

FEDERATION ADVICE ON DEATH FOLLOWING POLICE CONTACT

INITIAL ACTIONS

If you are involved in any way in an incident, which has resulted or could result in the death of a person you should seek immediate advice from a Federation Representative and/or a Solicitor. The Investigating Officer and the IPCC will be involved at a very early stage and have a role to perform which does not necessarily include your welfare. They have to consider whether you are a suspect or a witness but they may ask you to provide an initial account of events at an early stage prior to making this decision in order to commence their investigations.

YOU ARE STRONGLY ADVISED TO SEEK ADVICE FROM THE POLICE FEDERATION PRIOR TO GIVING AN INITIAL ACCOUNT.

Your Federation Representative will give initial advice and secure you the services of a Solicitor who can advise you further and protect your interests. For out of hours Federation assistance, contact the Force Control Room who will in turn contact the duty on call Federation representative on your behalf.

INVESTIGATION

You cannot be both a suspect and a witness. If you are being requested to provide your clothing or equipment or being asked for samples then you are clearly being regarded as a suspect and you must ensure that your rights and entitlements under PACE are respected. You may experience some tension and conflict with the Investigating Officers and you must be prepared to stand your ground and seek advice where necessary.

YOU ARE STRONGLY ADVISED TO SEEK ADVICE FROM THE POLICE FEDERATION BEFORE PROVIDING ANY SAMPLES.

You need to be aware that stressful incidents can affect your ability to recall what may be important details. Medical advice suggests that you will be better able to give a full account after a period of at least 24 hours rest.

The investigating officer and the IPCC will want to know what happened and may state that they need some form of account from you in order to properly commence enquiries. This is understandable; however the information they require may be available from another source without you having to give an early first account. Even if you believe you have done nothing wrong, prior to giving an early account be guided by the advice given to you by your Federation Representative and/or Solicitor who are there to represent your interests.

DUTY STATEMENTS

You cannot lawfully be required to provide a duty statement if you are or may be investigated for criminal or misconduct matters. If you are asked to provide a first account or a duty statement you should make it clear to the Investigating Officer(s) that you intend to reserve your position until you have had the benefit of independent advice from a Federation Representative and/or Solicitor. Contact in the first instance should be through the local Police Federation offices, or the on call Federation Representative (out of hours via Force Control Room)

AFTERCARE

The officers may feel uncomfortable remaining at work following a critical incident. Arrange for their safe return to their home address following any initial action required at the time of the incident.

Deaths following Police Contact incidents inevitably attract a great deal of press attention. The media may publish or broadcast items that can cause a great deal of distress to the officers. Officers should be prepared for this and steps may need to be taken to ensure the anonymity of the officers. Officers should be encouraged to take sensible steps to avoid members of the press discovering their details. The investigating officer should consult with the Federation representative and/or the officer before the force makes any media release.

The Sussex Police Federation can offer help and support for long periods of time and officers may display characteristics which are out of character. Occupational Health and medical experts should be consulted where possible to provide suitable support.