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Derbyshire Police Grapple with Surge in Emergency Calls Amid Series of High-Profile Murder Cases

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Emergency calls to Derbyshire Constabulary have soared by 10% recently, prompting urgent operational changes and resource reallocations across the force. Chief Constable Rachel Swann described the current situation as unlike anything she has experienced in her three-decade-long policing career, highlighting the mounting strain on officers amid a sharp rise in serious incidents, including multiple recent murder investigations.

Speaking to *Derbyshire Live*, Ms Swann revealed that over 6,000 more calls were received in June and July compared to normal levels. The spike in demand, she said, was not isolated to any single type of crime. “Some days we saw more calls than we would have on New Year’s Eve, which is traditionally our busiest day,” she said. “The increase was across everything, not one particular kind of crime.”

The murder of 21-year-old Dale Martin, which led to the arrest of 30 individuals, has been one of the most resource-intensive cases, requiring significant detective and uniformed support. The complexity of the case has placed added pressure on the already stretched police force. “This is an extremely complex job and is just one of many we are looking into. But we won’t rest until we have justice,” Ms Swann stated.

Other recent cases include a fatal stabbing inside Lloyds Bank in St Peter’s Street, the discovery of a woman’s body in Ashe Place, and the identification of human remains in Normanton, connected to a woman who had been missing for 15 years. Despite the spate of tragic incidents, the Chief Constable reassured the public: “We have looked at the murders and there is nothing to connect them in any way, such as gang-related, domestic or knife crime.”

Derbyshire Constabulary has taken several drastic steps to cope with the spike in demand. These include extending officer shifts from nine to twelve hours, cancelling training sessions, redeploying staff from training departments, and temporarily calling off rest days. Overtime has also been used extensively, and a ‘vulnerability hub’ has been set up to prioritise calls involving those at risk.

Ms Swann acknowledged the tremendous efforts made by her team, praising staff for their flexibility and commitment. “We have been able to flex our resource and make sure we still continue to do the ongoing serious investigations and responding to complex crime,” she said.

The Chief Constable noted that visible police presence in Derby city centre had been increased in recent weeks to restore public confidence. Patrol teams have reported 17 arrests, 24 stop searches, and a significant 22% drop in knife-related and public disorder offences in July alone.

Despite these efforts, Ms Swann stressed the challenges of managing modern policing demands with unchanged staffing levels. “I have the same number of police officers as there

were in 2010–2,110. But policing has changed in its complexity,” she said. Half of all calls now relate to non-criminal issues, such as welfare and vulnerability, while crimes like cyber fraud increasingly require specialist digital investigation.

While the central government has promised 35 new officers, Ms Swann emphasised the need for greater funding autonomy. “Any additional money and resource is welcome, but with the flexibility to spend it where needed,” she said, reinforcing the importance of tailoring funds to local operational demands rather than blanket allocations.

Finally, she urged the public to use police services appropriately and highlighted the availability of the non-emergency 101 number and live chat option, both of which are monitored 24/7. “Part of my role is balancing making people feel safe with visible policing–the part that keeps people safe, which they don’t see,” she said.