

GETTING SORTED

Operation Filesafe helps manage years of misplaced paperwork



Last year, Mark Ellison QC stated in his review of the Stephen Lawrence case that the Met needed a better system for managing its paperwork.

Rolling out this year, Operation Filesafe is a Met-wide programme that helps us to find missing physical records and to better organise future files.

Last October, Croydon began a pilot to do just that. Collaborating with the Records Management Office, officers and staff sorted out their local archive, rummaged through records held in deep storage elsewhere in the country and combed through every Met building on borough to find misplaced files.

Foremost, they were looking for any records to do with the Stephen Lawrence case and the 1998 Macpherson inquiry into that investigation. But, also, they wanted anything to do with police corruption and undercover work overall.

As part of the Operation Filesafe Working Group, Ian Leslie of the Records Management Branch created a streamlined method for records management. It divides records into "crime" and "non-crime" categories then sorts them according



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to Management of Police Information (MOPI) categories. The team also condensed the lengthy checklist for registering files to a quick-glance document.

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How to register a crime or allegation

Allegations of crime must be registered within seven days of the initial report.

If you do not have access to the Records Management System (RMS), contact:

- Your local File on Division (FoD) or File on Borough (FoB) clerk for volume crime
- Records Management (RM) via their email for serious crime – Registry Mailbox

Register the crime/allegation with a unique record number on the RMS. If the local prosecution teams can't get you one, email RM for a Form 913 to request a registered file.

For case papers with multiple offences, classify it by the most serious offence.

Place files in the appropriate archive. The Met repository in Hendon is for serious crime, violent, sexual or high value, including allegations. Your local archive is for volume crime.

All file movements, deletions, additions and decisions must be minuted on the file and relevant forms authorised by the appropriate people.

She says the difference at Croydon, after everyone got stuck in and cleared up, was astounding. Every other borough and OCU will do a similar "spring-clean" in the months to come, so it's best to start using the new records management system now.

"It's not that wildly different, but it will make things a whole lot easier," says DI Coombe. 🗨