



AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

www.avonandsomerset.police.uk

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Office Hours: 8am – 6pm

18th October 2013

Michael Rose
Senior Coroner
Blackbrook Gate
Blackbrook Park Avenue
Taunton, Somerset
TA1 2PG

Dear Sir

JACK WILLIAM PAYTON DECEASED
REGULATION 29 CORONER'S (INVESTIGATIONS) REGULATIONS 2013
RESPONSE

I refer to your Regulation 28 report dated 30 August 2013 following your inquest into the death of Jack William Payton.

You reported matters of concern regarding the current shift patterns for Communications Department staff within the Avon and Somerset Constabulary. This was as a result of the evidence of two members of staff leaving you with a distinct impression that their shift pattern was a factor affecting their judgement detrimentally at the time of the incident involving the death of Mr Payton.

I have considered the matters of concern you have raised and what action you consider should be taken and will be taking the following action:

1. I am commissioning an independent assessment of the current shift pattern and its effects on staff. I currently anticipate this will be completed by [REDACTED] a Human Scientist with Qinetiq who will be working in conjunction with [REDACTED] the Force Medical Advisor from our Occupational Health Department who, as a specialist consultant physician, authored a dissertation on driving fatigue and shift work. It is anticipated this work will commence in January 2014, due to the availability of [REDACTED]

2. Their report will be presented for initial consideration to Chief Superintendent [REDACTED] who heads the Communications Department, together with representatives from the HR Department who will review the findings and develop recommendations balancing the findings of the independent report with the demand profiles the organisation experiences, the resources we have available, our need to provide a 24 hour/365 day service, and any other business impacts.
3. These recommendations will then be considered at Force level by an appropriate group to decide whether they should be implemented or whether any other options should be progressed. Should a decision be taken to amend shift patterns there are specific timescales set out with staff associations involving consultation and notice periods. The impact of these could mean that the timescales for full implementation could take until July 2014.
4. We would, of course, be happy to share our findings and the outcome with you in due course should you wish to see them.

The Constabulary recognises that working a shift pattern, particularly where that pattern involves working during the night, may cause a level of fatigue not experienced by non-shift workers. As such, the existing shift pattern was considered in order to balance the demand profile for service which exists across 24 hours, against available resources and the need to reduce the impact of shift working on staff. For this reason, the current pattern has forward-rotating shifts and sufficient breaks intended to minimise its impact on our staff. Commissioning the independent review I have outlined will, I believe, enable the Force to take an informed decision on any changes which may be required.

If I can be of any further assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Assistant Chief Constable