



Police and crime commissioners

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Ex-West Yorkshire police chief referred to IPCC over Lawrence allegations

Sir Norman Bettison is referred to IPCC amid fears officers tried to discredit members of murdered teenager's family

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Former West Yorkshire police chief constable Sir Norman Bettison has been referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission amid fears officers tried to discredit members of the [Stephen Lawrence](#) family, the force said.

West Yorkshire's police and crime commissioner, Mark Burns-Williamson, referred Bettison, saying he had "significant concerns" about his conduct at the time he was assistant chief constable of West [Yorkshire](#) police in 1998.

The referral follows a search for evidence across the police service of similar behaviour to that which attempted to discredit the Lawrence family when they were the target of covert surveillance as they sought justice for their murdered son, West Yorkshire police said.

It is being made alongside a similar matter that has been raised by Greater Manchester police and their police and crime commissioner, Tony Lloyd.

Both crime commissioners believe the evidence points to potential misconduct by serving police officers at the time of the Macpherson inquiry and which requires urgent investigation.

Burns-Williamson said: "I have become aware of three documents following a thorough search requested by West Yorkshire police chief constable Mark Gilmore.

"These documents raise significant concerns over the role of Sir Norman Bettison at the time he was assistant chief constable of West Yorkshire police in 1998 in commissioning a report to be prepared in the respect of a key witness appearing before the Macpherson inquiry.

"This may suggest an attempt to intervene in the course of a public inquiry and influence the manner in which the testimony of a witness, who was due to present evidence before it, was received.

"I have today referred this to the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

"This is a matter which needs to be thoroughly investigated and, if wrongdoing is demonstrated, those responsible must face the consequences of their actions.

"Doreen Lawrence and her family need their treatment by the police service reviewed independently and this must be done as a matter of urgency.

"I am sure the Independent Police Complaints Commission will do the same for these separate issues of concern indicating possible corrupt practices in the later period around the Macpherson inquiry."

He added that he was now seeking an urgent meeting with the home secretary along with his fellow police and crime commissioner in Greater Manchester.

"Wider issues of any institutional racism in the police service may need to be tackled with a standalone inquiry but my referral to the IPCC today is to make sure we understand the truth regarding the conduct of Sir Norman Bettison," Burns-Williamson added.

"I welcome Mark Gilmore, the chief constable of West Yorkshire, rightly and swiftly recognising the seriousness of this issue and dealing with it in an open and transparent way."

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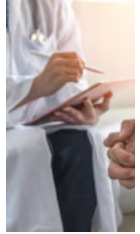
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