

Body Found In Portugal Believed To Be That Of Missing Bexhill Man - 07.08.19

New and Alerts

Portuguese police investigating the disappearance of Joel Eldridge from Bexhill, who had been living in Portugal, have sadly discovered a body near the town of Picha.

Joel, 29, went to Portugal in January 2018, saying he was going to work on a house near Coimbra, and was living in Macieira, near Serta, when his family last heard from him in mid-July 2018. He was also in contact with a UK-based firm who had an enquiry from him on 26 July 2018 about potential work back in the UK.

Joel's disappearance was reported to Sussex Police in late August 2018 and police issued a public and media appeal for information on 31 August.

Joel's parents made a further media and public appeal, with police support, on Joel's 30th birthday in March this year.

Detectives from the Surrey and Sussex Major Crime Team have been working closely with the national Portuguese Judicial Police and have visited Portugal several times to meet their counterparts.

Valuable assistance is also being given by the National Crime Agency's international liaison officers.

The Portuguese police, who are leading the investigation with Sussex Police support, had already been treating the case as murder and officers from their homicide team have been investigating.

Detective Chief Inspector Chris Friday, of the Surrey and Sussex Major Crime Team said; "Our enquiries, supporting those of the Portuguese investigators, gave us cause to believe that Joel had come to harm at the hands of others in while in Portugal.

"We understand that further tests are needed to confirm that the body is that of Joel, but we suspect this to be the case and we have updated his family about this development. Our thoughts are with them at this sad time.

"On behalf of the Portuguese Judicial Police, who continue to lead this murder investigation, we still ask anyone in the UK who may have heard from Joel since he went missing in July 2018, or who may have any other information about him or about anyone else who knew him, in the UK or Portugal, to contact us online at <https://www.sussex.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us/> or by calling 101, quoting Operation Lyra.

You can also contact the independent charity [Crimestoppers](#) anonymously on 0800 555 111.

In Portugal information can be given to the Polícia Judiciária in Coimbra on (+351) 239 863 000.

