

Operation Talla, CRN 6029679/21 and the Question of National Policing Policy

A factual public briefing on chronology, coordination and constitutional implications

Introduction

This briefing sets out, in strictly factual terms, a sequence of events concerning Crime Reference Number 6029679/21 and Operation Talla.

It does not allege motive or speculate.

It simply records what the documentary evidence shows and identifies the legal and constitutional questions that arise from that evidence.

The issues concern not a single local policing decision, but the relationship between:

- local police forces,
- the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC),
- nationally coordinated policy, and
- the public's lawful right to report crime and have it investigated.

The established facts

The following points are evidenced by contemporaneous records, disclosures and official correspondence.

1. The crime report

On 20 December 2021, allegations supported by extensive documentary and expert evidence were submitted to the Metropolitan Police.

A formal Crime Reference Number was issued: CRN 6029679/21.

Officers were assigned.

Evidence portals were opened.

Statements and material were received and logged.

Under ordinary policing practice and under the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA), these steps constitute the commencement of an investigation.

2. Senior awareness

The matter was escalated rapidly within the Metropolitan Police Service.

Communications show awareness at senior ranks.

The case was treated as significant in scale and complexity.

This was not a routine neighbourhood complaint.

3. National coordination structure (Operation Talla)

Separately, sworn evidence given to the UK Covid Inquiry establishes:

- Each police force retained operational responsibility locally.
- The NPCC adopted a national coordination role.
- Operation Talla was the national structure for that coordination.
- Senior officers from multiple forces sat on national command groups.

In short:

Local forces acted within a nationally coordinated framework.

4. January 2022 national guidance

In January 2022:

NPCC-linked communications refer directly to CRN 6029679/21.

At the same time, guidance emerges instructing forces not to record or accept certain categories of Covid-related crime reports.

Police Scotland's Speirs Directive explicitly instructs officers to reject reports and create intelligence entries instead of crime records.

This guidance was not local. It was national.

5. Chronology

The timeline is therefore:

December 2021 - major crime report opened (CRN 6029679/21)

December 2021 to January 2022 - substantial evidence submitted

January 2022 - NPCC command communications reference the CRN

January 2022 - national "reject / not record" style guidance disseminated

This sequence is evidenced and undisputed.

No inference is required to observe that the events occur contemporaneously.

The legal position

Two settled principles apply.

Crime recording triggers duties

Once a crime is recorded:

- investigative obligations arise (CPIA)
- evidence must be retained
- enquiries must be conducted proportionately
- decisions must be case-specific

A crime cannot lawfully be treated as a mere administrative receipt.

- Blanket policies are unlawful
- Police may exercise discretion case-by-case.

They may not:

- apply blanket refusals,
- predetermine outcomes,
- or fetter investigative duties by policy.

National guidance cannot override statutory obligations.

Policy cannot displace law.

The constitutional questions which arise

On the public record, the following issues now arise naturally:

- If forces remained “operationally independent”, why was national coordination issuing rejection guidance?
- If a crime was recorded and officers assigned, how can it later be described as “no investigation”?
- If national command structures were aware of this specific CRN, what role, if any, did that awareness play in subsequent national policy decisions?
- Were courts and complainants informed of the full national governance context when litigation later occurred?

These are not rhetorical questions.

They are matters of legality and candour.

Why this matters

This is not about one case. It concerns a fundamental safeguard:

The public must be able to report crime and have it recorded and assessed according to law.

If national coordination structures can:

- discourage recording,
- redirect reports away from crime systems,
- or pre-empt investigation,

then the legal protections Parliament enacted cease to operate in practice.

That is not a procedural issue, but a constitutional one.

Conclusion

The key point is simple:

- The evidence underpinning these concerns is not commentary or opinion.

It comes from:

- police disclosures,
- internal communications,
- sworn statements,
- and official records.

The chronology alone raises serious legal questions and those questions merit transparent answers.

In matters of policing, confidence depends not on assurances, but on evidence and candour and where policy

appears to override law, scrutiny is not at all optional, but is undoubtedly necessary.

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