

[Most Popular](#)[Most Emailed](#)

[Breaking](#)[Sport](#)[Business](#)[World](#)[Gossip](#)



Choose a date:



[NEWS](#) >

## Officer in Omagh probe 'repositioned'

By Claire Simpson

17/01/08

ONE OF two key police witnesses criticised for the evidence they gave during the Omagh bomb trial has been moved from their post, police confirmed last night.

The Police Ombudsman is investigating the conduct of scenes of crime officer Fiona Cooper and Detective Chief Inspector Philip Marshall after they admitted to changing their statements on how evidence was gathered.

A police spokesman said it had reviewed the duties of both officers and one of them had been "repositioned" following a recommendation from the Police Ombudsman (PONI).

He said the second officer has been allowed to remain in their post because their "duties currently fall within the restrictions required by PONI and repositioning is not necessary."

The spokesman refused to say which of the officers had been moved or whether the move is viewed as a demotion.

However, it is thought that Mr Marshall has been moved in line with a Police Ombudsman recommendation that the officers be removed from operational detective roles.

At a hearing in Belfast Crown Court last month Sean Hoey (38), from Jonesborough, was found not guilty of 58 charges, including the murder of 29 people and unborn twins who died in the 1998 bomb attack.

During the trial, Mr Marshall and Ms Cooper admitted they had "beefed up" their original statements to falsely suggest that specialist forensic precautions had been taken while police were searching the scene of a dissident republican bomb found in Altmore Forest in Co Tyrone in 2001.

In delivering his verdict, Mr Justice Weir criticised the pair's evidence and said they were guilty of a "deliberate and calculated deception".

However, he also suggested other officers "may also have played a part" in the deception.

A spokesman from the Police Ombudsman said their investigation into Ms Cooper and Mr Marshall's conduct had now been extended to address the possible involvement of other officers.