

Dr Anton van Dellen
His Majesty's Assistant Coroner
West London Coroner's Court
25 Bagley's Lane
London
SW6 2QA

The London Fire Commissioner is the
fire and rescue authority for London

Date 30 April 2025

Dear Coroner

Response to Regulation 28: Prevention of Future Deaths Report

I write in response to the Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths ['PFD report'] you issued following the inquest touching the death of Liam Allan.

The London Fire Brigade ['LFB'] was not an interested person in the proceedings to investigate the circumstances of Mr Allan's death. It has not been possible to ascertain the evidence presented to you during the course of this inquest.

Set out below are actions taken by LFB in relation to the matters of concern raised in your PFD report. These do not take account of any material you may have heard during the course of the inquest touching Mr Allan's death.

Radio communications

Following recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry in respect of radio communications at incidents, LFB has made significant changes to its radio system - Airwave Digital Main-Scheme Radio system. The changes improved communications between emergency services on incident grounds. This enables greater interoperability of the different operational talk systems used by the Metropolitan Police Service ['MPS'] and LFB.

In late 2022, further improvements to sharing of electronic incident records by emergency services came through the introduction of the Multi Agency Incident Transfer ['MAIT'] System. MAIT allows emergency services control rooms to share incident data electronically. LFB along with the MPS are upgrading their systems to accommodate this. However robust radio communications between control rooms are currently in place to share incident information via a secure radio network.

Emergency service control rooms have the capability to talk directly to each other. This is done in accordance with a memorandum of understanding signed by all London Emergency Service Control Rooms for swift passage and sharing of incident information. This direct communication between control rooms is done via a dedicated airwave talk group channel

Both the MPS and LFB are progressing the ability to exchange this information electronically. Whilst that work continues, the fastest way for the MPS to request the resources of the LFB at an incident is through a dedicated telephone line or via the dedicated airwave channel.

Water safety

Water safety along the Thames is an important part of the broader prevention work at LFB, in discharging its obligations under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

Currently LFB chairs the Tidal Thames Water Safety Forum. The Brigade also sits on the London Water Safety Partnership. Membership of these bodies provides LFB with the means to participate in and influence improvements in safety of persons in the vicinity of the Thames and other waterways in London.

LFB has worked with London Local Authorities to support them installing throwline boards at multiple points along the River Thames. Each throwline board contains a throwbag and foil blanket. These boards not only contain rescue equipment but provide precise geolocation detail, which can be used by LFB control staff to dispatch crews in the event of an incident.

The need for additional throwline boards along the Thames is regularly reviewed.

Since Mr Allan's death in August 2022, LFB has undertaken a number of activities aimed at improving safety along the River Thames. These include the following:

1. Working with London Local Authorities to help ensure the proper installation of water safety equipment at key points, linked to emergency services control rooms.
2. On 25th July 2023 – World Drowning Prevention Day - writing to Chief Executives of all London Local Authorities urging a review of water rescue equipment and arrangements. Several water safety events were held on this day at venues including Teddington lock, Hampton Court Palace and Hampton canoe club.
3. On 20th September 2023 an additional 10 throwline boards was installed in the vicinity of the point where Mr Allan drowned in Kingston-upon-Thames. In partnership with the London Boroughs of Richmond-upon-Thames and Kingston-upon-Thames, over 34 throwline boards have been installed along the Thames.
4. In the Richmond and Kingston areas of the Thames, as part of borough partnership initiatives in 2023/24, LFB provided throwlines and training in their use, to businesses, cafes, bars and restaurants along the river. Training in throwline use has also been provided to parks patrols.
5. In July 2024 a water safety room was opened at Twickenham Fire Station to provide training and education for river safety. The opening was covered by the broadcast media.
6. A number of multi-agency training exercises have been held to test and improve the emergency response on the Thames.
7. LFB has strengthened its operational working with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service to improve the response to emergencies on the Thames.
8. In May 2024, LFB Control had added details of water rescue resources held by neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services. This allows control room operators so assess whether LFB resources could be nearer to an incident and deployed more quickly if needed.
9. From February 2025, LFB Control staff monitor ES3 channel - the Coastguard channel - and broadcast any incident on the Thames to which LFB can respond.

I hope this response provides you with the necessary assurance that LFB is working to address the matters raised in your report.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the London Fire Commissioner.

London Fire Commissioner