



Investigatory Powers
Commissioner's Office

PO Box 29105,
London SW1V 1ZU

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P

17 February 2021

Dear Home Secretary,

CORONAVIRUS ACT 2020 – Investigatory Powers Measures

You will recall that I wrote to you on 26 March 2020, requesting that you exercise your powers under ss. 22 and 23 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (“the Act”) to provide for the appointment of temporary Judicial Commissioners and the extension of time limits in relation to urgent warrants. The subsequent regulations are due to expire at the end of next month and I have been asked for a view on whether they should be renewed.

There is no doubt that these emergency measures were critical in ensuring that my office could continue to fulfil its functions during the first half of last year. With all but two of the permanent Judicial Commissioners categorised as ‘clinically vulnerable’, the appointment of the ten, temporary Commissioners ensured that holders of high judicial office could continue to scrutinise applications within the secure office environment. I am very grateful to the Commissioners themselves, as well as all of those involved in their appointment and induction, for their commitment to making this work.

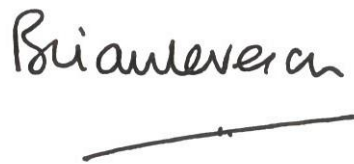
Following changes to Government guidance and the implementation of measures to create a Covid-secure work place, the permanent Judicial Commissioners began to return to the office in the summer last year and I have not needed to call on the services of the temporary Commissioners since then.

Although the impressive pace of the vaccine roll-out gives me every reason to be optimistic, we should not make any assumptions about the challenges that IPCO and the country may face in the coming months. The majority of the permanent Commissioners have now had their first dose of the vaccine and, with the stringent arrangements that have been put in place in the IPCO offices, are content to continue to attend and fulfil their functions. It is for this reason that I therefore do not

consider it necessary to request that fresh regulations should be made at this point but I will, of course, keep this under review in the coming weeks and months and will notify you should my assessment change. Sections 22 and 23 of the Act continue to serve as an important insurance policy to enable IPCO to maintain its vital oversight of investigatory powers in these uncertain and unprecedented times.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Leveson". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is a horizontal line that starts under the first letter and extends to the right, ending under the last letter.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Brian Leveson The Investigatory Powers Commissioner