

## **The Sheku Bayoh Public Inquiry**

### **Witness Statement**

**Pauline Donaldson**

**Taken by [REDACTED]**

**on MS Teams**

**On 25 February 2022**

### **Witness details**

1. My name is Pauline Donaldson. My year of birth is 1965. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. I work for Police Scotland as an Airwave Communications officer based 'P' Division Headquarters in Glenrothes. I have held this post for 17 years. I have an HNC in Administration and Information Management. I got this qualification in 2004. My duties include the analysis of call data records obtained from Airwave Solutions Limited for all calls made by airwave terminals. Airwaves terminals are Police radio communication devices. There are handheld terminals, vehicle terminals and base sets. I also deal with supplying terminals to officers, and repairing and replacing faulty terminals.

Signature.....[REDACTED].....

### **Previous statement**

3. I have had an opportunity to read the statements I provided to PIRC. The first dated 26 May 2015<sup>1</sup> and the second dated 21 December 2017.<sup>2</sup> I can recall giving these statements to PIRC. I think the statement may have been read out to me but I cannot be sure. I confirm that I would have been truthful and accurate in what I told PIRC at that time. I accept the content of the statements. I don't remember now the detail of what documents I provided to PIRC but I accept that what I said would have been correct at the time.
4. I'm asked if there were any discrepancies from what I have told the Inquiry in this statement and what was in my statement at the time, would I want my original statement to be preferred. I appreciate that my statements to PIRC were given at the time; however, I would say they should both be the same.

### **Airwave transmissions**

5. It is possible to identify which terminal an airwave transmission has been sent from. All transmissions are listed in the call data records by their Individual Short Subscriber Identifier (ISSI) number. The ISSI number is programmed into the radio terminal. If an Airwave message was sent from a certain terminal, it should be the officer who was assigned that terminal who sent that transmission. The Airwave reports are very similar to itemised telephone bills. They show the calling ISSI and the ISSI of the terminal who received the call, the date, time and the affiliating service masts or service sites. It is possible that an officer could be using another officer's terminal. They're not supposed to; they should always use their own terminal so that the control room know who they're speaking to, but I wouldn't say that it never happens. There are also pool terminals available which can be used if an officer's terminal is faulty. So an officer could be using a pool terminal which would have a completely different ISSI on it, but technically they are supposed to inform the

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<sup>1</sup> PIRC-00284

<sup>2</sup> PIRC-00285

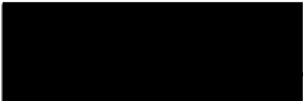
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control room at the start of their shift or whenever they have changed the terminal that they are using a pool terminal and advise of its ISSI.

6. Most police vehicles also have a radio fitted into them and they are also programmed with an ISSI. So unless we change the radio or re-programme the radio, that's the only way the ISSI number can be changed. My statement speaks about the fact that the radio sets in the vehicles are not permanently fixed and can be moved from one vehicle to another by an Airwave Communications Officer. I should add that the radio terminals are generally in the boot of the vehicle. Certain tools and technical knowledge would be required to remove the radios. A police officer could not remove or replace the radio in a vehicle. They are not easily mobile unlike the handheld devices. Again, the control room would know what radio is connected to which vehicle.

#### **Talk groups**

7. I am asked to explain what a "talk group" is. The talk group is the local radio channel; it's just a local group talk so that everybody in that area can just be heard by the controller and/or the dispatcher. In Fife, there are now only three talk groups in use but at that time there were more. At that time there was Kirkcaldy 1, 2, and 3, for the Kirkcaldy area but Kirkcaldy 1 was the only one that was generally in use. There were also local channels for Glenrothes, Leven, Dunfermline, and Cowdenbeath. The Kirkcaldy 01 talk group covered Kirkcaldy as well as Dysart, Burntisland, and Kinghorn. So officers in those areas would use Kirkcaldy 1 talk group.
8. At page 2 of my second statement to PIRC it says "Individual officers who are working their shift within that geographical area will normally patch in to that Talk group and will be able to hear any Airwave transmissions made over the Talk group and can themselves speak over that Talk group using the 'Press-to-Talk' or 'PTT' button on their handset." This is correct; however, the reference to "patch in" here is wording I am not quite sure of because to me to "patch" you're joining two talk groups together where you would just

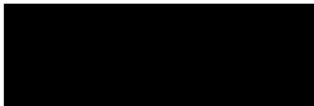
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automatically be using the Kirkcaldy 1 talk group if you were working in the Kirkcaldy 1 area. So I would just say officers would use their local talk group and would press the PTT button on the side of their radio to speak and transmit to the talk group.

9. The radio terminals have a display screen. The officers use the "Options" button to change the talk group channel. The talk groups are listed in Folders according to Division and within the Folder they were named by geographic area. Officers would change their talk group if they were moving to a different area to work or if they were advised by the control room to change channel.
10. As my statement says, supervising officers working in the area will monitor what is being passed over the talk group and will broadcast on it. The talk group will also be monitored from the area control room, with controllers assigned to specific talk groups. However, I don't have anything to do with what happens in the control room so I can't add anything further to this.

#### **Other uses of Airwave terminals**

11. In addition to transmitting to talk groups, the terminals can also make point to point calls. This is a private call between two terminals that's used for private discussions. To make a Point to Point call, you would key in the other terminal's ISSI number and it allows a private call between two terminals. This isn't audio recorded, however, the call activity data is recorded. It shows in the call data records as a point to point call. While in some ways it's like making a mobile phone call, you still require to use the PTT button with only one person speaking at a time. The speaker has to release the PTT button to let the other person respond. I'm asked if it's like using a walkie talkie. Yes, that's correct.
12. In terms of whether police officers would know each other's ISSI numbers, if you're working with the same people day in, day out, you would generally

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know what their ISSIs are but you can also save ISSI numbers into your radio as a contact.

13. I'm asked about the emergency button on the radios. It is a reddish/orange button that's on the top of the radio. In order to activate the emergency button, you press and hold the button [REDACTED] and it registers in the control room that it is an emergency activation. This activates what's classed as a "hot mic" for a specific period of time, which I think is 10 seconds. I'm not entirely sure of how it works, however, I believe it opens the talk group up to everybody and let's everybody hear what's being transmitted from the hot mic for a period after the button's been pressed. But I'm not very technical with it.

14. My statement makes reference to being able to use the radios to call landline phone numbers and mobiles numbers. It was just a case of dialling "9" first for an outside line and then calling the number. I think that would show as a PTN call on the call data records. Those calls are not recorded. The only calls that are recorded are calls that come through the control room. So if it's a point to point call to the control room, or it's a PTN call to the control room it's recorded. But if anything, these are the only ones. Again, it's just the data about that call that's captured on the records. However, it's not possible to make a telephone call from a phone, whether it's a desk phone or mobile etc directly to a terminal.

15. I'm aware that status messages can be communicated. There are status messages such as "at scene" and "on refreshment break" and things like that. They are keyed in to advise the control room on where they are or what they're doing at a specific time but, again, I don't know how it works because I've never used any of them.

16. I'm asked if I know any of the other witnesses in this case. No, I don't, other than John Wilson and Colin Gill. I haven't spoken to any witnesses about my evidence.

Signature.....[REDACTED].....

17. I'm asked if I have been following this case on social media or on the news.

There's a lot of media information going on about it so generally I've watched things or if it's been on the news and I've just listened to it. So I would say yes. I can't see that that has influenced my evidence in any way.

18. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that this statement may form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and be published on the Inquiry's website.

Signature..........Date.....

May 11, 2022 | 4:20 PM BS