



2020 November 30

Mr. Abid Mavani  
Fatality Inquiry Evidence Administrator  
Alberta Justice and Solicitor General  
9th Floor, Peace Hills Trust Tower  
10011 - 109 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3S8

Dear Mr. Mavani:

**RE: Constable Britni Randal Joyal – Public Fatality Inquiry, Issued July 13, 2020 (the “Inquiry Report”) Response of the Calgary Police Service (the “CPS”) to Certain Recommendations Arising from the Inquiry Report**

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Thank you for Ms. Fuchinsky's letter of July 14, 2020, containing the report from His Honour, Judge Dinkel, arising out of the Fatality Inquiry concerning Constable Britni Randal Joyal. The CPS appreciated the opportunity to assist the Court with testimony about the events of April 1 and 2, 2016, when Constable Joyal tragically died by suicide despite the best efforts of many CPS members.

As set out below, the CPS accepts his Honour's recommendation regarding the use of drones in its entirety. It also accepts in principle his Honour's recommendation to review the staffing of its Psychological Therapy Section and to consider hiring two additional psychologists and one nurse practitioner.

### **I. Background**

The Fatality Inquiry into Cst. Joyal's death took place from November 25-28, 2019. The CPS agrees with His Honour's description of the events leading up to Cst. Joyal's death which he set out as follows on page 2 of his report:

“On April 1, 2016, Calgary Police Service (CPS) member Cst. Britni Joyal left her home after having a discussion with her domestic partner about ending their relationship. Cst. Joyal went to her District Office and retrieved her service pistol from her locker. She then drove to Drumheller with the firearm in the car. While outside of Calgary she sent several text messages indicating she was suicidal. CPS were notified of the situation and began deploying a number of resources. Cst. Joyal eventually returned to her home in Calgary where she was observed by the Tactical (TAC) Unit. She remained in her vehicle in the driveway of her home for approximately 40

1 | Page

minutes, while continuing to communicate via text. She then left her home and drove to the Coroner's Office located at 4020 Bowness Road N.W. Cst. Joyal remained in her vehicle outside of the Coroner's office for approximately two hours. When CPS thought that Cst. Joyal was about to take her life, the TAC Unit moved in and boxed her vehicle in with two armoured vehicles, while at the same time firing a Distraction Device nearby and a Pepper Ball into her vehicle. As this was all taking place, Cst. Joyal placed her service pistol to her right temple and discharged it, taking her own life. The time was 2:26 a.m. on April 2, 2016. The autopsy conducted by the Coroner found no indication of drugs or alcohol."

His Honour added the following comments on pages 21-22 of his report regarding the efforts of the CPS and its members to prevent Cst. Joyal's death:

"In the end, the CPS as a whole should be commended for the professional and rigorous manner in which they acted in attempting to save the life of Cst. Joyal. Although there was a tendency for officers who gave evidence to wonder what they could have done differently, I firmly believe that Cst. Joyal was bound and determined to take her life that night and would not be stopped. That night the officers who needed to be in place, were in place. The chain of command performed as it should. Information was shared as it should have been. Plans were created and executed. Resources that were available were accessed. Everything that could have been done was done. Great skill, effort, bravery and heart were exhibited by each and every person involved on the night of April 1, 2016. There was no need for any officer to second guess their actions on that night."

The purpose of the Fatality Inquiry was to provide recommendations to prevent deaths in similar circumstances. The CPS has carefully considered his Honour's reasons recommendations in this regard and sets out its response to each of them below. It will also comment on an additional aspect of His Honour's reasons to suggest a possible improvement on how similar cases should be investigated in the future.

## **II. Use of Drones by Police Services**

His Honour recommended that a drone be provided to existing tactical units in Alberta to prevent deaths in similar situations. His Honour suggested as well that a drone could also be effectively used by the police in other criminal operations.

The CPS accepts his Honour's recommendation in full. The CPS' Support Section has implemented a drone program. The drones are currently operational and are available for deployment in appropriate cases.

### **III. Staffing of the Psychological Therapy Section**

His Honour has recommended that the CPS should review the staffing of its Psychological Therapy Section and to consider hiring two additional psychologists and one fulltime nurse practitioner if deemed necessary. The CPS accepts this recommendation in principle.

The CPS has made a number of changes to its Psychological Therapy Section since this fatality inquiry concluded. As a result of a recent organizational restructuring, the Peer Support Unit now reports to the Manager of the Psychological Therapy Section. This has resulted in improved collaboration and communication between the two areas who provide direct, confidential support to CPS members. Since these two areas are working more closely together, both of these areas can assess and manage risk more effectively and ensure the services they provide to individual members are better aligned.

The Psychological Therapy Section has refined its standard operating procedures and record-keeping processes to improve its screening, referral and documentation practices. As a result of these changes, an appropriately trained member of the Psychological Therapy Section will have access to an officer's clinical record at any time when the member is in crisis.

While the CPS has not added the staff that his Honour has recommended, it has retained a psychiatrist on a contract basis to provide additional support to the Section as required. The *Police Act* RSA 2000 c P-17, specifies a process that the Chief Constable and the Calgary Police Commission follow when designing and implementing a budget to address all aspects of the CPS's operations, services and programs for the City of Calgary, not just the areas reviewed at this Fatality Inquiry. This budget must ultimately be approved by Calgary City Council. The CPS has no control over budget cuts from the municipal and provincial governments. The ability to implement recommendations that are dependent upon increased budgets, or even dedicated budgets, will often fall outside of the CPS's control and capability.

### **IV. Investigation of Future Incidents Involving Suicides of Police Members**

His Honour raised a concern in his reasons with a police service being required to investigate the suicide of one of its own members. His Honour recommended that these cases should instead be investigated by the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team, (ASIRT). The CPS agrees with this recommendation in principle. The CPS acknowledges that these events are rare, particularly where its members were called to respond and engage with the member prior to their death. The CPS agrees that for similar incidents as this one, which trigger s. 46.1 of the *Police Act*, the investigation should be assigned to ASIRT. Any other incidents involving a member suicide will be reviewed on a case by case basis with strong consideration given that any follow up investigation being referred to an outside agency. Any other

reviews considered appropriate in the circumstances will include relevant experts as required.

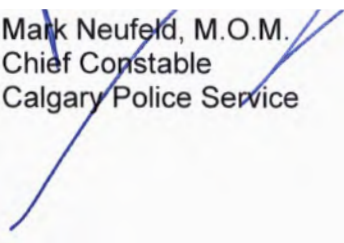
## **V. Conclusion**

The CPS is committed to encouraging its members to seek mental health support when they need such assistance, and to provide internal and external resources to support the mental health of its members. The death of Cst. Joyal was a tragic event which affected many CPS members deeply. The CPS is committed to continuously improving its training on mental health issues in policing, supporting its members when they are in crisis, and leveraging the available resources, budgets and outside expertise to do the same.

On behalf of the CPS, thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Inquiry Report.

Sincerely, |

Original Signed

  
Mark Neufeld, M.O.M.  
Chief Constable  
Calgary Police Service