



# HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY

Southsea NPT Neighbourhood Police Office  
Southsea Fire Station  
170 Somers Road  
Southsea  
Portsmouth  
PO5 4LU

**Telephone**                      **Direct Dial**  
101                                      07713880085

**Fax**                                      **Text Relay**  
01962 874201                      18001 101

Mr Matthieu Petrigh BSc, MRes  
Head of Operations  
Fort Roche Group  
5 Alice Way, Hounslow Business Park  
TW3 3UD London

**Email  
Address**

david.sanderson@hampshire.pnn.police.uk

**Our ref:**

5 August 2020

**Your ref:**

Dear Abshir, Matthieu and the wider Fort Roche team,

I would like to take an opportunity to thank you all for your professional support during the COVID-19 National Emergency.

This global pandemic has helped create an environment where the impossible actually seem possible. This is clearly demonstrated in the emergency housing of homeless individuals, their families and indeed their dogs into hotels around the country.

This challenge was delivered in Portsmouth at short notice, housing 200+ people experiencing homelessness in the City, into several private hotels with a significant need for an integrated health care approach. Such a rapidly gathered homeless community placed into hotels created a ripple of unintended consequences caused by resident's unlawful and unwanted behaviours creating unprecedented disruption to the local area which experienced acts of hostility, violence, disorder and serious crime. The homing of people, in such numbers, with wide and complex needs had never been attempted before; notwithstanding many were assessed as high risk offenders, vulnerable and volatile persons suffering addiction and mental health challenges.

The sites went live on the 1st April 2020 and saw an escalating trend in population growth with varying levels of current and onward support being required. The Portsmouth Community experienced a most serious rise in crime



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Deaf? Non-emergency text **07781 480999**

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and disorder. Demand for policing services was excessive, creating risk of service failure in other areas of policing. Such an impact caused a ripple of public outrage and was assessed as a critical incident for the Local Council and the Police to manage.

The Security Service provided by Fort Roche presented many risks none more so than that of your reputation. This operation had received national media interest, describing the situation as a “Cesspit of criminality”. Fort Roche accepted the risk and took ownership; a bold step. Your depth of experience and team approach united a holistic interpretation of solutions, building your plans around a health centred security ethic. Your layered tactic was most effective, reducing high harm impacts on your residents and the wider community which witnessed extremely high levels of crime and disorder noticeably reduce; allowing policing resources to relax. Your engagement with all stakeholders helped commutate a calming and reassuring influence and your continued approach of reflection and adaptation presents as a fine example of security, as a social responsibility.

As the government moves to create a once in a life time opportunity to home and support our homeless I do hope that you seek opportunities to operate in these most sensitive of areas of security risk. Your teams have consistently demonstrated a community approach to security risk management, operating as pioneers in a unique problem space.

What you have achieved as a team is simply impressive and inspirational. You have helped improve the lives of our communities and in so many individual cases of homelessness; lives have been saved and improved for the better. Your reflective approach navigated uncharted, publically and politically sensitive territory to deliver remarkable outcomes. I felt it proper, that on behalf of Hampshire Constabulary and my local policing team we thank you.

On a personal level; this has been a most challenging policing experience, one I didn't think we would get right; we did! Thank you! Working with you has been a rewarding experience, proving that we really are stronger together.

Kind regards

Insp David Sanderson MSc  
NPCC RF Disruptive Technologies Lead &  
Southsea Neighbourhoods  
Southsea Fire Station  
170 Somers Road  
Southsea  
PO54LU  
Work mob. 07713880085  
Int ext (765) 4685225



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