



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
Alex Chalk KC MP
Lord Chancellor & Secretary
of State for Justice

Mr Andrew J. Cox
H.M. Senior Coroner Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly
H.M. Coroner's Office Pyder House, Pydar Street
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[REDACTED]

6 July 2023

Dear Andrew,

REGULATION 28 REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS

Thank you for your letter of 23 May, and annexed report of 22 May, containing recommendations on Preventing Future Deaths (PFD). I have read it personally and with care. I was deeply saddened to read about the circumstances relating to the tragic death of Tamsin Ann Dolamore. This is a particularly tragic loss, and my thoughts are very much with Tamsin's family and friends.

I will start by responding to your key recommendation on action to be taken, which is to provide statutory funding to support long-term therapy for the recovery of victims and survivors of rape, sexual violence, domestic abuse and child sexual abuse. I will then address your wider concerns in turn.

The Government recognises that funding for victim support provision is crucial, and I agree that victims must have access to the support they need to build resilience to move forward with daily life. This is especially important for victims of the crime types you refer to, as they as they can be particularly traumatic.

Your report noted the improvement and increases in funding for Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) across Devon & Cornwall. Indeed, to better support victims and meet demand for services we are more than quadrupling funding for victims' services by 2024/25, up from £41 million in 2009/10. This includes up to £6.6 million for services supporting victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse, and funding to increase the number of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) by 300, to over 1,000 by 2024/25. In addition, in September 2022, the Ministry of Justice and Home Office announced a joint fund for Violence Against Woman and Girls (VAWG) 'by and for' services. This will run over two years (2023/24 to 2024/25) and total up to £6 million.

Ministry of Justice funding to Devon and Cornwall PCC for victim support services has increased from £2m in 2018/19 to £3.7m in 2022/23 - this equates to an 85% increase. This funding includes core funding for PCCs to allocate at their discretion, based on their assessment of local need; and funding that is ringfenced for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence support services and ISVAs and IDVAs.

It is vitally important that this funding reaches those who need it most. and you make a very powerful point (if I may say so) about the need for a 'joined-up approach'. We agree.

As you note, the Victims and Prisoners Bill is currently going through Parliament. To respond to your recommendation on introducing statutory funding, the Bill is not the right vehicle to set out how future funding may be directed. This is determined by HM Treasury as part of the Spending Review who decide departmental expenditure limits and set out a plan for how public money will be spent over a multi-year period, in line with government priorities.

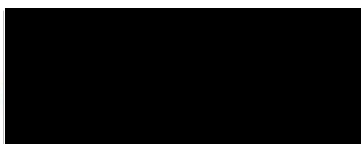
The Bill is a key opportunity to strengthen, through legislation, funding structures to make the best use of funding and resources – and to deliver that coordination you call for. The duty to collaborate is one measure within this designed to achieve this end. It will drive forward more effective, and targeted, strategic multi-agency collaboration on commissioning for victim support services. This places a joint statutory duty on Police and Crime Commissioners, Integrated Care Boards and local authorities to collaborate with each other when commissioning certain victim support services. The duty includes child and adult victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse and other serious violence. The timing of the duty commencing is tied to the Parliamentary passage of the Bill, which is determined by the House Authorities, and following this we expect to consult on accompanying statutory guidance for local areas, as well as to plan for implementation as soon as practically possible.

I'm pleased to learn about the steps being taken towards a more joined-up commissioning approach in Devon, Cornwall, Plymouth and Torbay. The duty will build on existing collaboration like this and create greater consistency, to help local areas within England map their local needs, and target provision of support more effectively.

Lastly, you raise concerns about the serious matter of the number of open rape and serious assault causes and vacancies at Detective Constable level. As you have sent a separate PFD to the Chief Constable, I trust they will respond fully on the matter.

I hope the information above provides the assurance that we have considered, and will continue to consider, your recommendations seriously, and that we are actively seeking to improve the services we provide to victims of crime, by implementing the actions I have outlined. Thank you for the effort and care you have given to this very sad case.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the Lord Chancellor.

RT HON ALEX CHALK KC MP

LORD CHANCELLOR AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR JUSTICE