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21 October 2005
For Immediate Release

IPCC Publicly apologises to six complainants

The Independent Police Complaints Commission has today issued an apology to six complainants, who complained in 2002 about an investigation by Hampshire Police.

The complaints were against the investigation by Hampshire Police of allegations of unlawful killing against Gosport War Memorial Hospital. The case was inherited by the IPCC from the Police Complaints Authority when it was set up on 1 April 2004.

IPCC deputy chair John Wadham said: "The usual high standards that the Commission has set itself have not been applied in this case and I wish to publicly apologise to the complainants for that.

"There have been a number of problems with the way that this case has been handled, not least the unacceptable length of time it has taken.

"I have also today offered to meet with all the complainants with IPCC Commissioner Rebecca Marsh, who has recently been given responsibility for this case.

"We will assure the complainants that the IPCC will now move quickly to deal with their complaints.

"Rebecca Marsh will also be reviewing the handling of this case."

-ends-

Notes for editors

- The IPCC is the body with overall responsibility for the police complaints system in England and Wales. It has the task of increasing public confidence in the system and aims to make complaints investigations more open, timely, proportionate and fair. The 17 IPCC Commissioners guarantee the independence of the IPCC and by law can never have served as police officers.
- Since April 1 2004 the IPCC has used its powers to begin 62 independent and 222 managed investigations into the most serious complaints against the police. It has also set new standards for police forces to improve the way the public's complaints are handled. Since 1 April 2004 it has upheld 363 appeals (out of 1102 valid appeals) by the public about the way their complaint was dealt with by the local force.
- The IPCC is committed to getting closer to the communities it serves. It has regional offices in Cardiff, Coalville, London and Sale plus a sub office in Wakefield. Commissioners are regionally based and supported by 84 independent investigators, as well as case workers and specialist support staff.
- The IPCC web site is constantly updated at www.ipcc.gov.uk or members of the public can contact the IPCC on 08453 002 002.

For further information please contact:

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