



Home Office

Rt Hon Kit Malthouse MP
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Catherine West MP
House of Commons
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Dear Catherine,

Thank you for your letter of 1 November to the Home Secretary regarding the Inquiry into the horrifying murder of Sarah Everard, which was announced by the Home Secretary on 5 October. I am replying as the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Probation.

I can assure you that the Government is absolutely committed to tackling and preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG). A cross-Government Tackling VAWG Strategy has been published this summer, and the Home Secretary will chair a new taskforce to drive cross-Government action on these crimes and help maintain public confidence in policing. The Home Secretary has also taken forward Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) recommendation for a VAWG National Policing Lead, which the Home Office is funding; and she will be working closely with Deputy Chief Constable Maggie Blyth, the new lead, to drive forward improvements in policing's response to these crimes.

The appointment of a Chair for the Inquiry will be announced shortly. Final decisions about how the Inquiry will operate will be made in consultation with the Chair. It will also be for the Chair to decide what support he/she would need to conduct the Inquiry.

In regard to scope, the two-part inquiry will enable consideration of a broad range of issues arising from, but not limited to, the Wayne Couzens case. Part one will examine Couzens' previous behaviour and establish a comprehensive account of his conduct leading up to his conviction, as well as any opportunities missed, drawing on the Independent Office for Police Conduct's (IOPC) investigations, once concluded. Part two can look at any issues raised by the first part of the inquiry, which could include wider issues across policing, including but not limited to vetting practices, professional standards and discipline, and workplace behaviour.

In response to putting the Inquiry on a statutory footing, I assure you that part one of the non-statutory inquiry will provide for greater flexibility, which can be tailored to the issues and is likely to be more time and cost efficient. The Government has amended regulations to make it clear that it can be a breach of professional standards, leading to a disciplinary sanction, if officers fail to co-operate with investigations and inquiries, when identified as a witness. The Home Secretary will retain the option to convert it to a statutory inquiry if, in

consultation with the Chair, it is determined that the inquiry cannot otherwise fulfil its functions.

We are not waiting until the Inquiry reports to take action. The Home Secretary has commissioned HMICFRS to undertake an urgent inspection to provide assurances on the capacity and capability of the police to vet and monitor officers, focusing on the way the police identify and deal with officers committing sexual misconduct. The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Commissioner, Dame Cressida Dick, has announced that she has asked Baroness Casey to lead an independent review into the MPS. This will look at “standards, corruption, and sexual misconduct” within the MPS ascertaining the extent to which current leadership, recruitment, vetting, training, communications, and other processes, effectively reinforce the standards the public should expect.

I hope that this information provides some assurance that this Government is committed to making the public feel safe and that they are working closely with the police to take all steps necessary to strengthen public confidence in policing.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kit Malthouse', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rt Hon Kit Malthouse MP