

Ms Alison Mutch,
Senior Coroner,
Greater Manchester South
BN13 2PQ

Email only: [REDACTED]

14th December 2021

Dear Ms Mutch

Regulation 28 Report – Ms Donna Ann Constantine

We write on behalf of the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing (the College) in relation to paragraph 7, Schedule 5 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, and regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, and the prevention of future deaths reports sent to the NPCC and the College, both dated the 19th October 2021.

Whilst the NPCC and the College have separate and distinct responsibilities, the two organisations frequently work together on national approaches to policing policy. As such, this response is provided jointly in respect of both organisations' separate prevention of future deaths reports. The notice sets out concerns that arose from the information received during the inquest into the death of Ms Constantine. We are very sorry to read of the circumstances of Ms Constantine's death. Our sympathies are with her family and friends and we share your commitment to addressing the issues that contributed to her untimely loss.

The notice sets out your principal concern which highlights a text message sent by a vulnerable person to a Police Officer's mobile phone which was not being monitored and your concern that giving out officer's phone numbers to victims was a national policing approach.

In order to establish a better understanding of the circumstances in relation to this PFD we have met with the relevant leads from Greater Manchester Police and wider NPCC portfolios to discuss this fully.

Firstly, it is important to note that since the death of Ms Constantine, the Victims Code was updated in April 2021, with a number of key changes having been introduced.

These are:

- The Code provides 12 overarching rights, so it is easier to understand and apply.
- It makes frequency and method of contact with the victim, victim led.
- Officers and staff must minimise contact points and provide a 'single points of contact' for information where possible.
- Officers and staff have more discretion as to when it is most appropriate to offer a victim personal statement.
- There is a greater emphasis on explaining 'why' certain decisions have been made

The purpose of the victim's code is to maintain contact with the victim in relation to their reported crimes, along with implementing any special measures required as a vulnerable person.

It is appreciated of course that officers dealing with an investigation may wish to give their work number/email address to a victim of crime as a point of contact. This would be in order to discuss the progress of their crime or request/ gather further information as required.

However, forces nationally are not (neither had they been prior to April 2021) encouraged to give out mobile phone numbers as a point of contact in an emergency or in the event of illness/concern for welfare.

Should victims have an emergency they are encouraged to call 999 or 101 for a non-emergency in every case.

Should an officer receive a call which indicates an emergency/concern for welfare they would be expected to call the relevant control room to report the incident which can then be recorded and allocated for attendance in the usual way.

We hope that this addresses the concerns you raise. Should you have any further questions in relation to our response please send this to [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Chair
National Police Chiefs' Council

[REDACTED]

Chief Constable [REDACTED]
CEO
College of Policing