

Press & Public Relations Department



MOD100055129

The **aims** of the Press & Public Relations

Department are:

- To promote the achievements of the force
- To provide accurate, timely and relevant information about the activities of the force internally and externally
- To improve awareness within the force of the services provided by the department

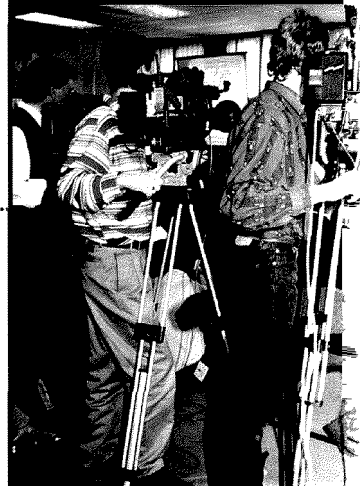
The department is one of the busiest police press offices in the country, dealing with an average of 280 calls per day from the media.

The office services five major regional newspapers, seven local radio stations, three local TV stations and 25 weekly newspapers. Most of the national media also have correspondents based in the West Midlands and there are four major freelance agencies.

Press & publicity officers support operational command units and departments by handling media enquiries and by publicising initiatives and examples of good police work.

The department is staffed by experienced press officers who are former journalists and can offer help and advice on any media-related matter, both during office hours and on a call-out basis.

The department is split into three main sections: news, public relations and administration.





News Desk

Due to the nature of police work, the main emphasis of the department is on reactive work and responding to daily media enquiries.

The news desk operates between 7.00am - 7.00pm Monday to Friday and 8am - 3.30pm on Saturdays.

The news desk is fully computerised and deals with:

- issuing details of crimes and incidents to the media
- responding to general media enquiries
- arranging press conferences and photocalls
- organising documentary requests
- briefing officers prior to radio and television interviews

Details of crimes and press statements are released via three 24-hour 'voicebanks'. These are recorded information lines covering the central, western and eastern areas of the force. On average, reporters make 2,500 calls a week to the three voicebanks.

When the office is closed, the Force Communications Centre handles press calls and updates the voicebanks. The duty inspector can be reached on 0121 626 4040 (internal 7802 3036).

Public Relations

Taking into account the importance of the news desk and the need to respond to media enquiries, press & publicity officers attempt to split their time between reactive and proactive work - and each is allocated a number of operational command units and/or departments which they are responsible for publicising.

Staffed by a full-time public relations officer, an information officer and a photographer, the public relations section is responsible for:

- writing press releases
- organising promotional campaigns
- preparing the Chief Constable's Annual Report
- producing the force newspaper, News Beat
- preparing briefing sheets for officers
- briefing opinion formers of changes in policy, etc
- media training
- publishing promotional booklets and leaflets

Administration Desk

The administration section provides a back-up service to the department and is also responsible for:

- preparing a daily press cuttings summary
- recording police-related television and radio programmes
- issuing traffic bulletins on request
- a wide range of general administrative duties



The Press & Public Relations Department provides a number of services. Some of those available and how they might help YOU are listed below. For example:

PRESS CUTTINGS

If you are in charge of an incident room and need to know what the media are saying...

The department uses an outside agency to supply daily and weekly newspaper cuttings on police-related subjects, including national issues and policy. The cuttings are distributed to members of the Policy Group, operational command units and several heads of departments. Cuttings relating to specialist areas, eg drugs, are also available on request.

VIDEO/RADIO LIBRARY

If you are running an inquiry and need television or radio footage about the case...

Items from the local and national television news and local radio programmes are recorded daily, along with police-related documentaries, crime appeal programmes, etc, and are stored in a library. Copies of broadcast programmes are available for viewing on request.

BRIEFING SHEETS

If you are asked to take part in an interview about a policy-related matter...

The department has question-and-answer briefing sheets available on a wide range of topics, from the arming of police officers to dealing with harassment within the police service. Briefing sheets explain force policy and, where applicable, give the ACPO and Federation views.

NEWS BEAT

If you want to know what's happening in the force generally...

News Beat is the in-house staff newspaper. Produced monthly, it contains general news, a 'job spot', Police Federation information, a new policy spot and a variety of features. Copies of News Beat are distributed to local MPs, the media, retired officers, other police forces, etc. The paper welcomes letters, suggestions and ideas for features from readers.

DEALING WITH THE MEDIA BOOKLET

If you find yourself dealing with the media and need some general advice about what to release...

The booklet 'Dealing with the Media' gives general guidelines about how to talk to the media on a range of topics, from dealing with a sudden death to traffic accidents. The booklet also gives a 'checklist' of questions the media are likely to ask.

MEDIA AWARENESS TRAINING

If you want to know how to get the best out of your dealings with the media...

The one-day media awareness course run at Tally Ho! examines the role of the media and shows how officers can get the most out of their dealings with them. The course includes some practical work involving radio training. A one-day intensive television training course using a professional broadcaster can also be arranged.

For more details contact the public relations officer.

ON-SITE RADIO TRAINING

If you want advice about getting the best out of a radio interview...

The department offers on-site radio training to sergeants and above on request for groups of four or more. Press officers will visit operational command units or departments and give advice on handling radio interviews followed by practical sessions. (Separate training sessions can be arranged for officers working in specialist roles, eg, crime prevention, domestic violence etc).

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF RADIO & TV INTERVIEWS

If you are asked to give a radio or TV interview at short notice...

The booklet 'Getting the most out of radio and TV interviews' gives general advice on how to answer questions, how to prepare in advance and some important dos and don'ts of handling interviews.

FACT FILES

If you want information on policy-related subjects...

The department produces a selection of fact files which explain the force policy on a wide range of issues such as drugs, racial harassment, equal opportunities, domestic violence, child abuse, etc. Fact files are also available on the history of the force, the role of the Special Constabulary, etc.

PROMOTIONAL BOOKLET

If you need general information about the force...

A promotional booklet explains how the force is structured, how it operates, the areas it covers, etc. It also outlines our policing priorities, how the force is funded and the role of the Police Authority.

ANNUAL REPORT

If you want to know how the force performed during the previous year...

The Chief Constable's Annual Report is an in-depth report of how the force performed over the previous 12 months. It also lists yearly crime and other police-related statistics. Reference copies of the report are available to borrow from the department.

VICTIMS OF CRIME LEAFLETS

If a victim of crime needs advice on police procedure or wants to know how their case will be handled...

The department has produced a range of leaflets giving help and advice to victims of crime, burglary, sexual assault, domestic violence and car crime. For copies, contact your admin support manager or the force Stationery Stores.

CAMPAIGNS

If you are thinking of running a campaign and need some advice about how to launch it...

Contact the public relations officer for advice on how to get maximum publicity and the best ways to promote a campaign.

OPINION FORMERS

If you know of opinion formers who should be supplied with details of force statements and information...

The department has compiled a list of opinion formers who are sent details of force statements, special publications, etc, aimed at keeping them updated on important issues affecting the police service. If there is someone you believe should be added to the list, contact the information officer.

THE INTERNET

The department is responsible for maintaining and updating our site on the internet.

The internet address is: www.west-midlands.police.uk

For further details about the Internet contact the Public relations officer

IF YOU WANT TO CONTACT US....

The headquarters Press & Public Relations Office is based at Lloyd House and deals with police-related issues in Birmingham and Solihull. It also deals with all policy matters and filming/documentary requests.

Post	External No.	Internal No.
Head of Press & Public Relations	0121 626 5198	2568
Public Relations Officer	0121 626 5197	2567
Head of News	0121 626 5456	2564
News Desk	0121 626 5858	5914
Public Relations Desk	0121 626 5496	2561
Information Officer	0121 626 5490	2563
Photographer	0121 626 5495	2327
Admin Desk	0121 626 5196	2566
Fax	0121 626 5190	2560

The Western press office is based at Bilston Street and covers the **G-K operational command units:**

News Desk	01902 649004	7871 6580/1
Fax	01902 649191	7871 6966

The Eastern press office is based at Little Park Street police station and covers the **'M' operational command units:**

News Desk	01203 539090	7931 6580
Fax	01203 539131	7930 6583