

From:

Ethical Approach UK

To:

(1) Director General, Justice Policy Group, Ministry of Justice (via email)

(2) Head of Justice Services, South Wales Police (via online submission portal)

cc:

Clerk to the House of Commons Justice Committee (via email)

Date: 26 December 2025

Dear Sir or Madam

**Re: Clarifications relating to justice during Operation Talla**

I write in the public interest to seek constitutional clarification arising from sworn evidence given by the Crown Prosecution Service to the UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry.

As you will be aware, the CPS witness statement of Gregor McGill and dated 12 May 2023, confirms that during the Covid period Operation Talla operated as a multi-agency framework involving policing bodies, the CPS, the Home Office and others.

The statement further records that the Criminal Justice Sub-Group for Covid-19 was chaired by the Head of Justice Services for South Wales Police, with participation from the CPS, HMCTS, probation services and additional criminal justice partners.

The CPS evidence also confirms that this framework involved informal coordination, review of draft regulations and the development of nationally consistent operational guidance.

This evidence gives rise to a legitimate constitutional question concerning how judicial independence and oversight were maintained during this period of coordinated policing, prosecutorial and executive activity.

In that context, I respectfully seek clarification on the following matters:

- What visibility the Ministry of Justice had of Operation Talla and the Criminal Justice Sub-Group arrangements described in the CPS

witness statement, given the Ministry's constitutional role in relation to the justice system and sponsorship of the CPS and HMCTS.

- What role the Criminal Justice Sub-Group, under the chairmanship of the Head of Justice Services for South Wales Police, understood the judiciary and courts to have in relation to the legal and operational coordination taking place.
- What safeguards were considered or applied to ensure that judicial independence and effective court oversight were preserved where legal interpretation, enforcement guidance and prosecutorial considerations were being developed outside the courtroom.

These questions are not posed adversarially. They arise from a concern to understand how constitutional balance was maintained during an unprecedented period and to support public confidence in the integrity of public justice.

Given the significance of the CPS evidence in the public domain, a clear and considered response from both addressees would be of considerable public value.

I would be grateful for and look forward to clarification from you both.

Yours faithfully

Ian Clayton

Lead Investigator

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