

UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY

Public notice issued on 2 November 2016 by the Undercover Policing Inquiry

Relating to the use of the identities of deceased children by police officers for undercover purposes

NOTICE

If you are:

- (1) The parent or close relative of a child who was born between 1938 and 1975 and who died in childhood, and**
- (2) You wish to know whether the child's identity was used by the police to create an undercover identity,**

You are invited to make contact with the undercover policing inquiry.

But before contacting the Inquiry please read carefully the explanatory notes below.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. This Notice is addressed to the parents and close relatives of children who were born between 1938 and 1975 (inclusive) and died in childhood.¹
2. The Undercover Policing Inquiry is investigating the conduct and management of undercover police operations. For further information about the Inquiry, please see the Inquiry's website at www.ucpi.org.uk.
3. The Metropolitan Police Service, through Operation Herne, has already published the fact that during the life of the Special Demonstration Squad (1968 – 2008) the identities of at least 42 deceased children were used by its officers to create their undercover identities. The Inquiry is investigating these 42 cases and others within the Special Demonstration Squad. The Inquiry will also investigate the full extent of the practice by all police services in England and Wales which it is already aware was not confined to the Special Demonstration Squad.

¹ Section 1 of the Family Law Reform Act 1969 and article 2 of the Family Law Reform Act 1969 (Commencement No. 1) Order 1969 changed the age of majority from 21 years to 18 years as from 1 January 1970

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4. So far, 23 families have expressed to the Metropolitan Police Service an interest in knowing whether the identity of their deceased child was used for police undercover purposes. If you are a member of one of these families the Inquiry will, with your permission (which it will seek through the Metropolitan Police Service), make contact with you.
5. The Chairman of the Inquiry, Sir Christopher Pitchford, has concluded that it is necessary to give further prominence to this aspect of the Inquiry's work so as to inform the public and to enable those families who choose to do so to register their interest with the Inquiry. The Inquiry realises that surviving families who become aware of this practice may be shocked and distressed by it. The Inquiry will receive any enquiries that you may have as sensitively as it can.
6. In the course of the Inquiry's work the Chairman will be required to make decisions under section 19 of the Inquiries Act 2005 as to whether information held by the Inquiry should be made public. That information will include the names of deceased children whose names were adopted by police officers carrying out an undercover role. The Chairman wishes to provide the parents or close relatives of children whose identities were, or might have been, used in this way with the opportunity to (i) ask for disclosure of information that will be held by the Inquiry and (ii) to make representations as to whether those identities should be made public.
7. The spread of dates of birth specified in the Notice has been selected having had regard to the evidence currently available to the Inquiry. However, the statistical chance that the name of a person born between 1938 and 1975, who died in childhood, was used to create an undercover identity is very small indeed. The Inquiry's investigation is at an early stage and if further evidence comes to light which makes it necessary to amend the date range it will issue a further public Notice.
8. There is no obligation on any family to whom this Notice is addressed to respond to it. The decision whether to make contact with the Inquiry is entirely for the family concerned.
9. The contact details for the Undercover Policing Inquiry are:

Email:	info@ucpi.org.uk
Telephone (9am – 5pm):	0203 741 0429 or 0203 741 0430
Letter:	PO Box 71230, London NW1W 7QH

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10. Any parent or close family member who makes contact with the Inquiry should provide or be prepared to provide:
 - (1) the identity, date of birth and date of death of the deceased child;
 - (2) details of the relationship between the person registering their interest and the deceased child; and
 - (3) contact details for the person registering their interest.
11. Your contact with the Undercover Policing Inquiry will be treated in confidence unless and until you decide that your contact with the Inquiry need not stay confidential.
12. If you are considering making contact with the Undercover Policing Inquiry because you wish to know whether your deceased child's name was used to create a police undercover identity, it is important that you should know that the Inquiry may be unable to give a 'yes' or 'no' answer to your question, even after the Inquiry has concluded its work and knows the answer. The reason for this is that in order to protect the rights of other individuals or in the public interest the Chairman of the Inquiry may have to make a restriction order under section 19 of the Inquiries Act 2005 that prevents the Inquiry from releasing information in its possession. Any response that the Inquiry is able to give may have to be delayed to await the completion of the Inquiry's investigation.
13. If the Inquiry does intend to publish the name of a deceased child that was used to create the undercover identity of a police officer it will first attempt to make contact with a parent or close family member of the child, whether or not they have previously made contact with the Inquiry. This will be much easier if you have already made yourself known to the Inquiry: if you have not contacted the Inquiry, the Inquiry may not be able to find you.
14. If you do make contact with the Inquiry, a member of the Inquiry team will be available to answer your questions and to explain the Inquiry's procedure.
15. The Chairman will soon begin to consider applications to impose restrictions on the disclosure of the names of undercover police officers, under section 19 of the Inquiries Act 2005. The Inquiry will respond to your enquiries whenever they are made. **However, if you are interested in making contact with the Inquiry, you are asked to do so as soon as possible and, in any event, by 22 December 2016.**