



The Rt Hon Priti Patel  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Via email

21<sup>st</sup> October 2019

### **HMICFRS report: PEEL spotlight report: Shining a light on betrayal Abuse of position for a sexual purpose**

Dear Home Secretary,

The publication of the PEEL spotlight report: Shining a light on betrayal Abuse of position for a sexual purpose highlights a number of important findings and presents Forces with an important challenge to do more to prevent officers and staff abusing their position for a sexual purpose.

I Agree that such behaviour is “extremely rare” and there can be no disagreement with the statement that even one instance of abuse of position for a sexual purpose is one too many.

As the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire, I will reflect on the report and work with the Chief Constable to maintain the legitimacy of the police and protect the public from predators who have no place in policing.

I am proud that Northamptonshire Police was adjudged to be a “good” force when it came to tackling such behaviour, led in part by an “effective” counter-corruption unit, clear leadership on ethics and a concerted effort to raise awareness of such corruptive behaviour across the workforce.

This is a valuable report and demonstrates how far we have come in addressing this issue since 2016 when the force was last inspected in this area. Since then, the force have carried out a force-wide awareness campaign on this problem which means colleagues are now even more aware of the behaviour expected of them while supervisors are trained to spot the signs of potential corruption if and when it arises. In addition to this, our ‘Bad Apple’ confidential electronic reporting system is designed to give staff the confidence to report matters of concern where actions or behaviour of colleagues fall below that expected under staff values and the Standards of Professional Behaviour.

Our counter-corruption team has been strengthened in both numbers and in terms of experience, allowing them to better investigate allegations when they do arise. Also if they result in misconduct hearings, we will always publicise the outcome. Further work has also been done on appropriate relationships and a strategy around sexual harassment is currently being developed. To ensure that these improvements continue to be embedded across the organisation, I have requested regular updates in relation to how the Force deals proactively with such matters through my monthly accountability board

Such cases thankfully remain extremely rare, but in order for the police to maintain the trust and confidence of the public, it's imperative that we are seen to be investigating any unacceptable conduct of this type and, where appropriate, remove those offenders from the service because they have no part to play in it.

This report also makes important recommendations about the importance and value of vetting, not least at a time when the police service is in the process of recruiting thousands of new officers in the coming years. Vetting mustn't be seen as a blocker, but an enabler, a genuine first line of defence for policing. I also believe that serious thought must be given to the creation of a national vetting service, that will should deliver a more effective and efficient service to forces across the country.

There is still work to be done, but I firmly believe the report's findings today demonstrate Northamptonshire Police has made impressive inroads into tackling an issue which has real potential to damage the confidence the public has in its police officers and staff.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Stephen Mold". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Stephen Mold  
Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

c.c. Sir Thomas Winsor