

Commander Basu (*Guardian*, 11/1/14) refers to the ‘intolerable’ delay, for the family and his officers, before the inquest jury reached its conclusion on the death of Mark Duggan. There were many reasons for this – not least the complexity of this case, two associated criminal trials and our own finite resources. We agree that such delays add to the stress and anxiety for all concerned.

But a key feature of this investigation was the fact that the firearms officers refused to answer questions at interview. Following a protracted exchange of written questions and answers, it was nearly a year before we were able to get answers to all our questions, and even then we were not able to probe those answers verbally.

The law has now changed and we can compel officers to come in for interview. However, they can and still do refuse to answer questions verbally at interview.

Families and friends of those who die during police contact find it inexplicable that officers present at someone’s death do not fully cooperate with subsequent investigations – so do we. It means that the inquest is the first time they have to account properly for their actions and have their evidence probed and tested.

Following the comments made recently by the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, I hope that Commander Basu’s officers will now not only attend interviews, but also answer questions, if required, in our continuing investigation into Mark Duggan’s death, and any future tragic deaths.

Dame Anne Owers, Chair of the Independent Police Complaints Commission