



Established by Act of Parliament

Federation House, Highbury Drive, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7UY
Telephone 01372 352012 Fax 01372 352013
Email Chairman@polfed.org www.polfed.org

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE

Our Ref: SW/JMV

10th March 2014

Dame Anne Owers
Chair
Independent Police Complaints Commission
5th Floor
90 High Holborn
London
WC1V 6BH

Dear Dame Owers,

I am writing in response to your comments made on The World Tonight with David Eades (07/03/2014) where you stated that your job was hindered because: 'police behave like sulky teenagers', and when asked whether you had confidence in the police you replied that you were 'unable to comment'. As a serving police officer and as a representative of my colleagues across England and Wales, I found these comments and your lack of impartiality as the head of the body set up to independently investigate complaints made against the police, insulting and inappropriate.

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) has called for an independent body to investigate complaints made against the police since 1999 and were supportive of the inception of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) in 2004 and establishment in 2005. Policing is about maintaining public order and keeping the streets safe. Police officers do this by confronting the often unpleasant and dangerous elements in society and such interactions invariably lead to grievances being raised. Having a robust and well-resourced complaints system is crucial in ensuring the police service remains accountable for its actions.

In recent years there have been a number of high profile and historical police cases that have been the subject of concern and subsequent reinvestigation. This is right and fully supported by the Police Federation and our members - the 124,000 police officers we represent up and down the country. For the small minority of officers who are found at the conclusion of an investigation to have behaved inappropriately, or worse, we agree that they must receive the appropriate disciplinary outcomes and reprimanded in accordance with Police (Conduct and Performance) Regulations, (2012).



It is not right that as the chair of the independent body assigned to investigate such emotive cases you are offering such weighted judgements about the police during on-going investigations. As the head of the IPCC you are in a position of influence, you hold a public office and as such your opinion is seen to be an endorsement of fact. It therefore stands to reason that you should retain your independence and withhold personal opinion on matters to which your body is assigned to investigate. To say during a media interview that you could not answer the question of whether you trust the police was sensationalist. That you then went on to say you only see the worst in policing is not only surprising but particularly disappointing after your attendance at the national Police Bravery Awards last year where some of the finest examples of bravery are celebrated.

If you are prepared to criticise policing because you see the 'worst' of it, then I would strongly recommend that you take time to get out and visit forces across the country and shadow the fantastic work done each day; to see the very best in policing.

Personally I am proud to be a police officer and proud of the incredible dedication and sacrifices made every day by my colleagues keeping this country and their communities safe. It is therefore extremely frustrating that instead of trying to build public confidence in the police, as outlined in the terms of reference for your organisation, you seem intent on knocking the police and prejudicing their reputation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SA', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steve White
Vice-chairman - Police Federation of England and Wales