



April 2021

Dear Candidate,



This letter has been written with the Discovery Council. The Council is made up of members who have a learning disability and autism who live in Somerset.

discovery
Get more from life



All of the Council members receive support from Discovery, a non-profit organisation in Somerset.



This letter explains what we think the police in Somerset should be doing to make sure people are safe.



We want the next Police and Crime Commissioner to think about people who have a learning disability and autism.



It is important that the Police and Crime Commissioner makes decisions that keep people safe and that solve some of the problems people experience.



What we think police in Somerset should be doing to make sure people are safe



I. We want more police in our local community and on our streets



Seeing police officers on the street makes us feel safer.



At the moment, we think too many police officers drive around in cars instead of walking in our local area.



Having police on local streets means we can go to them if we need them. There used to be more police officers out and about and that was a good thing.



Anti-social behaviour is a problem in some places and sometimes this leads to **disability hate crime**. Having police on the street helps to stop this.

A **disability hate crime** is when you are a victim of a crime because of your disability,



2 We want the police to build relationships with the local community



It is easier to report a crime or ask for help if you know the police in your area.



We want local police to get to know us.



In some places, police check in with us to make sure everything is ok. They can spot when we might be having problems in our local area.



We want the police to build more relationships like this with people who have a learning disability and autism.



3 We want more police stations to be open



In some parts of Somerset, the police stations are closed or they don't have people in them very often.



It can be easier to go to a police station to report a crime.



Police stations are somewhere that people can go to know they are safe.



We want to have access to local police stations.



4 We want the police to listen and take things seriously



Some people who have a learning disability and autism don't feel like they are taken seriously when they report a crime.



We want the police to believe us when we tell them what has happened.



Sometimes this can make victims feel like they are the one in the wrong.



Police training on supporting victims who have a disability would help the police work with us if we need to report a crime.



5 We want the police to help make safe places in our local community



Some of us have places we go to often and people who we trust in those places, for example a local shop.



We want the police to know where we live is a safe place and to work with places that are safe.



We also want the police to think about if there can be more safe places in Somerset – for example, through the Safe Places Scheme.



6 We want the police to think about how people who have a learning disability and autism experience all types of crime



Some people will experience **disability hate crime**.



This can make victims be scared and unhappy. It can also make other people who have a disability scared that it might happen to them too.



All people who have a learning disability and autism could be victims of crime.



We want the police to think about us as part of the community and make sure they can support us if we are victims of any sort of crime.



For example, women who have a learning disability and autism are worried about crime against women and staying safe at night.



Police training to help understand the needs of people who have a learning disability and autism is important.



The Police and Crime Commissioner should speak with people in the local community to hear what they think about what the police do.



This should be done in an accessible way.



What we want you to do now



We would like to hear what you want to do as Police and Crime Commissioner



We would like to hear how you plan to make sure people who have a learning disability and autism feel safe.



We would like you to reply to this letter to let us know what you think about our priorities.



You can write to us or send us a video.

You can send these to

Alexandra.gbedemah@dimensions-uk.org



We will share your replies with the people who have signed this letter and the people who live in their area so they know that you are listening to their views.



We wish you luck in the election

Yours sincerely

Discovery Council