



Devon & Cornwall
POLICE

Acting Chief Constable Jim Colwell MBA CMgr MCMI

Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter, Devon, EX2 7HQ

- 📞 **101 Non Emergency** SignLive **Non Emergency** (BSL video relay)
- 📞 **999 Emergency** **Non Emergency Text 67101** (Deaf only)
- 🌐 **dc.police.uk** **999 BSL Emergency** (BSL video relay)
- 💻 **dc.police.uk/webchat** **Text 999** (Deaf only - must pre-register at www.emergencysms.org.uk)

By email: peter@petertatchellfoundation.org

19 March 2024

Dear Peter

I write in response to your Apologise Now! campaign, and your drive for Chief Constables in the UK to recognise, and regret, the way the LGBT+ community were policed in the past.

We know that the police have to uphold the laws of the day. Of course, it also matters how the law is upheld. I know that, at the time, the way the laws were enforced was often disrespectful and inappropriate, and caused long running damage to trust in policing amongst LGBT+ communities. This includes impacting adversely on our own LGBT+ officers and staff. I have of course heard this directly from ex officers affected.

I want to apologise for the way those laws were enforced in the past, and for any harm caused to LGBT+ communities in Devon and Cornwall as a result.

It seems now incredible that the anti-homosexual laws of the past could ever have existed. I look at my current workforce and am proud to see it proportionately reflects the LGBT+ population. We are in a fortunate position within Devon and Cornwall where our multiple Pride committees continue to extend invites to our force, and we engage with such events to help us to have meaningful exchanges with our wider communities. The force is clear we need to be providing leadership in reducing prejudice and increasing understanding between different groups of people.

I mentioned earlier that I have heard from former colleagues about the homophobic nature of some policing in the past. Your campaign has given me much thought, and I will be reaching out to learn more from people subjected to policing at the time, to learn from their experiences and ensure that an understanding of the inequities of the past informs our policing going forwards.

I wish your Apologise Now! Campaign well and hope that policing is, as a result, able to draw a line under past homophobic victimisation and to boost LGBT+ trust and confidence in the police.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colwell', written over a horizontal line.

**Jim Colwell MBA CMgr MCMI
Acting Chief Constable**