



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Criminal Justice Committee

Fiona Taylor QPM
Deputy Chief Constable
Police Scotland

All correspondence c/o:
Justice Committee Clerks
Room T2.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

By email

Tel: 0131 348 5195
Textphone: 0800 092 7100
justicecommittee@parliament.scot

28 February, 2023

Dear Deputy Chief Constable,

Polcing and mental health

Thank you for your letter of 2 February 2023, which the Criminal Justice Committee considered at its meeting of 22 February. The Committee welcomes the additional measures that Police Scotland has introduced to support the mental health and wellbeing of officers and staff.

However, the Committee notes that your response did not address all of the issues raised in our first two letters and did not provide an explanation as to why the officers the Committee spoke to did not receive the expected standards of advice and support. For example, some of the officers told us that they were not offered return to work interviews or informed of the support available to them, and some said they were not offered additional counselling sessions, despite these being recommended by medical professionals.

Could you please respond to all of the matters raised by the Committee in its previous correspondence to Police Scotland on this issue?

Some key issues on which we would appreciate clarity are whether the onus remains on officers to seek support, whether measures are in place to ensure that supervisors and line managers are able to recognise and provide support for the 'slow burn' trauma that some of the officers described, and what mandatory training is in place. Could you also please confirm whether consideration is being given to providing a dedicated line for police officers and staff and/or amending the criteria to ensure that officers in crisis are given the appropriate help when they call and confirm when in 2023 the court scheduling system redesign will be in place.

At its meeting, the Committee also considered correspondence from the Scottish Police Federation and the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents. It would be appreciated if your response could also address the issues raised by them.

The Committee's work on policing and mental health has highlighted the links between the stressful and, at times, traumatic work that we ask officers and staff to undertake on our behalf can have on their mental health and wellbeing. This can sometimes lead to catastrophic outcomes.

In previous correspondence, Police Scotland confirmed that it does not record the circumstances surrounding the death of police officers or staff members and it does not record whether or not a work-based element was apparent. In light of the Committee's work in this area, it would be helpful if you would confirm whether Police Scotland intends to undertake any work to determine through informal and/or formal methods whether there was a work-based element in relation to any officers or staff who have sadly taken their own lives. If there are work-based elements, would Police Scotland investigate what these were and consider any improvements to processes that can be made?

This letter is being copied to the Chair of the Scottish Police Authority, Martyn Evans.

A response by Friday, 17 March, would be appreciated.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Audrey N : cjl". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Audrey Nicoll MSP
Convener, Criminal Justice Committee