

# News on Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner's Office

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## Leaders agree it's time to move on as Chief Constable retires

Devon and Cornwall Chief Constable Mr Will Kerr OBE KPM has announced his retirement by mutual consent with Police and Crime Commissioner Alison Hernandez.

Mr Kerr has been under investigation for several years by bodies in Northern Ireland but has not been charged with any offence. An investigation by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) in England continues although this is not related to criminal allegations investigated in Northern Ireland that have since been dismissed.

Commissioner Hernandez said: "Suspension from duty is a neutral act and there is always a presumption of innocence until proved otherwise.

"I have now agreed Mr Kerr's departure from the force to allow processes for new and stable leadership to take Devon & Cornwall Police forward as this is now in the best interests of all parties.

"Mr Kerr's skills and experience will be a loss to UK policing. I remain frustrated at the amount of time this investigation has taken and the way that cross jurisdictional issues have lengthened the process during separate investigations by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland and now the IOPC.

"His departure does not signal guilt, but instead a deep appreciation of the need for Devon & Cornwall Police to move forward with stable leadership from a substantive Chief Constable.

"James Vaughan will continue as Interim Chief Constable until a new recruitment process is complete. In accordance with police misconduct regulations, the investigations will continue."

Mr Kerr said: "Having been cleared in relation to what I believe were malicious criminal allegations in Northern Ireland, I have decided that it's now in the best interests of my family and the Force that I retire as Chief Constable.

"After nearly 36 years of public service, this is not the way I would have chosen to retire but the Force, and communities across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, deserve stable leadership in policing.

"I remain a strong advocate for effective accountability in policing, but that accountability process must be fair, timely and proportionate. Sadly, like too many other officers, that has not been my experience over the past two years.

“I continue to wish all of the highly committed officers and staff in Devon and Cornwall Police well and, despite the personal challenges of the past few years, I remain proud of the value of community-focussed policing, and a firm supporter of the people within its ranks.

“I would also like to thank PCC Alison Hernandez for her consistent support over the past 2 years, and her commitment to fair and proportionate justice.”