



The Metropolitan Police Service and seven women have now concluded a mediation process in relation to claims arising from long term intimate sexual relationships.

As part of the settlement, the details of which are confidential, the MPS agreed to publish the full apology that has been given personally to those seven women.

The following is attributable to **Assistant Commissioner Martin Hewitt**:

"The Metropolitan Police has recently settled seven claims arising out of the totally unacceptable behaviour of a number of undercover police officers working for the now disbanded Special Demonstration Squad, an undercover unit within Special Branch that existed until 2008 and for the National Public Order Intelligence Unit (NPOIU) an undercover unit which was operational until 2011.

"Thanks in large part to the courage and tenacity of these women in bringing these matters to light it has become apparent that some officers, acting undercover whilst seeking to infiltrate protest groups, entered into long-term intimate sexual relationships with women which were abusive, deceitful, manipulative and wrong.

"I acknowledge that these relationships were a violation of the women's human rights, an abuse of police power and caused significant trauma. I unreservedly apologise on behalf of the Metropolitan Police Service. I

am aware that money alone cannot compensate the loss of time, their hurt or the feelings of abuse caused by these relationships.

"This settlement follows a mediation process in which I heard directly from the women concerned.

"I wish to make a number of matters absolutely clear.

"Most importantly, relationships like these should never have happened. They were wrong and were a gross violation of personal dignity and integrity.

"Let me add these points:

"Firstly, none of the women with whom the undercover officers had a relationship brought it on themselves. They were deceived pure and simple. I want to make it clear that the Metropolitan Police does not suggest that any of these women could be in any way criticized for the way in which these relationships developed.

"Second, at the mediation process the women spoke of the way in which their privacy had been violated by these relationships. I entirely agree that it was a gross violation and also accept that it may well have reflected attitudes towards women that should have no part in the culture of the Metropolitan Police.

"Third, it is apparent that some officers may have preyed on the women's good nature and had manipulated their emotions to a gratuitous extent. This was distressing to hear about and must have been very hard to bear.

"Fourth, I recognise that these relationships, the subsequent trauma and the secrecy around them left these women at risk of further abuse and deception by these officers after the deployment had ended.

"Fifth, I recognize that these legal proceedings have been painful distressing and intrusive and added to the damage and distress. Let me make clear that whether or not genuine feelings were involved on the part of any officers is entirely irrelevant and does not make the conduct acceptable.

"One of the concerns which the women strongly expressed was that they wished to ensure that such relationships would not happen in future. They referred to the risks that children could be conceived through and into such relationships and I understand that.

"These matters are already the subject of several investigations including a criminal and misconduct enquiry called Operation Herne; undercover policing is also now subject to a judge-led Public Inquiry which commenced on 28th July 2015. Even before those bodies report, I can state that sexual relationships between undercover police officers and members of the public should not happen. The forming of a sexual relationship by an undercover officer would never be authorized in advance nor indeed used as a tactic of a deployment. If an officer did have a sexual relationship despite this (for example if it was a matter of life or death) then he would be required to report this in order that the circumstances could be investigated for potential criminality and/or misconduct. I can say as a very senior officer of the Metropolitan Police Service that I and the Metropolitan Police are committed to ensuring that this policy is followed by every officer who is deployed in an undercover role.

"Finally, the Metropolitan Police recognises that these cases demonstrate that there have been failures of supervision and management. The more we have learned from what the Claimants themselves have told us,

from the Operation Herne investigation and from the recent HM Inspectorate of Constabulary report the more we accept that appropriate oversight was lacking. By any standards the level of oversight did not offer protection to the women concerned against abuse. It is of particular concern that abuses were not prevented by the introduction of more stringent supervisory arrangements made by and pursuant to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. The Metropolitan Police recognizes that this should never happen again and the necessary steps must be taken to ensure that it does not.

"Undercover policing is a lawful and important tactic but it must never be abused.

"In light of this settlement, it is hoped that the Claimants will now feel able to move on with their lives. The Metropolitan Police believes that they can now do so with their heads held high. The women have conducted themselves throughout this process with integrity and absolute dignity."

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