

Inquiry announced in WPC fingerprint case

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SCOTLAND'S senior law officer yesterday called for an investigation into allegations of criminal conduct in the case of former policewoman Shirley McKie, who was wrongly accused of leaving her fingerprint at a crime scene.

Lord Advocate Colin Boyd asked the regional procurator-fiscal at Paisley, Mr Bill Gilchrist, to examine allegations made by the father of the former Strathclyde Police officer.

A Crown Office spokeswoman confirmed that one of the allegations made by Mr Iain McKie was a criminal matter about forensic officers involved in the case.

She added: "As the Lord Advocate is responsible for investigation as well as prosecution of criminal offences, this is in his jurisdiction."

The controversy began with a 1997 murder case in Ayrshire, in which David Asbury was jailed for life for killing Marion Ross.

Ms McKie was accused of perjury during the murder trial when she denied that a thumb print found at the crime scene was hers. Experts argued that it was not her print, and she was cleared of those charges last year.

Two weeks ago, a police inspectorate report exonerated Ms McKie and criticised the Scottish Criminal Records Office (SCRO) Fingerprint Bureau, which was involved in analysing prints in the case, as "not fully effective and efficient".

Mr McKie wrote to Justice Minister Jim Wallace, asking for an inquiry into the possibility of perjury and criminal conspiracy. Details of the investigation were released by the Scottish Executive yesterday when a spokesman said Mr Wallace had passed Mr McKie's note to the Crown Office.