

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

John Finnie MSP
Convener
Justice Sub-Committee on Policing
John.Finnie.msp@parliament.scot

26 November 2020

Dear Convener

PUBLIC INQUIRY CONCERNING THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DEATH OF SHEKU BAYOH

Following my statement to Parliament on 21 May 2020 to announce the Terms of Reference for the Public Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of Sheku Bayoh, I am pleased to confirm that the Inquiry will now formally begin its work on Monday 30 November 2020. The Inquiry setting up date marks the point at which I hand over full responsibility of the Inquiry to Lord Bracadale and the work of the Inquiry will commence.

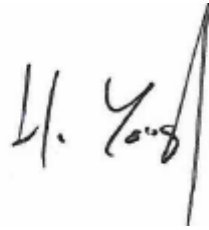
I have also informed the Scottish Parliament today that I have appointed two Assessors to the Public Inquiry; Michael Fuller and Raju Bhatt.

Michael Fuller has previously held the roles of Chief Constable of Kent Police and Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service and is currently a Non-Executive Director for the Home Office. Raju Bhatt, is a founding partner at Bhatt Murphy and also a founding member of the Police Action Lawyers Group (PALG) and Inquest Lawyers Group (ILG). Further information has been provided in Annex A.

I am grateful for all of the suggestions regarding potential Assessors that I received. I have listened carefully to all key parties and have valued their input in this process. In coming to my final decision on who to appoint, I gave full consideration to all views on the areas of expertise required of Assessors. I am confident that the appointees will bring balance and vital experience to support Lord Bracadale during the Inquiry. I appreciate that there were suggestions of nominees with specific expertise in medical and scientific fields, but Lord Bracadale also has the power to call expert witnesses with specific expertise in a range of areas to give evidence to the Inquiry.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

The Inquiry itself will be in touch with key parties shortly to confirm next steps.



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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
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ANNEX A – ASSESSORS – BIOGRAPHIES

Raju Bhatt



Raju Bhatt is one of the founding partners of Bhatt Murphy, a team of lawyers based in London who work together to make a contribution to the protection of civil liberties in the UK.

From the outset of his legal practice in 1988, he has specialised in working with members of the public who seek accountability from the state and its officers, focussing upon the treatment of individuals in the criminal justice system in particular.

He has a unique history of work with families who have lost their loved ones through death in custody, especially as a result of the use of force, and he has been responsible for many significant developments in this and related areas of legal practice over more than three decades.

His experience and authority in relation to deaths in custody and other contentious circumstances has been recognised on various fronts. In 2015, he was appointed to the Reference Group on the Independent Review of Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody by Dame Elish Angiolini who reported to the Home Secretary in 2017. In 2010, he was appointed to the Hillsborough Independent Panel which reported to the Home Secretary in September 2012. In 2009, he was appointed special adviser to the Joint Committee on Human Rights in relation to its parliamentary scrutiny of the bill that came to pass as the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.

Michael Fuller QPM



Michael is a former Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service. He was responsible for the inspection of the Crown Prosecution Service and Serious Fraud Office. Whilst performing this role he reported directly to the Attorney General and Parliament through the Justice Committee of the House of Commons.

He is a former police officer and served as the Chief Constable of Kent Police from January 2004 until March 2010. When he retired Kent Police was designated by the Police Inspectorate as one of five most improved police forces within England and Wales.

Michael started his police career on joining the Metropolitan Police Service as a cadet in 1975. Whilst serving within the MPS he worked in demanding uniformed and CID positions throughout London, including postings at New Scotland Yard and attained the rank of deputy assistant commissioner.

He was instrumental in setting up the Racial and Violent Crime Task Force and drew up the Metropolitan Police action plan in response to criticism arising from the Macpherson Inquiry. Michael set up and commanded Operation Trident which successfully reduced gun crime in London. He also supervised numerous murder investigations whilst in command of the Met's West Area Serious Crime Group.

Michael retired from the police in April 2010 after 34 years to take up the position as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service. He is the holder of the Queens Police Medal (QPM) for distinguished police service. Michael qualified as a Barrister whilst serving as a Chief Constable and was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in July 2007.