



Sara Payne, whose eight-year-old daughter Sarah was abducted and murdered in July 2000, has been told by Scotland Yard that they have found evidence to suggest she was targeted by the News of the World's investigator Glenn Mulcaire, who specialised in hacking voicemail.

Police had earlier told her correctly that her name was not among those recorded in Mulcaire's notes, but on Tuesday officers from Operation Weeting told her they had found her personal details among the investigator's notes. These had previously been thought to refer to a different target.

Friends of Payne have told the Guardian that she is "absolutely devastated and deeply disappointed" at the disclosure. Her cause had been championed by the News of the World, and in particular by its former editor, Rebekah Brooks. Believing that she had not been a target for hacking, Payne wrote a farewell column for the paper's final edition on 10 July, referring to its staff as "my good and trusted friends".

The evidence that police have found in Mulcaire's notes is believed to relate to a phone given to Payne by Brooks to help her stay in touch with her supporters. On Thursday night Brooks insisted the phone had not been a personal gift but had been provided to Payne by the News of the World "for the benefit of the campaign for Sarah's law".

In a statement, Brooks said the latest allegations were "abhorrent" and "particularly upsetting" because Sara Payne was a "dear friend".

Responding earlier to news that Payne's details had been found in Mulcaire's notes, one of Payne's close colleagues said: "We are all appalled and disgusted. Sara is in bits about it." It is not known whether any messages for Payne were successfully hacked by Mulcaire.

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