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Sent by email

Dear Peter,

As we approach the end of Pride month, I personally write to you today on behalf of West Midlands Police to sincerely and whole-heartedly apologise for the historic mistreatment of LGBTQ+ communities. I recognise laws were historically wrongly used to proactively target members of the LGBTQ+ community, in particular gay and bi-sexual men, and that this ruined lives having a lasting negative impact. As a result, people did not feel they could be open to be who they were or about the people they loved for fear they would be arrested and sent to prison. This was completely wrong and for this I would like to extend a sincere apology for any recent and historic injustices and discrimination that members of LGBTQ+ communities in the West Midlands have faced.

I was appointed as the Acting Chief Constable of West Midlands Police in January this year. During my first months in post, it has been my privilege to have met with members and representatives of the LGBTQ+ community and our own force LGBTQ+ network, alongside having many other opportunities to listen, engage with and meet people across the West Midlands.

I actively wanted and continue to listen, hear and understand the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ communities, both historically and now, so I could comprehend the detrimental impact policing had on people. From these recent engagements and opportunities, I have been deeply saddened and moved by the trauma experienced by individuals as a consequence of the actions and behaviours of police. I am extremely grateful to all those who have been so open and willing to share their experiences with me and I praise you for your bravery and courage.

It has become increasingly clear to me that the manner in which certain laws were enforced prior to the decriminalisation of homosexuality was, in many cases, inappropriate, discriminatory, and fell short of the standards any member of the public should expect. It is for this reason I want to express my sincere regret and offer this genuine apology for the actions and behaviours that led to ill-treatment or harm experienced by members of the LGBTQ+ community.

I am of the view that as Acting Chief Constable of West Midlands Police I currently own and am responsible for the past, present and future of the force. While I cannot right the wrongs of the past, I can offer my sincere regret and acknowledge the impact actions have had. It would be unfair to criticise the actions of individual officers of the past but as the leader of this organisation, I can apologise sincerely on behalf of the force and commit to how West Midlands Police will seek to rebuild relationships and ensure we police without fear or favour going forwards.

June has seen the country, members of our own workforce, you, your friends and family celebrate another vibrant and uplifting month of Pride celebrations. It therefore seems only fitting that I use

this moment to mark West Midlands Police's support to the LGBTQ+ community with this apology and commitment for the future.

Thankfully I do believe that we have come a long way and are now in a much more inclusive and diverse organisation that plays an active role in engaging positively with our LGBTQ+ community, both internally and externally. I unequivocally believe in policing communities without fear or favour which forms the foundations of legitimacy in UK policing. Only again this month have we witnessed in other parts of the country how quickly community cohesion can be broken down and the importance of policing with impartiality, particularly in an ever more polarised society. Here in the West Midlands, I am committed that we will do everything possible to always police without fear or favour. Crime is crime, regardless of colour, creed or any other protected characteristic. We are here to protect you.

I want everyone to feel able to speak to West Midlands Police, to report a crime or to share information in the knowledge that they will be treated with dignity and respect. I also want people from all communities to see policing as a potential career and to be part of the positive changes we are making and reflecting the incredible diversity of the West Midlands.

We will not tolerate any type of hate crime, and since my appointment I have ensured any report of a hate crime has specialist detective oversight of its investigation to ensure we do everything possible to bring offenders to justice and prevent future such incidents. We are seeing hate crime reporting increase and we acknowledge that this growing trend creates real anxiety and concern to people wishing to go about their normal peaceful lives and negatively impacts on how safe people feel. However, we also know that many hate incidents often go unreported, so one of my asks of you today is to encourage the community to have the confidence to report these crimes which have too often blighted members of the LGBTQ+ and other communities. We will listen and thoroughly investigate any reported hate crime.

In addition to the traditional means of reporting crime, we have established and are continuously developing the range of places where members of the community can report hate crime. I am pleased that more people are now reporting hate crime than ever before and in turn we now see more prosecutions for such abhorrent offences.

We need to collectively amplify and celebrate the diversity of our force and communities in the West Midlands and for this reason we have a Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy that puts cultural competence at its heart. This ensures that everything we do, from recruitment and policy creation to workplace behaviours and public engagement, we have a culture of continuous cultural learning and competency underpinning this. As part of our cultural competence programme entitled, 'Policing without fear or favour' we have been carrying out various chapters of learning with our workforce. Our DEI strategy consists of six pillars focused on protected characteristics and recognising the importance of work across all areas. Each pillar is led and has the advocacy of an Assistant Chief Constable.

We recognise how one incident can cast a spotlight on a particular community, often leaving others feeling isolated, disconnected and vulnerable. For this reason, our approach is to ensure policing will not be disparate or differential across any community. We will continue to actively build our internal staff associations and networks who form a positive conduit for the force with wider communities and who can provide us with a wealth of incredible advice, support and lived experience.

Earlier this month, our well-established LGBTQ+ staff network held its own Proud Day as part of this year's Pride month, celebrating diversity, inclusion, and the contributions of our LGBTQ+ colleagues and allies across the organisation. The day featured an inspiring conference in the morning, followed by a vibrant, family-friendly community celebration in the afternoon.

I am proud of the steps we have taken and am determined to continue to build an inclusive service, free from discrimination for all communities. I want you to have a police force that you can trust, respects diversity, and protects the rights and dignity of everyone.



I know I cannot change the past and it saddens me greatly to think that our historic actions have diminished trust in West Midlands Police and led to feelings of injustice that persist for some today.

Thankfully policing has changed considerably for the better over time, but I want to ensure we do not forget our past and ensure this learning now proves to strengthen how we continue to improve our services to the public and all LGBTQ+ communities in the future. This can, and will, only be achieved by us working collaboratively with LGBTQ+ partners and key stakeholders and for this reason I actively encourage your ongoing engagement and participation. This way we can ensure all communities are treated with the equity, respect and compassion they deserve.

I hope that from this letter you will recognise that this is not simply words of apology but a heartfelt desire, on behalf of our force, to proactively build a positive relationship with the LGBTQ+ community and allies, to build trust and confidence in policing and make the West Midlands a safe and cohesive place to live, work and visit.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Scott Green', written in a cursive style.

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