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DIRECTOR
LYDIA DAGOSTINO

SOLICITOR ADVOCATE
JENNA DOLAN

SOLICITORS
JANE CLEASBY, SOPHIA DUTTON
ROSA POTTER, ISABELLE STANDEN

PRACTICE MANAGER
JILL PATEMAN

9 ST GEORGES PLACE
BRIGHTON
EAST SUSSEX
BN1 4GB

TEL: 01273 674898
24 HOUR EMERGENCY TEL: 0800 387463

Website: www.kellys-solicitors.co.uk

Email: admin@kellys-solicitors.co.uk

CJSM: subadmin.kellys@kellys.cjsm.net

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Dear Home Office Consultation

The NPSCPs and their RLRs are shocked and extremely concerned that on 16 July 2026 a public consultation was announced about the future of the Undercover Policing Inquiry.

The NPSCPs and their RLRs strongly object to any changes to the Inquiry and the current proposals under consultation including amendment/narrowing of the terms of reference, conversion to a non-statutory inquiry or the Inquiry being prematurely brought to an end.

This Inquiry has undertaken important work exposing state and police abuse and corruption from 1968. The NPSCPs have provided the Inquiry with significant contemporaneous exhibits and oral testimony that indicate how undercover police officers and their managers lied and covered up this conduct. Recently and several years into the Inquiry process, another undercover police officer (HN60), has accepted that he conducted a deceitful sexual relationship.

As noted by the Inquiry's press-release in response to the consultation, *"To date, the Inquiry has heard evidence of allegations of serious criminality by undercover officers in their undercover personas. The Inquiry has made several referrals to the Miscarriage of Justice Panel in respect of convictions believed to be unsafe. In some cases, this has led to the quashing of convictions, including that of an activist who had their conviction quashed earlier this year based on evidence uncovered by the Inquiry"*. However, there is significant work yet to be done.



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The consultation relates to the Inquiry's work on Tranche 4 (NPOIU 1999-2011), Tranche 5 (all other undercover policing practices 1968 to date) and Module 3 (examination of current undercover policing practices and recommendations for the future). This is a critical part of the Inquiry's work where further significant abuses of state power are already known to have occurred (including numerous deceitful sexual relationships by undercover police officers of the NPOIU). Some of the most egregious behaviour in undercover policing is yet to emerge including, but not limited to, miscarriages of justice, undercover police officers acting as *Agents Provocateur* and failures around the policing of racist criminal gangs. It is vital that these issues are explored and that the NPSCPs receive disclosure; that the voices of the NPSCPs are heard in public through live / written evidence and exhibits; and that the public officials implicated are required to give evidence.

The next Tranches of this Inquiry are also extremely important because they cover the time when undercover police officers operated under the regulatory and statutory oversight of the Human Right Act 1998 and Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, legislation that is supposed to protect the public today. Examining and understanding what went wrong is therefore critical to recommendations for the future of undercover policing.

Curtailing the Inquiry now would fail to address the significant public interest identified to Parliament by the then Home Secretary Theresa May when the Inquiry was set-up, namely the public interest in "learning the lessons of past failures" in order to "improve the public's confidence in undercover work" and to "ensure there is no repeat of these failings in the future."

Ministers are concerned about the length of the Inquiry, the cost and the delay in providing outcomes to those affected. The NPSCPs note that much of the cost and delay incurred by this Inquiry is a consequence of the excessive levels of secrecy demanded by the state (and police) in the Inquiry. The NPSCPs have seen the outcome of endless state applications over many years for restriction over the identities of officers and documents held by the state, including over material that is already in the public domain. Any change to the current format of the Inquiry as a result of the delays that this has created will incentivise more state obfuscation and delay and encourage a further drive for secrecy and lack of transparency. This will undermine the provision of outcomes to those affected and the search for truth, accountability and learning.



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The NPSCPs and their RLRs are concerned about the timing and truncated nature of the timetable for consultation, the limited information that has been provided to the public and how this will clearly limit the public's ability to engage and provide meaningful and informed responses.

Many NPSCPs consider that the decision to issue a consultation shows a complete lack of respect to victims of police and state abuses, particularly in light of the failure to seek any advance information or input from the people most impacted. The consultation was published during the Tranche 3 hearings and is due to last only 5 weeks (and during the summer holiday period) concluding on 20 August 2026, when Parliament is in recess. There has been no prior consultation with CPs as to how this timing will affect the consultation, and no appropriate mitigation has been taken, contrary to the Governments Consultation Principles 2018. There has been a refusal by the Home Office sponsor department to meet with NPSCPs. A meeting requested in December 2024 was rejected - see **attached** email dated 23 December 2024.

The Consultation Principles 2018 require consultations to be informative to ensure that those consulted understand the issues and can give informed responses. The current consultation has not been accompanied with a detailed published consultation document (as has happened with previous inquiry consultations – the Sponsor Department will be aware that the Leveson Inquiry Consultation ran for 10 - weeks and was accompanied by a detailed background document).

The current consultation is also extremely limited in scope and the way the questions are formulated is inherently flawed. There is a clear impression that the Sponsor Department is merely seeking validation for a decision that has already been taken.

It is perverse to rely in the consultation on the Public Office (Accountability) Bill (Hillsborough Law), given the Act is not yet enacted. In any event, it should not be used as a mechanism to downgrade this Inquiry. [We attach a note prepared by Pete Weatherby KC](#) on the consultation. Pete Weatherby KC has been instructed in several inquiries (statutory and non-statutory). He was heavily involved in the negotiations about the Public Office (Accountability) Bill and is instructed by a number of CPs in this Inquiry.



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There is an additional concern that the recent confirmation from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) that they will no longer coordinate the privacy redaction process has sabotaged the Inquiry processes; and that this, combined with the inability to appoint a new Chair have contributed to a decision to issue this consultation.

The NPSCPs have waited many years for there to be an independent inquiry into undercover policing. Many NPSCPs have put their lives on hold to effectively participate in this Inquiry and some of them have suffered significant trauma due to the state abuses under investigation. The suggestion that this Inquiry might now be shut down and/or its scope or Terms of Reference reduced or that there will be is an ineffective non-statutory inquiry is causing significant further trauma and distress.

The NPSCPs, who have expressed a view, intend to publicise opposition to this consultation, and its use of Hillsborough Law as a pretext to curtail a public inquiry (before the Act even comes into force). They intend to take action to ensure that the following key demands are met:

1. That the Inquiry fulfils its Terms of Reference as planned, to include Tranches 4 and 5 and Module 3
2. That adequate resources are made available to ensure this
3. That the Home Office does not bow to the obvious vested interests of the state who want to shut down this Inquiry
4. That documents are processed and served more quickly, with a clear process to avoid state filibustering and to ensure candour/avoid a cover up of state abuses. It is vital that the fundamental importance of urgent disclosure to the NPSCPs is recognised
5. That a Chair/expert panel is urgently appointed to complete the work of the Inquiry
6. That the consultation is immediately withdrawn and the NPSCPs are separately invited to serve short submissions setting out their concerns and any lessons to be learnt from the process so far. (It is vital that suggestions for how the Inquiry processes could be



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made more efficient, effective and a trauma informed approach adopted are considered in consultation with CPs).

There are clear savings that might be made going forward in this Inquiry, but it is not accepted that a non-statutory inquiry is inherently more ‘agile and innovative.’

It is therefore vital that representatives from the Home Office sponsor department urgently meet with some of the CPs and their RLRs.

Please provide suggested dates for an urgent meeting with RLRs and CPs **within 7 days from 31 July 2026** (the day after Tranche 3 Phase 3 concludes). For now, and in line with the NPSCPs’ key demands, we urge that the consultation is withdrawn.

Yours sincerely

Lydia Dagostino (on behalf of the NPSCPs’ RLRs who have expressed a view)
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