

Witness Name: RACHEL WATSON

No: WITN0339015

Dated: 07 April 2026

## THE NOTTINGHAM INQUIRY

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### SECOND WITNESS STATEMENT OF RACHEL WATSON

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I, Rachel Watson, will say as follows: -

#### **INTRODUCTION**

- 1) I am the Director General of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (“the IOPC”). I have held this position since 22 April 2024.
- 2) This witness statement is made to provide the Nottingham Inquiry (“the Inquiry”) and Core Participants with an update to the matters set out in my first witness statement [WITN0339001] dated 11 December 2025 which describes the IOPC’s involvement in investigations and other matters touching on the Inquiry’s Terms of Reference (“ToR”).
- 3) May I begin again by expressing my sympathy for the bereaved families and survivors of the attacks carried out by Valdo Calocane (VC) in Nottingham on 13 June 2023. I want to again acknowledge the enormity of the pain and loss they have faced. I welcome the Inquiry and wish to fully assist it.
- 4) In the interests of reducing duplication, I take as read the sections of my first witness statement [WITN0339001] which set out the background, role, remit, and statutory framework underpinning investigations at the IOPC.

#### **UPDATES RELATING TO ONGOING IOPC INVESTIGATIONS**

- 5) In relation to Operation Gosemore, I am aware that the IOPC received a letter on 19 March 2026 from the firm of solicitors representing two of the survivors

requesting that the investigation be reopened. This matter is being considered in line with our operational policies and procedures.

- 6) As many as possible of the outstanding investigative actions for Operations Astwell, Copthorne, Longdale and the re-opened Operation Penhallow have been completed. Updates are provided to the complainants and Interested Persons every 28 days. We continue to apply our enhanced engagement policy and provide the bereaved families with the opportunity to review decisions and relevant underlying material before decisions are finalised.
- 7) Deputy Director General Steve Noonan made a policy decision [WITN0339016] on 10 February 2026 that:

*“Operations Astwell, Penhallow, Copthorne and Longdale will continue to be investigated in parallel with the evidence hearings of the Nottingham Inquiry, which begin on 23 February 2026. The investigations will remain open until it is believed that all evidence which may be relevant to its investigations has been given to the Inquiry. This decision will be kept under review. I am satisfied that this decision is necessary for our final decision making to be effective and efficient, to meet the public interest and our statutory duties. “*
- 8) On 12 February, this decision was communicated to the families and the Inquiry. The investigators will review evidence given to the Inquiry as part of their own ongoing investigations. Arrangements have been made to receive and consider any representations the families and victims wish to make concerning the Inquiry evidence. This approach reflects the importance of the Inquiry and the need to ensure that IOPC decision making takes account of all relevant evidence.
- 9) In order to try to assist the Inquiry as fully as possible, arrangements have been made for staff time to be prioritised internally so that evidence obtained by the investigations can be assessed and provided to the Inquiry promptly.
- 10) At the conclusion of these investigations, final reports will be completed, and the IOPC Decision Maker will then make determinations as required by paragraph 23 to Schedule 3 of the PRA 2002, in particular about whether any officers subject to investigation should face disciplinary or unsatisfactory performance proceedings. The IOPC is required to seek representations from the forces (as the Appropriate

Authority) before making final determinations and, applying its enhanced engagement policies, it will also seek representations from the families and victims before doing so.

### **New Complaint**

- 11) On 26 March 2026 Mrs Emma Webber, Barnaby's mother made a complaint to Nottinghamshire Police concerning former Special Constable Skenderaj ("SC Skenderaj") accessing highly sensitive body worn footage showing in graphic detail the injuries to her son Barnaby (and to Grace O'Malley-Kumar), and also the efforts to save his life, without authority.
- 12) This matter had come to the attention of the Nottinghamshire Police, as Appropriate Authority (AA) previously in 2023, resulting in a conduct matter being recorded and investigated (without a referral to the IOPC). During the investigation SC Skenderaj resigned but he was subject to an Accelerated Misconduct Hearing as a former officer, which determined he would have been dismissed had he still be serving, and he was placed on the police "barred list". The AA failed to provide Mrs Webber or other members of Barnaby's and Grace's families with any information about the investigation until after proceedings had concluded and so they were unable to participate in it. Operation Astwell is investigating the families' complaints about that failure but not the conduct of SC Skanderaj as it had already been investigated.
- 13) In her complaint Mrs Webber has explained:
- "We have never been given sufficient detail of this Officer's actions and were told he was dismissed.
- We now understand the shocking detail of what he accessed and also that he resigned (it was also publicly stated that he had been dismissed - clearly not the case).
- I request that this file be referred to the Crown Prosecution Service for a charging decision regarding the criminal elements of this data breach."
- 14) The AA referred this new complaint to the IOPC for a mode of investigation decision. It was determined on 1 April 2026 that the AA should take it forward. That would include ascertaining if a referral to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

was considered during the conduct matter investigation and whether to investigate the complaint, with a view to making such a referral now.

- 15) Under the statutory regime a conduct matter investigation should investigate any indication a criminal offence may have been committed alongside breaches of the standards of professional behaviour arising out of the same facts. Accessing police information without authority will usually indicate that an offence may have been committed contrary to s170 Data Protection Act 2018. It may also indicate offences contrary the Computer Misuse Act 1990 and/or amount to Misconduct in a Public Office.
- 16) The AA has now confirmed it cannot find in its documentation for the investigation of SC Skenderaj (CM/00072/23) any explicit reference to criminality or any reference around decisions or consideration of referral to the CPS.
- 17) The IOPC has explained its view to Nottinghamshire Police, that the AA should:
1. Decide if there should be an investigation under paragraph 16 schedule 3 of Mrs Webber's complaint with a view to determining if there should be a referral to CPS for a charging decision.
  2. If not, and the complaint is handled other than by investigation, it should explain to Mrs Webber why it has decided that no such investigation is appropriate
- 18) The IOPC believes this the most effective way of addressing the complaint as the AA already has the investigation material which needs to be considered for a referral and can make a decision quickly. Mrs Webber will have a right to review of the outcome by the IOPC in either case under paragraphs 25 or 6A to schedule 3 respectively.

#### **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST IOPC STAFF**

- 19) I refer to my first witness statement where I provided details of the IOPC's approach to the allegations concerning remarks by IOPC staff that were included in the Operation Penhallow officers' response to the notice of misconduct proceedings and which were made public in the media on 25 September 2025.
- 20) On 22 July 2025, the IOPC instructed Womble Bond Dickinson (WBD) solicitors to investigate the allegations together with the complaints made by the families.

The Director of Investigations, Nicola Marfleet, has oversight of the investigation and receives regular updates.

- 21) I am assured that WBD are making every effort to complete the investigations as quickly as possible, including by agreeing to split the investigation into two parts. Part one covers complaints from the family outside the scope of the allegations described in paragraph 11. Part two concerns the allegations described in paragraph 19.
- 22) The investigation into Part one has concluded, decisions have been made under our disciplinary and complaints policies, and the IOPC communicated the outcomes to the families on 2 April 2026.
- 23) At the date of this witness statement, the investigation into Part two is continuing. I understand that the three officers have been advised by their solicitors not to provide any account to the investigation until after the conclusion of the re-opened Operation Penhallow. Their solicitors have said that this is not intended to frustrate the investigation but to protect the officers' legitimate interests in the statutory processes.
- 24) WBD are also waiting to receive clarification from one Police Federation representative of their account, which they have said is delayed pending receipt of legal advice. The IOPC hopes the investigation and decision-making will be completed as quickly as possible after all those accounts have been received.
- 25) I fully acknowledge the strength of feeling of the families in relation to the staff members whose conduct is being investigated. Those whose conduct was referred to in the press coverage mentioned in Paragraph 19 remain subject to restrictions on engaging with members of the public.

### **Reflections**

- 26) I reiterate the reflections I provided in paragraphs 115-130 of my first witness statement. The IOPC will continue to reflect on the outstanding investigations and additionally the evidence heard at the Inquiry. I will continue in the meantime to try to ensure that these investigations are progressing with the sensitivity,

diligence, and timeliness they deserve. I and others in the senior management team are briefed regularly on these investigations and are fully aware of the monthly updates.

- 27) In my first statement I explained my view that consideration must be given to the need to strengthen communication with families and victims in similar cases, in a way which fully acknowledges the deep distress and trauma they will be experiencing. This obviously applies to correspondence sent directly to families and victims but reflecting further on the families' complaints, their evidence and submissions to the Inquiry, has led me to the conclusion that those principles should apply in all areas of IOPC work. Historically decision-making documents were drafted only with AAs in mind - for example assessing the harm from a breach of the standards of professional behaviour by reference only to the principles of legal causation - without recognising that a particular failure may have been a missed opportunity to prevent later terrible events. Many of those decision-making documents are now shared under the enhanced engagement policy when they would not have been previously. Regardless of that, in future all our documents should be written in a manner which fully reflects an awareness of the inevitable distress and trauma experienced by families and victims, whilst also applying the correct legal tests.
- 28) In terms of steps to improve the experience of those who come into contact with the IOPC, I can confirm that we are continuing to develop our strategy to improve the experiences of people who use the IOPC's services or otherwise come into contact with the IOPC - our "service user strategy". At the end of 2025 we ran our first exercise to involve bereaved families, and families of seriously injured people in IOPC service improvement. The aim was to find out about their experiences of being involved in an IOPC independent Death and Serious Injury investigation. These families agreed to complete a survey and tell us about their experiences. We were particularly interested to hear about how we communicated with them, whether the information that we provided throughout was helpful and made them feel informed about what was happening, and whether we considered their needs and circumstances. The feedback from these families is now being used to

inform our operational policy work on Enhanced Engagement. Work to embed “enhanced engagement” in our investigations where families need more effective participation continues.

- 29) We have already launched two service user panels, for policing professionals and for complainants who have gone through the review process, and we intend to launch our third service user involvement panel in June 2026 for members of the public, building on this work.

**STATEMENT OF TRUTH**

I believe the content of this statement to be true. I understand that proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief of its truth.

Signed:

**GRO-B**

Rachel Watson

Director General

**Independent Office for Police Conduct**

Dated: 07 April 2026

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