

Assistant Chief Constable suspended following anonymous criminal allegations



Assistant Chief Constable Bernard Higgins was suspended with immediate effect yesterday following 'a number of criminal and misconduct allegations'.

Three other officers have also been suspended and another two have been placed on restricted duties.

The allegations of 'criminality against officers' were made anonymously and referred to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service who decided that an independent investigation should be carried out by the Police Investigations Review Commissioner (Pirc), and this is now under way.

Deputy Chief Constable Iain Livingstone said: "I can confirm that Assistant Chief Constable Bernard Higgins was suspended today by the Scottish Police Authority.

"In addition, three other officers have been suspended, and two others placed on restricted duties, by Deputy Chief Constable Rose Fitzpatrick. At this time our focus must remain on continuing to meet the operational challenges that we face each day."



A spokesman for the commissioner said: "This was to allow the COPFS to consider whether the criminal allegations should be investigated by the commissioner.

"The COPFS decided that an independent investigation should be carried out by the PIRC and this is now under way."

An SPA spokesman said it “has in addition today formally referred misconduct allegations relating to the senior officer to the Pirc for further investigation having assessed that, if proven, they would constitute gross misconduct.”

He added: “The suspension is effective with immediate effect and will be reviewed in four weeks, or if there is a change in circumstances relevant to the suspension.”

ACC Higgins “denies and rejects” any allegations of wrongdoing.