

HM Assistant Coroner
Ms. Karen Henderson
HM Coroners Service
West Sussex
Brighton and Hove
BN2 3QB

3rd October 2024

Dear Ms. Henderson,

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 notice regarding the death of Miles Ethan HURLEY on 10/07/2022, in my role as NPCC lead for Custody.

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

Within the Regulation 28 you highlighted four main areas of concern. In my role as NPCC Lead for Custody, I will address the first three points. The fourth relates to a Memorandum of Understanding between Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, Sussex Police and MITRE, therefore, these organisations will be best placed to address your concerns. In relation to the areas of concern, please see below:

1. Lack of effective communication between police officers

Concerns were raised regarding a decline in Mr Hurley's mental health, missing periods and risk behaviours that the report states were present at the point of Mr Hurley's arrest but not passed to the Sergeant on his arrival in custody.

The practice of arresting officers risk assessments being formally completed prior to arrival at custody is inconsistent across forces. Best practice is being considered through the NPCC Betterment Workstream to include a nationally recognised pre arrival risk assessment in place to communicate risks and concerns that may have been raised.

2. Lack of relevant documentation

It is recognised that there is a lack of information being recorded on custody detention logs. The College of Policing Hydra packages are in place to improve this and the NPCC are supportive of this training for custody staff. I understand that Sussex Police have now adopted this training.

3. Lack of effective documentation and communication between the Liaison and Diversion Service (LDS) and the police within the custody suite.

I provide comment against each of the sections within this area of concern below:

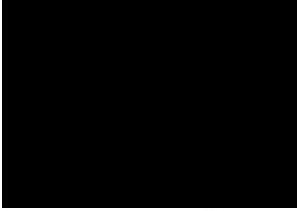
- a) This is a local force issue and therefore not for the NPCC to make comment.
- b) The NPCC is unable to make comment on the mental health plan referred to in this case.
- c) Guidelines around supporting a LDS Practitioner as to when it is appropriate to undertake a formal mental health assessment when an individual is intoxicated is a matter for the LDS provider. Whilst it is positive that an assessment was considered in this case, it is unclear from the report whether this was a 'fitness for detention/release' assessment that was being requested. An assessment under the Mental Health Act would require an Approved Mental Health Professional to have attended the suite at the request of LDS. LDS practitioners are mental health professionals, and it is within their remit to conduct such an assessment and therefore not for the police to make comment.
- d) A lack of 24-hour LDS service is an issue that has been raised previously with NHSE by the NPCC as an area of concern.
- e) National guidelines are in place in the form of PACE Code C in relation to identifying vulnerability in police custody and the provision of an Appropriate Adult. It is not clear from the information in the report as to why the interviewing officer did not deem the support of an Appropriate Adult for Mr Hurley necessary in this case.
- f) NHS Trust information sharing has also been raised as a concern by the NPCC in that the inability or refusal to share clinical records between criminal justice pathways adds risk to a detainees welfare.

The NPCC continues to work collaboratively with key partners to address concerns within the custody space and I hope the information provided will go some way to address your concerns.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further action or information in relation to my response.



Yours Sincerely




Deputy Chief Constable
Surrey Police

National Police Chiefs' Council lead for Custody and the movement of prisoners.