

# Lay Person's Guide to the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA) and the Handling of CRN 6029679/21

**If police activity looks like an investigation, then the law treats it as one.**

## 1. What is the CPIA?

The Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA) sets out the rules police must follow when handling potential criminal cases.

In simple terms, it governs:

- How evidence is handled
- What must be recorded and retained
- What must be disclosed

It exists to ensure:

Fairness, transparency, and accountability in criminal investigations

## 2. When Do CPIA Duties Apply?

CPIA duties apply once a criminal investigation is underway.

A criminal investigation does not require:

- an arrest
- a formal case file
- or a decision to prosecute

It begins when police are actively assessing information or evidence relating to potential criminal conduct.

### 3. What Counts as Investigative Activity?

In practical terms, an investigation is underway if police are:

- Gathering or receiving material
- Assessing evidence
- Passing material to a team for review
- Coordinating activity between officers or units

It is the activity, not the label which matters.

### 4. What Duties Arise Under CPIA?

Once investigative activity begins, police must:

***(i) Follow all reasonable lines of enquiry***

This includes lines that may:

- support the allegation
- undermine it

### ***(ii) Record and retain material***

Evidence must not be ignored or discarded

It must be:

- logged
- preserved
- managed properly

### ***(iii) Maintain proper disclosure***

Relevant material must be available for prosecutors and ultimately the courts.

## **5. Why This Matters**

CPIA is not optional. It is designed to ensure that potential crimes are properly examined, not filtered or dismissed without process

## **6. Applying This to CRN 6029679/21**

In the case of CRN 6029679/21, the following is established from documentary evidence:

- A crime reference number was issued
- Material was submitted and handled within policing structures

- An investigative team was engaged
- Material was transferred internally, including via senior personnel

## 7. The Key Question

The Metropolitan Police position is that there was no formal criminal investigation.

However, the documented activity shows:

- handling of evidence
- coordination of review
- structured engagement by personnel

## 8. Why This Creates a Problem

Under CPIA:

If investigative activity has begun, statutory duties arise.

Those duties do not depend on whether the process is described as:

- a “review”
- an “assessment”
- or something else

They depend on what was actually done.

## **9. The Plain Facts**

Police handling of CRN 6029679/21 constituted investigative activity. Therefore, an investigation had commenced.

However, the full extent of activity undertaken was not compliant with CPIA statutory duties - clear deficiencies are evident in several respects.

## **10. Final Point**

CPIA exists to prevent situations where evidence is handled, but not formally recognised and therefore not subject to proper safeguards.

In simple terms, one cannot avoid full compliance with investigative duties by attempting to change the label.

***Ian Clayton***

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