the individual's responsibility to ensure that they catch up on anything they miss due to absence, and provision is made for them to do this via self-directed study slots, written into the CPD scheduling. It is an expectation via management that all officers complete these sessions and the content provided. In addition, wherever possible these sessions are recorded, and the content uploaded onto 'College Learn' for out of hours availability.

The following training has already been delivered as part of this mandated programme:

Mental Health Awareness – Sussex (e-learning) – January/February 2022

This course reviews the understanding of mental health and the powers and responsibilities that Sussex Police have to those suffering from a mental health condition. The course provides key contacts, legislation, procedural guidance, and referral information for further awareness. The course also includes information regarding resources available to officers on their personal issue MDTs (Mobile Data Terminals) such as Mental Health Forms, Reference materials, resources, and internal support.

Mental Health and the Police Programme – College of Policing (e-learning) –October/November 2022

This is the College of Policing e-learning package on 'College Learn'. This programme provides a general awareness of mental health conditions and diversity.

The content consists of two modules:

Mental Health Explained

- Including: defining mental health, poor mental health, core issues, mental health conditions and vulnerability, learning disabilities, misconceptions, legislation, assessing capacity

Mental Health Initial Response

- Including: communication - verbal and non-verbal, point of view communication, point of view de-escalation, MHA Section 135 (1) warrants, criminal suspect with poor mental health, vulnerable victims and witnesses, vulnerable suspects, other causes for incidents and safe and well checks.

Personal Safety Training

Personal Safety Training is mandatory safety training which all officers are required to attend twice a year. The training includes a number of real-life scenarios which officers will encounter when responding to incidents. The training content during October 2021 – March 2022 included an input





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on mental health crisis and distressed victims, highlighting some of signs and symptoms that a person in a mental health crisis may display, and reinforces the options available to officers in responding to such incidents. It also reminds officers of their powers, and what they need to consider under the Mental Health Act. The scenarios complement the other mandatory mental health training provided by Sussex Police.

Current courses now include a mental health training input on the following mandatory courses:

- Initial Inspector Training: A minimum of an hour session to go over some of the key areas of mental health and policing that may require Inspector oversight. Features discussion on s136 pathway and escalation.
- Custody Officer Training: A session for Custody Officers to support them in managing some of the complex areas of interface between mental health and the criminal justice system. This features discussion on s136 detentions from Police custody.
- Call Handlers Mental Health Training: A half-day session on the variety of mental health related calls that they may encounter. This includes an input on s136 detentions, and the training will be delivered to all Control Room Operators before the end of 2022.

All training that is delivered by Sussex Police on Mental Health & Policing is in line with the College of Policing's APP on Mental Health & Policing and is currently developed and delivered with oversight from a mental health social worker.

1.4 There was also confusion amongst Officers (and a lack of clear understanding) around the provision and use of service the Haven at Millview could provide.

We understand this observation to relate to the wider context of the 'Blue Light Line' (of which the Haven at Millview forms part), the telephone provision provided by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust for officers to use for consultation about mental health incidents, namely when they are considering using their powers under s136 of the Mental Health Act (1983).

In response to requests from frontline Police Officers to have additional information in relation to s136, an additional guide to s136 detentions was published in January 2022 which clearly outlines the role of 'The Blue Light Line'. This document was reviewed and developed into a short 2-page document that has been added to the 'Crewmate' app. Sussex Police also publish its 'Mental Health Guide' on the Crewmate app for officers to refer to.

1. REBOOT - Lack of provision for Older Age Group

There was clear evidence that Jade was vulnerable and had become involved in violence and crime in 2019 (the year before his death). It was believed by some that Jade exploited by gangs running county line drug operations. A need for an early intervention was identified by his social worker and a referral to Reboot was made.





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The Inquest was told that at the time REBOOT was prioritising 12 – 14 years children and as Jade was nearing 18 they were unable to work with him. This was a missed opportunity for Jade to be involved in a form of early intervention before his life started unravelling and he became more heavily entrenched in the world of crime. It is understood that at the time of Jade's death the Police and Crime Commissioner was responsible for the REBOOT scheme but at the time of writing this report the scheme is now run by Sussex Police.

Response

The Reboot programme was introduced in June 2019, originally financed by Home Office funding and later financed, and overseen by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), with officers from Sussex Police working on the programme in tactical roles. The age criteria set by OPCC made the programme available to children aged between 10yrs – 17rs.

From April 2021 the Reboot programme continued to be available, but funding and oversight was taken over by Sussex Police. The age criteria remained at 10yrs – 17yrs but without any focus on a particular age group within that range.

Reboot is intended to be an early intervention, specifically targeted to a child who is at Level 2 of the Continuum of Need, **and** has the following indicators:

- Exposed to criminal behaviour as the norm.
- High disregard for the rules.
- Aggressive behaviours
- Experience of violence within the community.
- High Impulsivity
- Engaging in harmful risk taking.
- Early Signs of difficult relationship with caregiver/family member.
- Engaging in unhealthy and potentially exploitative relationships.
- Alcohol or Drug use.
- Not engaging positively at school.

Children at level 3 & 4 of the Continuum of Need remain the responsibility of statutory services, as their needs are considered too high for the Reboot programme.

In light of the Reboot Programme in 2019 being staffed by officers from Sussex Police, to assist our response to the Regulation 28 Report a retrospective review has been carried out to ascertain whether, at the point of referral Jade could have been accepted onto the programme.





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Whilst Reboot accepted children up to the age of 17, they needed to have sufficient time to work with the children before their 18th birthday (including a 12-week mentoring programme). As the programme started in June 2019, the referral window for Jade would have been approximately 3 months (June to August) due to his age. Although we are unable to confirm exactly why Jade was not accepted on to the Reboot programme, it is unlikely that it was based on his age alone, as at the time of the referral Jade's needs were too high and had surpassed the Reboot criteria.

We have worked hard to ensure that we are able to provide a comprehensive and constructive response which we hope addresses the issues raised within the Regulation 28.

However, if there are any follow-up questions about this response, please do come back to me and I will do my best to resolve them.

Yours sincerely,



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