

## Introduction

Thank you for inviting me to speak about the 999 programme which seems to have had, as I have been told, a “completely disproportionate reaction from some local councillors”, who have made some disparaging, misleading and on occasions, provocative statements about the Police. It is more disappointing because for some reason they seem to be focussing their remarks towards the police when it is in fact an emergency services programme.

Whilst I believe it is important that we should all be able to express ourselves as senior leaders, I find it incredibly disappointing, frustrating and sad because I believe some of the comments made on social media and in open meetings continue to undermine the fantastic work our frontline colleagues do. In Wiltshire and Swindon we enjoy excellent working relationships at all levels. This has been built with a mutual commitment to collaboratively improve the services to the public and therefore we should be doing everything we possibly can to support the partnerships not to undermine them. I feel some of the comments have been personally offensive, unwarranted and unprofessional. Please be assured I will not be making any disparaging remarks or undermining our partnership or the governance arrangements because I believe it is important for senior leaders to remain collegiate and united in our delivery of public services. In the thirteen years I have been a senior leader in Wiltshire, I have not and will not be engaging in such negative commentary.

I am pleased to be here to be able to present to you my rationale and views about why the police have contributed to the making of this programme and in particular address some of the issues that I believe have been raised. I believe it is my responsibility to try and clear up some of the misleading views being expressed.

The “999: What's Your Emergency?” programme is a documentary series which is currently showing on Channel 4. The programme follows and films the work of all the emergency services not just the police. There have been three series so far and all have received public acclaim which has prompted incredible amounts of generous support and admiration from the public. The programme also recognises the brilliant work of all our front line services, the complexities they face, the pressure they are under, the growing demands they are experiencing and most importantly the service they are able to provide with significantly less resources. It is my view, we should celebrate and support the work of all our frontline services not just emergency services, and that is what I will continue to do in my role as Chief Constable.

It is also my view the programme is an authentic portrayal of those complexities, demands and environment they work in. It gives a strong insight to the public about the sorts of social issues our frontline staff are facing. To be clear again, this is all our frontline services, not just policing.

In order for the programme to be progressed, the Force were informed about the approach and the guidelines followed:

The contract exists between Blast! and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire and Swindon.

It was agreed that the framework for the contract being built were around the following elements, which I understand is the common approach between all participating emergency services:

- Initially, the programme makers came and spent a 'research period' of around two weeks with Wiltshire Police
- The TV company had a compliance period where all the relevant checks and consents will be gained in line with Ofcom guidelines and the Data Protection Act.
- The TV crew had a 'full access' agreement with the police which meant that they were able to film all police activity. The filming period took place for 10 weeks and a compliance period then took place to bring out the stories and do the relevant permissions and checks. This then moved on to an interview phase where staff featured were interviewed, followed by the edit stage where checks on cases, arrests, officer's permissions, victim contacts were followed up
- This is a 12 month commitment with Blast! Films alongside the Fire and Ambulance Service (who have separate agreements in place with the TV Company)
- Blast! Films are responsible for gaining consent of the contributors to the programme who are featured outside of the police

In terms of editorial control, Blast! carry out a pre-transmission viewing for each episode which is an opportunity for three members of Wiltshire Police to correct any factual errors and discuss any concerns with them. Let me emphasise, colleagues representing the force have a strong and credible background in identifying risk and managing vulnerability, indeed, the Detective Superintendent who has viewed the programmes has just returned from a national operation where she has experience in dealing with child abuse, exploitation, vulnerability and risk, and other forms of public protection. To suggest that Wiltshire Police do not understand the risks and vulnerability issues relating to people we come into contact with is implausible, insulting and undermining.

Blast! has shown that they are committed to listening to the Wiltshire Police input at the viewing and making changes where appropriate (in line with the Ofcom Broadcasting Code which regulates all UK broadcasters). Blast! state that they are committed, under Ofcom, to delivering fair, accurate but objective programmes.

Regarding consent and permission, the following is the extract from the contract relating to this issue:

*"The producer undertakes to obtain all necessary permissions from all Wiltshire Police staff and officers who are featured in the programmes, and all other individuals appearing in the programmes, as set out in and required under the Ofcom broadcasting code."*

Blast! are also clear on their responsibility to vulnerable people, and within their FAQ briefing, they state:

*"As a company, we have extensive experience of working responsibly and supportively with vulnerable contributors to enable often marginalised people to have a voice. This includes*

*people with mental health issues, people affected by alcohol or drug misuse, children (including Looked After children), people with criminal convictions and victims of domestic abuse. We take our Duty of Care before, during and after transmission extremely seriously. Where appropriate, our dialogue with contributors often extends long after broadcast to ensure they are properly supported. Our commitment in this area extends far beyond OFCOM guidelines and we take great pride in the fact that many of the most vulnerable people we have collaborated with are still in contact with us and speak extremely positively of their experience of working with us."*

Whilst Channel 4 has commissioned the work as their commitment to public services Blast Films which is a reputable TV production company approached the emergency services in Wiltshire and requested our participation which all of us have done. Ofcom guidance is clear and relates to both the producers Blast and Broadcaster. Persons are required to give consent and if this is not given, they will either not appear in the documentary or will be totally anonymised.

It is important to state that Wiltshire Police, Blast! and Channel 4 have not received one complaint from anyone featured within the documentaries. In addition, Wiltshire Police have not been required to attend any incidents further to a person appearing in the series and as an organisation we have not been asked to participate in any partnership case conference relating to any actual concerns further to a person appearing in the programme.

So to be clear, the Police and the other emergency services and agencies participating in the programmes are not required to obtain consent; it is Blast! Films who have that responsibility.

As I have already emphasised the programme is an authentic portrayal of the pressures experienced by our front line colleagues. On a daily basis, on an hourly basis, very often minute by minute they are dealing with people who are suffering severe and chronic mental health problems, people in crisis, dealing with the homeless, people suffering alcoholism, people ravaged by drug addiction, people who go missing or simply people who may be exposed to exploitation. The police are dealing with an increasing number of people who are ill and vulnerable, confused, exposed, alone and at that moment in time uncared for, whether suffering from Alzheimer's, dementia or some other debilitating illness. It is clear all of our frontline colleagues are under similar pressures and they should be applauded for the high quality services they provide under difficult circumstances.

The diversity, volume and nature of the demand for policing has significantly increased in recent years. There has been an increase in crime, anti-social behaviour and the wider demand. The profile of crime is changing with a more transient population. New and emerging crime types are a real increase such as modern day slavery, human trafficking, cyber-crime, child abuse and child exploitation. Serious and organised crime and terrorism is more sinister, complex and dangerous than ever before. It is therefore my view the public should know the pressures our public services are under, how they deal with those challenges and how they work brilliantly in partnership with other agencies and the public to provide high quality services. It is misleading and disingenuous to believe our county whether Swindon or Wiltshire, are not experiencing this increase demand, significantly

more dangerous complex crime and increased pressure upon public safety. The threat of serious and organised crime groups operating in Swindon and Salisbury and most major towns in the county is real and the only way to effectively respond to these threats is to be open and transparent and authentically engaging with our public so that they are able to collectively help us respond to these demands.

As the Chief Constable I believe it is time that the police had a more sophisticated, engaging and open relationship with the public about the service we are able to offer. I believe this programme offers the opportunity to start to have a more mature and meaningful relationship. My belief is that the more we, as public sector organisations, communicate with authentic and pragmatic dialogue the more trust and confidence you will engender and develop. Let's not forget we are one of the safest counties in the country and we experience high levels of trust and confidence within our communities.

I believe colleagues in public office have a greater responsibility than ever before to have those authentic conversations with the public about how economic and social deprivation impacts upon the services we are able to offer. More importantly, not just to discuss the problems we are all facing but know and understand how we can inspire and mobilise the communities we serve so they are part of the solution and not the problem. The public are more sophisticated than some people give them credit for and I know the programme has had a positive impact upon the public that we have heard from.

When I watched the programmes, which I have now done three times, I am proud to say I have witnessed officers and staff providing a high quality service in incredibly difficult circumstances.

I am particularly pleased the programme will focus upon mental health, serious and organised crime, sexual exploitation, youth, wider exploitation, and other forms of vulnerability because these are the areas of greatest demand for our emergency services. Of course, all of our front line services are dealing with similar issues, therefore it is important for all of us to communicate effectively around the demands we are all facing.

The reason why I am proud of the Wiltshire Police contribution is simple. Like the public I have witnessed officers and staff exhibiting **courage, professionalism, sensitivity, compassion, kindness, humanity, understanding, patience, warmth, tenacity and most importantly an optimistic and upbeat portrayal of the police.** They have been pragmatic and honest which is exactly what I want from my colleagues.

It is worthy to note that Wiltshire Police has not participated in a documentary for a number of years but due to the type and style of documentary it was decided to enter into a relationship with Blast! Films to increase awareness and enhance the reputation of the force.

We did not enter into the programme with the intention of damaging the reputation of Wiltshire and Swindon, we did not enter into the programme with a motivation to damage the reputation of partners and we did not enter into the programme with the intention to increase vulnerability and risk of people in crisis. I do not believe we have done so in any of

these circumstances. I believe it is disingenuous to suggest this programme has in any way damaged the reputation of Wiltshire and Swindon.

In fact, in the main I do not believe vulnerability or risk has been increased at all. I do believe the making of the programme and the programme itself has put a spotlight on vulnerable people who as a result may have received more support than they ordinarily would do.

Wiltshire Police went into this documentary knowing some of the risks and we carefully considered them. One risk we did not predict or foresee was the adverse reaction we seem to have from Local Authority colleagues.

I am incredibly frustrated, hurt and disappointed at this reaction, the unfounded criticism of my officers and the wholly disproportionate misleading and highly critical narrative developing, although interestingly not from the public. Whoever is suggesting that risk has disproportionately increased for people contributing to this programme clearly do not understand the attendant circumstances? Anyone who is vulnerable, in crisis or by their age at risk, will already be engaged or have been engaged in other public services before the police come into contact with them. When the police do come in contact with those sorts of people a sixteen page form is completed and sent to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). Therefore there are at least three occasions before during and after the incident takes place when risk is assessed. When the multi-agency safeguarding hub receives the report, the risk should be addressed again. Prior to the airing of the programme there is another opportunity to address any residual risk. Therefore there are at least five opportunities to address any residual risk.

So if it is helpful I will address some of the issues that the PCC has raised with me.

During the early negotiations and scoping for the documentary I received a briefing about the opportunities and threats relating to the programme, the risks and benefits and as a result a recommendation was made to the PCC.

The OPCC and the legal team developed a contractual arrangement with Blast! Films and I am as comfortable as I am able to be with the arrangements in place. Therefore in answer to the question about who is responsible for the participation of Wiltshire Police in these programmes it is my sole responsibility. I provide operational advice and develop operational policy which I believe is clearly understood by myself and the PCC.

There have been questions about the Wiltshire Police approach to vulnerability and safeguarding. I have watched with interest how my colleagues have dealt with vulnerable people in our community. Far from exhibiting a lack of understanding of how to deal and support vulnerable people or people at risk I have been impressed by my frontline colleagues who have shown their humanity, patience, kindness and sensitivity which I believe has been palpable and plain to see. I hope you agree we should all be reassured by these qualities being exhibited by some fantastic dedicated people. Interestingly, some may say the police should not have become involved in some of the incidents portrayed in the programme because other agencies should have been notified. This is not uncommon and reinforces the position that the police are a service of last resort.

I want to impress upon panel members here today; Wiltshire Police have a very impressive track record in dealing with vulnerability and public protection which has been recognised by HMIC and Ofsted. The positive feedback we have consistently received is particularly pleasing in such a challenging environment and with the back-drop of many organisations not experiencing the same positive feedback. Only recently in December 2016 Police were commented upon favourably in relation to the culture shift, training and management of risk within the Joint Targeted Area Inspection which also is repeated consistently in the effectiveness report conducted by HMIC that same year.

Some people have said that officers have not portrayed themselves professionally in the making of the programme, particularly in relation to some of the views they may have expressed.

There are a number of facts that have been relayed or alluded to during the programme. It is true to say the following:-

- Wiltshire Police are one of the worst funded forces in the country
- We do not have enough resources to meet public expectation
- We do not have enough resources to maintain an effective visible presence in our communities
- Demand is increasing because other organisations are not able to provide the services we have experienced previously
- The decline in social care has real consequences
- Public scrutiny is higher now than ever before
- Legislation is more complex than ever before
- It is more dangerous and challenging in our communities that are the most deprived and challenged than ever before

There is also a suggestion that the programme is political. Far from it, as the Chief Constable I am confident that my staff have not used this programme as a political platform. I know and my colleagues understand what operational independence requires from us all. I will continue to protect operational independence and I will not be deflected from that position. It is important to state that the participation of the police in documentary series is standard practice. On any given day there will be numerous production broadcasts shown across the TV network that highlight the work of the police and other emergency services (The Force, Night Cops, The Met Policing London, Police Interceptors). Our due diligence shows that other forces have not encountered the issues that have been raised within Wiltshire and Swindon. We conducted a short review on the 1<sup>st</sup> August this year to ascertain how many of these documentary programmes were being shown. In the region of 30 programmes were being shown during a 24 hour period on a variety of topics across the country.

I do however believe that senior police leaders require morale courage to be operationally independent but that does not mean they should not be politically adept, agile and astute when it is appropriate to do so.

It is therefore my view the programme is not political, there is not political conspiracy and I do not believe politics with political motivation have been exhibited by my officers in the programme.

I am also aware there is an assertion that the programme is damaging the reputation of Wiltshire and Swindon. I do not accord with this assertion. In fact I do not believe members of the public or potential investors who may have a commercial interest in the county will be disproportionately influenced by the programme at all. I certainly do not believe potential investors would make a commercial decision based upon a snapshot of public service provision. The programme has only 2 million viewers and in the main has received very favourable feedback from the public.

I believe that Swindon and Wiltshire has a strong brand and is known as a vibrant and flourishing safe county. I do not believe the reputation of Swindon and Wiltshire is so fragile and delicate that it could be damaged by the programme. If it is, I do not believe that is a matter for the police to address. Again, I am aware this assertion has been made in public on a number of occasions which I believe can only be made to undermine the Wiltshire Police and is disingenuous in its motivation.

As the Chief Constable I continue to be supportive of the Wiltshire Police involvement in this programme. I believe it is important to have an authentic and rational relationship with the public but most of all I want to continue to say to the public that despite the lack of resources and increased demands we will do all that we are able to protect you, help you, support you and look after you with humanity, kindness, courage with our values at the heart of what we do. These comments should also be aimed at all of our frontline resources who I believe do an incredible job.

I hope the PCP will understand the rationale for the programme and celebrate like others do that this is one of the top performing forces in the country with a strong reputation and we should pay tribute to our front line officers and staff who go out there courageously, professionally, dedicated and committed to providing a high quality service.

In conclusion, it would not be credible for a Chief Constable to try to suggest Wiltshire Police is one of the top performing forces in the country without independent scrutiny and evaluation. Therefore I will draw your attention to the last HMIC Effectiveness Inspection where the force was graded as good, good and good in all of the different elements of the inspection, with an overall grading of good for the force. It particularly commented favourably on how effective the force is at protecting those who are vulnerable to harm and supporting victims. The force was graded as good, good and good with an overall grading of good in all of the efficiency inspections. The force was also graded as good, good and outstanding with an overall grading of good in the legitimacy inspection. The leadership within the force has also been favourably assessed within the leadership framework, most recently being described as outstanding when inspected for crime compliance and integrity. The force was one of only three forces in the county to have received a good grading for crime data integrity. Finally, staff associations have undertaken a morale survey across the country and Wiltshire Police Officers morale is the highest in the country. I hope colleagues will agree with me, Wiltshire Police frontline services and the organisation in the context of

being one of the least funded forces across the country provides excellent value for money, high quality services and are doing all that they are able to protect our communities from harm.

But, whilst I will continue to applaud my colleagues, our success as an organisation should only be recognised in context of excellent working relationships, partnerships and collaboration with local authorities, other agencies and most importantly the communities we serve.

As I said at the beginning, thank you for the opportunity to provide you with my views.