



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Criminal Justice Committee

Fiona McQueen CBE  
Chair  
Scottish Police Authority

By email

**15 September 2025**

Dear Ms McQueen,

### **Police Scotland Independent Review Group: Deep dive into Sex Equality and Tackling Misogyny and Violence Against Women and Girls**

The Committee has received a letter from Murray Blackburn Mackenzie (MBM) regarding the above-mentioned report. I have sent you a copy with this letter.

As you know, the Committee has been closely following developments in this area and has previously received disturbing evidence of a series of high-profile cases during the passage of the Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) (Scotland) Act.

I am concerned, therefore, to read the findings of the Independent Review Group (IRG) 'deep dive' report which states IRG "believe that there is evidence of sexism, misogyny and VAW [violence against women] within Police Scotland, both at the institutional and individual level" (para 27).

The letter from MBM makes a series of points on their understanding of how the SPA has handled the consideration of the IRG's work and the 'deep dive' document. As the prime body responsible for the accountability of Police Scotland, I would like to give the SPA a chance to respond so that the Committee can assess how well this critical matter is being scrutinised and addressed both within the SPA and by Police Scotland.

MBM also stated that, in a response to a FOI request, Police Scotland told them that "the deep dive report is 'out of date'" and they are not therefore clear which of the thirty recommendations and eleven indicators for change/success in the IRG report have been met.

Contact: Criminal Justice Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Email [justice.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:justice.committee@parliament.scot). We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

I would be grateful if the SPA can respond to the contents of the MBM letter. Specifically, I would be grateful if you can also address the following questions:

1. What scrutiny has the SPA carried out of the work of the IRG and the 'deep dive' report? Did you speak to the authors and not just Police Scotland?
2. Do you consider this scrutiny to have been adequate?
3. What actions were therefore taken by the SPA to bring about the change called for by the IRG within Scotland?
4. What steps have Police Scotland taken to make any changes and how is the SPA monitoring progress?
5. Do you consider the findings of the 'deep dive' report to be "out of date"? If so, can you provide assurance that all the criticisms and concerns listed by the IRG have been addressed? If not, what steps are the SPA now taking to ensure that the changes called for by the IRG are being made?
6. Do you have an assessment you can share with the Committee on the progress of meeting the thirty recommendations and eleven indicators for change/success in the IRG report?

In the first instance, the Committee would welcome your comments on the above as the prime body for holding Police Scotland to account. We will then consider the response and see if any further information is needed from the SPA or the Chief Constable.

I look forward to your response and would be grateful if this could be received by Friday 26 September.

I am copying this letter to MBM.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Audrey N : cdl'.

Audrey Nicoll MSP  
Convener