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Police Investigations &
Review Commissioner

OPERATION LUIDH
PIRC030318

PIRC Investigation Findings

Death of 51-year-old man
Edinburgh
25 March 2018

BACKGROUND

On 25 March 2018, 51 year old male was found unresponsive on the living room floor of a flat in Edinburgh. The cause of death was multi drug toxicity.

In the late evening 24 March 2018, a member of the public, who lives in the flat below, telephoned Police Scotland via the 999 emergency telephone system to report a disturbance in the flat above. He reported hearing banging, shouting, raised voices and arguing coming from the flat and stated that on a previous occasion there had been a fight in the flat and that a female had been attacked within.

Police officers were instructed by the Police Scotland Bilston Area Control Room (ACR) to attend a disturbance in the street, but were not instructed to go to the flat. The ACR staff member who managed the incident was dismissive of the reporter's concerns and report due to her perception that he was a person who abused the 999 system to report minor matters, many of which she considered were not matters for the police to deal with.

The police officers who attended the reported incident conducted a general search of the area, but did not go to either the flat, where the deceased was found, or speak to the reporter. The attending police officers updated the ACR that no disturbance was taking place in the street.

REFERRAL TO THE PIRC

On 28 March 2018, Police Scotland referred the above incident to the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) in terms of the Police and Fire Reform Act 2012 and the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (Investigations Procedure, Serious Incidents and Specified Weapons) Regulations 2013.

PIRC INVESTIGATION

The PIRC investigation focused on how Police Scotland dealt with the reporters call and on whether the police actions in failing to effectively manage and investigate his report, may have contributed towards the death of the 51 year old male.

PIRC investigators obtained statements from relevant police officers, police staff and civilians. They also seized and examined command and control incident logs, telephone and Airwave recordings, briefing papers and associated documentation.

PIRC FINDINGS

Following investigation the Commissioner found that:

- The deceased died from multi-drug toxicity as a result of consuming various illicit drugs.
- The Police Scotland Controller, failed to pass accurate and relevant information to officers who she sent in response to the report of a disturbance. She wrongly told officers that there was a disturbance in the street, that a fight was taking place and that a female was being

attacked. She should have told officers that there was a report of a disturbance within a flat.

- Officers who attended about 2310 hours on 24 March 2018 stated that they thought they were attending a disturbance in the street, possibly involving a female being attacked or engaged in a fight. On arrival there, the officers found no reported fight or disturbance in the street and as they were unaware that the disturbance related to a specific flat and did not go to that flat. Neither did they make efforts to contact the reporter, in the flat below. Had they done so the reporter could have provided further information and reiterated the report of a disturbance in a flat.
- The Police Scotland reporter was dismissive of the reporter as she knew him to be a repeat user of the '999' system to report, in her opinion trivial matters. Had she taken the report more seriously she should have sent the officers to the disturbance in the flat, resulting in clarity being established in relation to the deceased's wellbeing at that time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The ACR staff member should be reminded of the need to deal professionally with all calls from members of the public and accurately pass relevant information to operational officers.
- Where there is a named reporter, where appropriate, police officers attending a call should make contact with the reporter to clarify the information provided and undertake effective investigation, unless the reporter specifically states that he/she does not wish to be contacted by the police.