

WILTSHIRE POLICE



Police and Crime Commissioner,
Philip Wilkinson.

Chief Constable Catherine Roper
Police Headquarters
London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

19 January 2024.

Dear Police and Crime Commissioner, Philip Wilkinson,

I am shocked and saddened today to start this letter to you reflecting on the terrible incident at the weekend which saw one of my officers sustain serious injuries, causing them to be hospitalised. This was a shocking incident and one which I know has resonated across the organisation and with the public too. I thank all our communities who have sent their very best wishes to the officer, I know that he is very grateful. A number of officers supported at the scene, who I would like to thank publicly. I would like to also pay tribute to a member of the public who assisted - I am extremely grateful to them for the support they gave my officers.

A 17-year-old male was arrested relating to the incident, on suspicion of causing grievous bodily harm with intent and possession of an offensive weapon. We issued a further update this week that the male has been released on bail pending further enquiries. Our investigation continues at pace and, as I have said in the public update this week, whilst it would not be appropriate to say anything further on this matter at this time, we will make every effort to ensure justice is served.

Incidents such as this, whilst rare, are alarming. Our officers and staff put themselves in harm's way every day, and I know that this is appreciated by the vast majority of our communities as we go about our duties to protect the public and keep them safe from harm.

As promised, I wanted to provide a further update to you and to our communities on the progress we are making further to the Force being placed into the HMICFRS Engage (special measures) process in July 2022. I made the commitment at the outset of our improvement journey that I would regularly keep the public updated on how we are doing so that they can, through you, hold me to account for the delivery of improved policing services in the county. [The full update can be found here.](#)

In relation to the above, last week you and I both attended my third Police Performance Oversight Group (PPOG) which consists of a panel, chaired by HMICFRS, of policing experts from various national policing organisations. Whilst there is still much to do, I was able to outline a number of improvements in relation to how we respond to public calls for service. These updates included:

- We now have a new operating process in place to free up more call takers to answer 999 calls. As such, the average 999 answer time has reduced to 8 seconds for November
- In terms of non-emergency calls, our average time to answer a 101 call was 51 seconds in November, which is 21 seconds quicker than the month before
- We have introduced a new automated answer system to signpost how else people can get in touch – which saw an immediate reduction of 650 calls per week, and in turn increased switch board capacity and sped up answer times on our phonelines

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- All call logs are now reviewed and closed by supervisors ensuring they contain a meaningful threat, harm and risk assessment to ensure we accurately record vulnerability at first point of contact.

Last week we also launched our new operating model for frontline resources, which includes the re-establishment of dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) to improve the visibility and engagement with all our communities. It also included the realignment of shift patterns of our response officers, which means we can more effectively deploy and police the county, and better match resources to demand for our services. We are already seeing and hearing positive feedback from this model in relation to how quickly we are able to respond to incidents across the county and provide support to victims, which is excellent initial feedback. This will, in turn, provide a higher quality of service to people who need our help.

We also introduced our [Community Commitments](#). This is a contract between us and the public, outlining what engagement they can expect from their Neighbourhood Policing Teams. The commitments will ensure greater consistency in the level of service provided across the entire county so the public can hold us to account for the level of access they have with Neighbourhood officers and staff at a local level.

We remain in Engage. However, upon becoming Chief Constable for Wiltshire Police in February 2023, I made a commitment that the Force would look and feel very different by the end of my first 12 months in post. I believe that is the case and I am listening carefully to you, our communities and our stakeholders as to feedback on our services. The year 2024 will be an important year for Wiltshire Police as we continue to make sustainable progress so that we can ensure the delivery of consistent, responsive and quality services that our communities deserve, and which they can have trust and confidence in.

On Monday 22 January, between 6:30pm and 7:30pm, I will be holding a Facebook Live event where I would welcome any members of the public to dial in and have a chat to me about how they think things are going for the Force, ask any questions on how we police the county and deploy resources, or ask about any of the issues I have updated on over recent weeks. I would love to hear our communities views and understand where they feel we may have improved, but also where we need to further improve. You can find out more by visiting the Wiltshire Police Facebook page.

In closing, this week we have also commenced – at this stage - a predominantly online social media campaign relating to an alarming rise we are seeing in the number of cases of livestock worrying. This is understandably causing real concern to our rural communities due to the significant impact on the welfare of their livestock, and on their livelihoods. Over the coming weeks we will be expanding our work in this area to raise awareness of both the impact on our rural communities, and how to report incidents of this nature.

I think it is important for us all to remember that livestock worrying is a criminal offence and, to reassure communities who are victims of it, Wiltshire Police will take reports seriously and progress any criminal investigation where possible. This will be supported by a Victim Impact Statement in my name, which will reflect how deeply livestock worrying affects our rural communities and will not be tolerated. You can read more about this issue by visiting our dedicated webpage: [Livestock Worrying | Wiltshire Police](#)

Kindest regards to you,



Catherine Roper

Chief Constable, Wiltshire Police

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