

[REDACTED]  
Deputy Chief Constable



Mr Adrian Farrow  
HM Assistant Coroner,  
Greater Manchester (South) Coroner's Court  
1 Mount Tabor Street  
Stockport, SK1 3AG

26<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Dear Sir

**Re: Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths concerning the inquest into the death of Claire Nicole Briggs**

Thank you for your letter enclosing the Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths arising from the inquest into the death of Claire Nicole Briggs, dated 8 December 2023. I have had the opportunity to review the progress that has been made since Ms Briggs' inquest concluded in July 2023 and provide the following update, which I hope addresses the concerns that you had identified about delays in the rollout and implementation of the Joint Operating Protocol between Northwest emergency services.

**Steps to develop the Joint Operating Procedure**

The Northwest Ambulance Service ('NWS') is the lead agency for the development of the Joint Operating Procedure ('JOP').

Since Greater Manchester Police ('GMP') commenced Project Aurora – a project to implement the principles of Right Care, Right Person ('RCRP') into its operating model – the lead branch for progression of the JOP has been the Force Prevention Branch which took ownership of the JOP in mid-2023. Prior to this change of ownership, the JOP was owned by the Force Contact, Crime and Operations Branch ('FCCO'). The reason for this change of ownership was to ensure the JOP aligned with the RCRP proposals being progressed within GMP and to make sure service delivery by GMP and NWS would not negatively impact the communities of Greater Manchester by having two potentially contradictory processes in place.

NWS currently chairs bi-weekly meetings in relation to the JOP, which are attended by all Northwest police forces and representatives from the relevant fire and rescue services and Northwest Fire Control ('NWFC'). GMP is represented at these meetings by personnel from both the Force Prevention Branch and the FCCO (as the main business area affected by the JOP), to ensure the details contained within the JOP are accurate and reflective of correct working practices.



Further progress has been made to finalise, agree, and implement the JOP since the inquest touching upon the death of Claire Briggs concluded. Version 1.0 of the JOP went live on 12 October 2023 with four of the five North West police forces, namely Cheshire Constabulary, Cumbria Constabulary, Lancashire Constabulary and Merseyside Police.

Other partner organisations, including GMP, have yet to agree to the JOP. GMP considers the wording contained within the section on *'Identifying the Lead Agency'* creates ambiguity and could cause confusion. The current wording is not clear as to which organisation would be the lead agency in certain circumstances, particularly in instances when there may be scene safety concerns, and what such a designation would mean in practical terms. This section of the JOP also suggests that two organisations could be considered the lead agency at the same incident for different purposes (*"the lead for the policing purpose would be the Police, NWAS would remain the Lead Agency for the health matter"*). It is felt this current wording may create confusion between organisations, such as with regards to who is expected to deploy resources in the first instance which, in turn, may result in delays in deploying the right resources to the scene, thus putting service users at risk. The wording as currently drafted is also at odds with GMP's RCRP proposals, specifically in relation to when GMP will deploy resources to medical incidents and when GMP would be acting as a lead agency or in support of NWAS.

GMP recognises the importance of the JOP and is committed to working with NWAS and the other Northwest police forces to produce a JOP that is fit for purpose and provides a high level of service from the most appropriate agency to people in need. To this end, GMP is continuing to work closely with all relevant partners, including NWAS, in order to reach a mutually agreeable solution which not only works within the current working environment but aligns with the future operating model of RCRP in Greater Manchester and across the Northwest region.

GMP and the four North West police forces which have signed up to the JOP are liaising with one another via the bi-weekly JOP meetings, at the Northwest regional RCRP meetings and via separate conversations between each force to understand our respective positions with regards to the current version of the JOP. It is hoped that a mutually agreeable solution can be reached that would see GMP sign up to the JOP by the end of February 2024.

It is envisioned that once the *'Identifying the Lead Agency'* section is amended, it will align to the current and proposed RCRP working practices for all contributing police services, meaning the JOP would not need further updates to align with the RCRP processes of each police service, nor would the content of the JOP be superseded by RCRP policies.

GMP is currently working closely with NWAS in respect of the RCRP project. Work is ongoing in relation to the response to be provided by police and ambulance resources to incidents of a physical health concern. To ensure an appropriate response is provided by both blue light services, a partnership agreement specific to Greater Manchester is currently in development. This partnership agreement will formally outline each organisation's roles and expectations at incidents of Concern for Welfare ('CFW') where the primary or sole nature of the incident relates to a physical health concern, and will ensure that GMP's response to matters of physical health concern, in conjunction with NWAS, is aligned to the principles of RCRP and the regional JOP and that organisations meet their legal obligations under ECHR legislation.



It is envisioned that the Greater Manchester specific partnership agreement and the regional JOP will work in cohesion and ensure processes specific to Greater Manchester is clearly understood by both organisations.

It is anticipated that this partnership agreement will be complete by the end of April 2024.

### **Communicating and explaining the JOP**

Once the JOP has been agreed for launch in Greater Manchester, and before the implementation stage, there will be a process within the FCCO to ensure that all staff are made aware of the document and that they understand its purpose and aims, its relevance to GMP, and how it should be used by them. This message will be distributed by the senior leadership team within the FCCO to all supervisors within the branch for further cascading to all staff members.

In the interim, as the JOP has now been launched with all Northwest police forces except for GMP, to ensure there is no misunderstanding or incorrect application of the JOP within Greater Manchester, contact has been made with NWAS to ensure there is a mutual understanding that the JOP is not currently in place within Greater Manchester.

### **An interim protocol**

In November 2022, communication was distributed throughout the FCCO outlining the escalation process between GMP and NWAS. This message was reinforced in June 2023 via internal messaging and is recirculated, as necessary, to ensure consistent compliance. What was initially introduced as an interim measure in 2022 is now considered “business as usual” and, through regular liaison with NWAS, is regarded as appropriate practice for both organisations. These escalation processes are outlined below:

- For GMP to obtain further information or an estimated time of arrival ('ETA') for an ambulance, a call to NWAS should follow normal process by a police dispatcher using the non-urgent ICCS hotkey (a system that is used to report an incident/pass information to partner agencies).
- The Hear and Treat service is an option for the officer on scene to discuss the circumstances with a clinician. An ambulance may not always be required, and advice can be passed. It is highlighted to officers that this service is not to be used to try and upgrade the ambulance response or to give information that the patient's condition has deteriorated or worsened in any way. In such circumstances, NWAS must be called on 999 or ICCS for the incident to be triaged again.

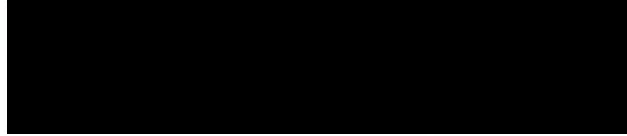


- Should GMP experience any issues, such as significant delays in ambulance attendance when police are already on scene, and contacting NWAS using the non-urgent number has failed to resolve the issue, GMP can contact the NWAS Emergency Operations Centre ('EOC') performance manager via agreed telephone lines which have been distributed within the FCCO. This number is only to be used by supervisors/duty managers and is not to be used to report a change in the patient's condition.
- If there is a requirement for further escalation, the GMP duty manager/inspector only can contact the NWAS GM EOC duty manager via an agreed telephone number. This number is not to be made available to anyone outside of the FCC and is only available to inspectors or above to ensure the integrity of the service.
- Any further escalations will be via the Force Duty Officer ('FDO') as per current processes.
- GMP now also has access to the NWAS cancellation line in order to cancel an ambulance. This bypasses the NWAS call handlers and is a direct number to their dispatch room. It may also be used to discuss any particular concerns where officers have remained on scene, but escalation is not yet required. This number is available for use by GMP dispatchers but must not be used to give updates to NWAS about the patient's condition.
- GMP is also working on a process for NWAS to escalate to GMP via the dispatch duty inspector prior to making contact with the FDO, as a resolution can often be found without FDO intervention.
- The Hear and Treat service has been relaunched across GMP. This was communicated to officers and staff forcewide on 4 October 2023 via the Force intranet. An article has been published on the intranet which outlines the purpose and benefits of the Hear and Treat service alongside the contact telephone number for use by frontline officers.
- The Force Operations Centre collates daily data regarding any delays between the two services and reports to FCCO senior leadership every Monday.
- Weekly meetings between senior GMP, NWAS and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service ('GMFRS') colleagues are held to discuss demand and any issues that have occurred during that week.

Whilst work with partners to implement a mutually agreeable JOP in Greater Manchester continues, the above measures are in place to ensure GMP and NWAS can communicate and escalate concerns via agreed processes where necessary.

I trust that the above demonstrates that a considerable amount of work is underway to agree and implement the JOP in conjunction with the work to roll out the Right Care, Right Person programme. Both of which are aimed at ensuring a more consistent and joined-up approach is taken across all emergency services in the Northwest when deploying resources to incidents.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the Deputy Chief Constable.A small black rectangular redaction box covering the name of the Deputy Chief Constable.

**Deputy Chief Constable  
Greater Manchester Police**