

Dear Mr and Mrs Roberts,

We write with reference to the telephone conversations that took place between yourselves and our officials at the end of 2005 in relation to the Council's decision to seek the Navajo Charter Mark, as a result of which you were visited by officers of the Lancashire Constabulary on the 12 December 2005.

We recognise that this was a traumatic incident for you and are writing to express our regret and apologise for the way in which this matter was handled. As you are aware, the matter was reported by a council officer to the Lancashire Constabulary in accordance with policies and procedures agreed between the police and the council to promote the effective reporting of homophobic incidents. These were new policies that have since evolved and developed with the benefit of experience, including the outcome of this case.

With the benefit of hindsight, we recognise that a fundamental weakness of the procedures followed by the council at this time was that an incident could be reported by a single officer on the basis of his individual evaluation of the incident and in part on the basis of information provided to him by a third party, and in the light of the council's policies. We apologise for the handling of this matter and confirm that, were such an incident to occur in the future, the council would require the reporting of the incident to be approved at a senior level.

Finally, we recognise that you have expressed concerns that our policies are discriminatory against those holding traditional Christian views and fail to take sufficient account of the rights guaranteed by Articles 9 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. We wish to emphasise that the Council is committed to a policy of tolerance and equal treatment for all, including those holding strong religious views, and is fully committed to its role as a public authority within the terms of the Human Rights Act 1998.