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Mr Chris Bath
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Dear Chris,

Thank you for your letters of 29 September, 14 November and 19 December 2025 regarding a statutory duty to provide appropriate adults for vulnerable adults. I am the head of the Police Powers Unit and am replying on behalf of the Minister of State for Policing and Crime, Rt Hon Sarah Jones MP. I apologise for the very delayed response.

I am very grateful for the detailed policy briefing you have provided on this matter. Appropriate adults undertake a critical role in safeguarding the rights, entitlements, and welfare of both children and vulnerable adults. Vulnerable adults make up a significant proportion of individuals in police custody, and some indications suggest that proportion is growing. It is absolutely vital that there are functional safeguards in place for this group.

I am aware that you and Kate Green met the Policing Minister's predecessor, Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP, in September last year to discuss the subject of appropriate adult statutory provision for vulnerable adults and it was agreed at that time for future options to be considered. I can assure you that this now will be explored as part of the new local governance arrangements that will replace Police and Crime Commissioners in 2028. Whilst I note your further concerns that changes to police governance can cause a degree of uncertainty in the short term, it is only right and proper that the full range of options are now comprehensively considered as part of the future plans. Thank you for your offer to meet with the Policing Minister to discuss this further, but I think that it is more appropriate that officials meet with you in due course as this work develops.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the work that you and the National Appropriate Adult Network undertake in the provision of advocacy, training, support and guidance to local policing bodies and appropriate adult schemes.

Very best wishes,

Lizzy Gummer

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