



Devon & Cornwall Police

Building safer communities together

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Telephone: 101

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Dear Phil

Police attendance for Welfare Checks on behalf of External Agencies

We are continually reviewing our business to ensure that we work effectively and efficiently; focussing our resources on known risk, harm, threat and vulnerability, protecting people from harm, reducing crime and bringing offenders to justice.

Having conducted a review of requests by external agencies for the Police to conduct Welfare Checks on their behalf, our evidence supports the national picture that in the majority of these requests the Police were not the appropriate initial responder. This has created an unsustainable and unnecessary demand on the Force. We are seeking to be more robust in our identification of risk and vulnerability at the earliest stage to ensure that individuals receive a proportionate level of response from the most appropriate agency and request your continued support in achieving this.

In the absence of well evidenced and detailed concerns by the requesting agency identifying an **immediate risk to life**, the Police are likely to have no role in such requests. The mere presence of the police can have a negative impact for those who are living with mental ill health or recovering from a crisis, especially when there is no policing reason for our involvement.

As of March 2016 we intend to make significant changes to how we respond to your requests. Devon and Cornwall Police will **only** respond to requests for assistance from external agencies to conduct 'welfare checks' on adults at risk and children where the following criteria are met:

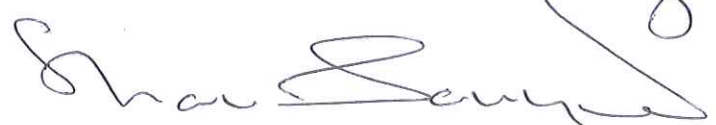
- There is an identifiable and immediate risk to life or property.
- The adult at risk or child is suffering or are at risk of suffering immediate and significant harm.
- It is reasonably believed that a crime has been committed or is about to be committed.
- Attendance of a Police officer is necessary to prevent a breach of the peace.

It is intended that Devon and Cornwall Police will no longer accept responsibility for carrying out checks where an agency makes a request which does not meet any of the above criteria. Our new working practice is attached (appendix A) and provides more detailed advice and guidance for your information.

Your staff may wish to make contact with us and should you have any concerns or wish to discuss this change further please do not hesitate to contact Inspector Paul Searle on 01392 224032 or email paul.searle@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

Following any discussion you may wish to amend your working practices to reflect the changes to our service delivery and advise any contracted agencies that discharge this duty on your behalf. This will ensure that we are only notified of those circumstances where the policing need outlined above is identified. We would ask that you inform us, at the time of the report, of steps you have taken to mitigate any risk. If it is identified that a policing response is necessary and proportionate any risk assessments should be shared with us when available.

It must be stressed that the above change to our working practice will in no way alter our response to any incident which arises dynamically or during which your staff request urgent Police assistance where they are unable to prevent harm to themselves or others.

Yours Sincerely


Shaun Sawyer