



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Criminal Justice Committee

Mr Martyn Evans
Chair
Scottish Police Authority

All correspondence c/o:
Justice Committee Clerks
Room T2.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

By email

Tel: 0131 348 5195
Textphone: 0800 092 7100
justicecommittee@parliament.scot

19 December, 2022

Dear Mr Evans,

At the Committee meeting of 7 December 2022, the Criminal Justice Committee considered your response to the Committee's recent letter to you on policing and mental health.

Thank you for undertaking an urgent review of the number of cases where officers and staff have retired due to mental ill health and where the administration of their retirement remains incomplete.

Thank you also for providing information on the work that the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) is doing to track and monitor employee wellbeing within Police Scotland. That information is helpful in enabling the Committee to understand the oversight of the SPA in this important area.

However, it raised some concerns for the Committee about the SPA's oversight of the effectiveness of the advice and support provided to Police Scotland officers who have mental health issues.

The Committee noted that your response did not include any contribution from any of the police unions. In particular, the Scottish Police Federation, who assisted the Committee in arranging the informal evidence sessions with the police officers.

In my letter to you, I referred to a number of issues which were raised by the police officers during the informal evidence sessions about the processes for Ill-Health Retirement (IHR) and Injury on Duty (IOD) awards.

In your response, you indicate that the SPA, in conjunction with Police Scotland, initiated a piece of work to review both processes in late 2019 and that this work is to be reported to the Authority in February 2023. Could you please confirm whether this

work is expected to conclude by then. Also, it would be helpful if you could please provide details of any of the outcomes of that work that have already been implemented.

In your letter, you confirmed that the waiting time for an officer to see a Selected Medical Practitioner (SMP) has reduced from 21 to 12 months and that 39 of the 'live' cases have been in the IHR process for more than 12 months. Could you please confirm whether those 39 cases have been prioritised and, if so, when the retirement and injury on duty processes are expected to conclude for those cases.

The Committee has been made aware that whilst an SMP post is vacant, the Force Medical Adviser (FMA) can be appointed to perform the role of the SMP on a temporary basis. Could you please confirm whether Police Scotland implemented this procedure when the SMP post was vacant or was requested to do so by the SPA?

You confirm that the IOD award process is administered by Police Scotland on the Authority's behalf, and that it can be a medically complex and time-consuming process. In particular, where a former officer is suffering from a psychological condition(s). It would be helpful to understand the SPA's oversight role in monitoring whether SMPs are provided with the assessments of medical professionals who have diagnosed the officers and all other relevant paperwork promptly by Police Scotland's HR department.

You indicated that there are currently 30 'live' applications for IOD awards, some of which are currently with the SMP for consideration. Could you please confirm when a decision on these awards is expected, and if more than one SMP is considering these applications?

Your commitment to consider further actions to reduce delays and make improvements in respect of single points of contact and general communication with applicants while their cases are ongoing is welcome.

These issues are dealt with in greater detail in the notes of the informal evidence sessions with six police officers which describe their experiences of working for Police Scotland. The notes detail the impact on officers of not receiving the right support at the right time, as well as examples of good practice, and contain a number of suggested areas where improvements could be made. These notes are published on the Committee's website. The Committee would be grateful if you would consider the issues raised in the detailed notes from our meetings with police officers and respond to the points they made to us.

I have copied this letter to the Chief Constable of Police Scotland, Sir Iain Livingstone QPM.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Audrey N : AN". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Audrey Nicoll MSP
Convener, Criminal Justice Committee