

Ms Catherine McKenna  
Greater Manchester North Area Coroner  
HM Coroner's Office  
Floors 2 & 3  
Newgate House  
Rochdale  
OL16 1AT

By email only: [REDACTED] FAO Ms Catherine McKenna

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Dear Ms McKenna,,

**Regulation 28 Report – Dr Jonathan Harvey Shaw**

I write on behalf of the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) in relation to paragraph 7, Schedule 5 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, and regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, in relation to the prevention of future deaths report sent via email to the NPCC dated 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

The notice sets out concerns that arose from the information received during the inquest into the death of Dr Shaw. I am very sorry to read of the circumstances of Dr Shaw's death. My sympathies are with his family and friends.

The NPCC is an advisory body that supports policy development for police forces in England & Wales through a set of portfolios. ACC [REDACTED] is the National Police Chief Council's lead for Suicide Prevention and Chair NPCC Suicide Prevention Steering Group.

Through this work, we are aware of a number of international internet sites facilitating the purchase of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] for the suspected purpose of suicide. In response to this threat and in collaboration with experts from the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), Home Office and other key stakeholders, the NPCC have raised awareness and informed responses across the policing sector regarding the emerging trend of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] use in suicides. We have also supported the National Crime Agency, which is conducting a criminal investigation into the supply of [REDACTED] by a specific foreign national and working closely with the CPS and international authorities.

As you may be aware, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are 'reportable' substances in the UK ([REDACTED] as an Explosive Precursor and [REDACTED] as a Reportable Poison) under the Poisons Act. Given the threat posed by these substances, [REDACTED] has discussed the regulation or restriction of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] with the Home Office's Chemical Reporting Team and the Dept of Health and Social Care. These agencies have taken work forward to ensure as far as possible that both



[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] is not sold to individuals. Legal suppliers have been directed to mix the substances with other products namely salt which will lead to vomiting upon ingestion, thereby reducing the viability of [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] as a suicide method. We have been advised that there are no current plans to change [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] status from 'reportable'. The Home Office, in collaboration with legitimate suppliers, is proactively challenging suspicious sales.

In June 2023, [REDACTED] wrote to all Chief Constables, highlighting the need for preparedness in addressing [REDACTED] related challenges. Briefing materials were circulated to all UK police and regional suicide prevention leads. Furthermore, in October 2023, legislative changes were made regarding the sale of poisons and explosive precursors by suppliers based in England, Wales and Scotland. These changes, which include substances which are classed as reportable Explosive Precursors like [REDACTED] or Poisons like [REDACTED], aim to reduce the risk of harm by setting out obligations for suppliers related to regulated and reportable substances. As of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023, it is now a criminal offence to sell certain substances without an Explosives Precursors and Poisons (EPP) license.

When specific intelligence indicates that an identifiable individual in the UK has purchased items like [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], police will conduct a 'safe and well' visit. Often, voluntary surrender of these items can be negotiated, with recovery and appropriate support referrals made. Where this is not possible, increased health surveillance measures are encouraged with partner agencies. In cases of death linked to chemical suicide, efforts are made to track shipments and download electronic devices to quickly identify the product's origin and prevent further victims.

Regarding police powers of entry, search, and seizure, Section 19 of PACE allows for the seizure of 'evidence' when an offence is established or suspected. However, the offence of Encouraging or Assisting Suicide, as per the Suicide Act 1961 (amended 2010) is complex. This is particularly true when the perpetrator operates from outside the UK, and/or the 'victim' is an active and willing participant. In such scenarios, the law is unclear, and there is no power of entry to a victim's premises unless an immediate threat to life is believed to exist under Section 17 of PACE. Identifying and seizing potential self-harm items in a typical household is impractical due to the ubiquity of such items.

The NPCC remains committed to working with the Home Office and DHSC, who lead cross-government work on Suicide Prevention, to explore all options to prevent avoidable deaths. Furthermore, HM Governments five-year Suicide Prevention Strategy for England, recently launched last year, contains numerous actions that will enable all relevant and influential organisations to support and achieve Government ambition.

I hope the information provided will go some way to address your concerns.

For any further information please contact my Staff Officer [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) who will be happy to address any concerns and answer any questions.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
**Chair, National Police Chiefs' Council**

