



Home Office

Minister of State

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His Majesty's Assistant Coroner, Dr Nicholas Shaw,
Fairfield, Station Road
Cockermouth
Cumbria
CA13 9PT

Regulation 28 report: Matthew Brierley

14 October 2025

Dear Dr Shaw,

Thank you for your email of 28 April to the Home Secretary regarding the Prevention of Future Deaths report relating to the death of Matthew Brierley, a Border Force employee, in April 2024. I am replying as Minister of State at the Home Office, and I apologise for the delay in responding to your letter.

At the outset, I wish to express my most sincere condolences to Matthew's loved ones for the distress they will have experienced following Matthew's death.

The Detention and Custody Authorised Professional Practice (APP) produced by the College of Policing (henceforth 'the College') sets the standards for police engagement with detainees after their arrest, including any offers of support. This includes operational advice on managing the risk of suicide for persons under investigation, such as Matthew. The College is independent of government; its role is to set high professional standards for policing; sharing what works best; acting as the national voice of policing; and ensuring police training and ethics is of the highest possible quality.

How the APP is followed is an operational decision for individual police forces. The Home Office has no authority to intervene in operational policing matters. I cannot comment on the action and decisions taken by police officers in the course of their duties because operational matters are the responsibility of the Chief Officer of the force concerned.

I have had sight of the responses by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and College of Policing to your report. These set out the relevant guidance that police officers should follow in order to support detainees after their arrest and prevent custody and post-custody suicides. I am satisfied that there is current police guidance on this matter which is readily available to forces and clearly sets out the actions for police officers.

I am also reassured by the commitment of the NPCC to ensure that detainees are offered support, post-arrest, in order to decrease the likelihood of suicide post-custody, including consideration of mandatory referrals to partner agencies when an offer of support is declined.

I would like to take the opportunity to set out the support Matthew was offered by the Home Office as a Border Force employee.

Hampshire Police informed Border Force officials of Matthew's arrest on the weekend of 16 March 2024. Matthew was contacted by a Border Force Deputy Director and support was offered. Subsequently a welfare point of contact was identified. A decision was made to suspend Matthew on full pay, in line with HR guidance. This decision was explained to Matthew, whilst emphasising the importance of his welfare. Matthew was given assurances that the situation would be managed discretely and confidentially.

The 'keeping in touch' process was explained, and all relevant welfare support contact numbers were shared with Matthew. A week later, following a conversation with Matthew, his Border Force IT equipment was collected during an offsite meeting with a Border Force official, a standard formality in these circumstances. The offer of employee support was reiterated during this meeting. The following day, Border Force officials were informed of Matthew's death.

Following this tragic news, Border Force officials maintained contact with Matthew's wife and have written to Matthew's father on two occasions to assure him that HR guidance was followed appropriately.

The Home Office Independent Professional Standards Unit conducted a formal review of the management and support for Matthew during and after his arrest. The report concluded that "following Matt's arrest, the steps taken under the relevant policies were appropriate" and that "Matt was provided with appropriate support and treated with due sensitivity". The report also found that aside from one occasion, keep-in-touch discussions occurred regularly and well within the agreed ten-day period.

I hope this letter assures you, and Matthew's family, that proper processes were followed, and that appropriate guidance is in place to support Home Office employees in these circumstances. My thoughts remain with Matthew's family.

Yours sincerely,

