



TOTAL POLICING



[MPS Home](#) > [News Archive](#) > Be ready to respond to Inquiry into Undercover Policing 11.08.15

Be ready to respond to Inquiry into Undercover Policing 11.08.15

It's anticipated that the Inquiry into Undercover Policing, chaired by Lord Justice Pitchford, will start to ask The Met for relevant material from September. Officers and staff are being asked to prioritise and respond promptly to any requests.

"The terms of reference for the Pitchford Inquiry are extremely broad," explains Assistant Commissioner Professionalism Martin Hewitt. "Potentially it could require any information relevant to undercover policing operations by The Met and other English and Welsh police forces.

"Given this range, it's clearly not possible for the Met Public Inquiry team to pre-emptively gather all material. Instead, they'll need to make direct contact with Met units to research where relevant material is held and respond to individual disclosure requests.

"Please treat these requests as a priority. The Met will have 14 days to respond, but the Met team will need time to review the material before it's provided to the Inquiry and may need to task follow up searches. It's therefore vital that when the Public Inquiry team make contact with a unit and ask for searches of their systems and archives to be done, that the unit responds promptly and effectively, and provides full and complete disclosure of all material relevant to the search parameters."

It's anticipated that the Inquiry will require disclosure of intelligence linked to operations, applications and authorisations, crime records, Holmes accounts and case files where the undercover tactic was deployed. The Inquiry may also call for reports, reviews, briefing and policy documents, training material, personnel files, correspondence and meeting minutes.

Full disclosure

"The Inquiry can and will require access to highly sensitive material and I am sure this will raise concerns as to the provision of this material outside the Met," adds Martin. "The Inquiries Act and protocols that will be issued by Lord Justice Pitchford do allow for us to apply for redaction and restriction orders for submissions. However it will be for our legal counsel and the Met Public Inquiry Team to consider this and make any applications. If you're asked to do a search, please complete it under the parameters given and provide all the material that it generates without any restriction or redaction."

Material will be physically transferred and retained under the appropriate Government Protective Marking Scheme. Inquiry personnel are DV vetted and they are currently putting in place appropriate physical security measures.

"It is vital that the Met maintains the confidence of the Inquiry and complies with the Inquiries Act in providing full, timely and effective disclosure. Preventing any evidence or document being provided to a Public Inquiry, suppressing or concealing a document known to be relevant or altering or destroying any such document are criminal offences."

The Met is obliged to keep any documentary or otherwise stored material (e.g. computer records) which contain or may contain content pertaining directly or indirectly to undercover policing operations since 1968. This includes Advanced and Foundation level such as test purchase, controlled delivery and covert internet investigators.

"Thank you in advance for your support. The ongoing safety and security of undercover officers and other sensitive intelligence sources is of critical importance and central to the terms of reference of the Public Inquiry Team."

More information

Read more about the [Undercover Policing Public Inquiry](#).