



Mr A M KNIGHT

**Northamptonshire Police
Civil Litigation Department
Police Headquarters
Wootton Hall
Northampton
NN4 0JQ**

**Tel: 08453 700700 (7490)
Direct Line Fax (01604) 633757
Email:tony.knight@northants.police.pnn.uk**

Our ref: MI.070510

2 April 2009

Mr G Williamson
130 Westfield Avenue
RUSHDEN
NN10 9RB

Dear Gareth

Re: Complaint and Legal Action

I write in connection with your complaint and legal action against Northamptonshire Police alleging disability discrimination, breaches of the Human Rights Act and misfeasance in public office. As you know, this concerns an incident on 15th April 2007 when your scooter was stolen and the subsequent investigations that followed.

On behalf of Northamptonshire Police and the Chief Constable I apologise for the poor service that you received.

You should have received a good standard of service from Northamptonshire Police on 15th April 2007 and in the days that followed, but regrettably you did not. The service you received did not reach the level normally delivered by Northamptonshire Police. We pride ourselves in serving the community well and as a member of that community we did not give you the service that we should have done.

You are well aware of PC Jones's failings. Regrettably he made basic errors in the investigation that he conducted (for example failing to seize CCTV footage and failing to take statements) and he is sorry about that. As you know PC Jones was investigated and received a warning for his failings and for an officer of 20 years unblemished service that is a serious matter. He takes this very seriously and has learnt from his mistakes.

One of the most serious failures, not only on the part of PC Jones but also the organisation as a whole, was the failure to keep you and your family properly informed. You were not only the victim of an unpleasant crime, but a repeat victim of crime about

.../

2/

to give evidence at court. In those circumstances you could have reasonably expected to be kept up-to-date with the progress of the investigation. PC Jones and the organisation failed to recognise this and failed to keep you and your family properly informed about the investigation. I am sorry about that.

The initial failings in the investigation should have been picked up and rectified by supervisors and/or members of the crime recording 'system'. They were not, and this failure allowed a poor investigation to continue. This should never have happened and I am sorry that it did. The Crime Recording and Investigation Bureau (CRIB) wrongly categorised the crime and this meant that the investigation was not properly supervised. At the time of this incident in April 2007 the CRIB was a relatively new computerised system and the operators, although trained, were lacking in experience. I can assure you that the system has only improved over the last two years and the operators and supervisors that work within the CRIB have learnt from the mistakes that were made in your case. Northamptonshire Police does not want those mistakes to be repeated and improvements are always being made in the way that we provide a professional service to the people of Northamptonshire.

The Crime Support Unit also made a number of basic errors for which I am sorry. The wrong categorisation made by the CRIB should have been identified and it was not. When your scooter was recovered it should have been considered for forensic examination and it was not. Inexplicably no-one told PC Jones that your scooter had been recovered and that was a basic error that should not have happened. Again, I apologise for this - this is not the standard of service that Northamptonshire Police wishes to achieve or normally delivers.

PC Jones's sergeant also failed to effectively monitor and supervise his investigation and this was also unacceptable. Northamptonshire Police have been working hard over the last two years to improve the standards of supervision and the Chief Constable himself has been vigorously promoting more 'intrusive supervision'. I can assure you that the standards of supervision have improved since April 2007 and that they will continue to improve.

For all these mistakes I, and the organisation, are very sorry.

I am aware of your concerns about the standard of investigation undertaken by the Professional Standards Department (PSD) and I am sorry that you feel that your complaints were not taken seriously. Your complaint was taken seriously.

In an ideal world PSD would have done a better investigation; but the investigation that took place had to be proportionate, particularly bearing in mind the resources available to the PSD and other matters that they were investigating at the time.

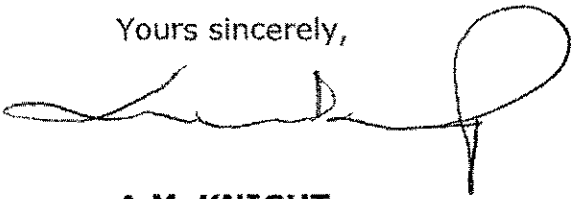
..../

3/

PC Jones is horrified by the allegation that he discriminated against you because of your learning difficulties. He, and the organisation, recognise your strength of feeling about this and I can assure you that Northamptonshire Police care enormously about people with disabilities and this of course includes people with learning disabilities.

It is particularly distressing to hear that you have lost faith in your local police and we want to start rebuilding that confidence and trust. I hope that today's mediation and the apologies we have made go some way to starting that process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A.M. Knight', with a large loop at the end.

A.M. KNIGHT
Civil Litigation Manager