

## Regulation 28: Prevention of Future Deaths report

Miriam BOULIA (died 04.02.22)

	<p><b>THIS REPORT IS BEING SENT TO:</b></p> <p><b>Andrew Lord</b> <b>Commissioner, Transport for London</b> <b>4<sup>th</sup> Floor</b> <b>14 Pier Walk</b> <b>London</b> <b>SE10 0ES</b></p>
1	<p><b>CORONER</b></p> <p>I am: Adam Smith Assistant Coroner Inner North London St Pancras Coroner's Court Camley Street London N1C 4PP</p>
2	<p><b>CORONER'S LEGAL POWERS</b></p> <p>I make this report under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, paragraph 7, Schedule 5, and The Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, regulations 28 and 29.</p>
3	<p><b>INVESTIGATION and INQUEST</b></p> <p>On 11 February 2022, ME Hassell, HM Senior Coroner for Inner North London, commenced an investigation into the death of Miriam Boulia, aged 33 years. The investigation concluded at the end of the inquest on 21 November 2022.</p> <p>I made a determination of death by road traffic collision.</p> <p>The medical cause of death was:</p> <p>1(a) traumatic brain injury</p>
4	<p><b>CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DEATH</b></p>

	<p>The collision occurred just before 9am on a Friday. It was a wet day. Ms Boulia was using a pedestrian crossing to cross Great Eastern Street at its junction with Curtain Road. After crossing safely to a pedestrian island, she initially waited there to cross Great Eastern Street, together with a small group of other pedestrians. Several other pedestrians crossed on a red man.</p> <p>Ms Boulia then walked onto the crossing across Great Eastern Street, on a red man. She appeared to be holding her hood up whilst looking to her left. She was struck by a bus, which was travelling in a South Easterly direction, from her right, on green traffic signals. She fell underneath the bus and was dragged under it until it came to a standstill. As a result, she sustained catastrophic, unsurvivable injuries. She was declared deceased at the scene.</p> <p>Although the driver of the bus took appropriate evasive action, the collision was unavoidable.</p>
5	<p><b>CORONER'S CONCERNS</b></p> <p>During the course of the inquest, the evidence revealed matters giving rise to concern. In my opinion, there is a risk that future deaths will occur unless action is taken. In the circumstances, it is my statutory duty to report to you.</p> <p>The <b>MATTERS OF CONCERN</b> are as follows.</p> <p>I received evidence, both in the form of a report and orally in court, from PC [REDACTED], a Traffic Management Officer in the Road Safety Engineering Unit of the Metropolitan Police. He is a qualified Highway Inspector recognised by the Institute of Highway Engineers and holds a RoSPA certificate in Road Safety, Collision Investigation and Prevention. As part of preparing his report, he conducted two site visits, when he observed the operation of the signals at the crossings at this junction and the behaviour of pedestrians.</p> <p>The current timings of the signals, both at the pedestrian crossing where Ms Boulia died (at the North West side of Curtain Road, which I refer to as crossing 1) and the crossing over Great Eastern Street at the South East side of Curtain Road (by the Old Blue Last pub, which I refer to as crossing 2) do not allow enough time for pedestrians to cross the road safely.</p> <p>The inter-green period (the period when the road traffic's signals are not at green) at crossing 1 is only 10 seconds, made up of 6 seconds when the pedestrian signal is at green man and 4 seconds of "blackout" or "clearance" period. 10 seconds is insufficient time to allow pedestrians to cross the road safely before the road traffic's signals change to green.</p>

	<p>The green man for pedestrians is an invitation to cross, hence the blackout period should allow enough time for any pedestrians who step onto the crossing a moment before the green man goes out to cross the road safely. The current blackout period does not allow for this.</p> <p>Although at crossing 1, the 10 second inter-green period extends to 16 seconds when there is no road traffic filtering from Curtain Road to Great Eastern Street, in practice this is rarely the case. There is no filtering traffic at crossing 2, but the inter-green period is still insufficient to allow pedestrians to cross safely.</p> <p>PC ██████ observed that pedestrians routinely cross on the red man at the crossings at the junction of Great Eastern Street and Curtain Road, probably due to the inadequate inter-green periods.</p> <p>There have been 21 collisions involving injury at this junction over a recent three-year period, 9 of those involving injury to pedestrians. Of particular concern is that the number of collisions at this junction of a similar nature to that in which Ms Boulia died, is unusually high.</p> <p>I also received a report from TfL, from which I note that this junction will now formally be included within TfL's recently re-instituted Safer Junctions Programme (it previously was not part of the programme). However, the report indicated that the timescale for completion of any improvements to this junction is 2-4 years, subject to funding.</p> <p>The TfL report indicated that any urgent safety improvements which need to be made at this junction in advance of progressing the wider scheme will be progressed, and that a site visit was being arranged for early December 2022 to consider any urgent safety improvements.</p> <p>PC ██████ gave evidence that improvements to signal timings (including increasing the inter-green periods) can be made much quicker than installation of new signals (such as signals including countdown timers). I understand that such changes could be made much quicker than the 2-4 years envisaged for completion of the wider scheme.</p> <p>I consider that changes to the signal timings would amount to urgent safety improvements.</p>
6	<p><b>ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN</b></p> <p>In my opinion, action should be taken to prevent future deaths and I believe that you have the power to take such action.</p>
7	<p><b>YOUR RESPONSE</b></p>

	<p>You are under a duty to respond to this report within 56 days of the date of this report, namely by 23 January 2023. I, the coroner, may extend the period.</p> <p>Your response must contain details of action taken or proposed to be taken, setting out the timetable for action. Otherwise you must explain why no action is proposed.</p>
8	<p><b>COPIES and PUBLICATION</b></p> <p>I have sent a copy of my report to the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [REDACTED], husband of Miriam Boulia</li> <li>• [REDACTED], mother of Miriam Boulia</li> <li>• Representatives of the bus driver</li> <li>• HHJ Thomas Teague QC, Chief Coroner of England &amp; Wales</li> </ul> <p>I am under a duty to send a copy of your response to the Chief Coroner and all interested persons who in my opinion should receive it. I may also send a copy of your response to any other person who I believe may find it useful or of interest.</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, the coroner, at the time of your response, about the release or the publication of your response.</p>
9	<p><b>DATE</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>SIGNED BY ASSISTANT CORONER</b></span></p> <p>28 November 2022 <span style="float: right;"></span></p>