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**Chief Constable Amanda Pearson MSt
(Cantab)**

Dorset Police
Force Headquarters
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By email: peter@petertatchellfoundation.org

Email: Amanda.pearson@dorset.pnn.police.uk

28th February 2024

Dear Peter

I am writing in response to your Apologise Now campaign and the important work you are doing to increase the trust and confidence of the LGBT+ community and help policing be part of a positive future.

As part of LGBT+ History Month, I thought that this was a good opportunity for reflection and to celebrate change.

Firstly, I want to address the past. Clearly, policing has a duty to uphold and enforce the laws of the day, whatever our personal opinion and views. We must remain impartial to protect the legitimacy of policing and policing by consent. However, it is clear that the way in which previous laws were enforced and the associated police activities caused significant harm, trauma, anger and injustice to LGBT+ communities, which has severely damaged trust and confidence in policing and we have a lot of work to do build that trust.

As Chief Constable of Dorset Police, I want to apologise for the way in which those laws were enforced and for any physical and mental harm and trauma that this caused to LGBT+ individuals and communities in Dorset as a result. I know that there were local examples of this in Dorset and the feelings of how this happened continue to affect and influence the trust and confidence of the LGBT+ community in policing.

Secondly, I want to look ahead to a brighter future. Today's police service is not what it was and we continue to work tirelessly to ensure that we have positive relationships and engagement with all our diverse communities and have an inclusive and diverse workforce that represents the community we police. Our focus is especially on those communities who have reduced trust and confidence. This is so critical in our British policing model of policing by consent and to the legitimacy and transparency of police activity.



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I acknowledge that we still have some way to go. We know that LGBT+ victims are less likely to report crimes to us and we need to encourage and support those victims who do report to us so that we can keep them safe. We also know that within our own workforce that LGBT+ officers, staff and volunteers don't feel confidence to be themselves so we look to explore our systems, processes and structures to allow us to support them to thrive and develop no matter what their protected characteristics.

I would like to explain some of the work Dorset Police are doing to actively make change:

- **Inclusive Leadership Programme**

The programme has been designed to provide our leaders with the support and tools they need to be ethical and inclusive leaders, demonstrating the highest level of integrity and standards of professional behaviour.

This will assist them in developing their confidence to identify and address concerning behaviours and having difficult conversations.

It is an opportunity for them to enhance their current skills by building on their knowledge, improving their personal qualities as an inclusive leader, and empowering their teams to do the same, through understanding workplace strategies, tools and legislation, cultural lived experiences and introducing psychological safety to better understand themselves and their teams.

- **Well established LGBT+ staff network**

The Dorset LGBT+ Support Network is our staff support group for anyone in the policing family who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender plus which includes those who identify as gender fluid, non binary, pansexual, questioning and intersex (LGB&T+).

They provide a voice to officers and staff in challenging under-representation, tackling discrimination and improving our understanding of LGBT+ issues.

They offer support, undertake awareness raising activities and act as a critical friend to the Force, challenging it to improve its services and processes for all. They strive to increase the visibility of supportive colleagues who do not identify as LGB&T, but who wish to work alongside the network to improve support, equal opportunities and reduce the isolation and discrimination that some staff experience.

The network also:

- Provide emotional support and advice to members.
- Support members career progression.



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- Act as role models.
- Provide a forum for discussion and conversation.
- Increase the confidence and satisfaction of members.
- Promote equality and diversity through awareness raising.
- Provide advice to support equality training.
- Contribute to policy changes.
- Contribute to improving the reputation of Dorset Police.
- Communicate with its members on a quarterly basis.
- Communicate regularly with the Strategic People, Confidence and Equality Manager to raise issues.
- Respond to requests for assistance from the Strategic People, Confidence and Equality Manager.
- Meet regularly with the Chief Officer lead.
- Collaborate with other staff networks.

Our network Chair is also the South West regional Lead across six forces (Avon and Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Channel Islands and Devon and Cornwall) for LGBT+ Staff Networks and represents the South West region at regular national meetings dealing with issues faced by the LGBT+ staff and the wider community. We also attend the LGBT+ annual conference where learning and identification of key themes are shared locally for our continuous improvement.

- **Call it Out campaign**

We know the vast majority of employees within the organisation are professional and do not demonstrate unacceptable behaviour, but there is a minority who do, and we do not want them in Dorset Police. It is important that everyone in the organisation understands this and that is why we are launching our Call it Out behaviours campaign.

The campaign reminds everyone that it is everyone's responsibility to call out unacceptable behaviour and signposts colleagues to the various methods in which this can be done, including anonymous reporting. This is one of the ways we intend to end prejudice and unacceptable behaviours and is something we regularly remind our workforce of.

- **Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs)**

Dorset Police have redesigned its IAG model to reflect the need to access independent advice from a wider representation of diverse groups and to ensure that the service provided effectively meets the needs of our communities with the primary role of an Independent Advisory Group (IAG) is to act as a 'critical friend' to the Police. There is LGBT+ representation within the local and strategic IAG membership.



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In 2022, we convened a LGBT+ specific IAG in response to a high risk missing person from the LGBT+ community. The IAG provided valuable advice in relation to internal and external communications and provided support to LGBT+ community members as well as signposting support and guidance from national LGBT+ networks and organisations. This proved invaluable for the commanders involved in leading the investigation and has formed part of our learning and development around improving our public service during incidents involving members of communities with protected characteristics.

- **Hate Crime**

Dorset Police is proactively working with our communities to increase confidence in the reporting of hate crime. We are creating an independent external scrutiny panel to review hate crime investigations to enable us to make improvements and ensure that we provide the very best service to our victims and we are working with community groups and partners to forge stronger relationships to foster trust and inclusivity both within our LGBT+ communities and our internal workforce.

- **Represented and engaged with the NPCC LGBTQ+ working group**

We are represented at Senior Leadership level with the NPCC LGBTQ+ portfolio so that we are engaged, support and help shape future national policing activity.

- **Positive Action Strategy**

We recognise that a diverse workforce representing the people and communities it serves goes to the very core of the principle of policing by consent. It is therefore essential to tap into the widest talent pool possible to ensure we attract, recruit, develop and retain key talent to meet current and future skills gaps.

The strategy addresses workforce representation and the use of positive action to achieve this and supports the NPCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy, and is inextricably linked to the forces' strategic and operational approach to community engagement and working with partners.

The overall aim of our Positive Action strategy is to improve the workforce representation of Dorset Police, determining where best to use positive action measures and to continue to build an inclusive culture where diversity and difference is welcomed and respected.

Everyone in our workforce is unique and brings their own individual perspectives. To gain the benefits of diversity we must embed an inclusive culture where everyone feels comfortable voicing their own opinions and ideas. An inclusive culture, which encourages all of us to be ourselves at work, will lead to improved wellbeing, engaged people, increased productivity, reduced turnover and sickness rates and



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results in better outcomes for the public. We want to attract the best and everyone has a role to play in creating a more inclusive culture.

- **Workforce representation**

Our work with our Positive Action team has resulted in an extremely positive LGBT+ workforce representation of 3.8% of the workforce who identify as identify as bisexual, gay or lesbian compared to 2.8% of Dorset's population.

I hope that this letter demonstrates my commitment to an inclusive, fair and legitimate police service and hope that policing can work with the LGBT+ communities, locally, regionally and nationally to make positive progress and redress the harms of the past.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Pearson
Chief Constable