

# UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following document contains frequently asked questions and answers. Should you have any other queries please get in touch with the Inquiry at: [info@ucpi.org.uk](mailto:info@ucpi.org.uk)

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# UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY

## 1. ABOUT THE INQUIRY

### 1.1. Why is this Inquiry taking place?

In 2015 the then Home Secretary, Theresa May, announced that there would be a judge-led inquiry into undercover policing.

This was in response to independent reviews carried out by Mark Ellison QC, which found "[appalling practices in undercover policing](#)".

The reports set out a number of issues including:

- failures to disclose material to be used in criminal proceedings;
- deception of courts; and
- concerns around the deployment of undercover police officers in Stephen Lawrence's family.

### 1.2. What will the Inquiry do?

The Inquiry's aim is discover the truth about undercover policing across England and Wales over the past 50 years, and provide recommendations for the future.

For the purposes of the Inquiry, undercover police operations are defined as "the use by a police force of a police officer as a covert human intelligence source".

Two undercover policing units – the Special Demonstration Squad (SDS) and the National Public Order Intelligence Unit (NPOIU) - have particular prominence for the Inquiry, however, its work is not restricted to these units.

The SDS was a covert unit that existed within the Metropolitan Police Service between 1968 and 2008.

The NPOIU was set up around 1986, originally as the Animal Rights National Index. Around 2010, it merged with three other units to become the National Domestic Extremism Unit.

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 those who came into contact with officers and the officers themselves.

The Inquiry will establish a clear picture of what has happened and why, so that fully informed recommendations can be made for the future of undercover policing.

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The Inquiry's [terms of reference](#) sets the Inquiry's work out in full.

## 1.3. How does the Inquiry work?

The Inquiry is led by Sir John Mitting, a former high court judge. It is independent of government and the bodies it is investigating. The Inquiry is supported by legal representatives, civil servants and contractors.

Starting in summer 2020, a series of evidence hearings will take place. Former police officers, those who managed them, and those affected by their conduct, will be called to give evidence.

Sir John will then produce an interim report that will contain his factual findings and conclusions on the evidence heard in modules one and two.

There are three modules to the Inquiry's investigations:

- **Module one** - Examination of the deployment of undercover officers in the past, their conduct, and the impact of their activities on themselves and others.
- **Module two** - Examination of the management and oversight of undercover officers, including their selection, training, supervision, care after the end of an undercover deployment, and the legal and regulatory framework within which undercover policing was carried out. Module two (a) will involve managers and administrators from within undercover policing units. Module two (b) will involve senior managers higher in the chain of command as well as police personnel who handled intelligence provided by undercover police officers. Module two (c) will involve a number of other government bodies with a connection to undercover policing, including the Home Office.
- **Module three** - Examination of current undercover policing practices and of how undercover policing should be conducted in future.

The final report will follow the conclusion of module 3, which will set out the Inquiry's conclusions and recommendations for the future of undercover policing.

## 1.4. How is the fact-finding work of the Inquiry structured?

To manage such a broad remit, the Inquiry has divided its fact-finding work into six "tranches". Special Demonstration Squad officers and managers and those affected by their deployments are split into three tranches, each covering a different time period: Tranche 1: 1968-1982; Tranche 2: 1983-1992; Tranche 3: 1993-2007.

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As a smaller and more recent policing unit, National Public Order Intelligence Unit officers and managers and those affected by their deployments are the focus of a single tranche – Tranche 4.

Tranches 5 and 6 cover “Other undercover policing officers and managers and those affected by deployments” and “Management & oversight by mid- and senior-rank officers, other agencies and government departments” respectively.

The Inquiry intends to hold hearings in line with these tranches and in roughly chronological order.

### 1.5. What is the Chairman’s role?

The Chairman was appointed by the Home Secretary. He is independent of Government.

The Chairman supervises the running of the Inquiry and decides how the Inquiry is to investigate the matters within the terms of reference. This is subject to a requirement to act with fairness and to avoid unnecessary cost.

He will write the interim report that will contain his factual findings and conclusions on the evidence heard in modules one and two. With the help of a panel, he will then produce a final report with relevant recommendations for the future of undercover policing. This will be delivered to the Home Secretary.

The Chairman cannot make any findings of civil or criminal liability, nor can he award any compensation.

### 1.6. Why is there a single Chairman rather than a panel?

This Inquiry is reading and reviewing tens of thousands of documents and will receive and consider the evidence of at least 250 police witnesses and the civilian witnesses who were affected by their deployments.

The appointment of members to a panel to sift through this in addition to the Chairman would impose a heavy cost in both time and money. It would result in further delays that would be unacceptable to all involved.

However, once the facts have been determined after modules one and two, the Chairman considers that it would be both practicable and desirable for a diverse panel to be recruited to consider the current state of undercover policing and to make recommendations to the Home Secretary for the future.

# UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY

## 2. TAKING PART IN THE INQUIRY

### 2.1. Who can submit evidence to the Inquiry?

Anyone can submit evidence to the Inquiry.

### 2.2. How do I get in touch or submit evidence to the Inquiry?

You can:

- email us at [info@ucpi.org.uk](mailto:info@ucpi.org.uk)
- write to us at PO Box 71230, London NW1W 7QH
- give us a call on 0203 876 4750 or 0203 876 4760.

You may, if you choose, instruct a solicitor to represent you. The [Chairman can make awards for costs](#) for this.

#### **By email**

Most documents can be emailed, but documents with a protective marking of SECRET and above must not be emailed for security reasons. If you have any doubts about the level of sensitivity of documents in your possession, please contact the Inquiry team for advice and assistance.

The Inquiry web email inbox is monitored from Monday to Friday, throughout the working day.

#### **By post**

We will acknowledge all letters within five working days of receipt, providing a full response within 20 working days where one is needed. For complex issues a response may take longer.

#### **By telephone**

The Inquiry team will not take evidence over the phone on the first call; rather they will advise you how to engage with the Inquiry.

### 2.3. What happens when I contact the Inquiry?

A note will be taken of any initial contact with the Inquiry and your details will be kept by the Inquiry team unless you specifically ask us not to; however if your engagement with the Inquiry is to proceed we will need to take some details.

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We record your personal data in line with the General Data Protection Regulation. For more information see [our privacy notice](#) and [data protection notification](#).

### 2.4. Do I need legal representation to give evidence?

The decision on whether or not to get legal representation is one that only you can make, but the Inquiry team do not need you to have a lawyer in order to provide us with your evidence.

### 2.5. If I give evidence to the Inquiry will I have to go to the hearings?

We can't give you a full answer on that without knowing the nature of your evidence. However not everyone who provides us with a witness statement will need to go to a hearing to provide evidence in person.

# UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY

## 3. CORE PARTICIPANTS

### 3.1. What is a core participant?

A core participant is a person who has played, or may have played, a direct and significant role in the subject the Inquiry relates to. They can also be a person or group that has a significant interest in the Inquiry or may be subject to significant or explicit criticism as a result of the Inquiry.

Core participants are designated by the Chairman, with their consent, and can be an individual or an organisation. In this Inquiry, there are two primary categories of core participants:

- State core participants: this includes police officers, police institutions and government.
- Non-state core participants: this includes individuals that have had relationships with undercover officers, trade union members and activists.

These categories of core participants always have different legal representatives.

Core participants have access to all of the public evidence relevant to their particular interest in the case. In many cases, core participants and other witnesses can also have their reasonable legal costs paid. There are no state core participants that have their legal costs paid by the Inquiry.

You don't need to be a core participant to give evidence to the Inquiry.

### 3.2. How do I become a core participant?

Groups or individuals need to apply to the Chairman, setting out their reasons for applying.

If you have decided to apply, you should make the application as soon as possible.

In deciding whether or not to grant core participation status, the Chairman may take into account any delay that has occurred. If there has been any delay, this should be fully explained and reasons given.

### 3.3. How many core participants are there?

A [dedicated page](#) on the Inquiry website provides the most up-to-date information about the Inquiry's current core participants.

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### 3.4. What legal representation do core participants have and who pays for that?

A core participant may appoint a qualified lawyer to act on their behalf in relation to the Inquiry proceedings.

The Chairman is required to direct that core participants be represented by a single legal representative in cases where:

- the core participants' interest in the outcome of the Inquiry are similar;
- the facts they are likely to rely on in the Inquiry are similar; and
- it is fair and proper that they be jointly represented.

The Chairman can make financial awards to cover the cost of core participants' legal fees, subject to conditions designed to prevent excessive or wasteful spending.

The guiding principles that apply are necessity, proportionality and reasonableness.

### 3.5. Do I need to be a core participant to get my legal costs paid?

No, section 40 of the Inquiries Act 2005 gives the Chairman power to award expenses and legal costs to those who give evidence, whether or not they are core participants. This is subject to the [conditions set out by the Home Secretary](#).

There are no state core participants that have their legal costs paid by the Inquiry.

## 4. WITNESS STATEMENTS

### 4.1. What are witness statements?

The Inquiry is conducting an officer-by-officer investigation of former undercover police officers from the Special Demonstration Squad, National Public Order Intelligence Unit and units from other police forces. As part of this, officers, those responsible for managing them, and those affected by a deployment, will be asked to produce witness statements.

As part of the statements, each individual will be asked to cover a set of questions specific to their experience.

Former officers are approached first to allow the managers and non-state core participants the opportunity to see the officer's responses, subject to any necessary restriction order redactions, before issuing their own statements.

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### 4.2. How are witness statements prepared?

From each investigation, the Inquiry will identify relevant materials and compile a pack to assist the witness in preparing their statement. These packs may be subject to restriction order redactions.

The finalised pack will be issued to the witness and their legal representative, accompanied by a request for a witness statement. This request is called a 'Rule 9 request'.

A [Witness Protocol](#) was also issued by the Chairman in January 2018 which sets out what is required.

### 4.3. What happens to the statements after they have been submitted?

Witness statements will allow the Inquiry to receive a detailed picture of the work undertaken by each officer during their time within the Special Demonstration Squad, the National Public Order Intelligence Unit and units from other police forces.

Witness statements will form part of the hearings bundles produced for the evidence hearings. Evidential hearings bundles will bring together all the relevant information about an officer's deployment.

Once the hearings for a particular tranche have finished, all open evidence considered as part of that tranche will be published. This includes witness statements, subject to any restriction order redactions.

## 5. THE HEARINGS

### 5.1. When and where will the evidential hearings take place?

The first evidence hearings are expected to begin in summer 2020. The venue is yet to be determined, but for convenience and efficiency, it will be in London. An overflow facility will be available.

### 5.2. How will evidence hearings work?

This Inquiry aims to be as open and transparent as possible. The Chairman will hear evidence from core participants and other witnesses. Counsel to the Inquiry or the Chairman may ask questions based on their statements.

During the hearings, the Inquiry will publish daily transcripts of the hearings and any documents referred to that day, subject to any restriction orders.

The Chairman wants to create the optimal conditions for getting to the truth by hearing evidence in full from all sides. In his [statement](#) of 19 December 2018, he set out his views on why live-streaming of the evidence for certain witnesses would be incompatible with protecting their rights and interests and may infringe restriction order made. Further options will be considered.

The Inquiry will ensure that there is sufficient public and media access in place for the hearings.

### 5.3. What issues will the evidence hearings address?

For module one, all issues lists have been consulted on. The lists for [the Special Demonstration Squad was published in 5 July 2018](#) and for the [National Public Order Intelligence Unit](#) and [Other Undercover Policing](#) on 21 February 2019.

Covering 158 questions, 161 questions and 21 questions respectively, they are extensive and seek to get to the truth of undercover policing. These issues are not set in stone, and may be amended as the Inquiry progresses

The issues list for the module two investigation into the Special Demonstration Squad was released for consultation in early 2019 and the list was published on 19 June 2019. The corresponding lists for the National Public Order Intelligence Unit and Other Undercover Policing units will be released for consultation later in 2019.

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### 5.4. Can I be compelled to give evidence?

Yes, the Chairman has the power to issue a notice requiring a person to attend and give evidence, but would much prefer if witnesses did so voluntarily. The Inquiries Act 2005 makes a provision that a person may object to the Chairman's notice on the grounds that the requirement to give evidence is not reasonable in all the circumstances.

### 5.5. Can I be prosecuted for giving evidence which would incriminate me?

On 8 September 2016 the Inquiry published a letter from the Attorney General which granted an 'inquiry-specific' undertaking.

The undertaking means that the evidence witnesses give to the Inquiry will not be used against them (or against their spouse or civil partner) in any criminal proceedings, or when deciding whether to bring criminal proceedings.

This will enable witnesses to give evidence to the Inquiry without fear of being investigated and prosecuted as a result of their own evidence.

### 5.6. Why should people who have committed a crime have an undertaking?

The Inquiry's objective is to get to the truth. Therefore, it is important that witnesses can give open and honest evidence. Without the protection of the undertaking from the Attorney General, a witness might choose not to answer a question because to do so might leave them open to prosecution.

## 6. COVER NAMES, ANONYMITY AND RESTRICTION ORDERS

### 6.1. When and how does the Inquiry publish cover names?

The purpose of publishing cover names is to enable members of the public to identify whether they may have known officers who were deployed undercover and to prevent cases of mistaken identity.

When no application for a restriction order is made or an application has been unsuccessful, cover names are published as soon as the Inquiry has completed its pre-publication checks. These include checking whether the officer had a sexual relationship during their deployment, or the name of a deceased person was used.

Sometimes it takes time to track down those who were affected, such as the relatives of a person whose identity was used. The Inquiry won't publish cover names until it has made all reasonable efforts to contact those affected by the publication.

The cover names published so far are listed on the website.

### 6.2. How many cover names are not subject to restriction orders?

So far, the cover names of 68 Special Demonstration Squad officers and four National Public Order Intelligence Unit officers are not subject to restriction orders.

Further statistics on anonymity applications can be found in our latest [update note](#).

### 6.3. When and how do you publish real names?

Where there is no restriction order, real names will be published as and when the name of the person appears in documentary evidence that the Inquiry publishes. They will not be published in a separate list on the website because it is the cover name, not the real name, which officers will have been known by. The primary reason for publishing a cover name is to enable witnesses to come forward

### 6.4. Why would witnesses want to remain anonymous?

This Inquiry aims to be as open and transparent as possible.

However, sometimes anonymity is required. This can be because:

- Some core participants – including people who have been deceived into relationships with officers – want their privacy respected.

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- Exposure of identities could put individuals at risk of serious injury, or in extreme cases, death, because of the nature of the deployments they have undertaken.
- Revealing identities could damage individuals or their family's private life and contravene their human right.

In making a decision, the Chairman applies the legal principles and approach [outlined](#) by his predecessor Sir Christopher Pitchford. In doing so he considers the extent to which rejecting the application would help the Inquiry fulfil its objectives, weighing this against the grounds advanced in support of the application, which may include the public interest, and/or an individual's safety and right to private life.

### 6.5. How do anonymity and restriction orders work?

The non-state core participants and the undercover officers who served with the Special Demonstration Squad and the National Public Order Intelligence Unit have been given the opportunity to make an application to the Chairman for anonymity. Anonymity in inquiry proceedings is achieved by way of restriction orders.

Restriction orders granting anonymity will vary. They can be made to restrict information contained within written documentary evidence which could lead to an individual's identification (for example, their name, image, or information about their family). Restrictions may also be used when a witness is providing live evidence at oral hearings - through measures like closed hearings, screens, or voice modulation, for example.

The Chairman will make a ruling on whether to grant or reject the application either in full or in part, followed by a restriction order where one is needed if the application is successful.

Restriction orders are made where the Chairman is satisfied an application meets the tests set out in [section 19 of the Inquiries Act 2005](#). The legal principles under which the decision is made are set out in the [May 2016 ruling](#).

Restriction orders only apply to the disclosure or publication of evidence *given to and held by the Inquiry*. They cannot restrict the disclosure or publication of information held independently of the Inquiry. The [directions, rulings and orders webpage](#) contains copies of any restriction orders made. Copies of the open versions of the anonymity applications are also on the website.

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### 6.6. When will people find out about restriction orders being in place?

Rulings on restriction orders will be announced as soon as practicable after the decision has been made.

There can be delays in publication as the Inquiry checks with other agencies that may be concerned that no information is being released which they wish to argue ought to be restricted, or in some cases to consult with witnesses on the wording of the announcement.

Looking at issues on a case-by-case basis means that submissions can be received from everybody involved, and that all sides of the argument can be discussed.

In some cases oral hearings are needed to then further clarify some of the points and to hear all objections fully. This process takes time because the Inquiry must fully consider all applications to ensure that this Inquiry is as full and transparent as possible.

The [directions, rulings and orders page](#) contains copies of any restriction orders made. Copies of the open versions of the anonymity applications are also on the website.

### 6.7. What happens if the Chairman declines to grant a restriction order?

If the Chairman declines to make a restriction order, or declines to make a restriction order as extensive as that sought by the applicant, the Inquiry will notify the applicant prior to revealing the information.

This decision can be challenged by way of an application for permission to apply for judicial review. If no application is filed within the 14 days proscribed by section 38 of the Inquiries Act, or if the challenge is unsuccessful, the information may then be released to the appropriate core participants and may be published on the Inquiry's website.

## 7. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

### 7.1. How do I get access to the Inquiry if I'm not giving evidence and not a core participant?

The Inquiry is a public Inquiry, and the Inquiry team will put all public evidence and information about the Inquiry's work on its website.

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During the hearings, the Inquiry will publish daily transcripts of the hearings and any documents referred to that day, subject to any restriction orders. Lists of witnesses due to appear at the Inquiry will be posted on the website in advance of each hearing.

The Chairman wants to create the optimal conditions for getting to the truth by hearing evidence in full from all sides. In his statement of 19 December 2018, he set out his views on why live-streaming of the evidence for certain witnesses would be incompatible with protecting their rights and interests and may infringe restriction order made. Further options will be considered.

The Inquiry will ensure that there is sufficient public and media access in place for the hearings.

### 7.2. [Where can I find the latest updates on the website?](#)

The [news section](#) of the website will publish all the latest information about the Inquiry.

Useful first points of contact for those wishing to find out more about the Inquiry are the:

- [Terms of reference](#)
- [The Chairman's opening remarks](#)
- [Update notes](#)

### 7.3. [Can I request information from the Inquiry under the Freedom of Information Act 2000?](#)

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply to inquiries set up under the 2005 Inquiries Act, including the Undercover Policing Inquiry.

However, the Inquiry operates in as transparent and open a manner as possible in accordance with the interests of justice. The Inquiry publishes regular updates notes on the progress of its work as well as its costs on a quarterly basis.

# UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY

## 8. IDENTITIES OF DECEASED CHILDREN AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS

### 8.1. How will the Inquiry find out that the names of deceased children or other individuals have been used?

The Inquiry will examine the documentary evidence in order to establish whether an undercover officer based their cover identity on that of another individual. The Inquiry may also ask questions of the officer concerned, provided that they are not deceased.

### 8.2. How many identities were used by the police?

This Inquiry will look to establish a definitive figure for this. But previously published information by Operation Herne revealed 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.

[Operation Herne](#) was an independent investigation led by Derbyshire's Chief Constable Mick Creedon QPM into the Special Demonstration Squad (SDS). Operation Herne's terms of reference was to examine how the SDS operated from its origin in 1968 to its closure in 2008.

### 8.3. How can relatives find out if their family member's identity was used?

We have [invited parents or close relatives of deceased individuals](#) who wish to know whether their relative's identity was used by an undercover officer to contact the Inquiry.

Coming forward means that the Inquiry will be able to take into account the interest of the family.

If their relative's name was used, and that fact can be disclosed, then it will make establishing contact much easier.

### 8.4. Does the Inquiry always inform relatives when they find out about deceased individuals' identities being used?

Before publishing cover names, the Inquiry endeavours to contact close relatives of deceased individuals whose identities were used by the police where it has been able to identify them.

The Inquiry also visits relatives at their request to talk through any concerns they may have about the Inquiry processes.

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There may be instances where the Inquiry will not be able to let relatives know. This would be if a restriction order has been made because the risk of harm to the former officer outweighs the interest in publishing the cover name.

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## 9. SEXUAL OR INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

### 9.1. Does the Inquiry always contact people who have had relationships with undercover police officers?

The Inquiry strives to find anyone who may have had a sexual or intimate relationship with an undercover officer.

To do this we need to be able to find out who these people are, but identifying and tracing the right people can take time.

We publish cover names to help people identify if they were affected and to encourage them to come forward, and we also carry out our own investigations to identify incidences where this has happened.

If you had, or believe you had, a relationship with an undercover police officer, please contact the Inquiry.

# UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY

## 10. NEXT STEPS

### 10.1. What are the Inquiry's timelines?

As there are several complex issues still to be determined that require engagement with Core Participants, there remains some uncertainty around the completion date for certain stages; however, those milestones on which there is a greater degree of certainty have been added to the table below.

To manage such a broad remit, the Inquiry has divided its work for Modules One and Two into the following six "tranches":

1. Special Demonstration Squad officers and managers and those affected by deployments (1968-1982)
2. Special Demonstration Squad officers and managers and those affected by deployments (1983-1992)
3. Special Demonstration Squad officers and managers and those affected by deployments (1993-2007)
4. National Public Order Intelligence Unit officers and managers and those affected by deployments
5. Other undercover policing and those affected by deployments
6. Management & oversight by mid and senior rank officers, other agencies and government departments

The table will be updated with additional dates on a quarterly basis.

## UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY

	Tranche 1	Tranche 2	Tranche 3	Tranche 4	Tranche 5	Tranche 6
Completion of anonymity applications <sup>1</sup>	3 REMAIN	1 REMAINS	2 REMAIN			
Obtaining witness statements from officers and managers	DEC 2018 - SEPT 2019					
Obtaining witness statements from those affected by deployments	NOV 2019 - FEB 2020					
Anticipated commencement of hearing	SUMMER 2020					
Anticipated end of hearing						
Closing submissions for Modules One and Two						
Panel Members for Module Three in place						
Publication of interim report						
Closing submissions for Module Three						
Module Three completed and delivery of Final Report to Home Secretary, ahead of publication						

Further information on the Inquiry's progress can be found in the latest [update note](#).