

Our Ref: IX/2341/23

Mr Graeme Irvine
HM Senior Coroner
East London Coroner's Court
Queens Road
Walthamstow
London E17 8QP

[REDACTED]
Deputy Assistant Commissioner
Metropolitan Police Service
New Scotland Yard
Victoria Embankment
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SW1A 2JL

Email: [REDACTED]

30th April 2024

Dear Mr Irvine

I am the Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Frontline Policing in the Metropolitan Police Service ("MPS"). On behalf of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, I write to provide the response to the matter of concern addressed to the MPS in your Report to Prevent Future Deaths dated 15th March 2024.

On behalf of the MPS, may I first of all express my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Mr Sydney Piper, our thoughts and sympathies are very much with them.

The Coroner's "Matter of Concern"

The Prevention of Future Deaths' report dated 15th March 2024 records:-

- "2. *Mr Piper's death was the latest in a series of deaths investigated by this court in which homeless persons have died in tents and encampments in wooded areas along the A406 and the periphery of Epping Forest due to high risk behaviours including, but not limited to, crush injuries, fire, third party assaults and drug misuse. The monitoring and policing of such encampments is, in the view of the court, lacking which increases the risk of fatal harm*".

MPS Response

The MPS have liaised with the Coroner and have been unable to identify any other deaths in this area which would suggest any specific or ongoing risk to public safety, or significant criminal activity.

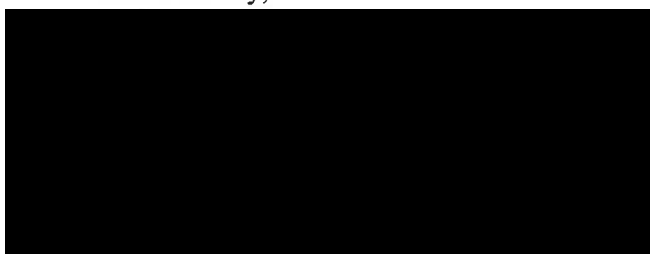
In accordance with statutory guidance, any unauthorised encampment which poses a risk of safety to occupants and others will be addressed as a public safety/public health issue through a multi-agency approach led by the local authority. Further, where individual crimes are reported there will be a duty for police to investigate.



I can confirm that ongoing work is being undertaken with the respective local authorities and there is strategic police/partnership joint working to focus on rough sleeping. The police neighbourhood teams are supporting the local authority strategy for rough sleeping, which includes community safety, housing and enforcement.

We have increased engagement with local residents who use the forest and surrounding environs to encourage reporting of rough sleeping they become aware of directly to the Local Authority. The MPS is working closely with the Local Authorities and the Epping Forest Park Rangers to ensure any early identification of rough sleeping is addressed as a partnership.

Yours sincerely,



Deputy Assistant Commissioner
Local Policing and Met VAWG Lead