



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

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Deputy Assistant Commissioner
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Friday 12th December 2025

Dear Professor Harris,

On behalf of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, I write to provide the response to the matters of concern addressed to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in your Report to Prevent Future Deaths dated 19th September 2025 following the inquest into the tragic death of Mrs Rebekah Arter.

On behalf of the MPS, may I first express my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Mrs Arter, our thoughts and sympathies are very much with them.

The MPS has acknowledged and reviewed all the matters of concern raised in your Regulation 28 Report and responds as follows:

The Coroner's "Matters of Concern" and the MPS' Responses

Matter of Concern

"That there may have been missed opportunities for the IOPC and Metropolitan Police Service from their investigations to identify that Rebekah was a victim of domestic abuse and coercive control, which would have enabled her to be protected. This is illustrated by these facts:

- *That Rebekah had met her husband initially as a victim of a crime.*
- *That police investigations uncovered a large number of women with whom he had inappropriate relationships and that he misused his police powers.*
- *That he was dismissed from the police for drug offences in May 2023, but the risk to Rebekah was not apparently considered at that time.*
- *A witness has alleged that a video was sent by him of Rebekah [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which the family allege was used to shame and enforce control over her, allegedly in 2023.*
- *A history of her having unexplained repeated bruises and injuries was available in 2024 to anyone who enquired about the risk of domestic abuse.*
- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- *That in retrospect it is recognised by a Detective Chief Inspector that he was an exceptionally persistent and damaging offender against women, but no charges in relation to that had ever been brought.*

It is recognised that the MPS will have taken a number of steps to improve investigations since 2016. The public will want to know of these. The issue of the abuse of police powers threatening the safety and lives of women has been a matter of considerable public interest. In my opinion this is a national issue of concern and that ministers should be informed of these matters to consider if any further investigation is needed to prevent future deaths and/or for the public to be reassured.”

MPS Response

In addressing the coroner’s concerns, this response will set out the improvements the MPS has made since 2016 to address these concerns, including in response to the Baroness Casey review on culture and standards in the Metropolitan Police Service, the Angiolini Inquiry Part 1 and His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire &

Rescue Services (HMICFRS) concerns on vetting, misconduct and misogyny in the police service.

We will highlight the changes to MPS policy and practice in relation to Vetting and address the work that has been undertaken in relation to the public concern regarding the abuse of police powers and its impact on the safety of women. This includes the creation of the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences Investigation Unit (DASO) and the new mandatory training on Abuse of Position for Sexual Purpose (APSP). We will also address the work that the MPS has undertaken in the last three years to tackle violence against women and girls.

Lastly, we will reference the Angiolini Inquiry which is scrutinising the issue of safety of women and girls in Part 2.

Vetting

As part of our New Met for London plan, we are reforming the way we vet officers and staff. We have changed our approach and are confident that, following our reforms, only those who meet the highest standards will be granted vetting clearance and able to join the Met. Our policy and practice on screening out individuals, via vetting, who have misogynistic and/or predatory attitudes and behaviours is strong and robust – and believe it is one of the strongest positions taken by any police force in the UK.

Today, the presumption is an individual who has been previously arrested for rape and applies to join the Met, will not receive vetting clearance, unless there are exceptional circumstances. And in line with national guidance, applications for a position as a police officer, special constable or member of police staff are rejected in all cases where the applicant is, or has been, a registered sex offender. Applicants with convictions/cautions for offences where vulnerable people were targeted or the offences were of domestic abuse should also be rejected.

The MPS' new Force Vetting Policy was launched in June 2024 and includes a Statement of Vetting Tolerances and Vetting Decision-Making Framework (VDMF). The Statement of Vetting Tolerances provides direction on the level of

tolerable risk for vetting clearances, applied for or held by personnel and contractors. It states that the organisation has a low tolerance to any person holding a vetting clearance who, amongst other things:

- Has been cautioned or convicted of domestic abuse, coercive or controlling behaviour or stalking and harassment.
- Has been cautioned or convicted of sexual offences.
- Has been cautioned or convicted of offences against vulnerable people.
- Been the subject of a non-molestation order or Domestic Violence Prevention Order.

Since the policy was introduced in June 2024, we do not believe anyone who has a caution or conviction for any sexual offence or offences involving domestic abuse, stalking or controlling and coercive behaviour has joined the force. While our strengthened processes have seen refusal rates move from 5.4 per cent in 2020-21 to 11.4 per cent in 2023-24.

In addition, the MPS has also lobbied for, and worked with the Home Office on, new vetting legislation to give police chiefs greater ability to dismiss officers who are unsuitable to hold vetting clearance after serious incidents or where intelligence points to a pattern of behaviour that deems an officer unsuitable to continue in their role.

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences Investigation Unit (DASO)

The MPS acknowledges the public concern regarding the abuse of police powers and its impact on the safety of women. Since 2016, the MPS has undertaken significant reforms to strengthen investigations, improve safeguarding, and ensure accountability.

DASO – this was created in early 2022 in response to the cases relating to former Police Constables [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], a unique reactive department committed to investigating Police-Perpetrated Domestic Abuse (PPDA) and Sexual

Offending (SO). DASO comprises of four investigation teams and a separate Victim Support Unit (VSU), part of the Professionalism Command.

DASO is made up of specialist officers with safeguarding experience and the requisite skill set. DASO is responsible for investigating all PPDA SO gross misconduct cases however, they also take primacy for the parallel criminal investigation when offences are committed 'on duty.'

In addition to its core business, DASO is committed to raising awareness of PPDA and SO by visiting Basic Command Units (BCUs) and Operational Command Units (OCUs) to present a DASO input, providing anonymised case studies highlighting common themes and reinforcing the reporting of wrongdoing.

Victim Support Unit (VSU) – this is a team of trained Sexual Offences Investigation Technique Officers (SOITs) who are victim focused to support victims through the misconduct hearing process when a case to answer in gross misconduct has been determined. At present the team are currently supporting in the region of 180 victims. The VSU also support victims through the trial process, particularly if the criminal investigation was held by one of the DASO investigation teams. The VSU are also involved in DASO roadshows, providing bespoke support to BCU/OCU's (Operational Command Units) when required, supporting officers and police staff. Most recently following the BBC Panorama documentary support was provided to officers and staff at Central West BCU (including Charing Cross Police Station). The VSU work closely with external partners such as Hestia (an organisation that supports adults and children in times of crisis) to further support victim-survivors.

Operation Assure was created in 2023. It was a programme of prioritised vetting reviews for serving officers and staff where the MPS held significant adverse information that necessitated a review of that individual's vetting clearance. The trigger for this process could come from various circumstances, including at the conclusion of a criminal investigation, following a misconduct hearing where a written warning, final written warning or a reduction in rank had been issued, or when adverse information about an individual came to the notice of the Directorate of Professional Standards (DPS). Once a review was triggered, it would be carried out by a senior

vetting officer and could lead to the individual retaining their current vetting status, or a decision to revoke the individual's minimum vetting status. If revoked, the individual would have been unable to access police premises and systems, which could then trigger a process under the performance regulations which could lead to dismissal. This process ceased following judicial review in February 2025.

However, from 1st September 2025, the MPS operationalised the Police Vetting Regulations (2025). The regulations, which were laid by the Home Office in April and took effect in May, provide police chiefs the ability to dismiss officers who cannot hold vetting clearance.

The main changes for policing are:

- The ability to hold and maintain vetting will become a legal requirement for all serving officers, including senior officers and special constables.
- Forces will have the ability to dismiss officers who aren't able to maintain/hold vetting.
- The regulations also set out how appeals against withdrawal of vetting should be held, including the inclusion of an independent panel member.

Through a parallel change in MPS policy, police staff will now be required to maintain vetting clearance in order to be employed by the MPS. The MPS priority is to affect the regulations in a fair and transparent way, initially working through cases for those officers and staff who were in the Operation Assure process before it closed.

Abuse of Position for Sexual Purpose (APSP)

It is critical that all officers and staff know the signs and symptoms of abuse of position, how it may begin with professional contact and then quickly progress. Through training and internal communications channels, MPS officers and staff are reminded of the need to be willing to and know how to speak up with any concerns they might have regarding colleagues.

As part of a recent inspection by HMICFRS, the MPS reviewed HMICFRS Standard 6.1.3, specifically looking at how we seek to raise awareness of Abuse of Position for Sexual Purpose, both internally and externally. As a result, this summer the MPS introduced a mandatory training package for all officers and staff on the subject of APSP.

In the training, we highlight a likely offender profile, and the potential indicators of sexual misconduct. Alongside we raise awareness of the potential “red flags” to look out for such as misogynistic or extreme sexual comments often being dismissed as ‘banter’ being an indicator of potentially dangerous behaviour. The training also highlights and raises awareness of the likely characteristics of those that could be targeted, most often being vulnerable females.

Lastly, we seek to make clear how to get help both internally and externally, through MPS and external reporting mechanisms, aiming to eliminate any barrier that individuals may face when reporting concerns of the behaviour of a member of the organisation or the service they have received. This seeks to instil confidence in those reporting that their complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

These principles are now embedded in MPS training and shared with external agencies and organisations across London that support vulnerable people, to ensure those inside of the MPS and those outside are able to identify warning signs of APSP within policing and safeguard potential vulnerable victims and take the appropriate next steps.

DASO also participates in the national APSP working group, seeking best practice from other forces.

Wider training

Additionally, the MPS has mandated that officers and staff complete training on sexual harassment in the workplace of which compliance for this is also tracked.

We have delivered training to our whole workforce – that is around 40,000 officers and staff - that underlines our standards, values and provided tools to assist officers and staff to stand up to inappropriate behaviour. We have also rolled out five days of specific leadership training on culture and values.

In conjunction with the mandatory training, DASO and the VSU work alongside the DPS Prevention and Engagement Team presenting the DASO awareness sessions as well as DASO/ Guardian roadshows. The roadshows bring together a combination of support from DASO, VSU, Helping Employees Affected or Living with domestic abuse (H.E.A.L DA), Hestia, Stalking Threat Assessment Centre (STAC), Network of Women (NoW) and Human Resources (HR) as appropriate. The primary aim is to encourage staff to report wrongdoing, ensuring them that they will be supported if they come forward. Topics covered include how to report wrongdoing or unethical behaviour, sexual harassment in the workplace, what protection and support are available, confidential reporting channels and practical advice with a Q & A session.

Integrity Assurance Unit

The Integrity Assurance Unit (IAU) manages officers or staff who are the subject of an Adverse Judicial Finding (AJF), evidentially tainted by virtue of a criminal or misconduct outcome or in respect of whom adverse information is held. The IAU will ensure that such officers or staff are risk assessed and handled fairly to protect both the individual, the public and the organisation. This is achieved by holistically reviewing all known information and, where applicable convening a management meeting to decide on whether Risk Management Measures need to be imposed to manage the risk presented by the taint, AJF or adverse information. The IAU oversees disclosure requirements associated with taint and maintains confidential records. The unit also liaises with legal and professional standards' teams, monitors fairness and compliance, and makes referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service where necessary. Its overall purpose is to uphold integrity, reduce risk, and maintain public confidence in the police service.

Workforce

Almost 1,500 officers and staff have been exited from the MPS in the last three years – this is the biggest shake up on police standards in 50 years.

We have invested in 200 more professional standards' officers (working in the MPS's Directorate of Professional Standards), who proactively seek out wrongdoing, and almost doubled the number of annual criminal conduct investigations to nearly 500 in the year 2023/2024.

Our legacy review of historic domestic and sexual allegations against 1,636 officers and staff – Operation Onyx – has resulted in 378 leaving the MPS through retirement, resignation or dismissal.

Whistleblowing

Alongside strengthened vetting, we have introduced a range of measures to root out those who should not serve in the MPS. They include a dedicated DASO team with victim care specialists. We have enhanced proactive work under our Anti-Corruption and Abuse Command and we have a dedicated team to support 'whistle-blowers'. Internal reports have trebled from 405 in 2021/22 to 1,389 in 2024/25.

We take reports seriously, and support those who make them. In November 2022, we were the first force to partner with Crimestoppers and launched an anti-corruption hotline for the public to report wrongdoing including police perpetrated abuse. This has been rolled out nationally.

In 2024, 137 officers and staff were arrested for sexual or domestic abuse offences compared with 89 in 2022. This demonstrates a stronger confidence in the MPS by victims to report this type of offending, and we have seen an increase in allegations made year on year. For sexual matters, 86 per cent of cases result in a formal disciplinary outcome.

Angiolini Inquiry

In addition to the work being done in the MPS to address the safety of women and girls, the issue is being scrutinised as part of the ongoing Angiolini Inquiry.

On 22 November 2021, [REDACTED] was commissioned to conduct an independent inquiry as to how off-duty Metropolitan Police officer, [REDACTED], had the ability to kidnap, rape, and murder [REDACTED], a member of the public. The inquiry has been divided into 3 Parts with the final report for Part 1 (regarding [REDACTED]), having been published on 29 February 2024.

On 11 May 2023, the Home Secretary announced the Terms of Reference for Part 2 of the Inquiry. The terms of reference are available publicly, and include:

1. The extent to which systems, policies and processes for the recruitment, vetting and transfer of police officers are fit for purpose and help to identify those who display misogynistic and/or predatory attitudes and behaviours
2. The extent to which aspects of police culture observed across police forces enable misogynistic and/or predatory attitudes and behaviours, and what the role of standards is.
3. The extent to which existing measures prevent sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.

The latter is the subject of the recently published second report of [REDACTED] (Part 2(iii) report).

Whilst the Part 2(iii) report is focused on its review of the safety of women and girls *in public spaces* only, it should be noted that the issues outlined in the coroner's PFD concerns are being explored in significant detail across all of Part 2 of the Angiolini Inquiry.

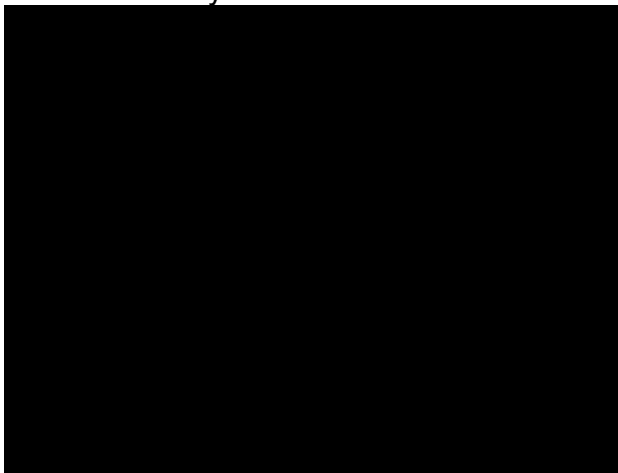
The Inquiry will draw upon evidence from relevant reports to inform its work, including the recent HMICFRS report and Baroness [REDACTED] reports. The Inquiry will take into

account the views of those most affected by these issues which will include those who work in policing and those who have been the victim of relevant crimes.

The MPS are continuing to actively support this Inquiry and address recommendations arising from the reports accordingly.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information from the MPS.

Yours sincerely



Deputy Assistant Commissioner

Metropolitan Police Service

Professionalism