FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY
Nick Perry

Department of Justice
www.justice-ni.gov.uk

Rm B5.10, Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST BT4 3SG
Tel: 028 9052 2992
email: nick.perry@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk

via email: pountain63@gmail.com

Mr Simon Pountain
Independent Reviewer of Criminal Record Information
c/o Access Northern Ireland
PO Box 1085
BELFAST
BT5 9BD

3 August 2017

Dear Simon

Thank you for submitting your first annual report on your work as the Independent Reviewer of criminal record information that can be disclosed on standard and enhanced AccessNI certificates. I am very grateful to you for the work that you have undertaken during the 13 month period covered by the report.

Turning to the specific recommendations in your report, we are, I am afraid, hampered at the moment in relation to what can be done in the absence of a Minister of Justice in Northern Ireland. I am aware however, that in respect of recommendation 1, that the Department's statutory guidance for this role was published on 4 July 2017 and is now available on the DoJ website. This was an intensive process and required the Department to seek the advice of senior counsel to ensure that the guidance document was fit for purpose and that it met the statutory requirements laid down for the role in Schedule 8A of the Police Act 1997. I hope that you find the guidance useful and helpful for your work in the future.

Turning to recommendations 2 and 3, while we understand the clear points you have made about the disclosure of informed warnings and some of the offences on the "never to be filtered" list of offences, these are matters that must be considered by a Minister and will require the legislative approval of the Assembly. We will, of course, make the next Minister aware of your recommendations and keep you informed of their consideration of the matter.

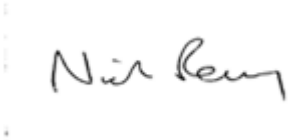
Given that the statutory requirement is for you to make your report to the Department of Justice, I am content to publish this on the website, together with this response.

Finally, I am aware that your current term of appointment finishes at the end of December 2017. I have asked colleagues in AccessNI to bring forward proposals for

the continuation of this important work after that period. I am aware that in your role as Independent Monitor for police information disclosed on certificates, this has been extended by the Home Office to September 2018.

Thank you once again for this report and for the important work that you do.

Yours sincerely



N P PERRY