



Investigatory Powers
Commissioner's Office

1st September 2017
Press Release – IPCO Launch

Today the new Investigatory Powers Commissioner (IPC), Lord Justice Fulford, takes on responsibility for regulating and overseeing how public authorities use the investigatory powers available to them under existing law. He takes over from the former Surveillance, Interception of Communications and Intelligence Services Commissioners.

The IPC is supported by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO), which is initially made up of staff from the existing oversight bodies. Setting up IPCO, and combining the existing oversight regimes into one, is the first step in commencing the Investigatory Powers Act 2016. Other powers, including the judicial 'double-lock', will be brought into force incrementally over the next year.

Lord Justice Fulford said:

"From today, and for the first time, investigatory powers will be overseen by a single body applying a consistent, rigorous and independent inspection regime across public authorities. This is an important milestone as we start to implement the new oversight powers set out in Investigatory Powers Act."

"I thank Lord Judge, Sir Stanley Burnton and Sir John Goldring for their work and wish Lord Judge and Sir Stanley every success in the future. I am delighted that Sir John will join the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office as Deputy Investigatory Powers Commissioner and look forward to working with him."

BACKGROUND:

- IPCO inspections will be rigorous and robust. Inspectors will be able to access systems, all supporting documentation, interview staff and bring potential issues to the attention of Commissioners. IPCO will inspect hundreds of public authorities each year, including the intelligence agencies, law enforcement agencies, local authorities and prisons.
- Once the 'double-lock' process has commenced, Commissioners will consider whether they agree with Ministers' decisions to authorise intrusive investigatory powers. Commissioners will have the power to refuse warrants.

- The IPC will lead a team of around 70. This will be made up of:
 - 15 Judicial Commissioners, made up of current and retired High Court, Court of Appeal, and Supreme Court judges and their equivalents in Scotland and Northern Ireland. They will be responsible for applying judicial oversight of certain investigatory powers through the 'double-lock' process, and in overseeing inspections by official inspectors.
 - 50 official staff including inspectors, technical and legal advisors, led by a Chief Executive.
 - A technology advisory panel (TAP), made up of scientific and technical experts, who will advise the Judicial Commissioners on technically complex issues.
- Although the previous Commissioners' posts have been abolished, their annual reports are due to be published shortly.
- Examples of the sorts of powers IPCO oversees are: intercepting phone calls, running agents, surveillance, bulk collection powers, and the consolidated guidance.
- Examples of the sorts of organisations IPCO will oversee are: GCHQ, MI5, SIS, the National Crime Agency, all police forces, the Serious Fraud Office, HMRC, local authorities, prisons and Whitehall departments.

Contact:

For more information please go to: www.ipco.org.uk.

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