

THE MESS

When the Institutional Record No Longer Tells One Story

An Evidential Briefing concerning CRN 6029679/21, Operation Talla and the Accounts Subsequently Given by Public Institutions

“At this stage, I make no accusations. I simply require explanations.”

- Ian Clayton, 29 September 2026

Introduction

There is no need to begin this paper with an allegation.

There is no need to advance a theory.

There is not even a need, at this stage, to determine which of several competing institutional accounts is correct.

We need only do something considerably simpler.

Read the documents.

- Read what the Metropolitan Police said in January 2022.

- Read what Operation Talla recorded on the same day.
- Read what the Metropolitan Police subsequently said in May 2022.
- Read what was advanced on behalf of the Commissioner before the Administrative Court in 2023.
- Then read what Metropolitan Police Professional Standards has now said after reviewing crime report 6029679/21 in 2026.

The difficulty does not arise because Ethical Approach UK has imposed an interpretation upon those records.

The difficulty arises because the records do not comfortably reconcile with one another.

That is The Mess.

1. 12 January 2022: The Same Day, Two Remarkably Different Positions

Crime Reference Number 6029679/21 arose from allegations presented to the Metropolitan Police on 20 December 2021.

By 12 January 2022, the matter had travelled considerably further than a local police station.

The Operation Talla update presented to the NPCC Chief Constables' Council recorded:

“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 corresponding action was:

“Op Talla team to share the results of the peer review assessment relating to the Crime Report submitted to the Met Police in relation to Anti-Vaccinations with all chiefs.”

The significance is difficult to miss.

On 12 January 2022, the national policing structure was being told that the final assessment of the Metropolitan Police crime report should be completed the following week.

A “clearer steer” was thereafter expected.

The results of a peer review assessment were to be shared with all chiefs.

The surviving record therefore demonstrates that CRN 6029679/21 had acquired national policing significance.

But something else also happened on 12 January.

At 8:35pm, Detective Inspector Akshay Chibber, identifying himself as Staff Officer to Metropolitan Police

Commissioner Cressida Dick, wrote to Mark Sexton concerning the same crime report.

He said:

“It has subsequently been closed and will not be investigated any further.”

But Chibber went further:

“I'm afraid allegations against the Government's Covid regulations and vaccine programs are not a matter for the Met police to investigate as allegation of a criminal offence.”

The juxtaposition is extraordinary.

On the same day, one institutional record indicates that the final assessment should be completed next week, after which a “*clearer steer*” could be communicated.

Yet, the Commissioner's Office was already communicating a categorical position to a complainant: closed; no further investigation; and, more broadly, allegations against the Government's Covid regulations and vaccine programmes were not a matter for the Metropolitan Police to investigate as allegations of criminal offending.

That creates the first question in The Mess:

What was the source of the policing proposition communicated from the Commissioner's Office on 12 January 2022?

And, if the anticipated “clearer steer” depended upon an assessment which was not expected to be complete until the following week:

What steer was being applied on the evening of 12 January?

2. The Investigation Which Apparently Was - and Wasn't

The terminology subsequently becomes still more difficult.

On 18 May 2022, Detective Superintendent Tor Garnett, then Head of CID, addressed whether complainants had been told that the allegations were subject to investigation.

She wrote:

“If you, or any of the complainants, were informed that the allegation was subject to an investigation, this would not have been an inaccurate representation; the allegations were, in fact, being reviewed/investigated to determine whether a crime should be recorded.”

That language matters.

It does not merely say that documents had been received.

It expressly uses:

“reviewed/investigated”.

Fast-forward to September 2026.

Following her review of crime report 6029679/21, PC Amanda Cousins of Metropolitan Police Professional Standards stated:

“I have reviewed crime report 6029679/21 and can confirm that an investigation was opened in relation to the matter recorded.”

The Professional Standards outcome also records:

“You are correct, the crime report does still exist along with any information gathered.”

We are therefore left with a remarkable sequence.

The public and complainants encountered propositions concerning no investigation.

Garnett subsequently said describing the allegations as subject to an investigation *“would not have been an inaccurate representation”* because they were being *“reviewed/investigated”*.

And Professional Standards has now gone further:

“an investigation was opened”.

These formulations require reconciliation.

Not by the complainants.

Not by Ethical Approach UK.

By the Metropolitan Police.

3. This Was Not Merely a Local MPS Matter

The 12 January Chief Constables' Council record materially changes the context in which CRN 6029679/21 must be considered.

The crime report was being discussed at national level.

Its assessment was expected to provide a “*clearer steer*”.

The Operation Talla team was tasked with sharing the resulting peer-review assessment with all chiefs.

Subsequent documentary material identified during the Ethical Approach UK investigation raises further questions concerning the national policing response to Covid/vaccine-related reports.

Police Scotland documentation later disclosed the January 2022 Speirs Directive, which referred expressly to the Metropolitan Police crime reference and to the NPCC position. Publicly available copies of the relevant material record the instruction that certain requests should be rejected and that Operation Talla should be informed.

What relationship therefore existed between the assessment of CRN 6029679/21, the “clearer steer” anticipated by Operation Talla, and the national approach subsequently taken towards comparable reports?

That question should be answered from records.

4. Then Came the Administrative Court

The matter becomes considerably more serious when attention moves from operational correspondence to judicial proceedings.

In 2023, Mark Sexton and Philip Hyland brought judicial review proceedings concerning the Metropolitan Police handling of their allegations.

The Commissioner defended those proceedings through the Metropolitan Police Directorate of Legal Services.

The position advanced on behalf of the Commissioner included the proposition that:

“the defendant determined that the allegations made by the claimants did not amount to complaints of criminal misconduct and so he declined to institute a criminal investigation into them.”

Consider carefully what that explanation conveys.

It describes an individual assessment of the allegations.

- The claimants made allegations.
- The Commissioner assessed them.
- The allegations were determined not to amount to complaints of criminal misconduct.
- Consequently, a criminal investigation was not instituted.

Now return to the communication from the Commissioner's own Staff Officer on 12 January 2022:

“I'm afraid allegations against the Government's Covid regulations and vaccine programs are not a matter for the Met police to investigate as allegation of a criminal offence.”

The two propositions are materially different in character.

One says, in substance:

We assessed these allegations and determined that they did not amount to criminal misconduct.

The other is considerably broader:

Allegations against the Government's Covid regulations and vaccine programmes are not a matter for the Metropolitan Police to investigate as allegations of criminal offending.

Both propositions emanated institutionally from the Commissioner.

That produces perhaps the most important question in this paper:

Which proposition actually governed the Commissioner's decision concerning CRN 6029679/21?

There follows another.

If the broader policing proposition communicated from the Commissioner's Office on 12 January 2022 formed any part of the actual decision-making process, was the Administrative Court informed of it when the Commissioner subsequently defended the decision on the basis that the claimants' particular allegations had been assessed and determined not to amount to complaints of criminal misconduct?

This paper, at this point, asks what the Court was told.

5. Then There Is Paul Easter's SRA Complaint

The institutional difficulty extends beyond policing.

On 15 February 2022, Paul Easter, identifying himself as working for the Department of Health and Social Care on behalf of HM Government assessing risks to the UK Vaccine programme, complained to the Solicitors Regulation Authority concerning Philip Hyland/PJH Law.

Among the matters complained of was:

“The sharing of the Met Police crime reference number, claiming there is an active investigation into the vaccination programme”

Easter further asserted:

“the inability to differentiate between a crime reference number and an open police investigation indicates that the firm should be reported to the Solicitors Regulation Authority as misconduct.”

Set that proposition beside what Garnett subsequently said:

“If you, or any of the complainants, were informed that the allegation was subject to an investigation, this would not have been an inaccurate representation...”

And then beside Professional Standards in 2026:

“I have reviewed crime report 6029679/21 and can confirm that an investigation was opened in relation to the matter recorded.”

The question for the SRA is consequently straightforward.

What becomes of the factual foundation of that element of Easter's complaint when measured against the Metropolitan Police's own subsequent statements and records?

Again, no theory is required, as the documents create the question.

6. The Mess

Step back from the individual documents.

The resulting picture is remarkable.

- On 12 January 2022, national policing records indicated that a final assessment of the Metropolitan Police crime report should be completed the following week and that a “*clearer steer*” would follow.
- That same evening, the Commissioner's Staff Officer told a complainant that the matter had been closed and would not be investigated further - and communicated a considerably broader proposition about allegations concerning Government Covid regulations and vaccine programmes.
- Months later, the MPS Head of CID said describing the allegations as subject to investigation would not have been inaccurate.
- In 2023, the Commissioner defended judicial review proceedings on the basis that the claimants' allegations had been assessed and determined not to amount to complaints of criminal misconduct.

- In 2026, Metropolitan Police Professional Standards reviewed the crime report and confirmed that “*an investigation was opened*”.
- Meanwhile, an HMG/DHSC-associated complainant had reported a solicitor to his regulator, in part for representing that there was an active police investigation.
- And behind all of this sits Operation Talla - The national policing structure within which the Metropolitan Police crime report was being discussed, peer reviewed and expected to generate a “*clearer steer*” for chief constables.

That is why this paper is called ***The Mess***.

- It is not a conclusion about criminality.
- It is not an allegation of conspiracy.
- It is not a substitute for investigation.
- It is the result of placing the institutions' own recorded positions beside one another.

7. Six Questions Which Now Require Answers

The questions can be reduced to six.

- First: What was the source of the proposition communicated by DI Akshay Chibber from the Commissioner's Office on 12 January 2022 concerning

allegations against the Government's Covid regulations and vaccine programmes?

- Second: How could the matter be communicated as closed and not to be investigated further on the same date that the Chief Constables' Council was being told that its final assessment should be completed the following week, after which a “*clearer steer*” could be communicated?
- Third: What was the precise relationship between CRN 6029679/21, its peer-review assessment, the anticipated national “*clearer steer*” and the subsequent national policing approach towards comparable Covid/vaccine-related reports?
- Fourth: How does the Metropolitan Police reconcile its various descriptions of whether an investigation existed with Professional Standards' 2026 confirmation that “*an investigation was opened*”?
- Fifth: When the Commissioner defended the 2023 judicial review on the basis of an assessment of the claimants' particular allegations, was the Administrative Court informed of the broader policing proposition communicated from the Commissioner's Office on 12 January 2022?
- Sixth: In light of the Metropolitan Police's subsequent statements, what factual basis remains for the allegation

made to the SRA that Philip Hyland/PJH Law had demonstrated misconduct by representing that the matter was subject to police investigation?

None requires speculation to answer.

They require records, recollection where appropriate, and institutional candour.

Conclusion

There is a temptation, when confronted with a documentary history this complicated, to search immediately for a grand explanation, but that temptation ought to be resisted.

There is a more disciplined path to take.

- Establish what happened.
- Establish who decided what.
- Establish what information was available to each decision-maker.
- Establish what was communicated internally.
- Establish what was communicated publicly.
- And establish what was subsequently placed before a court.

Only then should conclusions be drawn.

Ethical Approach UK therefore presently advances no single explanation capable of resolving ***The Mess***.

Instead, we return the questions to those uniquely capable of answering them.

These are not questions manufactured from speculation.

They are questions created by institutional documents.

The documents belong to the institutions and so do the answers.