

**THE INQUIRIES ACT 2005
BEFORE HH DEBORAH TAYLOR**

THE NOTTINGHAM INQUIRY

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF LEICESTERSHIRE POLICE**

1. This Opening Statement is provided to the Inquiry on behalf of the Chief Constable of Leicestershire Police, pursuant to the Chair’s directions dated 28 January 2026.
2. Temporary Chief Constable Sandall repeats his deepest condolences to the families of Barney Webber, Grace O’Malley-Kumar and Ian Coates, and recognises the suffering of Wayne Birkett, Sharon Miller and Marcin Gawronski. T/Chief Constable Sandall acknowledges the terrible impact on all those whose lives have been profoundly affected by the terrible events of 13 June 2023. The witness statements provided to this Inquiry and in earlier criminal proceedings make plain the tragic and ongoing consequences of VC’s horrific offending on 13 June 2023.
3. Leicestershire Police’s involvement in the events within the scope of this Inquiry is in relation to the police investigation following an incident on 5 May 2023. On 5 May 2023, Leicestershire Police received a 999 call from a logistics business called Arvato in Kegworth, Leicestershire, reporting that two workers had been assaulted at work by another worker called ‘Val Mendes’. The incident was graded as a ‘grade one’ (emergency) call. Police Constable (“PC”) Libbie-Mae Taylor and PC Connor Amos-Perkins were assigned to the incident.¹ They attended Arvato’s premises,

¹ PC Taylor was a student constable being tutored by PC Amos-Perkins.

which VC had already left. They spoke to the victims and witnesses, but had not taken statements before being assigned to another grade one call elsewhere.

4. The case was allocated to PC Taylor, who commenced an investigation. On 24 May 2023 Sky Recruitment Solutions (the recruitment agency that had placed VC at Arvato) informed PC Taylor that ‘Val Mendes’ identity was VC. Once she had VC’s identity, PC Taylor did not establish from police systems (though the information was there to be found) that VC had an outstanding warrant for his arrest issued by Nottinghamshire Magistrates’ Court on 22 September 2022 for the offence of ‘assault by beating of an emergency worker’, which had occurred on 3 September 2021.
5. By 13 June 2023 the Leicestershire Police investigation had made some progress, but statements had not yet been taken from the victims or witnesses, and VC had not yet been interviewed.
6. The Chief Constable makes the following five points by way of opening.
7. First, the Inquiry has the full support of Leicestershire Police. Leicestershire Police has given the Inquiry its full assistance from the outset and is committed to doing so throughout the Inquiry process. Leicestershire Police has assisted the Inquiry, and will continue to assist the Inquiry, with candour. Leicestershire Police has disclosed documentation and provided witness evidence, and will provide any further material requested by the Inquiry.
8. Second, there is an outstanding misconduct process in respect of PC Taylor, PC Amos-Perkins, and one of their supervisors, Temporary Police Sergeant (“T/PS”) Mark Read. The practical impact of the misconduct process being outstanding is that

those three officers are separately represented. It also has the effect of limiting the representations that the Chief Constable is able to make at this stage² for two reasons:

- a. The investigation is being carried out independently by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (“IOPC”), rather than by Leicestershire Police; and
 - b. T/CC Sandall will have a statutory role³ in the misconduct process once the IOPC’s investigation has concluded, including being responsible for bringing any misconduct proceedings that the officers may face.
9. Third, without transgressing the second point, the Chief Constable observes that the three officers above have accepted the following shortcomings. On behalf of Leicestershire Police, the Chief Constable recognises those shortcomings, and apologises for them. They are as follows:
- a. PC Taylor not saving her body worn video footage (“BWV”) of the police attendance at Arvato’s premises as ‘evidential’, meaning that it no longer exists. PC Amos-Perkins (as PC Taylor’s tutor constable) not directing PC Taylor to do so or checking that she had.
 - b. PC Taylor not searching on the NICHE database for VC’s offending history and any outstanding criminal matters, and not conducting searches for VC on the PNC or PND systems. PC Amos-Perkins for not reminding PC Taylor to do so or double checking that she had.
 - c. T/PS Read not conducting the required 28-day supervisor’s review of PC Taylor’s investigation.

² The Chief Constable would welcome the opportunity to make further, more detailed, submissions when the misconduct process has concluded.

³ Under Part 2 of the Police Reform Act 2002 and the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020.

10. Fourth, in order to assist the Inquiry it may, on occasion, be necessary to emphasise:
 - a. The need to avoid the risk of hindsight; and
 - b. The need for any counterfactuals to be explored rigorously and on the basis of evidence. This will be relevant when the Inquiry considers what would have happened if the Leicestershire Police officers had identified that there was an outstanding warrant for VC's arrest or taken other actions in their investigation.

11. Fifth, in the event that the Inquiry identifies shortcomings in Leicestershire Police's actions, policies or processes (or in national guidance and processes that apply to policing as a whole), Leicestershire Police is keen to understand and to implement that learning.

JAMES BERRY KC

JOANNE KANE

Serjeants' Inn Chambers

18 February 2026