

The Sheku Bayoh Public Inquiry

Supplementary Witness Statement

PC Scott Masterton

**Taken by [REDACTED] by telephone call
on Wednesday 9 November 2022**

Witness Details

1. My full name is Scott Masterton. My date of birth is in 1965. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. I am currently self-employed. I was formerly a police constable with the Police Service of Scotland. I retired in January 2017 and so have been retired for nearly 6 years. I previously gave a statement to the Inquiry on 11 March 2022 (SBPI-00067).

Training

3. I am asked about the training that I undertook to role of a controller in the Area Control Room (ACR). You do a training course on the different systems,

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the Command and Control etc., which is like a classroom environment to teach you how to use the different software and things like that. Then, you're put on a pod, kind of like a probationer in the police: so you're sitting alongside an experienced controller, watching them for a while, seeing what they're doing, and then slowly you start to deal with the jobs. It continues like that, with you dealing with more and more, until you're dealing with all of the jobs and until they deem that you're at the required level where you can be let out on your own, basically. There was no specific theory type training course for the role of controller.

4. I'm asked whether I have received any equality and diversity or racial awareness training when working with as a police officer. I'm sure I had some training of that kind when I was in the road traffic department, so that was sometime in the early 2000s. We went somewhere for the training. I'm pretty sure it wasn't a police station that we went to, and various people from ethnic minorities came in and spoke to us and gave presentations. Then we were spoken to about different aspects of diversity issues. I have a vague feeling that I've attended two courses like that, but I honestly cannot remember. I also have it in my mind that there might have been a computer package type thing that we went through at some point as well. Occasionally they would issue computer training packages for training. You'd have to go through and learn all the points, and then there'd be questions at the end to see if you'd understood it and taken it on board.

Working arrangements in the ACR

5. When I worked in the ACR, the pods are spread out in a circle around the room. In the centre of that circle there was a raised area where 4 supervisors sat. The supervisors role was to monitor the incidents as they came in and were dealt with by the controllers. Sometimes a supervisor would phone us and tells us what they wanted us to do. Sometime they would come up and

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speak to us face to face. The pod supervisors are looking at the same computer screen that we were looking at as controllers. We have the access to the same information in terms of seeing the same screen and listening to the same radio channels. However, as controller, I would mostly be listening to the channel for my area. The supervisor, on the other hand, would be listening to up to 6 channels. They had the ability to switch off certain channels, although how they managed that I don't know. When it came to grade 1 calls, unless there were other grade 1 calls, I would be expecting them to closely monitor the channel with the grade 1 call.

6. I'm struggling to remember how it worked with the incidents or "jobs" that appeared on my screen as a controller. I think you had a list of jobs on your screen. If I remember rightly, when a new job came in it flashed on your screen and you had to accept the job. I think you could read the job before you accepted the job. So the jobs are like a list of jobs, and you can see the time, the job number, and a brief description of what the job is and the grade of the job, if I remember rightly. So I think a line comes up and you get like a small bit of text, but also the grade of the job that you can see before accepting the job. The Grade 1 jobs flashes up in red, whereas the other jobs flash up in a different colour. The Grade 1 jobs would be visible to the Overview and my supervisor at the same time. So the way the system works, I'm confident that supervisor and the Overview would be aware that the grade 1 call had come in and would be on top of that without me bringing the incident to their attention. Where I normally sat as a controller covering Edinburgh city, I faced the supervisors so I could see if they were reacting to a call. However, on the day this incident took place, in the seat covering the Fife pod, I was facing away from the supervisors and could not see them. I was really busy dealing with the incident so was concerned with other things.

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7. I'm asked about the tagging system and the requirement for calls to be tagged as a "blade" incident. I have no recollection of that.
8. In terms of supervision from the Overview, the Overview staff would communicate with my sergeant or me. They're in a completely separate bit of the building, so it would never be face-to-face; it would be a phone call either directly to me or possibly through the supervisor, but mostly – if I recall – it was directly.

Unusual or High Risk Incidents Generally

9. I'm asked whether there are any circumstances in which a Controllers would be expected to inform a supervisor or the Inspector if an incident is not usual. First of all, I would not consider that the knife calls in the incident unusual - people on the street with knives is not unusual. If there was something unusual and I felt it was of a level of importance that the inspector needed to know then I would do that. However, that would only happen if it was lower than a grade 1 call. When an incident is graded as a Grade 1 call, then it would flash up in red on the Inspector's terminal the same as it would on mine.
10. In my time working as a controller in the ACR, I didn't ever have involvement in a firearms incidents that I can recall. However, as I understand it, the controller continues to be the controller even in a firearms incident in which the Inspector is taking a far closer oversight of an incident. However, I did have involvement in high risk incidents. It wouldn't matter how serious the incident was, I would still be the controller of it, and I would still direct resources and update the job on the computer, etc. The Inspector might be taking a far, far closer oversight of it. He might come in and speak on the radio, and likewise the supervising sergeant might come in and speak on the

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radio, and they might also add information and resources to the job, but they wouldn't take control away from me. I've never seen that happen. His job is to supervise and have oversight of it, he's not to get bogged down in the minutiae of actually allocating/deallocating resources, updating the job, i.e the command and control call card.

11. There are also situations where the pod supervisor and the ACR Inspector are monitoring an incident closely but may not speak on the radio. Quite often if there was a higher grade job like this and I'm kind of aware that they are monitoring the job more closely-- they're listening to the radio traffic, and I will quite often see them put an update on the job saying, "I'm aware of this update,". So I'm doing the radio traffic and updating the job, etc. They are sitting wherever they are, hearing this and, just for the log, basically, they put a quick entry on saying, "I'm aware of this update". Additionally, as far as the firearms goes as well, the firearms work on separate radio channels. So he's speaking to them on separate radio channels. So there will have been jobs that have been involved and that have had firearms involvement, but I don't really hear what that is because he's speaking to them on a separate channel and doing all the firearms stuff on a separate channel. So I don't really hear that.

Stay safe message

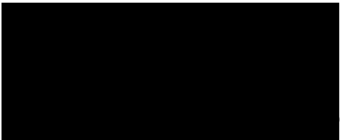
12. I'm asked whether controllers have a responsibility for issuing a stay safe message during Grade 1 calls. The only person I was ever aware of doing that was the ACR inspector, who would come on relatively frequently during Grade 1 calls to do that. I don't recall ever having been told it would be my responsibility to do that. That's not to say that I didn't ever do it. If I felt something extremely dangerous was going on and no one else has given a stay safe message so far or If I felt that officers were potentially disregarding

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their own safety. Again, I think it was mainly used in firearms situations. I'm asked about whether there were cards on the desks of staff in the ACR with a stay safe message printed on them. I have no recollection of that during my time working in the ACR.

Knife Incidents

13. I have been asked how many knife calls did I dealt with a month. I'd be really stretching my memory. So this is a very rough estimate – I'd say 5-10 per month. However, bear in mind I normally covered the Leith area in Edinburgh. I can say what the average would be in the Fife area.
14. I have been asked what is the normal tactical approach for a knife incident, specifically whether deploying unarmed officers to a knife incident would be normal in my experience as a controller. I would say that it is normal. I'd be expecting the divisional officers to attend and, if they can control the subject, arrest the subject, then all good and well. If they don't feel they can do that for whatever reason, say that it's too dangerous, at the very least contain the situation to protect both themselves and members of the public, and to pass that information back so that the control room – specifically me and the supervisor and the inspector – can use that information to find other resources to attend. So if for some reason it got so bad that they couldn't arrest the subject themselves, you're then probably looking at something like dog handlers or armed response officers. By and large, we're trained in the use of the baton, we're trained in the use of CS spray, and have our officer safety training to deal with individuals armed with knives. It is an ongoing, dynamic risk assessment by the response officers using the information that they are being given by me initially before they attend that, and then as soon as they

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get sight of the subject, it is a dynamic risk assessment that is going on all the time.

15. I'm asked whether I have any experience of dealing with any knives incidents as a controller in which response officers were not immediately deployed and an ARV was deployed first. No, I don't, no. I'm even aware of calls where there's been people armed with swords, and it was still the response officers that attended.

16. I'm asked whether, in high risk incidents involving a knife, it would be a reasonable option for a controller to direct response officers to go to an incident to observe only and not approach or attempt to detain the person. Yes, possibly. I don't think I've ever done it. I would be prepared to do that if I thought there was something that merited it. I'd be very, very surprised if I ever had to make that decision because almost definitely the local sergeant on the ground, the supervisor in the ACR, and the inspector in the ACR would probably make that decision first. So I'd be surprised if I would ever personally have to do it but if there was something in the job, yes, I'd be more than happy to say that. The local Sergeant or Inspector are effectively the local commanders on the ground and they would most likely, and also be best placed, to make any decision like this. Overall, it's a team effort between everybody: the response officers attending, the supervising sergeant on the ground and us in the control room. In a sense, whoever might be best-placed to make that decision would probably make that decision. In relation to this incident, I don't know the geographical layout of Fife, etc. There might be something the local sergeant might know that means he might come in and tell his troops to stand off and just observe, but that kind of thing is more reserved for firearms calls. So a firearms call, in general, you're still going to have a response unit attend, but it's a standoff call: Attend, observe and report back. I never really heard it, I don't think, ever with a knife call.

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Obviously you can get up very close to someone with a knife without necessarily being injured, but someone with a gun can do a lot of damage from far away. I can't recall a knife incident where that kind of stand-off message has been given.

Events in Kirkcaldy on 3 May 2015

17. I'm asked about the risk assessment I carried out as a controller in response to the calls that came in in relation to this incident on the morning of 3 May 2015. I can't specifically remember the details of any risk assessment that morning. However, generally, you need to understand that the call is already graded by the time it comes to me as a job and that a risk assessment has already been carried out by the time that job comes to me. There are occasions when a job comes across to me, I read and assess the information and I regrade the call. A grade 1 call is a threat to life. Its very rarely that would be downgraded. However, occasionally we get grade 2 calls and I could upgrade it to a grade 1 call if I assessed it as being a threat to life. So there is an element of risk assessment there when reading the job. Thereafter the risk assessment is minimal. It is the Police's job is to respond to calls from the public for help. That morning, we had a number of calls about the man in the street with a knife. The number of calls received certainly suggested it wasn't a hoax. The police have got to go and deal with it and if they can't deal with it to report back to the control room. We need to get officers to the scene so it's my responsibility to deploy officers to that incident.

18. I'm asked whether, from the information I had at the point of deploying officers to this incident, whether I expected that an ARV to be deployed. No, not immediately. While the timing of the call, i.e. a Sunday morning, is unusual, a male in the street carrying a knife is not an unusual call. I can't really

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remember the exact numbers, but even for my area of Leith, I guess that I dealt with five to ten knife calls per month, multiply that across the whole of Edinburgh City and you're probably talking, around 50 to 100 knife calls. You can probably get that kind of statistic from the police. However, it was a Grade 1 call so I would be expecting the ACR inspector to be looking at that incident and deciding whether an ARV was required. He has total control of firearms and what calls they go to; that's nothing at all to do with me.

19. I don't recall speaking to any supervisor in the course of dealing with this incident. I'm aware that Sergeant Stevie Bisset was on shift that day, albeit I don't recall speaking to him while this incident was ongoing.

20. I'm asked about Inspector Stewart's transmission in which he advised that he was monitoring the situation from an ARV perspective, and he asked them to feedback and that he would be listening out on the channel. I'm asked how long it would be typical for an Area Control Room to wait on feedback from officers in a situation like that, and if they didn't hear back quickly, whether there's any steps that the Area Control Room would take. No, there wouldn't be any defined time for something like that. It would depend on each individual job and the circumstances and what traffic was coming across the radio for that incident, so there's no definitive time.

Miscellaneous

21. I've been asked if I can remember a debrief session for the incident concerning Mr Bayoh. I'm not aware of any debrief following this incident.

22. 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.

November 16, 2022 | 5:34 PM GMT
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