

Witness Name:
Kathryn Meynell
Statement No.: 1
Exhibits: 0
Dated: [19/08/24]

THIRLWALL INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF KATE MEYNELL

I, Kathryn Meynell, will say as follows: -

1. I am the Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire Police and have held this post since December 2022. Since June 2022, I have also served as the National Police Chiefs' Council ('NPCC') lead for homicide, and it is in that capacity that I provide this statement.
2. Following the Parker Review into ACPO in 2013, the NPCC was established in 2015 to bring together the Chief Officers of operationally independent police forces under agreement of Section 22A of the Police Act 1996. Its objectives are set out in a collaboration agreement, and are as follows: -
 - a. The co-ordination of national operations defining, monitoring and testing force contributions to the Strategic Policing Requirement (standards set by the Home Secretary in respect of the most serious threats) working with the National Crime Agency where appropriate;
 - b. The command of counter terrorism operations and delivery of counter terrorist policing through the national network as set out in the Counter Terrorism Collaboration Agreement;
 - c. The co-ordination of the national police response to national emergencies and the co-ordination of the mobilisation of resources across force borders and internationally;
 - d. The national operational implementation of standards and policy as set by the College of Policing and Government;
 - e. To work with the College of Policing, to develop joint national approaches on criminal justice, value for money, service transformation, information management, performance management and technology; and

- f. Where appropriate, to work with the College of Policing in order to develop joint national approaches to staff and human resource issues, including misconduct and discipline, in line with the Chief Officers' responsibilities as employers
3. The NPCC primarily focuses on operational cooperation between forces, rather than on establishing standards, policies, and guidelines for the service, which falls within the jurisdiction of the College of Policing.
4. The work of the NPCC is carried out within thirteen broad Coordination Committees, each led by a Chief Constable, focusing on areas such as crime operations, finance, and criminal justice. Within these committees, chief officers take the lead on more specific issues. It is within the Crime Operations Co-ordination Committee, that I assumed the role of chief officer lead on homicide.
5. On 6 February 2018, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced that Professor Sir Norman Williams would conduct a rapid policy review into the issues pertaining to gross negligence manslaughter in healthcare. The review was set up to look at the wider patient safety impact of concerns among healthcare professionals that simple errors could result in prosecution for gross negligence manslaughter, even if they happen in the context of broader organisation and system failings.
6. On 11 June 2018, the Professor Sir Norman Williams Review was published and contained a recommendation that *"a new memorandum of understanding (MoU) should be agreed between relevant bodies, including the College of Policing, the CPS, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Health and Safety Executive (HSE) the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB) and professional regulators, in relation to the investigation of deaths in a healthcare setting. As a minimum this MoU should establish a common understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the organisations involved, support effective liaison and communications between these organisations, and cover what is expected of expert witnesses, in particular that they should consider the role of systemic and human factors in the provision of healthcare."*
7. Furthermore, that *"Signatories to the MoU should disseminate its contents in order to promote a greater understanding of legal issues among healthcare professionals and of healthcare issues (including systemic and human factors) among prosecuting authorities, the police and coroner services. This would help support the development of a "just culture" in healthcare, which recognises both systemic factors and individual accountability."*

8. Following the publication of the Review, a Working Group chaired by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), was convened, with representatives from the NPCC, College of Policing, the CPS, GMC, Treasury Counsel, Ministry of Justice, and healthcare regulators. In September 2018, the Working Group Chair agreed to identify key stakeholders and commence the drafting of the MoU.
9. On 19th December 2022, I met with then DCC Tim Forber (now CC Forber) as part of the process of assuming the role of NPCC Chief Officer lead for homicide. At the meeting, we finalised the NPCC position on a draft of the MoU that had been sent for consideration. The MoU satisfied the NPCC's requirements, and the DHSC was notified that the NPCC were prepared to enter into and sign the MoU. An electronic version of my signature was sent to facilitate this process.
10. However, as of the date of this statement, I am informed by the DHSC that the MoU is still currently in the process of being finalised.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Signed: ____K.Meynell _____

Dated: ____19/08/24_____