



SCOTTISH POLICE
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LETTER SENT BY E-MAIL ONLY

Audrey Nicoll MSP
Convenor, Criminal Justice Committee
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
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2 May 2024

CE/033/2023

Dear Convenor

I am writing in response to a request, received on 23 April 2024, for a briefing following media reports.

The media report relates to a live operational investigation. The Authority's Chair, Martyn Evans requested and received a high-level verbal briefing from Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs about this matter shortly after an article appeared in the [Sunday Mail on Sunday 14 April](#). I have been informed that this matter is subject of both a live criminal and conduct investigation. In this regard, the Authority is aware that there are currently two officers suspended and appropriate wellbeing measures are in place to support those affected. This is a proportionate level of engagement with the Authority regarding an operational matter to have attracted media or public attention.

Oversight of health and safety

The Authority does not oversee the health and safety arrangements of individual cases or operations. The Authority expects Police Scotland to manage the day-to-day health, safety and wellbeing requirements of officers and staff. There are a range of policies and procedures to support this and several internal and formal mechanisms in place where health and safety matters are highlighted and discussed. The Authority plays a more strategic role overseeing these matters with official attendance at the quarterly Health and Safety Board meetings where any pertinent issues are thereafter escalated to Police Scotland's Strategic Leadership Board, the Authority's People Committee, and the Board itself.

The Authority's People Committee plays a key role overseeing quarterly reports on health and safety issues such as enforcement activity, proactive preventative work, and accident statistics. The report also provides updates on current and emerging health and safety issues and updates regarding the development of policy and practice.

Oversight of covert policing

Covert policing is a highly regulated and governed area of operational policing. Professional practice and UK guidance supports covert enforcement activity to be conducted legally, ethically, and safely. Organisations such as the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) and the Investigatory Powers Tribunal have a primary role regulating this area of policing and the Authority takes its assurance from such organisations.

Prior to any media reporting, the Chair asked Police Scotland to provide a report on covert policing arrangements to our forthcoming Board meeting on 23 May 2024. Police Scotland will ensure this report also covers the health and safety arrangements for officers and staff who work in covert policing. I will ensure the report is shared with the Criminal Justice Committee for information.

I trust this information provides the Committee with assurance around the Authority's oversight of health and safety and covert policing matters more generally.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further requests.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

LYNN BROWN OBE
Chief Executive