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The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

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18 January 2021

Dear Home Secretary,

I write as Washington and Sunderland West Member of Parliament in relation to the deeply worrying reports that 400,000 fingerprint, DNA and arrest history records, held on the Police National Computer, have been deleted.

The loss of any criminal record is incredibly serious and I am acutely concerned about the impact this will have on the ability to keep people safe in Washington and Sunderland West.

There are grave issues posed by this situation and as a result, some vital questions which must be answered urgently:

- How many pieces of data have been deleted that relate to people or incidents that occurred in Washington & Sunderland West, the Sunderland City Local Authority area and in the scope of Northumbria Police.
- How many potential ongoing investigations in Washington and Sunderland West have been affected?
- What contact has been made with the Chief Constable of Northumbria Police to ensure they are able to identify where gaps in data have occurred and any mitigations?
- What specific provisions have been made for the impact this data breach will have on safeguarding arrangements in Washington and Sunderland West as well as Sunderland City? We know dealing with issues like harassment, stalking and domestic abuse often relies on good police record keeping, so issues like these are clearly at risk of being undermined.
- What contact has been made with Sunderland City Council to assess impact on joint working arrangements with police, including child protection and the prevention of violent extremism?

It seems inevitable that as a result of this fiasco, criminals will escape punishment, victims will miss out on justice and our community will be less safe.

The hard work and dedication of frontline police officers has been undermined by Home Office incompetence on your watch.

The very least we can expect now are clear answers to these serious issues and a thorough action plan.

I look forward to your urgent response and a clear assessment of the impact these serious failings, made on your watch, have had on Washington and Sunderland West

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sharon Hodgson MP

Member of Parliament for Washington & Sunderland West

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