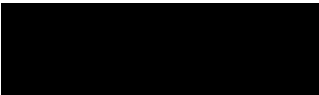




Our Ref: [REDACTED]
Your Ref: [REDACTED]

HM Assistant Coroner Jonathan Landau
Croydon Coroners Court and Offices
2 Davis House
Robert Street
Croydon
London CR0 1QQ

[REDACTED]
Director
Command and Control
Metropolitan Police Service
New Scotland Yard
Victoria Embankment
London
SW1A 2JL



4th September 2024

Dear Mr Landau,

I am the Director for Command and Control 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 23rd July 2024.

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

The Coroner's "Matter of Concern"

The Prevention of Future Deaths report dated 23rd July 2024 records:-

'Mr Woodley's brother and sister-in-law gave evidence at the hearing that a colleague of Mr Woodley called the police on the morning of 4 January concerned that he had not arrived at work. Their evidence was that an ambulance arrived to carry out a welfare check the following day (5 January) at around 1pm. They were told that the reason for the delay was confusion between Surrey Police and the Metropolitan Police.'

On the evidence before me, including that of Mr Woodley and his wife, I am satisfied that an earlier attendance would not have affected the outcome. However, I am concerned that failures in communication could result in avoidable fatalities in future cases.'

MPS Response

On 4th January 2024 at 7.48am, a member of the public called Surrey Police (SPS) informing them that a male was found hanging in the woodlands behind the Fox Public House, Caterham. SPS correctly passed the call to the MPS and officers attended in partnership with the London Ambulance Service (LAS) and the London Fire Brigade (LFB). The person found hanging and deceased was identified as Mr Neil John Woodley.

The attending MPS officers identified Mr Woodley's home address and attended the location. MPS policy states that when MPS officers attend an alternative venue/location to the original location (recorded on the Computer Aided Despatch [CAD]), a new CAD is to be created. The new CAD is then linked to the original CAD and assigned to the officers attending. This ensures that officer locations are known for safety reasons and if further calls are received incidents can be effectively managed. Unfortunately, on this occasion a linked CAD was not created.

The MPS have no records of Mr Woodley's work colleague or SPS contacting the MPS regarding an incident concerning Mr Woodley on 4th January 2024.

The MPS Command and Control (MetCC) however have three records regarding Mr Woodley's home address, the LAS and SPS on 5th January 2024.

On 5th January 2024 at 10.25am, SPS passed a call to the MPS which the MPS call handler processed correctly and created a CAD reference 2062/05JAN24. However, due to a new CAD not being created when officers attended Mr Woodley's home address on 4th January 2024 this was not linked to the initial incident and therefore the operator was unaware that Mr Woodley had already been found deceased. CAD 2062/05JAN24 was passed to the LAS by the MPS under the Right Care Right Person (RCRP) Policy as a welfare check and was subsequently closed by Met CC as LAS were now dealing. This was the correct decision and in line with MPS policy. LAS attended Mr Woodley's home address unaware of the events the day before.

In regards to a failure of communication between SPS and MPS, we do not believe this occurred as no record of a call to the MPS on the 4th January 2024 can be located.

As an organisation, learning will be delivered to MPS staff and officers, highlighting the importance of strict location sharing and compliance with standard operating procedures designed to protect front line policing and prevent correlation errors such as this incident.

I trust this provides the reassurance that the MPS has considered the matter of concern you have raised.

Yours sincerely,

