

Truth for victims and families as Orgreave Inquiry launches

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Miners and campaigners will finally get the answers they deserve as the government launches an inquiry into the violent events at Orgreave in 1984.

From today (26 March), the inquiry will begin investigating the violence that arose between police and picketing miners at Orgreave Coking Plant on 18 June 1984, resulting in 95 arrests and scores of injuries. Those arrested were charged with riot and unlawful assembly, but all charges were later dropped after police evidence was discredited.

The terms of reference, which have been published today, were developed in consultation with the Chair, the Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox, the Bishop of Sheffield, informed by his engagement with campaigners, policing bodies, and local representatives.

The inquiry will focus on securing and disclosing historical material so that the full picture can finally be understood. Using its statutory powers where necessary, it will have access to relevant records including those held by police, central and local government, trade unions, media organisations, and other public and private bodies.

The inquiry will seek to establish what happened at Orgreave by examining:

Planning undertaken by the police and government for the policing of the demonstration at Orgreave on 18 June 1984: This includes relevant decision-making in the leadup to the day.

What happened on the day and afterwards: The inquiry will examine the events at Orgreave on 18 June 1984, the immediate aftermath, and the lasting impact on individuals and communities, as well as the public narrative.

What happened to those arrested: This includes the charging decisions and prosecutions, all of which collapsed after police evidence was discredited.

The inquiry will also establish a publicly accessible digital archive of disclosed material. This approach reflects the strong views of campaigners that transparency must sit at the heart of the inquiry.

Minister of State for Policing and Crime, Sarah Jones MP, said:

For more than four decades miners, their families and their communities have lived with unanswered questions about what happened at Orgreave. Today we have delivered on our promise to these tireless campaigners to ensure the facts finally come to light.

The terms of the inquiry have been shaped by the Chair's close engagement with campaigners, and they place transparency at the very heart of the panel's work.

I am confident that they will bring the independence, expertise and balance needed to uncover the truth of what happened — however difficult that truth may be.

The Right Reverend Dr Pete Wilcox, Chair of the Inquiry said:

I am very pleased the Orgreave Inquiry, announced by the UK government in July 2025, is now live.

In reaching this point, the government has approved the Terms of Reference and confirmed the Panel to support me as Chair; and I am fully satisfied with both.

These foundations allow us to begin the inquiry's work with confidence, and engagement with stakeholders will begin immediately.

I am acutely aware of the weight of expectation placed on this inquiry. It is my ambition, with the panel, to deliver an outstanding inquiry as swiftly as thoroughness will allow.

The Orgreave inquiry was a government manifesto commitment to ensure the truth about the events at Orgreave comes to light. The inquiry will be carried out independently by the Chair and its carefully selected panel.

The 4 panel members who will support the Bishop in delivering the inquiry have been confirmed today as:

Wendy Williams CBE, a former chief prosecutor in the Crown Prosecution Service and, between 2015 - 2024, an Inspector in His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. She published the report of her independent Windrush Lessons Learned Review in March 2020, and her update report on the Home Office's response in March 2022. Ms Williams will provide independent insight on police governance, and the decision-making and effectiveness of police forces.

Baroness Mary Bousted, a former senior trade union leader representing teachers, leaders, and support staff and workers. She led the panel which, in April 2025, published the report of its independent review of the Police Federation of England and Wales. Baroness Bousted will provide relevant knowledge and insight concerning the strategic and operational leadership and management of trades unions.

Doctor Joanna Gilmore, Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of York, whose research expertise includes public order law, human rights and policing policy. Drawing on her socio-legal and historical research into the 1984-85 miners' strike, Dr Gilmore will contribute analysis of the broader societal, legal and political issues arising from the events at Orgreave.

Doctor Angie Sutton-Vane, a historian with extensive experience in evidence-based research, historical accountability and the archiving, preservation of and access to police force records. Dr Sutton-Vane will provide expertise on the interpretation of historical records, particularly those of the police.

This panel has been carefully selected to ensure the inquiry is independent, fair, and equipped with the necessary expertise.

Chris Kitchen, General Secretary, National Union of Mineworkers said:

The National Union of Mineworkers welcomes the government's announcement today

launching the inquiry into the battle of Orgreave, delivering on a long-standing manifesto commitment.

We have full confidence that the Chair, Rt Reverend Dr. Pete Wilcox, and the panel members, have the knowledge required to get to the truth about what happened, why it happened, who orchestrated the events at Orgreave on 18 June 1984, and why no one was held accountable. The NUM are fully committed to assisting the inquiry in its work.

Our hope is that once the truth has been brought to light, those directly and indirectly affected can finally start to move on.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/truth-for-victims-and-families-as-orgreave-inquiry-launches>