# Organisational Failure in Police Scotland Call-Handling Procedures Led to Tragic Deaths on M9 Motorway



A fatal accident inquiry (FAI) has concluded that Police Scotland’s organisational failure in call-handling procedures led to the death of Lamara Bell. Bell, who was 25, sustained severe injuries in a car crash on the M9 motorway near Stirling in July 2015 and remained undiscovered alongside her deceased partner, John Yuill, for three days.

Yuill, aged 28, had been driving under the influence of alcohol and cannabis when their car veered off the road early on July 5, 2015. The vehicle went down an embankment after crossing the hard shoulder and hitting a kerb. While Yuill died from head and abdominal injuries, Bell survived the initial impact but succumbed to her injuries due to the delay in rescue and medical intervention.

At 11:30 that morning, farmer John Wilson saw the wrecked car and reported it to Police Scotland's non-emergency line. However, due to a failure to log the call, no action was taken. It was only on July 8, when another farmer investigated the site, that Bell was found alive but critically injured. Despite being rushed to hospital, she died four days later.

Sheriff James Williamson’s report pointed out that if police had acted on Wilson's initial report, Bell’s injuries might have been survivable. The FAI criticized Police Scotland, noting that Sergeant Brian Henry, who took the initial call, was inadequately trained and unsupervised, highlighting systemic flaws.

The report indicated no deliberate negligence on Henry's part and stated the police force had since implemented changes in their procedures. Police Scotland admitted liability under the Health and Safety at Work Act and was fined £100,000. Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs apologized to the victims' families and acknowledged significant improvements in call-handling systems since the incident.