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Dear Jil

IPCC Official Statistics on Deaths following Police Contact

I am writing to you, following our brief conversation earlier this week, to request a formal review of the statistics produced by the IPCC.

During this week the IPCC has been the subject of media scrutiny focusing on a number of aspects of our work. In particular a number of media organisations presented news items on Tuesday 31 January which were critical of our figures on deaths following police contact, and in particular figures on cases involving the use of restraint by police officers. These items can be found on websites for the Independent newspaper, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism and the BBC Radio Four programme, 'File on Four'. If it would be helpful my team can provide copies.

There are two specific criticisms made against the IPCC. The first of these is that specific cases, such as that of Simon Bosworth, are not properly classified in our figures as deaths in police custody. This criticism relates to a set of annual statistics produced by the IPCC which can be found at the following web link:

http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/reports_polcustody.aspx

The second criticism is that figures on deaths involving police restraint are incorrect. This criticism relates to a research study published in 2010 which examined deaths in police custody between 1998/99 and 2008/09 and which can be found at the following web link:

<http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/deathscustodystudy.aspx>

Again my team can provide hard copies if it would assist.

I am obviously very concerned that the accuracy of our figures is being called into question and am keen to ensure public confidence in the statistics. I would like to request a review by you as the National Statistician, and Head of the Government Statistical Service into the collation, analysis and presentation of our official statistics on deaths following police contact. The findings from this review would be made public via our website as would the terms of reference. It may be helpful for you to be aware that Keith Vaz, MP and Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee has expressed an interest in this matter and I have written to him, following our conversation yesterday. I enclose a copy of that letter for your information.

Thank you for your assistance. I realise your team may need to discuss the reports with my research team and the contact here should be Tom Bucke, Head of Research and Analysis. Tom can be contacted on 020 7166 3151. If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M J Furniss', written in a cursive style.

Jane Furniss
Chief Executive Officer
Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)