



Caroline Russell AM
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
LONDON SE1 2AA

Dame Cressida Dick
Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service
(sent by email)

04 October 2021

Dear Commissioner,

Suspension of police officers under criminal investigation from active duty

I welcome your announcement today that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is launching a review of professional standards and internal culture within the force, following the rape and murder of Sarah Everard by a serving officer. However, I am disappointed that there is no mention of suspending from duty any officers who has a history of sexual misconduct or where questions are raised about their conduct.

I note that in a report in the Guardian over the weekend that two MPS officers allegedly involved in a WhatsApp group chat that swapped alleged misogynistic and racist messages and included Sarah Everard's killer, have been left on duty after being placed under criminal investigation.¹

It was reported that other forces with officers involved in this WhatsApp group (Norfolk Constabulary and Civil Nuclear Constabulary) decided to suspend their officers – who faced less serious allegations – removing them from their workplaces while the investigation continued.

In the context of the deception, kidnap and murder of Sarah Everard, by an officer using their police powers for evil, it is shocking to find that officers allegedly involved in misogynist messages were not suspended. Londoners need to be able to trust that officers involved in hate speech will have their police powers suspended so they cannot abuse those powers.

If other forces removed people who were under investigation for these offences from active duty, can you explain to me why did the MPS allow them to continue to serve, retaining the powers of a police officer?

Further reports at the weekend claim that you and the Home Secretary were contacted by a woman officer and ignored her evidence of 'vulgar and sexist' WhatsApp group messages involving police contractors and police officers.²



City Hall Green — Caroline Russell AM

caroline.russell@london.gov.uk 020 7983 4388 @carolinerussell

The woman officer making the reports described the way that language and images being shared within the group began to become graphic, sexual, and derogatory towards women and said the messages created a 'hostile and offensive environment to me'.

It is extremely worrying to hear that "an internal investigation in 2019 took no action against the male officers, saying the messages were 'distasteful' but did not amount to criminality or misconduct". This sounds from the outside like a frightening culture of endemic misogyny within the MPS.

The flow of shocking revelations is incredibly disappointing. There have been seven months since Sarah Everard was murdered and it doesn't seem that the MPS has prepared for the moment that her killer would be sentenced with actions to reassure the public that the MPS is a safe organisation for women.

Londoners need the reassurance that any officer with any history of, or question over, sexual misconduct is suspended so that you can reassure the public that officers on duty are safe and that every officer under suspicion is off the streets.

Yours faithfully,



Caroline Russell
Green Party Member of the London Assembly

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/oct/01/met-officers-investigated-over-couzens-whatsapp-group-are-still-on-duty>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/oct/03/vulgar-and-sexist-whatsapp-evidence-ignored-says-ex-met-detective>

