FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **15 February 2017**

PRESS NOTICE

Inquiry Announces Hearing on 5 April 2017

Sir Christopher Pitchford, the Chairman of the Undercover Policing Inquiry, has today announced that the Inquiry will hold a further preliminary hearing on 5 April 2017.

The Inquiry has received letters from the Metropolitan Police Service, published with the Chairman's directions for hearing, which seek to persuade the Inquiry that the Metropolitan Police Service needs more time to prepare applications for restriction orders seeking anonymity for its officers. In the same correspondence the Metropolitan Police Service questions the Inquiry's intention to obtain evidence from every surviving Special Demonstration Squad officer and to require all applications for anonymity by its officers to be made at this stage of the Inquiry.

The Chairman's current view is that the approach the Inquiry is taking is necessary to discharge its terms of reference. However, both the issues raised by the Metropolitan Police Service bring the timetable and complexity of the Inquiry into sharp focus. It is now increasingly unlikely that the Inquiry will undertake evidence hearings in 2017. The Chairman has decided that these issues need to be aired at a hearing in which other core participants can contribute.

The Chairman's directions set out a timetable towards the hearing as follows:

- By 23 February 2017 the Metropolitan Police Service is to provide the Inquiry with written submissions in support of its applications for an extension of time and change of approach. These submissions will be circulated to other core participants and published on the Inquiry's website.
- By 2 March 2017 the Inquiry's counsel team is to produce and circulate a note in response to the applications made by the Metropolitan Police Service, also addressing the factors that are affecting and will affect the progress of the Inquiry towards the oral hearing of evidence. The note will be published on the Inquiry's website.
- By 23 March 2017 the other core participants are to submit to the Inquiry any written response to the above two documents, which will be published on the Inquiry's website.
- By 30 March 2017 the Metropolitan Police Service is to respond further in writing, if so advised. The response will be published on the Inquiry's website.
- 5 April 2017 - commence a one to two day hearing at the Royal Courts of Justice.

Background

The purpose of the Undercover Policing Inquiry is to investigate and report on undercover police operations conducted by English and Welsh police forces in England and Wales since 1968. The Inquiry will examine the contribution undercover policing has made to tackling crime, how it was and is supervised and regulated, and its effect on individuals involved, both police officers and others who came into contact with them.

The work of the Inquiry ranges across the full scope of undercover policing work and will look at the work of the Special Demonstration Squad, the National Public Order Intelligence Unit and police forces in England and Wales. The Inquiry will also examine whether people may have been wrongly convicted in cases involving undercover police officers, and refer any such cases to a separate panel for consideration.

The work of the Inquiry will fall into three modules:

1. Module one will look at what happened in the deployment of undercover officers in the past, their conduct, and the impact of their activities on themselves and others.
2. Module two will look at the management and oversight of undercover officers, including their selection, training, supervision and care after the end of an undercover deployment. This section will also look at the law and other rules covering undercover policing.
3. Module three will make recommendations about how undercover policing should be conducted in future.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. This press notice does not form part of the directions.

2. The Undercover Policing Inquiry is constituted under the Inquiries Act 2005.

3. The Inquiry's terms of reference were announced by the Home Secretary on 16 July 2015.

4. The Inquiry's frequently asked questions provide more information on the Inquiry more generally.

5. The Inquiry's website is www.ucpi.org.uk and the Inquiry can be found on Twitter @ucpinquiry.

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