

Dozens of 'notable incidents' recorded by police control rooms

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Police Scotland have racked up dozens of “notable incidents” in the past 18 months as it continues to battle funding pressure from the SNP government.

Research by the Scottish Conservatives has revealed 182 mistakes between August 2017 and December last year, all of which were deemed serious enough to have a “significant impact” on the reputation of the force.

Of the instances set out, 62 involved officers going to the wrong address, and 81 errors led to a delay in police attending a 999 or 101 call.

Among the most serious matters highlighted were:

- A member of the public threatening to self-harm was dismissed as a “false call”
- Failure to respond to a warning about a missing person, who was later found dead at home by the person making the call
- An assault victim told to go to an unmanned station to report the incident
- Officers failing to attend a domestic abuse call
- A faulty computer was continually used by police due to a lack of alternatives

Although scores of incidents occurred, the total figure accounts for just 0.006 per cent of calls handled by Police Scotland in that time period.

Shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said the scale of the incidents showed the pressure the single force was under following the SNP’s refusal to fund crucial IT upgrades and the failure to support officers and staff during their poorly executed police merger.

The issue was previously raised by Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson at First Minister’s Questions in 2017.

At that point, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said lessons would be learned.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

“In an organisation the size of Police Scotland, there will always be

incidents involving human error.

“But this research sets out scores of cases which, frankly, should never have happened.

“Brave police officers and staff are doing a great job to the best of their abilities, but all too often their needs and welfare have gone ignored.

“The SNP has flat out refused to fund the digital upgrades they promised, meaning officers and call-handlers are under huge strain.

“I’ve visited these control rooms and know exactly how challenging a job it is, and how well staff perform in spite of that. The least they deserve is some adequate support from SNP ministers.

“It’s this sort of environment in which mistakes occur.

“The SNP has been in charge of the justice brief since 2007, and has to take responsibility for the scale of these errors, some of which have had devastating consequences.”