

22nd August 2016

Our Ref: [REDACTED]
Your Ref: Regulation 28 Report

Mr T R G Leeper
Assistant Coroner

Coroners Office
Warwickshire Justice Centre
Newbold Terrace
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire CV32 4EL

Martin Jelley
Chief Constable

Warwickshire Police
Executive Team
Warwickshire Justice Centre
Newbold Terrace
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire CV32 4EL

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Leeper,

Thank you for your letter dated the 30th June and the corresponding regulation 28 report contained therein. Please find below a comprehensive response to the issues raised.

It is the vision of Warwickshire Police to protect people from harm, with an aspiration of being great at protecting the most vulnerable. Any improvements that can be made to meet this vision are taken very seriously. The death of Luisa Mendes is deeply regretted by Warwickshire Police and we are determined that we will do things differently in the future to try to prevent deaths of a similar nature. We have personally apologised to the family of Luisa for our failings.

Specifically in response to the concerns raised in your regulation 28 report, I can update as follows:



www.warwickshire.police.uk
www.westmercia.police.uk



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warwickshire police
west mercia police

1. *The approach of controllers and call handlers to the categorisation of incidents which include allegations of violence. The basis for the concern is that the incident should have been categorised as 'violent' but it was not.*

I consider that the focus of controllers and call handlers should be on the need and immediacy of response rather than the assessed categorisation of any incident. This response should be focused on the threat, harm, risk and vulnerability of all those who seek our help.

To ensure this happens all staff have been trained regarding the identification of threat, harm, risk and vulnerability using the National Decision Making model (NDM) as part of their induction process. As an additional aide to appropriate information capture and decision making, this is being complemented by the introduction of the THRIVE model, (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability, Engagement). This provides a framework for staff to consider the issues evident in each individual case and provide the most appropriate response, assessing the needs of the caller. This training on NDM and THRIVE was refreshed to all Operations and Communications Centre (OCC) staff between January and March 2016. All training will be kept under review with appropriate refresher training given on an ongoing basis.

Additionally to add context, increase professional knowledge and to aid decision making, staff have been provided with specific inputs around protecting vulnerable people from harm. Officers and staff with specialist knowledge have provided bespoke training around high harm issues such as Domestic Abuse, Mental Health and Child Sexual Exploitation at OCC training days. These sessions are supported where applicable by on-line learning and knowledge checks provided by the College of Policing.

More recently, we have commenced innovative one day workshops to encourage and develop our staff to recognise and respond to vulnerability. These workshops will include all relevant staff within Warwickshire Police and are at the core of the ambition I have of protecting the most vulnerable in our society. To support these workshops, all supervisors and managers are being provided with additional inputs in how we can support our staff in dealing with the challenging issues that this ambition will create. The workshops are pioneering within policing and their impact will be subject of academic assessment by Worcester University. The workshops commenced in July and will have been delivered to all relevant Warwickshire officers and staff by December 2016.

I have been reassured that all our OCC staff are provided with appropriate training in a consistent manner. An experienced OCC Manager has responsibility for staff development and for quality assurance.

2. The handover procedures between controllers coming on and off shift in the Operations and Communications Centre (OCC). The basis of the concern is that there are no formalised procedures and no specific training in relation to handovers between controllers coming on and off shift.

Compelling evidence was identified during the preparation and ultimate delivery of the evidence to the inquest that showed the handover procedure between controllers in the OCC required improvement. However, the complex and varied nature of the calls received within the OCC means that the handover process must be dynamic and cannot be subject of an over-prescriptive process. It has been recognised that there was a need to reinforce the critical importance of passing vital information between controllers. In order to achieve this, changes have been made to the initial training programme for controllers and additional requirements incorporated into the controller 'task book', which is a list of skills that controllers need to demonstrate before progression in their role. Additionally, we are exploring the option of an electronic reminder for controllers that will pop-up and remind them of the requirements of handovers when they log on to the system and commence their handover; this is dependent on whether the current system allows for such a development. This is being researched and we await a response as to its feasibility.

3. The set up of the STORM computer system as it relates to deferrals. The basis for the concern is the absence of any feature on the STORM computer system which will alert management to the effect that an unauthorised deferral has been effected by a controller.

There remains a difficulty with substantive technical adaptations to the STORM system as it is used by a large number of police forces and other emergency service providers. After discussions with the company who own the system, Sopra-Steria, we have identified a change to the system that we are seeking to introduce in the next few weeks that will provide some mitigation to the issue of unauthorised deferrals. This change is still under development and it is intended that it will provide an alert on all priority incidents out of time. It is recognised that this does not prevent irregular deferrals being made, however within the current restraints of the system, is considered the best change we can deliver.

The change will be in addition to the reinforcement of the policy in relation to deferrals and the commitment that for a given period, all deferred priority incidents should be subject to checks to ensure that they were deferred with the consent of a supervisor. This will also serve to reinforce the training that no priority incident should be deferred without the consent of a supervisor. It addresses the deferral issue because, if the incident in question has been deferred, either rightly or wrongly, the system will automatically re-activate it and then send the relevant alerts.

Finally, Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police are in the advanced stages of the procurement of a new Command and Control system. We are building the new platform with the suppliers, to our specifications, which will include the changes required as a result of the learning through the inquest. This will include the correct authority level around deferring incidents.

I hope that the above response adequately answers your concerns in relation to the matters raised. Please be assured that we take this matter seriously and would welcome any further feedback you may have. We will take all practical steps to minimise the danger to members of the public now and in the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Jelley', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Martin Jelley
Chief Constable
Warwickshire Police