

Jonathan Landau
South London Coroner's Office
Floor 2 Davis House
Robert Street
Croydon
CR0 1QQ

10 November 2021

Dear Mr Landau

Regulation 28 Report – Mr Richard Boateng

I write on behalf of the College of Policing (the College) 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, prevention of future death report to the College dated the 26th February 2021.

The report sets out concerns that arose from the information received during the inquest in to the death of Mr Richard Boateng. I was very sorry to read of the circumstances of Richard's death. My sympathies are with his family and friends and I share your commitment to addressing the issues that contributed to his untimely loss.

The report sets out your principle considerations in respect of the current guidance provided to forces in respect of the conveyance of patients to hospital in an emergency if no ambulances are available. More specifically your letter provides the following information.

College of Policing - *Due to the Covid pandemic, no ambulances were available when police attended to Richard. The Metropolitan Police Service had a policy that permitted conveying patients to hospital in an emergency if no ambulances were available. However, the policy included no practical guidance as to how that could be achieved mitigating the risks. I heard that the Metropolitan Police Service is updating the guidance. However, I am concerned that other forces across the country may also lack such practical guidance, which is of particular concern due to ongoing pandemic and the demands that may continue of ambulance services*

The College is the independent professional body supporting everyone working in policing to reduce crime and keep people safe. The College has three complimentary functions;

- Sharing knowledge and good practice: creating and maintaining easy access to knowledge, disseminating good practice, and facilitating the sharing of what works

- Setting standards: setting standards for key areas of policing which help forces and individuals provide consistency and better service for the public
- Supporting professional development: setting requirements, accrediting, quality assuring and delivering learning and professional development, promoting diversity and wellbeing, and helping to nurture and select leaders at all levels.

The College licences the First Aid Learning Programme (FALP) used by Home Office Forces, including the Metropolitan Police Service. The programme is endorsed by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The College is responsible for ensuring appropriate quality assurance processes are in place to guide forces in the implementation of the HSE guidelines relating to the provision of first aid. However, transportation of casualties to hospital are not within the scope of the responsibility of a first aider (and therefore the FALP).

The transportation of casualties in police vehicles carries inherent risks to the casualty, requiring skills and responsibilities significantly above those of a first aider, and significant liabilities to the officers themselves. For these reasons instances of police transporting casualties should be kept to the absolute minimum and there is concern that development of College issued guidance would not only 'normalise' such practices but add to an unrealistic expectation being placed on officers at the scene.

That said, there will be instances when this may be necessary, and in those scenarios I would expect officers to conduct a dynamic risk assessment at the scene. The College has developed Authorised Professional Practice (APP) to aid decision making **National Decision Model (college.police.uk)**; this practical guidance guides officers through a process of considering the information, assessing the risks, considering policy and available powers, identifying options and finally taking action. In the absence of an ambulance and taking account of the prevailing circumstances (in particular the risk to the patient), I consider that the APP already provides appropriate guidance.

In considering the response, my team has also liaised with the NPCC portfolio leads for Response Policing (Chief Constable [REDACTED]) and Health and Safety (Asst. Chief Constable [REDACTED]). Both are in agreement with my response, and I understand that Chief Constable [REDACTED] is going to discuss the issue of the availability of ambulances with her NPCC colleagues to explore the national context.

As a matter of course, all coroner reports and inquests related to the provision of first aid by police officers are reviewed by the NPCC First Aid Forum as a standing agenda item. My staff have spoken with the forum chair and have agreed to escalate this issue to the Forum for consideration as to what practical advice can be offered to forces.

The College is committed to continuing our work with forces, the NPCC and other agencies to raise standards of practice in the care of people who come to police attention. We would like to thank you for bringing the circumstances of Mr Boateng's death to our attention so that we can ensure that our immediate and future work is informed by the events that culminated in his death.

Yours sincerely



Chief Constable [Redacted]
Chief Executive Officer
College of Policing
[Redacted]