

Mr Craig Naylor

HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary

Alasdair Hay, CBE QFSM
Chair
Scottish Police Authority
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By email: 

27 August 2026

Dear Alasdair

Assurance review of vetting policy and procedures within Police Scotland

In October 2023, HMICS published its report into vetting within Police Scotland. At that time, we made 15 recommendations and identified four areas for development. Since publication, a number of recommendations have been closed, updates have been provided on progress against others, and the Scottish Police Authority has undertaken scrutiny of Police Scotland's work to improve its vetting arrangements.

Recent media reporting concerning the now deceased former officer Alan Greer has raised a number of questions regarding what information was known within Police Scotland, when that information became known, and what governance and oversight arrangements were applied to the matter. Given the SPA's statutory role in holding the service to account, I am keen to understand the extent to which the Authority was sighted on these issues and the scrutiny that has been exercised.

I understand that the Authority has received a number of briefings relating to vetting reform, misconduct matters and the implementation of recommendations arising from the HMICS vetting and conduct inspections. It would be helpful to understand precisely what information was provided to SPA members in relation to Mr Greer, including any information concerning historic criminal investigations or other matters that may have been relevant to his suitability for appointment or continued service.

In particular, I would be grateful if you could clarify:

- When the SPA was first made aware of any information relating to historic criminal investigations involving Mr Greer.
- What briefings, written or verbal, have been provided to SPA members on this matter.
- Whether the Authority sought further information or assurances from Police Scotland following receipt of such briefings.
- Whether the matter was considered through any committee or assurance process within the SPA other than at the most recent public board meeting and, if so, what conclusions were reached.

A significant degree of assurance has previously been attributed to the historic data wash exercise undertaken following heightened national concern regarding police vetting standards. Police Scotland has reported that this exercise did not identify significant concerns that were not already known to the organisation. In light of recent reporting, I believe it is important to understand whether the SPA received specific assurance regarding the effectiveness and completeness of that exercise and whether members challenged the service on the methodology used, the findings identified and the residual risks that remained.

Should information relating to Mr Greer have been identified through this exercise, I would be interested to understand whether the SPA was informed and what scrutiny was undertaken regarding the actions taken by Police Scotland in response. Equally, if the information was not identified, questions arise as to whether sufficient challenge was applied to the assurances being provided regarding the robustness of the exercise and its ability to identify individuals who may no longer meet contemporary vetting standards.

More broadly, I am interested in understanding the extent to which the SPA has satisfied itself that progress against the HMICS recommendations is being delivered at the pace required. While updates have been provided to the Authority over an extended period, concerns remain within HMICS regarding the speed of implementation, the scale of outstanding vetting activity and the impact that competing resource pressures may have had on delivery.

In light of recent developments, I would welcome your assessment of whether the level of scrutiny and challenge applied by the SPA has been sufficient and whether, with the benefit of hindsight, there are areas where additional assurance activity should have been undertaken.

To assist HMICS in understanding the position fully, I would be grateful for:

- A chronology of SPA briefings and updates relating to Mr Greer and associated vetting matters.
- Copies of any relevant papers, reports or correspondence provided to the Authority- primarily those that have been provided for private sessions or un-minuted meetings.
- Details of any requests for further information or assurance made by SPA members or committees.
- Confirmation of any further scrutiny activity the Authority now intends to undertake including involvement of the Authority in setting the terms of reference for the review to be conducted by Chief Constable Chris Todd.

Given the importance of maintaining public confidence in policing and in the effectiveness of the governance and oversight framework surrounding them, I would welcome a formal briefing on these matters.

Yours sincerely



Craig Naylor
HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary

