

Urgent question from Margaret Hodge MP “To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if she will make a statement on the Metropolitan Police and the inquest into the deaths of Anthony Walgate Gabriel Kovari, Daniel Whitworth and Jack Taylor.”

“The litany of police errors is simply horrific. From refusal to check the murderer’s laptop because it was too expensive, failure to engage appropriately with the partners and families, failure to check the authenticity of a fake suicide note, failure to check CCTV, and the incomprehensible failure to link the deaths when three of the bodies were found in or close to St. Margaret’s churchyard in my constituency. Does the Minister agree with the friends, partners, and families that the Metropolitan Police are prejudiced and institutionally homophobic?”

Does he, at the very least, agree that given the facts of the cases, homophobia must have been a factor that influenced the actions and inactions of the police? In these circumstances, will he please order a full public inquiry, to examine whether there is institutional homophobia in the police service? And does he agree that such an inquiry is vital, if the police are to gain the trust of the LGBTQ+ community? And does he further agree that the inquiry is also vital to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again?

Seventeen police officers were investigated by the IOPC in 2015. None was sacked, and five have since been promoted. Is the Independent Office of Police Conduct fit for purpose? And what action has it taken to ensure that all police officers treat gay partners in the same way as they would any other partner, with appropriate respect and a proper duty of care? Action by the Home Office, the Metropolitan Police and the Mayor is essential, if the homophobia in our police service is to be properly, and thoroughly investigated and addressed.”