

Anthony Bangham
Chief Constable

West Mercia Police Headquarters, Hindlip Hall
PO Box 55, Worcester WR3 8SP

25 NOV 2016

Direct Dial: [REDACTED]

18 November 2016

[REDACTED]

Mr J P Ellery
Senior Coroner
HM Coroner's Service
Shirehall, Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY2 6ND

Dear Mr Ellery

**Response to Regulation 28 Report into Tyrone Ashley Lock
Jury Inquest: 3-6 October 2016**

I have read the regulation notice dated 13th October 2016 pertaining to the above inquest and have noted the six points of concern that you have identified. I respond to each one separately as follows.

Point 1

Tyrone should have been treated as a vulnerable person and not a suspect.

Response 1

This point is accepted.

I can confirm that in terms of supporting officers and staff West Mercia Police has already embarked on an extensive programme of work to raise awareness and understanding of vulnerability. We are keen that our people are professionally curious and recognise where those who cannot help themselves may require our help, support and intervention.

We are finalising a vulnerability strategy which includes national effective practice.

We have piloted a programme within the Telford area which encourages officers and staff to see beyond the obvious and think wider. This will be rolled out across West Mercia in 2017.

The use of the National Decision Making Model (NDM) is embedded across West Mercia. The NDM has six key elements. Each provides frontline officers and staff with an area for focus and consideration and can be applied to a range of circumstances.

We have complemented the NDM by introducing the THRIVE model, (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability, Engagement) across the Force. NDM and THRIVE both provide a framework for officers and staff to seek out as much information that they can and make sound rational decisions to protect the public.

To increase our professionalism further, officers and staff have been provided with an ongoing programme of development built around protecting people from harm. Officers and staff with specialist knowledge have provided training across the 13 strands of public protection, including high harm areas such as mental health and missing persons. These sessions are also supported by an extensive programme of on-line learning and knowledge checks provided by the College of Policing.

Clearly every incident reported to the Police will be assessed on its own merits. However such an extensive programme of ongoing work will ensure that going forward, officers and staff will be better placed to identify and manage vulnerability and ultimately protect the public we serve.

Point 2

That a second call to request the services of the helicopter should have been issued.

Response 2

This point is accepted.

Throughout the investigation into Tyrone's death, there has been extensive consultation with colleagues in NPAS in order that we better understand the NPAS call out procedure and ensure that this is clearly articulated to operational officers and staff.

Following the inquest T/ACC Cullen chaired a Critical incident Management Meeting which was attended by senior colleagues from NPAS. NPAS have subsequently written to all 44 police forces in England and Wales a briefing document on the policy and procedure for the deployment of NPAS aircraft. This includes the key point that when a request is declined that decision will remain under review and it should not be assumed a second request will also be declined.

Further, in consultation with NPAS, we have ensured that where attendance is declined, a fuller explanation setting out the reasons for non attendance is provided. This additional information will assist officers on the ground to review the information they have, to re-assess whether another request may be necessary. This was an important aspect of this particular case and I am satisfied that this change in procedure will help to ensure that further secondary requests for air support are always considered in the future.

Point 3

Collectively there was information available to the police at the time that led the jury to conclude that Tyrone should have been classified as a vulnerable person.

Response 3

This is accepted and as outlined in response 1, West Mercia has embarked on an ambitious programme to enhance vulnerability training for all staff and officers across the organisation to ensure such situations do not occur in the future.

Point 4

That NPAS have stated that had they received a second call to attend following Tyrone running off from officers, they would have made every effort to attend.

Response 4

As outlined in response 2, it is accepted that officers on the ground should have considered that a second call to NPAS be made.

I have set out in response 2 what actions we have already taken in consultation with NPAS to ensure that officers are aware of the call out procedures for, and capability of, NPAS so that similar circumstances may be prevented in the future.

Point 5

This point includes two separate issues:-

- i) Contrary to NPAS evidence the police officers concerned believed that regardless of Tyrone's status, a second call to NPAS would have met with the same result and there would be no point in making such a request.*
- ii) Two duty Sergeants involved on the Saturday and Monday had different views as to what risk of harm meant.*

Response 5

i) As outlined in responses 2 and 4, all officers have now received clear and concise guidance relating to NPAS call out procedures and capability.

ii) Clearly the situation had developed over time and the Sergeant who managed the incident on a Saturday morning was acting upon different information and was under a different belief than the Sergeant who recovered Tyrone's body on the Monday morning.

Whilst policing by its very nature will always be dynamic our investment in developing officers and staff is designed to promote consistency and ensure such situations are avoided in the future.

Point 6

This point includes two separate issues:-

- a) NPAS are included in this report so that liaison may take place between the two organisations*
- b) NPAS are to review whether any other police force may also have a similar lack of understanding*

Response 6

a) As outlined in response 2, West Mercia Police has already undertaken extensive liaison with NPAS in relation to this case and the learning points emanating from it, for both organisations.

b) I understand that NPAS are actioning this point separately and have responded to you directly.

I am satisfied that with the extensive programme of vulnerability training already underway, coupled with the ongoing improvements already put in place with NPAS colleagues, the force has done all it can to prevent such a circumstance arising again.

I trust that the above response demonstrates how seriously the force has taken the learning from this tragic incident, and answers your concerns in relation to the matters raised.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Bangham', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Anthony Bangham
Chief Constable