



Andrew Walker  
HM Coroner for the Northern District of Greater London  
North London Coroners Court  
29 Wood Street  
Barnet  
EN5 4BE

24 December 2014

**Coroners Concerns - Inquest - Santosh Benjamin Muthiah**

Dear Sir,

I have been passed a copy of your report dated 5 November 2014 raising questions and seeking a response from the Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences.

The objects of the Society are to advance the study, application and standing of forensic science and to facilitate co-operation among persons interested in forensic science throughout the world. It is also the professional body for forensic science practitioners.

Forensic Scientists outside academia are usually employed / contracted by a third party for their services by the police or other emergency services, including the fire service; solicitors; private businesses or individuals for criminal, civil and other investigative work or advice. Their reports are therefore delivered direct to whoever has engaged them and, depending on the circumstances and purpose, are not always available for wider circulation and may be sensitive or confidential.

A forensic scientist will not be called to assist at the scene or even with any aspect of the majority of fire investigations. They are rarely involved in any but the most serious fires and / or unexplained or suspicious deaths. Reasonably straightforward cases where the cause of the fire is readily assessed will usually be investigated by the fire service and / or police without an external forensic scientist's involvement.

They are not therefore, in my opinion, best placed to be able to report, or be required to report, information such as a specific appliance or apparatus that may have been the cause of a fire.

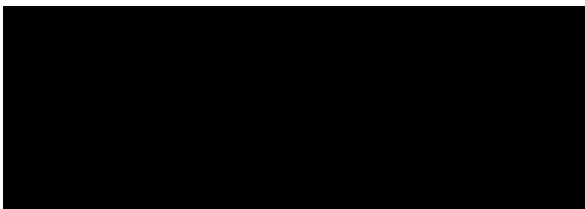
The fire service, I understand, have a duty to investigate every fire and the police will be involved in fatalities. Scientific evidence may be available to assist them to reach a conclusion or suggest lines of enquiry but not necessarily involving input from a forensic scientist.



In order to provide consistent and accurate data to a central monitoring body such as Trading Standards I believe responsibility should rest with a single agency that will always be involved and already has a duty to investigate, i.e. The Fire and Rescue Services / Local Authority.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need further information or if I can assist in any way.

Yours Sincerely



Colin Ratcliff

Vice President.

OCT 21 2014  
10:30 AM