

Chief Constable Jo Farrell apologises to the LGBTQI+ communities for historic injustices

Police Scotland's Chief Constable Jo Farrell has apologised to the LGBTQI+ communities of Scotland for the pain caused through injustices, including policing's role in enforcing laws which criminalised love and identity.

In a letter published online she said: " I believe passionately in the value that policing brings to our communities: keeping people safe from harm, protecting the vulnerable, bringing criminals to justice, solving problems, and reducing offending. We stand up for, and with our communities, which strengthens them, improves their wellbeing, and allows them to prosper.

That value must be for all our communities. Everyone must know that when policing talks about keeping people safe, that applies to them. All must feel able to speak to the police, to report a crime or to share information knowing they'll be treated with dignity and respect. I also want people from all communities to see policing as a potential career.

It is a matter of deep regret that these values, over a period of decades have not always applied to the LGBTQI+ communities

of Scotland.

As Chief Constable, I would like to extend a sincere apology, for the recent and historical injustices and discrimination that members of LGBTQI+ communities in Scotland have faced. At times policing has not only failed to protect you but has contributed to the mistreatment and prejudice many have endured.

Laws which criminalised love and identity were wrong, and policing must recognise and reflect upon our role in enforcing them. I am truly sorry for the serious and long-lasting physical and mental pain and harm caused, both to my internal colleagues, and to our communities.

Police Scotland is determined to build an inclusive Service, free from discrimination, for all our communities.

We will advocate for and support third party reporting to increase confidence and overall reporting.

We are empowering leaders to build inclusive teams; improving our education and training for all our officers and staff to ensure they understand and respect the issues facing the LGBTQI+ communities and on equality laws; focusing on our values and standards; and delivering a clear and consistent message that there is no place in Police Scotland for prejudice.

And we will reintroduce specialist liaison officers to work with the community and support officers and staff.

It is important that we take responsibility for our actions to build a future where everyone feels safe and supported.

I am dedicated to building a service that you can trust, one that is inclusive, respects diversity, and protects the rights

and dignity of all individuals. I hope this apology can contribute to the necessary progress to ensure the value of policing is for all communities.