

**PRESS RELEASE**

**RICHARD OKOROGHEYE:**

**METROPOLITAN POLICE APOLOGISE FOR FAILINGS IN RICHARD OKOROGHEYE  
INVESTIGATION**

Richard Okorogheye, 19, went missing from his home in West London on 22 March 2021. Richard was a vulnerable adult with a diagnosis of Sickle Cell Anaemia and had been shielding in line with government guidance.

Richard was reported missing by his mother, Evidence Joel, on 23 March 2021. His mother made police aware that he suffered from Sickle Cell Anaemia on a number of occasions and that he had left home without his medication. Richard's body was found in a lake in Epping forest two weeks later on 5 April 2021.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct ('IOPC') investigation into the police response to Richard's disappearance has now concluded. The IOPC found that overall, officers provided an unacceptable level of service to Richard's mother when she reported her son was missing and that the force should apologise.

The inquest into Richard's death is expected to take place next year.

Richard's mother, Evidence Joel, said:

*"The IOPC investigation has confirmed what I always knew – in the darkest period of my life, I was dismissed by multiple Metropolitan Police staff at all levels of seniority and my son's disappearance was not taken seriously. It is a matter of deep regret to me that despite both the IOPC and Metropolitan Police concluding that the performance of three police officers (including an Inspector) and three call handlers fell short of the standard expected, nobody will face misconduct proceedings. Therefore the apology is not accepted."*

Tara Mulcair of Birnberg Peirce solicitors said:

*"It is regrettable that the Metropolitan Police have decided to apologise to Ms Joel now, almost 16 months after his disappearance and only after a recommendation from the IOPC."*

Evidence Joel is represented by Tara Mulcair of Birnberg Peirce and Tom Stoaite of Doughty Street Chambers.

**BIRNBERG PEIRCE, 6 JULY 2022**