



PROFESSIONALISM HQ

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Date: 30th December 2020

Dear Mr Irvine,

I am the Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) for Professionalism in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and I am responding on behalf of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis in response to your Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths dated 12th November 2020. Your report was sent following the conclusion of the Inquest into the death of Ms Chelsie Greatorex.

On 19th June 2020, the Directorate of Professional Standards Specialist Investigation Unit (DPS SIU) conducted an investigation into police contact with Ms Greatorex prior to her death on 10th March 2020. A report was compiled using various sources of evidence, including, but not limited to, the statements of the investigating officer, crime reports, Computer Aided Despatch (CAD) messages and Missing Persons & Related Linked Indices (Merlin) reports. This report will be referred to in this letter when addressing the areas you have raised.

The response to the matters of concern is as follows:

Evidence heard in the inquest suggested Ms Greatorex felt anxiety regarding her role as a complainant in a sexual assault trial

The DPS SIU Investigation Report details a number of occasions when Ms Greatorex reached out to the investigating officer about feeling anxious and low. They appear to have formed a trusting relationship and when Ms Greatorex appeared to become particularly low, the investigating officer offered Ms Greatorex advice and a referral to a support agency. However, Ms Greatorex reassured the investigating officer that she was fine. On the day Ms Greatorex was informed of the date of the trial, there was little to suggest to the officer that she was feeling very low or in need of any further support other than what would be normally considered during a difficult time for any complainant in a case such as this.

To further support Ms Greatorex, on the approach to the trial an application was made to the court for "special measures" of which I know you will be familiar. This process would have included a pre-trial visit to the court, a private room and further support at the court.

In order to provide additional support for victims and/or witnesses throughout the entire investigative process, the MPS has introduced a THRIVE+ vulnerability assessment which is currently being trialled and is anticipated to be rolled out across the MPS in April 2021. It is a set of principles and a framework to assess the type of policing response or investigation required for a particular set of circumstances. THRIVE covers: Threat – Harm – Risk – Investigation – Vulnerability – Engagement + Prevention/Intervention. The framework is a tool which aligns to and enhances the National Decision Model and includes the assessment and ongoing review of risk during investigations. It also provides a common language around risk to improve information sharing and decision-making.

Despite the fact that Ms Greatorex was a child when the events of the allegation took place the investigation was not conducted by a specialist officer or team

Delays in the investigation were identified:

- **Despite naming the suspect and their place of study, no interview took place for over 3 months**
- **A decision to prosecute was not arrived at until late December 2019**
- **A court hearing was not listed until January 2020**

The allegation Ms Greatorex made was considered at the outset by specialist officers and it was decided that due to the non-complex nature of the investigation, it would remain with a Response Team officer to investigate. The MPS General Investigation Policy states that "*Where there is a requirement for ownership of crime investigations by the initial investigating officer, there may be occasions where the characteristics of specific investigations identify themselves as serious and/or complex. It is important that this is identified as soon as possible so that the most appropriate investigating unit is assigned to that investigation dependent on that seriousness and/or complexity. If serious and/or complex characteristics are present, then CID should be approached to take on that investigation*". The policy provides details of types of crime that are considered complex and, '*if the crime type is not listed above and there are no serious or complex characteristics, then the responsibility for further investigation must stay with the response team officer*'. In this instance, the crime was retained by the Response Team Officer to investigate.

The MPS recognises that as the investigation was not considered complex, it should have been completed in a quicker timeframe. The MPS have therefore made improvements in the supervision and team structures of response teams to support less experienced officers with their investigations. A Response Support Team was set up on North East Basic Command Unit on 23rd September 2020 and blends together resources from Emergency Response Policing Teams, Local Resolution Teams, Criminal Investigation Departments and probationary officers and their mentors. The Response Support Team functions as a training unit and allows for a steady improvement of officers investigative skills and point of contact for advice.

The observations about the length of the investigation and failure of management systems to adequately prioritise Ms Greatorex's case are being addressed with the introduction of a new product, the vulnerability tool, which has been developed for Basic Command Units' monthly Offender Management Meetings which prioritise outstanding named suspect cases when the victim has been identified as being the subject of some form of vulnerability. This allows for management intervention and looks across all offence types to identify cases where progress should be prioritised for the benefit of victims where an element of vulnerability has been identified. The vulnerability tool highlights those cases where the suspect has not been arrested and/or interviewed after two months and involves a vulnerable victim; for example, a person who is mentally unwell, who has a physical impairment, is under the age of 18 years; this is not an exhaustive list. Therefore, by using the vulnerability tool, it is intended that similar cases to this will be identified as requiring management intervention and prioritisation.

The timeliness from when the decision to prosecute and the court hearing lies with the CPS and Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS). The suspect for this allegation was interviewed on 5th November 2019 leading to a submission of the evidential file to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on 26th November 2019. The investigating officer made further contact with the CPS on 18th December 2019 regarding the decision on a charging authority and seeking to expedite the case. The CPS authority was granted on 27th December 2019. The suspect was served charges on 2nd January 2020 with a first court appearance provided for the end of the month.

When Ms Greatorex sought support from the MPS, no contact was made for four days, even then, the extent of the support was an email with the contact details of a borough psychologist support service

The investigating officer stated throughout the investigation that her contact with Ms Greatorex was either in person or by telephone as Ms Greatorex's expressed preferred method of contact. Ms Greatorex would email the investigating officer asking her to call her, but was aware that due to her shift pattern the officer may not be able to call her back for a few days.

The investigating officer was of the understanding that Ms Greatorex was also receiving support from her college through weekly meetings with a guidance counsellor. When Ms Greatorex made the officer aware that she was feeling anxious as she was getting into trouble at college for leaving doors open, the officer agreed to speak with the staff about this which she did.

The DPS SIU Investigation Report outlines the occasion when Ms Greatorex had emailed the officer on 4th March 2020 as she had felt a little low and wanted someone to speak to. The investigating officer had previously told Ms Greatorex that she could contact her at any time by email and that she would respond as soon as she was able. The officer returned the call on 7th March but reached her voicemail. On 9th March the investigating officer checked her emails from home and saw that a court date had been arranged for January 2021. The officer then telephoned Ms Greatorex to inform her. The e-mail of 4th March 2020 was discussed and Ms Greatorex explained that at the time of writing the email she had just had one of those days but everything was fine now. The officer asked her what she meant by feeling low and Ms Greatorex said that she had been worried about the case and what it would entail. The officer asked if she had someone she could speak to if she felt low and Ms Greatorex said she had an aunt she saw and spoke to regularly. The officer explained to Ms Greatorex that she was always welcome to talk to her but that she may not be the best person to help her with her mental health so she would email her details for Newham Talking Therapies (NTT). The officer also offered to refer Ms Greatorex other agencies, which she declined. Ms Greatorex said she was happy speaking to her aunt and would contact NTT if required. The conversation ended with Ms Greatorex in good spirits, talking about a recent exam and saying that she would be in contact soon. The investigating officer provided Ms Greatorex with the NTT details despite what was said in the conversation. During this conversation, the officer said in her statement that it did not appear to her that Ms Greatorex was in a mental health crisis and her responses led the investigating officer to think that the low feeling had passed and, although worried about the case, there was a network of support in place.

The MPS is committed to progress learning from instances of death by suicide involving victims and suspects and further develop the response to these. A small team of dedicated officers leading this work has focused on the delivery of key areas. The team is developing a Suicide Prevention Policy Document and Toolkit. The publication of this policy is a key step in developing our co-ordinated strategy to suicide prevention. The policy will draw together information on suicide prevention, support services, risk indicators, contacts and best practice. It will be accompanied by a toolkit providing easy to access guidance and advice from signposting support services to identifying key partners. A draft external Suicide Prevention Policy is due to be drafted by the end of December 2020 prior to going through the MPS's internal policy development process.

In addition to the policy publication, the suicide prevention team is committed to improving the training and guidance available to all officers and staff. An investigative standards' document is under development and is designed as an easy to follow key points to consider document for police first responders. This will enhance knowledge and understanding across the entire service and build on the additional guidance that is already used by some teams where death by suicide is considered higher risk i.e. Custody, Online Child Sexual Abuse.

The MPS Suicide Prevention Team is also meeting with other police forces to learn and share good practice.

In Conclusion

I would like to express my condolences to the family of Ms Greatorax. The MPS is committed to supporting all victims of crime and assisting them to get justice where possible. I recognise that this can't happen unless complainants and victims are adequately supported throughout what can often be a very challenging investigation and criminal justice process.

I hope this provides you with the reassurance that the MPS has considered and addressed the areas of concern that you have raised.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely




Deputy Assistant Commissioner