

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM

February 1st 2022

Louise Casey, Baroness Casey of Blackstock
[SENT BY EMAIL]

Important Questions on Your Review into Culture and Standards in the Metropolitan Police Service

Dear Baroness Casey,

I am writing on the important matter of your review into culture and standards in the Metropolitan Police Service (the Met). I very much welcome your review and have no doubt it will shed light on serious and important areas of improvement for the force. However, I do have several issues and concerns I wish to raise with you directly.

I have had a longstanding role in scrutinising the Met, first as a member of the Metropolitan Police Authority (2008-12) and since 2012 as a member of the London Assembly's Police and Crime Committee. As far back as 2014 I was raising concerns about homophobia in the force and homophobic comments made by police officers on social media and in private groups – something which we simply cannot allow.

We have also seen, just this week, a damning report issued by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) into the most appalling homophobic, racist and sexist behaviour by some officers at the Charing Cross Police Station, which the IOPC said it did not believe were isolated incidents. From the various reports over weeks and months it is clear to everyone that these are not isolated incidents.

Considering the above, and growing concerns I and many of my constituents have, I am hoping you could answer the following questions:

- In the working terms of reference for your review there is no specific mentioning of homophobia, racism or sexism. It is essential that these are explicitly stipulated in the terms of reference, to give confidence to Londoners that these issues will be fully considered and explored. Will you work with the Met to update the working terms of reference to include specific reference to these?

- The working terms of reference also outline that you will be “suitably supported with a secretariat, research and analysis functions, as required.” Given the volume of issues and increasing breadth of concerns coming to light, can you assure me that you have enough resources to be able to carry out a robust and detailed review?
- Will your review be considering the growing evidence of cultural issues in the Met, including the latest IOPC Report, referenced above?

I would also like to specifically raise concerns over the Met’s handling of the Stephen Port murders and the subsequent inquest and the profound impact this has had on London’s LGBTQ+ community and their confidence in the police.

It is also concerning that, despite asking you to conduct this review, in their public statements around the Port murders and their handling by the police, the Met are insisting “we don’t see institutional homophobia, we don’t see homophobia on the part of officers, we do see all sorts of errors in the investigation which came together in a truly dreadful way.” This has left many in the LGBTQ+ community concerned, and this is why it is essential that the terms of reference for your review specify homophobia as an area that will be covered by your work.

Of course, there are many good and outstanding officers in the Met. However, it is essential that the review you are undertaking is robust and the questions above are important in helping Londoners to have confidence in your review and taking the first steps to tackle the challenges facing the Met.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Pidgeon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM

Liberal Democrat London Assembly Member