

Our Ref: MJ/AT/2018
Your Ref: 121143/Imb

Martin Jelley QPM
Chief Constable

Mrs Louise Hunt
Senior Coroner,
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Date: 6th August 2018

Dear Mrs Hunt,

Response to the Report to Prevent Future Deaths – arising from the Inquest into the death of Kieron Bould.

Thank you for your letter of 13 June 2018 enclosing your Report to Prevent Future Deaths in the above matter.

I note the matters you raise as concerns, and would say at the outset that we acknowledge that there were issues with the communication between Warwickshire Police and West Midlands Police at the initial stages of the police involvement in this tragic case. However we also note that, based on your findings that the evidence indicates it is likely that Mr Bould took the morphine overdose at around midnight – shortly before the time he was reported missing to both forces – the matters giving rise to concern in this case would not appear to have affected the outcome in relation to Mr Bould.

Mr Bould was reported missing to Warwickshire Police by his mother at 00.41 on 18 September 2017. [REDACTED] stated that her son actually stayed a lot of the time with his partner, giving an address within the West Midlands Police area.

At 00:19 West Midlands Police had also received a call from his girlfriend reporting Mr Bould as missing.

Warwickshire Police immediately graded this matter as a high risk missing person and began immediate enquiries in relation to Mr Bould's vehicle. At 00.46.58 Warwickshire Police passed the information to West Midlands Police via a telephone call and a subsequent follow up email with all details from all logs up to the time of 00.49.

Following further enquiries by Warwickshire Police, including an exchange between Warwickshire and West Midlands confirming that given the known history as presented by his mother, Mr Bould was being treated as a high risk case, at 00.56 Call Handler Laura BARNES from Warwickshire Police Control room advises on the log that an email has been sent to West Midlands Police with all the details of our enquiries



so far. At this stage, it is also recorded that we were given a different email address to send the detail to by West Midlands Police control room.

It later transpired that the email address which West Midlands Police provided to Warwickshire Police specifically for the use of communication between Forces in relation to Mr Bould was a generic email address which was not regularly monitored. Warwickshire Police were unaware of this fact and therefore used the email address provided for updates on this matter, including the transfer of primacy to West Midlands Police at 01:53 once it had been established by PC Mitchell from Warwickshire Police that both his mother and his girlfriend had confirmed that Mr Bould did reside within the West Midlands Police area and had gone missing from their area.

Warwickshire Police were unaware at the time that the email address provided would not be regularly monitored for communications. We had made telephone calls to West Midlands at the outset of this matter, however once we had a West Midlands Police incident number and an email address was provided to us by West Midlands for the purpose of sending them updates, we utilised that system.

Having learnt that West Midlands system is different to the Warwickshire system (where call handlers have a separate screen to monitor emails as well as a system showing the calls and incidents logs) changes were made to our policies and procedures as detailed in the witness statement of Chief Inspector Kent from Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police, including the need for telephone contact with the other force in respect of transfer of primacy. These changes were implemented in February 2018.

Matter of concern 1

“There should be a system in place to ensure verbal communication confirms who is dealing with any incident”

In the initial stages following the call from Mr Bould's mother, Warwickshire Police did make telephone contact with West Midlands.

At 00.46.58, the Warwickshire log confirms that information was passed to West Midlands Police via a telephone call and subsequent follow up email with all details from all logs up to the time of 00.49. At this stage, West Midlands provide Warwickshire with a different email address to send the detail to West Midlands Police control room. This is the generic email address referred to previously.

At 00.59.11 there is a further telephone call recorded between Warwickshire Call Handler [REDACTED] and West Midlands Police to clarify where Kieron lives. At 01.00.43 West Midlands say that they believe Warwickshire Police should take ownership as their understanding is that Kieron's partner states she does not live with her, but that he lives with his mother in Warwickshire. They have not gone to [REDACTED] address yet (Mr Bould's girlfriend). They are passing the incident to a Sergeant to review. Therefore, at 01.02.01 Warwickshire Police confirm that we will send officers to travel over to Mr Bould's partner's address in West Midlands to speak with her.

At 01.47 PC Mitchell confirms that all parties state that Mr Bould lived with his girlfriend on West Midlands Police area. There is a comment on the incident that this is to be passed back to West Midlands for them to deal with and then close down the Warwickshire Police incident. This was because Mr Bould had been staying in and had gone missing within the West Midlands Police area and therefore, from an operational police perspective, the officers who are closest to where Mr Bould was last seen were West Midlands' officers – as such they were the right force to lead the enquiries to trace him.

At 01:53 Warwickshire Police call handler confirms this information to West Midlands Police in an email sent to the email address provided to us for that purpose.

It can be seen therefore, that at 00:59 Warwickshire Police did make telephone contact with West Midlands in respect of confirming who should best deal with this case. There was confusion as to which Police area Mr Bould lived within, and therefore Warwickshire confirmed that we would make further enquiries, including travelling to the West Midlands police area to do so.

Ideally, there would have been further telephone contact at this stage, although between 01.00 and 01.47, it was clear that Warwickshire Police were leading on establishing where Mr Bould had been living (whilst also conducting further missing person enquiries). In this particular case, it seems the difficulties arose with the transfer of primacy at 01:53.

Matter of concern 2

“There should be a system in place to ensure verbal communication about a transfer so the receiving force is aware of the referral”

Initially in this case, there was telephone contact between the Warwickshire Police control room and the West Midlands Police control room. However, following Warwickshire Police’s visits to both Mr Bould’s mother and girlfriend to confirm his home address, the critical communication confirming Warwickshire Police’s transfer of primacy to West Midlands at 01:53 hours was communicated only by email.

Previously our call handlers were required to satisfy themselves that the information has been delivered and received. Arguably, in this case, the call handler would state that he had sent the required information to the email address specifically provided for this purpose. However it has been recognised that this resulted in a 4 hour delay in this case and therefore the changes recommended in your report have already been incorporated into the procedures now undertaken by Warwickshire Police call handlers when transferring matters between Forces.

Whilst previously there was no requirement to follow up a transfer with a telephone call, it was widely adopted good practice to do so.

As a result of this case alerting us to the risks of not being required to make a follow up telephone call, on the 7th February 2018, Chief Inspector Kent directed an addition to the working practice guidance and task book for call handlers, that if the report of a missing person is to be directed to another force a follow up telephone call shall always be made to confirm receipt of the information before a log is closed down. Therefore, the action recommended by you has already been implemented by Warwickshire Police in order to attempt to mitigate the risks identified in this case.

In addition, we are aware of the response you have received from Chief Constable Thornton on behalf of the NPCC and would clarify that the College of Policing Approved Professional Practice (APP) direction around ownership of missing people has been re-circulated to our Control Room Management, supervisors and staff to remind them of what should be done to provide clarity on ownership of missing persons enquiries, and the importance of that ownership.

If you require any further detail in respect of these matters, we would be happy to assist further.

Yours sincerely



Chief Constable Martin Jelley