

HM Senior Coroner Penelope Schofield
West Sussex, Brighton & Hove Coroner's Service
Parkside Chart Way
Horsham
RH12 1XH

By email

31st March 2026

Dear Senior Coroner Schofield,

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 report sent via email to the NPCC dated 17th February 2026.

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

Matters of concern have been highlighted below:

1. Evidence was heard at the Inquest that there is no local or national recording of cases where police officers have died by suicide or who have attempted suicide whilst under police investigation for an offence of Police Misconduct. Without this information the Police service cannot identify if suicide is more prevalent amongst Police Officers and whether additional measures need to be put in place to support officers who are in this position.
2. Similarly I heard evidence that Police officers are repeatedly exposed to high levels of suicide incidents and trauma yet not all Police forces in England and Wales had implemented the recognised "STEP" campaign (Suicide Trauma Education Regulation 28 – After Inquest Template Updated 15/07/2025 TG Prevention).

In relation to the first matter of concern raised, the post suicide data collection, analysis and subsequent learning has been a long-standing issue for the service. The NPCC has been collating near real time suspected suicide surveillance data since January 2022. This is facilitated through the NPCC Suicide Prevention Steering Group and is formulated from data returns provided by police forces in England, Scotland, and Wales. This data includes Police Officer and Police Staff deaths by suspected suicide over recent years. Data returns are voluntary and used for intelligence purposes to aid suicide prevention and shared with Health and suicide prevention partners. The data does not capture attempted suicides, nor whether serving police personnel were under investigation.

The overall issue of police related suicides will be resolved by a requirement to report a consistent data set into the Chief Medical Officer for policing. The paper recommending this change was tabled at Chief Constable's Council in March 2026, and I am pleased to confirm that this was approved.

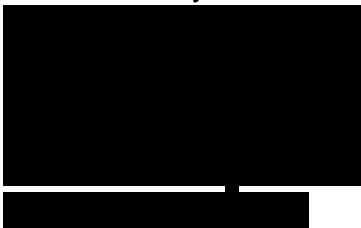
In relation to the second matter of concern, exposure to suicide is a common occurrence for police officers and many police staff, requiring regular, and on occasion, specialist support. The STEP campaign is supported by the NPCC, but a far more detailed and ambitious national approach is being developed, which all forces are involved in. The Trauma Support Model adopts a more holistic view of trauma and brings together a range of activities and interventions such as trauma tracking using incident data, annual psychological assessments and mandatory trauma prevention and suicide prevention training for new recruits and supervisors.

Oscar Kilo (The national police wellbeing service) sits with the College of Policing and works closely with the NPCC, HMICFRS and the Home Office to support the delivery of national strategies to meet obligations under the Police Covenant and to meet workforce wellbeing responsibilities. Oscar Kilo published the National Suicide Action Plan for Policing in July 2024 endorsed by NPCC, Police Federation, Police Superintendents Association and Unison and incorporating a 24/7 mental health crisis line for police officers and staff across England and Wales. The plan recognise that suicide in policing is an issue that deserves attention, and that more needs to be done to support police forces in reducing suicides.

In the Police Reform white paper there is a recommendation to increase annual mental health assessments from 50,000 per annum to 150,000 and also a national standard for welfare support in relation to staff under investigation. Again, I fully support these recommendations and will work closely with Chief Constables and the College of Policing to deliver them.

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,



Chair
National Police Chiefs' Council