

[Barbara Keeley responds to EPI report in to Child Mental Health Improvements](#)

Barbara

Keeley MP, Labour's Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health, commenting on the EPI report in to Child Mental Health Improvements, said:

"The Prime Minister said in January that she wanted to 'transform the way we deal with mental health problems right across society' but the findings in this report show these were just warm words.

"With nearly three quarters of Clinical Commissioning Groups failing to meet NHS England's improvement standards in children's mental health, and more than two thirds of these groups without fully-funded crisis care plans, it is clear that the Prime Minister's rhetoric on child mental health is not being matched by reality.

"The most worrying part of this report is the increase in the number of young people being treated on adult mental health wards which shows an abject failure of the Government to grasp the problems in the mental health system.

"The Government need to make sure that frontline mental health services get the money they need rather than using it to balance NHS budgets elsewhere."

[Police whistleblower alleges illegal hacking of campaigners' emails](#)



22 March 2017

The Domestic Extremism unit run by the Metropolitan Police deleted files in a bid to cover up illegal hacking of campaigners' emails, a police whistleblower has revealed to Green peer Jenny Jones.

The unit, called the National Domestic Extremism and Disorder Intelligence

Unit (NDEDIU), deleted the files in May 2014 to hide the fact an operative, who was working under orders from a police officer, had been spying on the email accounts of a number of environmental and social justice campaigners. The police officer had been supplied with the campaigners' passwords by the Covert Human Intelligence Source, the whistleblower revealed.

Lawyers at Bindmans, who are acting on behalf of Jenny Jones and others whose files had been shredded by the NDEDIU approached six of the people on the list to verify that the private email accounts and passwords were theirs. They then presented the letter to senior investigators at the Independent Police Complaints Commission and Baroness Jones had a follow-up meeting with the deputy head of the IPCC (over a week ago) to discuss what progress had been made. Baroness Jones discussed with the IPCC when she intended to publish.

Jenny Jones said:

"This illegal hacking by a police officer along with the collusion of officers within the Domestic Extremism Unit, is one of the worst cases of state snooping that I've ever heard. The personal information within the letter is accurate and it could only have been obtained illegally. There is more than enough to justify a full-scale criminal investigation into the activities of these police officers and referral to a public inquiry. I have urged the IPCC to act quickly to secure further evidence and to find out how many people were victims of this nasty practice. These emails could have contained personal information about medical conditions, worries of parents about their kids, family arguments and people's love lives. It is completely unacceptable that the police can stick their noses into the lives of innocent people without a shred of evidence that they are involved in terrorism or serious crime.

"We need an immediate end to the police surveillance of non-violent campaign groups who have no association with serious crime. By allowing the police to spy on environmentalists and campaigners for social justice, the government invites the security services to intrude on ordinary people's lives. That invitation to snoop provides cover for some officers to go further and to bypass the law regulating state surveillance to read private emails about people's personal lives. Whether it is undercover police forming long-term sexual relationships or these allegations that the police employ foreign hackers to open people's emails. It all starts with the government giving the green light to spy on innocent people.

"I want to praise the brave whistleblowers within the Met Police who have given me this information. Given the appalling treatment by the Met of whistleblowers acting in the public interest, I can completely understand why police officers might want to remain anonymous. Officers who care about the professionalism and political neutrality of the police are one of mainstays of a democratic society and deserve our support."

Notes:

1. The IPCC were notified by phone on the 17th February, after six of the ten

personal email accounts and passwords contained in the letter had been checked with the people concerned. The first meeting with them and Jenny's lawyer took place on the 23rd Feb. IPCC investigators have now requested a formal witness statement from Jenny.

2. The IPCC previously confirmed that there is evidence which suggests other documents were shredded after the Undercover Policing Inquiry (UCPI) was announced, and a specific MPS instruction had been issued that documents should not be destroyed without express permission.

In the IPCC press release Feb 2017, they state that:

Following a *referral* from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in May 2016, the IPCC has been investigating *allegations* that documents kept by the National Domestic Extremism and Disorder Intelligence Unit (NDEDIU) were shredded in May 2014.

The IPCC can confirm that there is evidence which suggests documents were shredded after the Undercover Policing Inquiry (UCPI) was announced, and a specific MPS instruction had been issued that documents should not be destroyed without express permission.

IPCC Deputy Chair Sarah Green, said "... *investigation* is ongoing. While the evidence indicates that a large number of documents were shredded over a period of days in May 2014, the difficult task ahead for our investigators is to determine what the documentation was, why it was destroyed, whether electronic copies were kept and who may have ordered its destruction.

"We are also examining what action the Metropolitan Police took once it was alerted, by a member of staff, to the *allegations* in December 2014."

"Separately a complaint by Baroness Jenny Jones, that records held by the Metropolitan Police relating to her were destroyed or deleted in or about June 2014, was referred to the IPCC on 27 January. That complaint is now also subject to *independent investigation*."

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[SRUC Elmwood allotment club springs into action!](#)

The allotment club at the Elmwood Campus of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) is springing into action – by celebrating its third year.

[Safety must be always be the top priority, but UK and US bans on carrying electronic devices on aircraft leaves questions unanswered – Richard Burden](#)

Richard Burden MP, Labour's Shadow Aviation Minister, responding to the announcement of a cabin baggage ban on laptops on certain direct passenger flights to the UK from Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia, said:

“The safety and security of passengers must always be the overriding priority for Government and for airline operators. If the Government has evidence the level of security checks on passengers carrying electronic devices is of exceptional concern in the countries listed then it is right that prompt precautionary action should be taken.

“This announcement leaves a number of important questions unanswered and we are seeking urgent clarification from Ministers. It's important the Government set out clearly the precautionary steps they have taken in response to advice from security services to reassure passengers and the public. The Government must also work with airline operators to ensure all passengers are given the necessary information and flights can continue where appropriate with minimal disruption as possible.”

[ICC adds one year to Bemba's conviction for attempted bribery of witnesses](#)

22 March 2017 – The United Nations-backed International Criminal Court (ICC) today sentenced the former Congolese Vice-President, Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo,

to another year in prison and about \$325,000 in fines for interfering with his trial.

Judges ordered that the sentence be served consecutively to Mr. Bemba's existing 18 year sentence for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Central African Republic between October 2002 and March 2003.

In their ruling, the judges ordered the fine to be paid within three months to the ICC and then transferred to the Trust Fund for Victims, according to a press release.

Mr. Bemba, along with two of the four other people accused, were found guilty in October 2016 for having jointly committed the offences of intentionally corruptly influencing 14 defence witnesses, and presenting their false evidence to the court.

Mr. Bemba was also found guilty of soliciting the giving of false testimony by the 14 defence witnesses and attempting to corruptly influence two defence witnesses.

These charges were in addition to the main ruling issued in March 2016, in which the ICC found Mr. Bemba guilty beyond reasonable doubt on two counts of crimes against humanity (murder and rape) and three counts of war crimes (murder, rape and pillaging) committed in the Central African Republic in 2002-2003.

Mr. Bemba had been the commander-in-chief of the former Congolese rebel group, the Movement for the Liberation of Congo, as well as a vice-president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the 2003-2006 transition.