

Determinations – Keith David Palmer

PC Keith Palmer was unlawfully killed.

On 22 March 2017 PC Keith Palmer was on duty as an unarmed police officer stationed at the Carriage Gates entrance from Parliament Square into the Palace of Westminster estate. An attacker who had driven his vehicle into multiple pedestrians on Westminster Bridge entered the Gates. PC Palmer stepped forward to challenge him. He immediately began attacking PC Palmer with knives, driving him back into the New Palace Yard area. PC Palmer stumbled against a low wall and the attacker continued his assault. In the attack, PC Palmer suffered a number of injuries, one of which was a serious stab wound to the chest. Although he was able to move away from the attacker, PC Palmer collapsed shortly afterwards. Despite prompt and capable medical attention at the scene, he suffered a cardiac arrest and could not be saved.

Before the start of the attack, the armed officers stationed in New Palace Yard had not been in close proximity to the Carriage Gates entrance. They had been some distance away and out of view of the entrance because they had understood their duty to involve a roving patrol around the Yard. In fact, tactical advice and written instructions stated that armed officers should be stationed close to the Carriage Gates entrance so as to protect those in the Estate and their unarmed colleagues.

Due to shortcomings in the security system at New Palace Yard, including the supervision of those engaged in such duties, the armed officers were not aware of a requirement to remain in close proximity to the Gates. Had they been stationed there, it is possible that they may have been able to prevent PC Palmer suffering fatal injuries.