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01 June 2022

Your Ref:

Our Ref:



C/O Criminal Justice Committee Clerks
Room T2.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

John Hawkins
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Dear Convener,

Further to the Evidence Session on Policing and Mental Health on 18 May 2022 I write to provide some additional information as requested in relation to the numbers of *“police officers who have died of suicide and, if there is a work place element and whether there have been any fatal accident inquiries.”*

As we discussed, every death in service is a tragedy for those involved, their families and colleagues and for the Police Service of Scotland. Each set of circumstances is unique and working with our union and staff association colleagues we seek to provide support to all of those who may have been affected and to promote a culture of wellbeing and mutual support.

In respect of specific numbers I can advise you that Police Scotland does not record the circumstances surrounding the death of police officers or staff members. By way of explanation, when a police officer or staff member dies it is classed as a ‘death in service’ but the reason is not recorded on Police Scotland’s System to Co-Ordinate Personnel and Establishment (SCOPE). In addition, the ‘cause of death’ is not recorded as it would contravene the principles set out in the Data Protection Act 2018, where data recorded must be lawful, fair and transparent. This means that there must be legitimate grounds for recording the data, it must be limited for its purpose, as well as being adequate and necessary.

Similarly, Police Scotland does not record whether or not a work-based element was apparent. Such incidents are so few that there is a danger that disclosing such ‘personal data’, may lead to the identification of the officer or staff member involved thereby causing further distress or harm. Personal data is defined in Article 4 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as:

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'Information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ("data subject"); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person'

I am afraid that I am therefore unable to provide the information you request. That said I can assure you that Police Scotland takes health, safety and wellbeing incredibly seriously and will continue to evolve its policies and practices to support all officers and members of staff.

Examples of current support arrangements include:

24/7 HELP Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

- Officers and Staff have access to our 24/7 HELP Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- The programme offers professional support and guidance via a team of trained wellbeing and counselling practitioners who offer confidential, independent and unbiased information and guidance.
- Officers and staff can call HELP EAP and discuss in confidence any concerns they may have.
- EAP can offer support and information on a wide variety of areas including health and wellbeing matters, money worries, caring responsibilities, consumer and legal issues, family and home concerns and work/life concerns such as job stress or bullying/harassment.

Trauma Risk Management (TRiM)

- The Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) process is a mechanism to support officers and staff affected by potentially traumatic incidents at work.
- Understanding and processing reactions and emotions immediately following exposure to traumatic incidents can help to prevent mental health difficulties further down the line.
- TRiM can be requested through a line manager referral or officers and staff can self-refer.
- Following TRiM support sessions if it is identified that additional mental health support is required an immediate referral to the HELP Employee Assistance Programme is made.

Your Wellbeing Assessment

- Officers and staff have access to a 'Your Wellbeing Assessment', delivered through our occupational health and HELP EAP providers Optima Health.
- This process has been designed to spot the early signs of potential difficulties before they become problems. Each assessment is reviewed by a member of the Optima Health clinical team and can provide early identification of issues and the provision of tailored support

In addition the Police Scotland Health and Wellbeing team are currently conducting an organisational review which aims to:

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- Better understand the health and wellbeing needs of officers and staff, and identify any emerging needs.
- Engage with stakeholders, both internally and externally, to gain a depth of qualitative and quantitative insight.
- Measure the impact of the overall Health and Wellbeing Programme against its objectives.

While not presented as an exhaustive list, I hope that this information will go some way to illustrating the level of organisational commitment and priority given to the health and wellbeing of our officers and staff.

Finally, in relation to your third query, there have been no Fatal Accident Inquiries in relation to the deaths by suicide of any Police Officers or Police Staff members.

I trust that this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Hawkins', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

John Hawkins
Assistant Chief Constable / Iar-àrd-chonstabal
Local Policing North / Poileasachd Ionadail Tuath

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