

Lewis Dean JOHNSON - determination on 22.05.25

This has been an inquest on behalf of Our Sovereign Lord The King by me, Mary Elizabeth Hassell, Senior Coroner for Inner North London, touching the death of Lewis Dean Johnson who died on 9 February 2016 at Clapton Common A107 in London. The jury has made a narrative determination as follows.

“Lewis Dean Johnson died on 9 February 2016 following a road traffic collision with a traffic light pole at approximately midday at Clapton Common A107, near the junction with Castlewood Road in London. Mr Johnson’s medical cause of death was blunt abdominal trauma with aortic rupture.

On the morning of 9 February 2016, Mr Johnson was driving a 300cc motorcycle and carrying a pillion passenger. Both individuals were engaged in snatching mobile phones from members of the public. This activity resulted in Mr Johnson and his pillion passenger being pursued by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) for over three minutes prior to the road traffic collision.

Mr Johnson’s manner of driving during the pursuit included travelling in excess of speed limits, driving on the wrong side of the road, passing vehicles on the nearside, and driving on the pavement. The manner of Mr Johnson’s driving was influenced by the fact that he was being pursued by the police in a high speed pursuit that involved the pursuing police vehicle following too closely at times, a factor that placed additional pressure on Mr Johnson affecting his decision making.

Opportunities to reduce risk to Mr Johnson and the public by the driver of the pursuing vehicle were missed. In particular, the pursuing police driver continued to drive too close to the motorbike, at times, following a point in the pursuit where the motorbike mounted the pavement forcing a pedestrian to move out of the way.

The presence of the pursuing police car also caused other road users to pull to the side of the road to assist the movement of the police car through traffic. One of these road users was the driver of a white box van at Clapton Common, which caused Mr Johnson to lose control of the motorbike before he collided with the road traffic light pole.

Mr Johnson’s failure to stop was motivated by a desire to avoid arrest whilst in possession of stolen goods.

The driver of the pursuing police vehicle did not have the qualification (IP code) required by MPS policy at the time to engage in the pursuit of motorbikes. Nonetheless, a pursuit took place because of a lack of knowledge amongst the police driver, the vehicle operator and MPS control room staff of policy relating to pursuit of motorcycles, and a lack of adequate communication of these policies. As such, appropriate termination based on the policy requirement for an IP code did not occur. This failure was due in part to the MPS failing to implement, disseminate and train relevant staff on relevant policies effectively.”