



ASSOCIATION OF SCOTTISH POLICE SUPERINTENDENTS

Representing the Operational Leaders of the Police Service of Scotland

Independent Review of Complaints Handling, Investigations and Misconduct Issues in Relation to Policing

Final Report, November 2020

The Rt. Hon. Dame Elish Angiolini DBE QC

Statement from the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents

The Association of Scottish Police Superintendents welcomes Dame Elish Angiolini's Independent Review, a significant report produced by her team with a far-reaching remit beyond complaints handling etc. and wide-ranging contributions from all who value the public's confidence in policing.

At the heart of public/police confidence is equality of access to visible policing and ASPS agrees with Dame Elish's astute observations about community policing being essential for those communities who may suffer adversely from 'digital poverty' exacerbated by social restrictions necessary to combat the pandemic. Through regular, reliable policing in communities led by superintendents, the Service will better understand the needs of diverse groups and cultures to maintain confidence and build trust. Similarly, communities will more clearly comprehend the scope and relevance of the policing mission, to keep people safe, based on strong, ethical values of fairness, integrity and respect, which the Review recognises are worth enshrining in statute.

Many of the recommendations will strengthen the processes and improve the outcomes across the agencies but implementation will come with additional costs to taxpayers which must be found in addition to an already overstretched police budget. Expansion of body worn video (BWV) is crucial but will be delivered only with considerable investment in the Service's ICT budget and collaboration across the Criminal Justice landscape. These facts are long reported to the

Scottish Police Authority, Scottish Government et al but meantime, BWV is not being prioritised.

The Review recommends learning from other jurisdictions and ASPS sees this as a welcome opportunity for superintendents who are both responsible for conduct investigation and themselves, subject to the Conduct Regulations. The Service must be discerning in how it will import the best of other systems. The proposals on conduct will have a significant impact upon officers and further intrusions into their private lives, a sacrifice made by those in the office of constable and their families, and into retirement. Opening up misconduct hearings to the public will improve understanding of quasi-judicial process but will require suitable venues and additional administration.

The Association particularly welcomes recommendations regarding 'raising the bar' for establishing when misconduct has occurred and the spirit behind a complaints system that focuses on finding timely solutions as a learning and improvement opportunity rather than bluntly imposing sanctions. Too often, simple performance and conduct issues become mired in complex internal investigations and prolonged timelines that are damaging to participants.

Superintendents, the senior operational leaders in policing are deeply concerned with the effective and efficient delivery of service to all communities. The Association will continue to support its members' professional development, particularly in equality, diversity and unconscious bias training but acknowledging community representatives' views that learning about different cultures and needs is best achieved through regular interaction with our communities.

Personal learning for superintendents includes better support for and understanding of the needs of our officers and staff from visible and non-visible minority groups. It is distressing that some junior colleagues reluctantly choose to leave the Service prematurely through exhaustion at dealing with discrimination. It is unacceptable that ASPS has only two members, both chief superintendents, who identify as being from a visible ethnic minority background. Leadership, coaching and mentoring are essential if better representation in senior ranks/roles is to be achieved.

The Association will work determinedly with the Service and partner staff associations and trade unions to consider the Review's recommendations with the clear objective of maintaining public confidence in policing and building trust with all communities and our officers and staff.

Chief Superintendent Stewart Carle
President, ASPS

Note to Editors:

ASPS is a statutory staff association representing 171 superintendents and chief superintendents posted to Local Policing, specialist and corporate roles across the Police Service of Scotland.

At the ASPS' annual conference, opened on a digital platform by Chief Constable Iain Livingstone QPM last Wednesday, 4 November, over 100 members and community partners heard presentations on about diversity and inclusion from Mr Chuck Wexler, a former police chief and now executive director of the Police Exchange Research Forum in the United States, and Dr Peter Jones of Shire Professionals, a chartered psychologist who specialises in delivering unconscious bias training to the public sector.

ASPS will continue to work with partners and professionals to improve personal development and learning opportunities for its members.