

**The Rt. Hon. David Blunkett MP**  
**Home Secretary,**  
**50, Queen Anne's Gate,**  
**LONDON. SQ1H 9AT**

**27, Donnini Court,**  
**South Beach Road,**  
**AYR KA7 IJP**

**27, September, 20001.**

Your Ref. Nazneen T Choudhury

Dear Home Secretary

### **Crisis in Fingerprinting**

I refer to my letter of 20. August re the above subject and to your reply of 18. September

Throughout five years seeking justice for my daughter I have been saddened by the total failure of authorities like the Home Office to be pro-active in any way.

Your letter only serves to confirm that a well-tried procedure for deflecting the complaints or concerns of electors is in place throughout the UK justice system.

While helpful in describing the role of the Criminal Cases Review Commission it completely failed to address my concerns about fingerprinting.

They are:

1. Some authorities in England have not prepared sufficiently for the change over to the non-numeric fingerprint system implemented this year.
2. Vast differences in fingerprinting practice and procedure exist area to area.
3. Particularly where Police non-experts are supervisors of fingerprint department's quality control is ineffective and bad practice exists.
4. A substantial number of the independent fingerprint experts used by defence lawyers are not trained in new procedures and are unable to advise their clients effectively.
5. Lawyers in general and judges in particular are not aware of developments in fingerprinting. This leads to inaccurate advice to clients by the former and ineffective charges to juries by the latter.
6. The presentation of evidence by prosecution experts lacks accuracy and clarity and does not assist judges and juries in their understanding of the complexities of fingerprint identification.

Because of these and other factors I believe that innocent people like Alan McNamara have gone to jail and that we are all at risk from a fingerprint service which in some areas has become dangerously inefficient and ineffective.

Would you please:

Cause an urgent review of fingerprint practices and procedures nation-wide particularly in respect of my concerns shown above.

There is evidence that the Scottish Criminal Records Office in Scotland and authorities in England are not following the protocols agreed by the European Expert Group on Fingerprint Identification as endorsed by Interpol this year.

While the Registration Council for Forensic Practitioners will help improve general standards and training for fingerprint experts it will not address these central matters.

The statement in your letter that. 'The system in place for verifying fingerprints is based on a regime of quality assured and audited fingerprint bureaux processes and procedures, enhanced training of fingerprint experts, competency testing, inspection and review ' is exactly what the Scottish Criminal Records Office claimed before its appalling inefficiency was revealed.

It is a sad fact that in some areas the system has become complacent, arrogant and inefficient over 100 years without effective challenge.

The ultimate responsibility as further injustices, like that suffered by Alan McNamara. are revealed rests with officials like you , and not the erring experts. This will be made crystal clear in any subsequent media publicity.

You would do well to brief yourself on my daughter's case at

[www.scottish.police.uk/main/campaigns/interim/interim.htm](http://www.scottish.police.uk/main/campaigns/interim/interim.htm) and [www.onin.com/fp/problemidents.html](http://www.onin.com/fp/problemidents.html) before commenting further.

If further information is required please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

**Iain A J McKie**