

matter of disappointment to me that the initial police investigations could, and should, have been better.

20. As Gold for Operation Lilford I was clear from the outset that we must do what we could to identify and make improvements in policing practice or behaviour, to prevent the circumstances and events of the original investigations from happening again. I defined clear terms of reference, or purpose, for the Gold Group that included "*understanding the MPS response to the murders and identify and address any risks and learning identified.*"
21. This has been a focus of the MPS over the last five years as we continue to improve as a direct result of the learning from the investigations into the deaths of Anthony Walgate, Gabriel Kovari, Daniel Whitworth and Jack Taylor. The murder investigation led by Detective Chief Inspector Tim Duffield identified a number of areas for learning, which were escalated to the Gold Group for review and action, alongside other wider developments. Once the IOPC investigation report had been received by the MPS, it was also assessed for learning and informed the Gold Group's activity.
22. I have categorised all of the individual issues with the original police investigations into five key aspects where changes and improvements were required. In addressing each, this statement considers the situation as it was in 2014/2015, the action taken to date and ongoing developments. The five aspects are:

- 1) **The quality of the initial death investigations and the professional curiosity of investigators.**

This includes both individual and collective actions, and the investigative curiosity of those involved in the original investigations, into what were considered to be unexplained deaths. It is a matter for the Learned Coroner and the jury, assisted by the expert evidence of former Detective Superintendent Mackay, to identify the specific decisions and actions that fell below the standard to be expected. However, considered as a whole, the approach of both local policing and specialist investigators should have been better and could have led to the earlier arrest of Mr Port on suspicion of murder.

The MPS continues to improve the standards and quality of investigations to increase the number of accredited detectives. Since

2015 these improvements have been across a number of areas including:

- i. The Basic Command unit ("BCU") local policing model (paragraphs 37 to 46),
- ii. Improved intelligence support to BCUs (paragraphs 57 to 63),
- iii. Introduction of a chief officer Head of Profession for Investigation to deliver continuous improvement of investigative professionalism and operational practices (paragraphs 91 to 93),
- iv. Introduction of the Detective Resilience Group and Detective Career Pathways (paragraphs 94 to 103),
- v. Improved support from the Specialist Crime Review Group ("SCRG") (paragraphs 104 to 111),
- vi. The introduction of Mi Investigation in BCUs (paragraphs 112 to 121),
- vii. Building capacity and capability in BCU investigations (paragraphs 122 to 162),
- viii. The training and accreditation of detectives in PIP level 1 to 4, (paragraphs 163 to 210),
- ix. The MPS death investigation policy (paragraphs 211 to 234), and
- x. National NPCC guidance (paragraphs 235 to 262).

**2) The leadership of the original investigations, including the direction and support for the investigators.**

More effective direction, leadership, support for investigators and resourcing of the original investigations could have identified, and pursued, other investigative lines of enquiry. The lack of clear investigation structures and strategies did not lead to any review of the deaths before October 2015, despite concerns being raised by victims' families, partners, friends and members of the LGBT+ community.

The MPS has taken a number of steps to increase the capability and resilience of senior detectives and the leadership of local investigations, including:

- i. Introduction of the BCU local policing model (paragraphs 37 to 46),
- ii. Introduction of the Specialist Crime Command with increased support to local policing (paragraphs 47 to 90),
- iii. Training for senior detectives (paragraphs 186 to 210),