

CHESHIRE, OPERATION TALLA AND THE NATIONAL POLICING RESPONSE TO VACCINE-RELATED CRIMINAL ALLEGATIONS

***What newly disclosed records reveal about the
transmission of national Operation Talla material into
local policing Gold Command***

An Ethical Approach UK Forensic Evidential Report

Ian Clayton

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1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report examines newly disclosed records provided by Cheshire Constabulary under Freedom of Information request FOI 20341.

The disclosure is important for a particular reason.

Much of the evidence previously obtained has concerned the national level of the policing response during Operation

Talla: the National Police Chiefs' Council, the National Police Coordination Centre, Operation Talla Gold and Silver, Chief Constables, national intelligence products and communications concerning reports made by members of the public relating to the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

The Cheshire disclosure provides something different. It shows what happened when material originating within that national structure arrived within an individual territorial police force.

It therefore allows part of the national-to-local transmission mechanism to be reconstructed from contemporaneous records.

The disclosure shows:

- a national communication from ACC Owen Weatherill, identified as Operation Talla Silver and National Mobilisation Coordinator NPoCC;
- its distribution to Chief Constables, Force Duty Gold Officers, force control rooms and ChiefsNet;
- its receipt and internal circulation within Cheshire Constabulary;
- consideration of the material for Gold strategy and tactical planning;
- the establishment of a local Gold/Silver/Bronze command structure;

- an associated NPoCC Strategic Intelligence and Briefing product circulated to all forces;
- direct treatment within those national materials of vaccine-related criminal allegations and Metropolitan Police CRN 6029679/21; and
- an expressly recorded operational relationship between NPoCC and NHS/DHSC teams responsible for vaccine programme security.

The significance of those matters must nevertheless be stated carefully.

The Cheshire documents do not themselves establish who authored or authorised the subsequently evidenced *“guidance to not record.”*

Nor do they establish in themselves, that Cheshire Constabulary itself refused to record a vaccine-related criminal allegation pursuant to such guidance.

What they do establish is an important part of the command, communication and implementation architecture within which the wider evidence must now be considered.

That distinction is maintained throughout this report.

2. THE 18 JANUARY 2022 NATIONAL COMMUNICATION

The principal document is dated 18 January 2022.

Its author is expressly identified as:

“ACC Owen Weatherill”

and his organisational position as:

“Op Talla Silver & National Mobilisation Coordinator NPoCC”

The intended audience is equally important:

“FAO - Chief Constables, Force Duty Gold Officers”

This was therefore not simply an intelligence note exchanged between individual officers.

It was a national senior-command communication.

Its subject was:

“Potential for imminent organised targeted criminal activity at vaccination centres and schools this week”

The communication addressed an increase in what was described as anti-vaccination activity.

Within that discussion, however, Weatherill expressly referred to:

“attempts to report ‘criminal’ offence complaints with Forces to engage the police in investigations relating to the vaccination programme.”

That passage is important.

The reporting of vaccine-related allegations to police was not occurring outside the national policing conversation. It was expressly identified within it.

3. NATIONAL ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The second page of Weatherill's communication contains the heading:

“Actions for consideration/implementation”

All forces were asked to consider a series of measures.

These included urgent engagement with vaccine-rollout partners, review of incident-response arrangements, additional police visibility and consideration of a Gold/Silver/Bronze command structure designed to provide a consistent force-wide approach.

Forces were additionally told to gather and review local intelligence and complete an NPoCC Strategic Intelligence and Briefing request for information.

Any relevant activity on 20 or 21 January was to be:

“immediately reported to NPoCC SIB to allow situational awareness and briefing to HMG partners who are aware of these threats.”

Another passage records:

“a separate briefing is also being circulated by DHSC to vaccination sites”

The documentary picture is therefore already wider than policing alone.

At national level there was communication involving NPoCC, forces, vaccine-rollout partners, HMG partners and DHSC.

The existence of those interfaces does not itself establish improper governmental influence over policing.

It does establish that those institutional interfaces existed.

4. THE METROPOLITAN POLICE CRIME REPORT WITHIN THE NATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Weatherill's communication then moves specifically to vaccine-related criminal allegations.

A separate heading appears:

“Anti Vax ‘criminal complaints’”

The document states:

“Forces maybe aware of or have received themselves ‘complaints’ from Anti-Vax activists and in some cases referencing a ‘crime number’ from the Metropolitan Police.”

It then deals expressly with the complaint received by the MPS on 20 December 2021.

Weatherill states:

“I can confirm that currently NO investigation has been initiated.”

The material received by the MPS is described as:

“several 1000 pages of generic documentation”

and the process undertaken by the MPS is described as a:

“review process”

The national communication also provides agreed MPS communications lines which other police forces were permitted to use if they received media enquiries concerning the MPS report.

This establishes an important point.

By 18 January 2022, the Metropolitan Police report was not being treated exclusively as an internal MPS matter.

Its existence, status and the language by which it should be publicly described had entered a national Operation Talla/NPoCC communication addressed to Chief Constables and Force Duty Gold Officers.

5. NPoCC, NHS AND DHSC VACCINE PROGRAMME SECURITY

Near the conclusion of the document appears a further passage of particular significance:

“NPoCC continue to work closely on policing’s behalf with the NHS and DHSC teams responsible for vaccine programme security”

That is a contemporaneous primary record.

It establishes an operational interface between national policing coordination and NHS/DHSC vaccine programme security.

It means that the question of governmental and policing interaction during this period cannot properly be approached on an assumption that the relevant organisations were operating in entirely separate institutional compartments.

The document expressly records that they were working closely together in relation to vaccine programme security.

6. HOW THE MATERIAL REACHED CHESHIRE

The Cheshire disclosure then allows the dissemination pathway to be followed.

At 17:24 on 18 January 2022, the Weatherill material was transmitted with the explanation:

“Please see the attached briefing note for forces from ACC Owen Weatherill in relation to the potential for imminent organised targeted criminal activity at vaccination centres and schools this week.”

The sender added:

“These documents have also been sent to all force control rooms for the attention of Gold Commanders and circulated on ChiefsNet.”

That sentence is particularly useful.

It identifies a deliberate national dissemination mechanism:

force control rooms to Gold Commanders to ChiefsNet.

The documents were not merely available to forces if requested. They had been actively distributed.

7. WHAT HAPPENED INSIDE CHESHIRE

At 18:41, the national material was forwarded internally:

“For review and action as appropriate”

At 19:12, another Cheshire communication stated:

“I will brief SCG on Wednesday evening (weekly COVID LRF SCG meeting) but I thought useful to have sight for Gold strategy and tactical plan, at first opportunity.”

The writer additionally recorded that they would be Gold over the weekend and offered to pick up any necessary work.

That is significant because it demonstrates movement from receipt to operational consideration.

The national material was being considered for Gold strategy and tactical planning.

This is precisely the kind of implementation pathway which the refined FOI request was designed to identify.

8. OPERATION ROADWAYS

The Cheshire records then disclose a local operation:

“Operation ROADWAYS”.

An email dated 18 January states:

“As discussed we will be implementing a GSB structure for the increase in intensity and action involving the Anti Vaccination Protests across Cheshire, primarily focused on Chester.”

The command structure included Gold and Silver officers, with Bronze functions covering:

*“Intelligence, Crime (Investigations) PSU,
Engagement/Communities, Legal and Comms”*

This is consequential evidence.

The Weatherill material had called upon forces to consider putting in place a Gold/Silver/Bronze structure to ensure a consistent force-wide approach.

The Cheshire records show that such a structure was in fact established locally in connection with the relevant activity.

The presently disclosed material does not prove that Operation ROADWAYS was created solely because of Weatherill's communication. The internal email itself says *“as discussed”*, demonstrating that local consideration was already occurring.

Nevertheless, the national and local records are plainly contemporaneous and operationally aligned.

The proper finding is therefore that the Cheshire disclosure provides evidence of local operational implementation consistent with the actions requested nationally by Operation Talla Silver/NPoCC.

9. AN UNRESOLVED PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS ENTRY

One further Cheshire passage warrants preservation, although not presently a conclusion.

The disclosed material contains the incomplete wording:

“Spoc in PSD – grip and understanding around how we deal with proportionate complaints – pro”

The remainder or surrounding context is not disclosed.

“PSD” ordinarily denotes Professional Standards Department in policing, but the incomplete nature of the disclosed entry means that it would be unsafe to attribute a precise meaning to the passage beyond its actual wording.

Given that Weatherill's national communication separately dealt with vaccine-related *“criminal complaints”*, the entry is potentially relevant.

It requires clarification though, rather than speculation.

10. THE NPoCC STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE PRODUCT

Cheshire has additionally disclosed an NPoCC Strategic Intelligence and Briefing document entitled:

“Anti-Vaccination Activity - Flash Briefing Note”

It is marked OFFICIAL SENSITIVE and states that it is relevant to:

“All Forces”

The briefing describes proposed activity at vaccination centres.

Importantly for the present investigation, it expressly identifies Metropolitan Police crime number 6029679/21.

The briefing states:

“The call to action has been made in furtherance of a conspiracy linked to a UK police Crime Number (6029679/21).”

It explains that groups believed the crime number related to an MPS criminal investigation concerning alleged serious harm arising from the vaccination programme.

Page 3 of the briefing reproduces examples of campaigning material prominently displaying the Metropolitan Police crime number.

CRN 6029679/21 had therefore become an identified subject within an NPoCC strategic-intelligence product intended for all forces.

That is an important evidential fact.

11. WHAT THE CHESHIRE DISCLOSURE NOW ESTABLISHES

Taken on its own terms, the new material permits several findings.

- First, Operation Talla Silver/NPoCC issued national senior-command material on 18 January 2022 concerning anti-vaccination activity and attempts to make criminal allegations relating to the vaccination programme.
- Second, the material was addressed to Chief Constables and Force Duty Gold Officers and distributed through force control rooms and ChiefsNet
- Third, the MPS vaccine-related crime report was expressly incorporated into that national communication.
- Fourth, agreed MPS communications concerning the crime report were made available for use by other forces.
- Fifth, NPoCC expressly recorded that it was working closely with NHS and DHSC teams responsible for vaccine programme security.
- Sixth, Cheshire received the national material and circulated it for operational consideration.
- Seventh, it was expressly considered in connection with Gold strategy and tactical planning.

- Eighth, Cheshire established a Gold/Silver/Bronze structure around the relevant anti-vaccination activity, including Crime (Investigations), Intelligence, Legal and Communications functions.
- Ninth, CRN 6029679/21 itself appeared within an NPoCC intelligence briefing relevant to all forces.

These findings materially strengthen the evidence of an organised national-to-local policing architecture.

12. THE 12 JANUARY CHIEF CONSTABLES' COUNCIL

The Cheshire disclosure becomes considerably more significant when placed against evidence already obtained.

Six days before Weatherill's 18 January communication, the Metropolitan Police crime report had been discussed during the Operation Talla update at the NPCC Chief Constables' Council.

The contemporaneous minutes recorded that:

“A crime report was made to the Met and the final assessment should be complete next week when a clearer steer can be communicated.”

The formal action was for the Operation Talla team to share the result of the peer-review assessment concerning the MPS crime report “*with all chiefs.*”

The significance of the Cheshire disclosure is that it now shows what national dissemination looked like at force level.

The 12 January record anticipated a “*clearer steer*” and all-chief dissemination.

The 18 January Weatherill communication then went to Chief Constables and Force Duty Gold Officers.

Cheshire's records show that it arrived and entered Gold strategy and tactical planning.

That sequence does not establish that the 18 January paper was itself the “*clearer steer*” contemplated on 12 January.

It does, however, demonstrate a close chronological and functional correspondence which warrants further investigation.

13. THE LATER “GUIDANCE TO NOT RECORD”

The next important comparison is with the internal correspondence of 14 February 2022.

That later material recorded:

“We have not been formally recording numbers of attempts to follow this process across the country. Our latest assessment shows that it is still occurring, it would appear that the guidance to not record has been a success as only one additional report has been created.”

The evidential distinction remains essential.

Weatherill's 18 January paper disclosed by Cheshire does not say *“do not record.”*

Indeed, that phrase does not appear within it.

What the Cheshire disclosure now supplies is evidence of the national communications architecture surrounding the same subject matter shortly before the existence of *“guidance to not record”* was expressly recorded.

It shows Operation Talla Silver, NPoCC, Chief Constables, Gold Commanders, vaccine-related criminal complaints, CRN 6029679/21, national intelligence, DHSC/NHS vaccine-security interaction and local force implementation operating within the same national policing environment.

The unanswered question becomes sharper:

Where, between those structures and communications, did the *“guidance to not record”* originate?

The February correspondence itself did not identify its author or authority.

The Cheshire disclosure does not answer that question.

It materially assists in identifying the architecture within which the answer should be sought.

14. THE POLICE SCOTLAND EVIDENCE

The existing investigation has separately identified the Police Scotland directive issued by ACC Alan Speirs on 25 January 2022 and evidence that officers were instructed how to respond to attempts to present vaccine-related material.

The significance of Cheshire is not that it proves the Police Scotland instruction originated from Weatherill's 18 January paper.

It does not prove so.

Rather, Cheshire now provides another independent force-level evidential window into the national dissemination process operating during the same period.

This is important because the investigation is no longer dependent upon reconstructing national coordination solely from documents retained centrally.

Individual forces are now producing records showing how national Operation Talla/NPoCC material entered their own command structures.

That makes comparison between forces increasingly important.

15. THE SEPTEMBER 2026 STATEMENT

There is now a further and potentially significant contemporary development.

We are in possession of correspondence, the origin of which we cannot yet reveal, which states:

“The available information indicates that the decision to close the investigation into your 2021 complaint was an organisational policy decision made by the NPCC.”

We are presently looking into how that apparent NPCC decision connects with CRN 6029679/21.

At the date of this report, that evidential relationship remains unresolved, whilst relating communications remain ongoing.

The Cheshire disclosure provides important contemporaneous context against which that NPCC-related proposition must now be examined.

We now know that national NPCC/NPoCC/Operation Talla material concerning the MPS crime report was being deliberately transmitted into territorial forces and their Gold structures.

Consequently, the possibility of an NPCC organisational policy or common national approach having practical force-level consequences is not an abstract institutional theory.

The Cheshire records demonstrate the mechanism by which national Operation Talla material could reach operational command within a force.

Whether the particular policy referred to travelled through that mechanism remains to be established.

16. A DOCUMENTED CHAIN

The emerging chronology can therefore be stated without embellishment.

- 12 January 2022: the MPS crime report is discussed within the NPCC Chief Constables' Council Operation Talla update; a forthcoming assessment is expected to permit a “*clearer steer*”, and the Operation Talla team is tasked to share the peer-review result with all chiefs.
- 18 January 2022: Operation Talla Silver/NPoCC issues national material to Chief Constables and Force Duty Gold Officers. Vaccine-related criminal complaints and the MPS report are expressly addressed.
- 18 January 2022: the material is distributed to force control rooms, Gold Commanders and ChiefsNet.

- 18 January 2022: Cheshire receives and circulates it for review and action.
- 18 January 2022: Cheshire records consideration of the material for Gold strategy and tactical planning.
- 18 - 20 January 2022: Operation ROADWAYS and a Cheshire Gold/Silver/Bronze structure are documented.
- 20/21 January 2022: NPoCC SIB material relevant to all forces expressly identifies CRN 6029679/21.
- 14 February 2022: separate national policing correspondence records that *“the guidance to not record has been a success.”*
- September 2026: an official source of which we cannot presently disclose the identity describes the relevant closure as apparently involving an *“organisational policy decision made by the NPCC.”*

Those are separate pieces of evidence. They should not be artificially collapsed into a single proposition, but neither should they be examined in artificial isolation.

17. THE FORENSIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Cheshire disclosure changes the evidential position in one important respect.

Previously, it was possible to demonstrate national coordination.

It is now possible to demonstrate national transmission and local operational receipt.

That is different.

The records provide an identifiable pathway:

Operation Talla Silver / NPoCC

to

Chief Constables / Force Duty Gold Officers

to

Force Control Rooms / ChiefsNet

to

Cheshire senior command

to

Gold strategy / tactical planning

to

local Gold-Silver-Bronze operational structure

That pathway is evidenced by contemporaneous records rather than reconstructed from institutional assumptions.

This matters particularly when considering the later evidence concerning national guidance.

If national guidance existed, the obvious forensic question is not confined to, what did it say?

It is also:

How was it disseminated?

Cheshire now provides evidence of a functioning dissemination architecture capable of carrying national Operation Talla material rapidly into force command structures.

18. THE PUBLIC-INTEREST QUESTION

The public-interest issue is therefore straightforward.

Police forces in England and Wales are operationally independent.

At the same time, Operation Talla existed precisely to coordinate the national policing response to what was said to be an unprecedented national emergency.

National coordination is not inherently improper. Nor is intelligence sharing. Nor is the establishment of common operational approaches.

Indeed, coordinated policing may be essential in circumstances crossing force boundaries.

The constitutional and ethical difficulty arises however, if national coordination affects something as fundamental as whether or not criminal allegations presented by members of the public are accepted or recorded.

If such a national approach existed, legitimate questions follow.

- Who made the decision?
- What was its legal basis?
- Was it advice or instruction?
- Which forces received it?
- How was it communicated?
- What discretion remained with individual chief constables?
- What role did Operation Talla Gold and Silver play?
- What role did NPoCC and NPCC play?
- What governmental interface existed?
- And what independent ethical scrutiny did the approach receive?

The Cheshire disclosure does not answer all of those questions. It does however makes them more difficult to avoid.

19. THE REMAINING REDACTIONS

Cheshire has also confirmed that further information is held but has withheld material under sections 31(1)(a) and 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act.

The s31 justification refers principally to protection of law-enforcement tactics and prevention of prejudice to policing activity.

There may be information which remains properly exempt. That must be acknowledged.

However, given the historical nature of the material and the substantial public interest now arising concerning national policing decision-making, the proportionality of the remaining redactions merits careful reconsideration.

Cheshire's own appeals procedure permits an internal review within 40 working days and states that the matter will be reconsidered by an independent officer.

Cheshire's current public FOI material likewise emphasises accountability and transparency as purposes of access to public information.

An internal review of the remaining redactions would therefore appear appropriate and consideration to proceed on such a pathway is now being considered.

20. CONCLUSION

The Cheshire disclosure does not reveal the author of the national “*guidance to not record.*”

It does not prove that Cheshire implemented such guidance.

It does not establish ministerial direction.

It does not establish that NPCC ordered the closure of CRN 6029679/21.

Those limitations matter.

But, the disclosure establishes something important in its own right.

It shows the machinery.

On 18 January 2022, Operation Talla Silver and NPoCC transmitted national material concerning vaccine-related activity to Chief Constables and Force Duty Gold Officers.

That material expressly addressed attempts by members of the public to report criminal allegations concerning the vaccination programme.

It expressly addressed the Metropolitan Police crime report.
It provided nationally usable communications concerning that report.

It recorded close working between NPoCC and NHS/DHSC vaccine programme security teams.

The material was distributed through force control rooms and ChiefsNet.

Cheshire received it.

Cheshire circulated it for action.

It entered Gold strategy and tactical planning.

A local Gold/Silver/Bronze structure was established.

And an associated NPoCC strategic-intelligence product distributed nationally expressly identified CRN 6029679/21.

Weeks later, separate contemporaneous policing correspondence would record:

“the guidance to not record has been a success”

because only one additional report had been created.

More than four years later, an official body would describe a policing approach as:

“an organisational policy decision made by the NPCC.”

The evidential connection between those matters has not yet been established.

That is precisely why it is now being investigated.

The Cheshire disclosure moves the enquiry forward because one important question can no longer sensibly be treated as theoretical.

Could national Operation Talla material concerning vaccine-related criminal allegations travel from the centre into the operational command structures of an individual police force?

Cheshire's own records now provide the answer and that answer is, undoubtedly, yes.

The question which remains is considerably more important:

What, exactly, travelled through that machinery?

And, in particular:

Did the subsequently recorded “*guidance to not record*” travel through it too?

That is now a matter upon which the primary records should be permitted to speak.