

More serious control room failings revealed

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A series of serious failings at the heart of Police Scotland control rooms have been revealed.

At First Minister's Questions today, Ruth Davidson pointed to hundreds of instances where the single force has deemed an incident so severe that it has been formally recorded.

The Scottish Conservative leader highlighted six specific instances – all of which have occurred in the last year – including examples of suicidal callers and domestic abuse victims.

It follows reports this week that Police Scotland failed to help a 999 caller who was later killed by her brother.

But while Nicola Sturgeon admitted there were problems, raising it at Holyrood was doing a "disservice" to the Scottish Government.

Today in the Scottish Parliament, Ruth highlighted the following examples of recent failures:

- A suicidal man who was told by call handlers to hang up
- A woman who had to phone three times to report a dead body in her property, after separate handlers missed that detail in the first two calls
- A householder who called to report that his door was being kicked in, but officers were never dispatched to investigate

The Scottish Government has been repeatedly criticised for centralising control rooms, meaning local knowledge has been lost, and some 999 callers are forced to speak to staff hundreds of miles away.

Ministers said this move would not have an impact on the level of service.

But today, Ruth cited three specific examples from the last year, including:

- Police being sent to the wrong address while a woman was receiving threats from an ex-partner
- A man being threatened with a knife, and officers being sent to the right flat, the right street... but the wrong town
- Officers also being dispatched to an incorrect address after reports of a woman and her niece being assaulted.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"We were promised that taking control rooms out of local areas wouldn't result in a loss of local knowledge.

"Michael Matheson promised that if performance dropped at any of these centres there would be 'rapid intervention'.

"He made that pledge two years ago, and yet we're still seeing hundreds of incidents.

"The SNP government has lost the confidence of the police on this matter, and needs to get a grip."

Below are links to the six incidents raised by Ruth at First Minister's Questions today:

Suicidal man told to hang up:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Suicidal-man-told-to-hang-up.pdf>

Two call handlers failing to record fact the caller was reporting a dead body:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Dead-body-in-house.pdf>

Call reporting a front door being kicked in:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Door-being-kicked-in.pdf>

Woman being threatened by ex-partner:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Threatening-texts-to-woman.pdf>

Man being threatened with a knife, police sent to wrong town:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Sent-to-wrong-town-over-knife-incident.pdf>

Woman who called reporting the ongoing assault of her mother and niece:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Niece-assault-wrong-town.pdf>

To see more reports, contact the Scottish Conservative press office.