



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

Working together for a safer London

DIRECTORATE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Her Majesty's Coroner
Northern District of Greater London
The Coroner's Court
Myddelton Road
Hornsey
London
N8 7PY

13th October 2008

Stuart Osborne
Commander

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Dear Sir

I write to detail the Metropolitan police response to your Rule 43 report arising from the inquest into the death of Timothy John Payne on 25th June 2008.

1. Where it is brought to the attention of the Custody Officer by *any* person that a detained person is or may be high risk of suicide or self harm the custody officer *must* call the relevant emergency mental health team for a full mental health assessment to be undertaken, even if a forensic medical examiner has purported to carry out such an examination;

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Custody Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) places great emphasis on the issue of risk assessment in accordance with the PACE Codes of Practice requirement to initiate an ongoing risk assessment on a detainee's welfare. Further in July 2008 the MPS Safer Detention Working Party agreed the following process: a mandatory consideration by the custody officer of every detainee as to whether they may be at risk of suicide or serious self harm following their release from custody. Guidance will be issued to custody officers detailing their responsibilities concerning their duty of care to the detainee upon release, and each BOCU will be encouraged to produce a leaflet, which will include information on support available to the person nationally and locally. The pre release risk assessment will be included in Custody officer and Designated Detention Officer initial training. Consent will be sought from detainees to share their details with appropriate support agencies with a view to appropriate follow up support being made available to them.

Progress has been made in creating a pre-release risk assessment for all detainees, which will aim to ensure that support agencies are informed of vulnerable detainees with a view to improving access to health care professionals. Additionally, the introduction of health care professionals, custody nurses, on a permanent 24/7 basis within the custody environment will provide an experienced and consistent approach to the provision of

medical care to detainees, as well as greatly assisting the custody officer in the risk assessment process.

There are issues with regards to detaining a person who is not detained under s136 of the Mental Health Act where there are no legal grounds to detain them. Also there is evidence that 'crisis' teams will only respond to requests from FMEs and not custody officers, there is also I understand a capacity issues for these 'crisis' teams.

These issues will be further pursued in conjunction with the ACPO lead for Custody and the MPS ACPO lead on mental health.

2. In circumstances where a welfare plan is necessary steps are to be taken to ensure that;

- I. a proper multidisciplinary approach is taken;
- II. the welfare plan is in writing and is flexible enough to manage changes in the welfare needs of the subject of the welfare plan.
- III. an individual with appropriate training is nominated to supervise and manage the welfare needs of the subject of the welfare plan.

In order to assist managers or custody sergeants to assess the risk of self-harm prior to discharge from custody or whilst being held in the custody suite, a Managers Risk Assessment tool has been developed. The tool can be reviewed as frequently as necessary and provides all the relevant questions a manager or assessor should ask.

This information is available on our Occupational Health website and will be distributed to all Custody, Human Resource and Directorate of Professional Standards staff to ensure they are aware of this information.

We also advise our staff that if they have concerns, managers of custody sergeants can access the 24-hour on-call Occupational Health Team who will provide them with additional guidance and support.

The tragic death of Timothy Payne had a huge impact on the MPS both as an organisation and on individuals within. We will ensure that all within the MPS work together internally and with our partners dealing with those who come into our care, employees or otherwise, to provide the best caring service possible both now and in the future.

Yours sincerely



Stuart Osborne
Commander
Directorate of Professional Standards