

Throughout the investigation the Supervising Member consistently raised concerns about its conduct and the behaviour and attitudes displayed by police officers in the course of interviews. Ultimately she concluded that the accumulated effect of these shortcomings was such as to be seriously damaging to the credibility of the investigation itself. Equally, the confidence that the complainants and others should rightly expect to have in the investigation of serious allegations concerning threats to a solicitor in the conduct of her professional duties, was potentially severely undermined.

The appendix attached to this statement sets out a catalogue of concerning incidents that occurred in the course of this investigation. Each of these incidents, taken in isolation, would be unacceptable but not calculated to render the overall investigation severely flawed. However, considered accumulatively they do add up to behaviour and attitudinal predispositions which are both unacceptable and undermining of the rigorous professionalism and professional detachment which the Supervising Member is, by statute, required to be satisfied has pertained in any particular case.

In summary, the investigation of the alleged threats to Mrs Nelson by officers of the RUC was unacceptable to the Supervising Member of the ICPC because:

- The officer assisting the Investigating Officer appeared to have difficulty in co-operating productively with the power and authority relationships which are an inherent facet of supervised investigations
- The concerns raised by the Supervising Member were either not addressed or addressed unsatisfactorily
- The apparent prompting of the police officers to have ready prepared statements in advance of interview undermined the possibility of full and candid responses to important questions
- The ill disguised hostility to Mrs Nelson on the part of some police officers was indicative of a mind set which could be viewed as bordering on the obstructive.