

9 May 2011

Dear Sir

We agree with your article, 'Police sack hundreds of officers in secret hearings' (May 9) that a more transparent police misconduct system is desirable. Therefore at the outset of IPCC investigations our Commissioners consider if a public hearing may be suitable at its conclusion.

However, your article oversimplified the opportunities we have to direct more public hearings. Beyond the exceptional circumstances it mentioned, such a direction can only follow an independent IPCC investigation where serious misconduct has been found.

We conduct approximately 150 independent investigations a year and if serious misconduct is found it often results in a public criminal trial. These investigations also include deaths involving the police, which are of significant public interest, and in these cases the evidence and circumstances will be aired at a public inquest irrespective of whether serious misconduct or criminality is found.

Also under the current regulations the force, the accused officer(s), affected members of the public, and any witnesses must be consulted before a Commissioner directs a public hearing. In the case of the Ian Tomlinson investigation for example this involved contacting 127 individuals or bodies.

Ultimately when directing a public hearing a Commissioner must be satisfied that the stringent conditions set out in the regulations are met, and that any additional time and cost involved serve the public interest.

Yours sincerely,



Len Jackson
Interim Chair
Independent Police Complaints Commission