

His Majesty's Assistant Coroner Robert Simpson
West Sussex, Brighton & Hove

By email: [REDACTED]



18/09/2024

Headquarters
Church Lane
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2DZ

Dear HMA Robert Simpson,

Inquest touching on the death of Ryan Louis Ouslem

Tel: [REDACTED]
www.sussex.police.uk

I write in response to concerns you raised following the conclusion of the Inquest into the death of Ryan Louis Ouslem, which concluded on 5th September 2024. We are grateful for the opportunity to address these concerns and trust the following information will assist.

Rapid Assessment Service

You have requested information from Sussex Police and SPFT regarding plans for roll out of the SPFT "Rapid Assessment Service" where practitioners from the Trust will be attending police calls which have a mental health element (where requested). In line with this, you would also like to know how information is to be shared between agencies.

The roll out of the Rapid Assessment Service is being led by SPFT who are commissioned by NHS Sussex to deliver secondary mental health care in Sussex. Sussex Police are an active participant in the review process and are working collaboratively with NHS colleagues through the Mental Health Urgent & Emergency Care Board and Mental Health Urgent & Emergency Care Improvement Plan to help inform what the new provision could look like.

As it stands, the Rapid Assessment Service or Rapid Response will be accessed by our officers via the Blue Light Line. The Blue Light Line is already operational, and it is current policy to utilise this service when dealing with a mental health incident. The Blue Light Line retains records of the contact and ensures information is correctly processed. There will be no change in practice required for police officers when the Rapid Response Service is launched, and it anticipated it will enhance the offer of service from the Blue Light Line.

Whilst Sussex Police are an active participant in the review, SPFT retain the latest information regarding timescales, service specification and service scope.

Mental Health Training at Sussex Police

You would like to understand more about mental health training for police officers, particularly as PC [REDACTED] said she could not recall receiving any updated mental health training since starting 7 years ago, noting she is in training role.

The subject of mental health has been a particular training focus for Sussex Police for some time. Training has already been rolled out across the force in many areas and is detailed in the enclosed supplementary statement of [REDACTED] the Mental Health Lead for Sussex Police.

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Moving forwards, all new Police officers joining Sussex Police via initial entry routes will be completing a two-day mental health course, which is an accredited qualification – ‘Level 3 in Supervision of Mental Health’. The anticipated rollout is from January 2025 and the qualification will give officers the opportunity to spend more time on the techniques of talking to people presenting with a mental health condition and will involve completion of related scenarios.

As part of this roll out, additional spaces on these courses will be open to all officers who are longer in service, who will be able to book onto the course, although it will not be mandatory for them. This is offered alongside the courses that are currently taught and the learning will be captured on our LEARN platform, allowing a full record of completion to be captured for each learner.

Work continues with the Sussex Police Learning & Professional Development Team (L&PD) to roll out a mandated training package via the College Learn Training Platform. As referenced in Mr Gordon’s statement, “Mental Health and the Police” is a 90-minute e-learning package produced by the College of Policing. It was initially rolled out to Response Officers in Winter 2021, and Autumn of 2022, but completion will now be mandatory for the following officers and staff:

- Coaches on Divisional Coaching Units
- Trainers in Initial training (though most deliver mental health training or are Mental Health First Aiders)
- Assessors in the Assessment & Verification Team
- Special Constables
- Investigating Officers
- PIP 2 Investigators

Compliance will be monitored, and the College Learn Platform is only accessible via individual login. Our L&PD department is currently working hard to ensure this is introduced as soon as possible, and the urgency for this training has been highlighted and escalated accordingly.

Available Resources around Mental Health

There is a myriad of information available to officers and staff on their individually issued MDTs (Mobile Data Terminals). The information provides guidance for officers via an app-based system and can be easily accessed whilst they are attending incidents. This includes, but is not limited to:

Crew Mate:

- Suicide Intervention
- Mental Health Guide – broken down into two clear sections:
 - Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 - A&E Response Guide
 - Full Mental Health Guide



Quick Links:

- Mental Health Form
- Crib Sheet for completion of the Mental Health Form - this is a guidance document detailing when and how to use the form, in relation to the following situations:
 - Section 136
 - Section 135 Warrant
 - Voluntary Attendance/Referral to Mental Health Services
 - Mental Capacity Act

██████ – Mental Health Training

It is accepted that PC ██████'s mental health training may not be as up to date as it should be. As referenced in ██████'s statement, from October 2021 – March 2022, there was an input on mental health at Personal Safety Training (PST) and PC ██████ attended her refresher PST on 22nd March 2022, and therefore **should** have received the input on mental health crisis and dealing with distressed victims.

PC ██████ may have also attended the CPD training sessions, as outlined, again, in ██████'s supplementary statement. However, as has been identified, attendance at the training is not always captured. I am pleased to say that steps have been taken to address this issue, and going forwards, attendance will be recorded.

It is however accepted that currently, PC ██████'s role in the Divisional Coaching Unit (DCU) does not necessarily capture all CPD Training and Professional Development Days, as her role is not classed as a Response Officer nor Neighbourhood Policing Officer, for whom training is mandated. Officers within the DCU can attend CPD Training but is dependent on their awareness that the CPD sessions are being run.

Crucially, from the 7th October 2024, staff on DCU will become part of our Neighbourhood Policing Teams and therefore mandatory training will become aligned.

We are grateful that Ryan's Inquest identified this issue for us, and we have now taken steps to address training for roles that may otherwise have not been included in the mandatory training.

██████ has offered 1:1 training to PC ██████, which will provide a refresher on mental health, as well as address any knowledge gaps.

As identified above, the planned roll out of "Mental Health and the Police" (College of Policing package) will ensure mandated mental health training is provided to **all** officers and staff that may be required to attend incidents where mental health could be a factor. PC Hunt and her colleagues in the DCU will be included in this training going forwards.

I hope the additional information provided herein reassures you that your concerns have been addressed. As an organisation, we remain committed to learning and improving our processes wherever we can. Please do let me know if I can be of further assistance.



Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

Chief Superintendent

West Sussex Divisional Commander