



PATIENTS' FORUM AMBULANCE SERVICES (London) Ltd

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Sir Paul Stephenson
Commissioner
Metropolitan Police

January 9th 2011

Dear Sir Paul,

I am writing to you about the increased use by the Metropolitan Police of techniques involving “kettling” people into a confined space where they are detained until such time as they can be released or processed in a controlled manner. The approach appears to gather everyone in its path whether protestor or by-stander. I understand this practice is not currently subject to specific statutory regulation and control, except of course that Article 3 of the Human Rights Act provides that, “No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”. This would appear to limit the sort of force that may be used.

The reason I am writing to you is specifically in relation to the medical needs of people held in a large crowd contained by the police, sometimes for several hours. People may become ill during such detention either due to panic, fear or the occurrence of natural events like strokes and heart attacks. Other people may have sustained an injury in their interaction with the police. In such a situation the civil liberty to call an ambulance and to receive treatment consistent with their clinical needs and civil rights are likely to be hampered possibly leading to death, sustained injury or increased harm as a result of delays in getting attention for a medical emergency.

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Can you please answer the following questions?

- 1) Are you able to show that during planning of your operations that the potential medical needs of the people you detain by “kettling” are considered?
- 2) Can you provide a copy of your policy for responding to the medical needs of people who have been detained in a “kettling” operation?
- 3) During the use of this kind of detention what method is used to identify medical problems, especially in the ‘thick of the crowd’ that may arise during the detention?
- 4) Can I have a copy of any agreements you have with the LAS on their access to people your officers have detained during a “kettling” operation.
- 5) What provision do you make to allow the LAS access to people who have been detained during a “kettling” operation?
- 6) What agreement do you have with the LAS to enable them to respond directly to 999 calls from people who have been detained by your offices in a “kettling” operation?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Alexander
Vice Chair