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safe and reassured



From the office of Deputy Chief Constable Nick Baker

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Our Ref: NB/MJ

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Dear

Following the Staffordshire Police Pensions Board on 06 December 2017 I am writing to respond to the concerns raised by NARPO on the review of injury pensioners. As requested I have done this via formal letter. I have endeavoured to answer each question as listed and numbered accordantly.

1 - You raised concerns that the principles of fairness were not being adhered to. I would like to reassure you that each review is being carried out as expeditiously as possible and the process applied is balanced and proportionate. This is not a mass review but reviews of individual pensioners, within a defined criteria, whose particular circumstances are carefully considered.

2 - In relation to your belief that IOD's do not have to submit full medical records or provide other personal information if they do not wish to do so, this refers to a letter from the ICO to Northumbria Police Federation dated 10 November 2017. It is about Northumbria Police, not Staffordshire Police and the information asked for by that Force of its injury pensioners being reviewed is different to that requested by this Force. The QC's opinion is not a legal judgment. So far, only a small number of individuals have not provided consent for access to their medical records, and an even fewer number have declined to provide details as requested. It is for the individual to decide, but their review will go ahead either way.

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3 - I have also noted your concerns about the SMP, however it is for the SMP to conduct the review as they think appropriate and necessary. Each pensioner reviewed does have the right to appeal which could include the conduct of the examination if relevant. We are satisfied with the conduct of the SMP and it is incorrect that injury benefit bandings have been reduced in nearly all cases. This will be shown in the next Progress Report to the Police Pension Board (which will then be published on the Force's external website).

4 - After the review appointment, the SMP writes a detailed report which is confidential and only sent to the injury pensioner. If the injury pensioner is dissatisfied with that report, including any explanations provided, they have the right of appeal. Although I cannot comment in the public domain on individual cases, I am unaware of any person in Staffordshire who has been reviewed and then appealed about the term 'age accelerator' being used.

5 - In relation to the letter and comments from Chief Constable Sara Thornton, it is not for me to make comment here upon what a third party may have written to another third party on this matter. Staffordshire Police have been very clear about the reviews it is undertaking

6 - To address your question in relation to our questionnaire, there is no standard form used by all forces. I am sorry that you feel the last paragraph is unnecessary and comes across as heavy-handed, this was certainly not our intention. The last paragraphs of the questionnaire are an explanation of Sections 2 and 3 of the Fraud Act 2006, Regulation 37(1) of the Police Injury Benefit Regulations 2006, and a Declaration by the injury pensioner that the information provided is accurate and correct to the best of their knowledge, confirming that they have not knowingly withheld any relevant information. This wording was selected following legal advice and there is no reference to potential action being taken in respect of non-compliance.

Yours sincerely



Nick Baker
Deputy Chief Constable