

RESTRICTED-POLICY



DURHAM CONSTABULARY

Procedures, Tactics and Guidance

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Procedures, Tactics and Guidance

1. Release of information to the media

Information will be released to the media in furtherance of the prevention and detection of crime and to provide public reassurance.

This will include:

- Witness appeals to crimes and RTCs, including CCTV footage if appropriate
- Appeals in connection with serious crime investigations, including CCTV footage if appropriate
- Information about forcewide and local crime prevention initiatives
- Information about arrests and convictions, including images of offenders
- Information about people wanted on warrant, or suspected of having committed an offence.
- Information in relation to media support to a major incident
- Information in conjunction with partner agencies

it will not include:

- Information which could compromise ongoing investigations
- Information which could identify covert sources
- The identities of victims, unless they have specifically given their consent.
- We reserve the right to identify a victim without their consent if doing so is in the interests of the police investigation, eg an assault victim who is unconscious but whose movements need to be traced. This would only be done after family members had been informed.

1.1 Witness Appeals

Witness appeals will take the form of voicebank updates or emailed news releases and may include information contained on the force incident logging system.

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The voicebank will be updated by media and marketing officers, and communications centre supervisors.

Media and marketing officers and communications centre supervisors have the authority to release basic information direct from the incident log.

This will include facts which cannot be disputed, including the date, time and location of the incident, the nature of the incident, whether or not any arrests have been made and the particulars of any witness appeal.

Witness appeals to RTCs could typically include the details of vehicles involved, direction of travel, the ages of those injured, details of injuries, which hospital they are in and their current condition, and how long the road was closed to allow for traffic investigation.

Nothing must be included which could be seen as apportioning blame to anyone involved, could be open to interpretation or could be disputed in court.

Identities:

Those injured in RTCs will not be named. In the case of fatalities, the identity of the deceased can only be released to the media when the investigating officer is satisfied that all appropriate family members have been informed.

1.2 Release of images of convicted offenders

Images of convicted offenders will normally be released to the media if a sentence of three years or more has been imposed.

The image of someone convicted of murder or manslaughter will be released to the media regardless of length of sentence, unless the Senior Investigating Officer can demonstrate a reason not to do so.

1.3 Release of CCTV footage

CCTV footage will only be released in furtherance of the prevention and detection of crime, and to educate communities on issues relevant to public safety.

It will not be released for use on TV programmes which are mainly intended as entertainment, such as Police, Camera Action, Traffic Cops etc.

1.4 People wanted on warrant or suspected of having committed an offence

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Consideration will be given to releasing details of people wanted on warrant, or suspected of having committed an offence, if it can be demonstrated that:

- There is a reasonable expectation that the subsequent publicity will lead to the person being traced.
- All other reasonable steps to trace them have been taken.
- The head of CID, or their representative, has approved the release, in consultation with the CPS.
- The information which will be released could include the name, age and last known address of the offender, and the offence for which they are being sought

Note: This procedure does not cover the volume crime appeals which are issued via Crimestoppers. This will be covered by separate guidance which is currently the subject of consultation. It will be added as an appendix in due course.

1.5 Major Incidents

In the event of a major incident, media liaison will comply with the requirements of the Emergency Plan.

1.6 Media Monitoring

The Media and Marketing Team will monitor regional and national media for items of relevance to Durham Constabulary and the police service in general.

Part of this monitoring will be evaluate the media coverage given to items of news released by the Media and Marketing Team.

A news digest summarising the main items of interest will be prepared and circulated forcewide each weekday, by 11.30am at the latest.

2. Marketing Durham Constabulary

Marketing activity, both internal and external, will be driven by the need to provide value for money, with cost neutral tactics always being considered as the starting point for any campaign. Marketing activity will be evaluated to demonstrate that it has achieved measurable benefits.

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Marketing tactics will be used for the following:

- Promoting local and forcewide initiatives
- Providing crime prevention advice to the public
- Advising local communities about crime in their area
- Informing people how to contact their neighbourhood teams.
- Informing people how they can contact the police in a non-urgent situation
- Informing people how they can access policing services
- Informing people of the action police are taking in their local area to address the issues which matter to them
- Promoting PACT meetings
- Promoting use of force Facebook sites

2.1 External Marketing will involve:

- Partnership working with other local agencies where appropriate
- The production of promotional material (such as flyers, leaflets, posters etc)
- Use of the website and social networking channels
- Working directly with communities at PACT meetings
- The media and marketing team will quality check all promotional literature for compliance with corporate standards, clear print and plain English guidance.
- Consideration will also be given to making printed material available in Braille, large print and appropriate ethnic minority languages.

2.2 Communicating with online communities

- Full use will be made of the internet to communicate with online communities.
- News releases and media appeals will be published on the force website.

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- Webcasts will be used whenever possible.
- Compacted versions will be published via Facebook and Twitter.
- The neighbourhood pages will be updated regularly.

2.3 Internal Marketing will involve dissemination of information via:

- The force circulator
- The staff newspaper, printed or online
- PC wallpaper
- Internal information material for specific initiatives, available for face-to-face briefings, group presentations and to assist officers and staff in their daily duties.

There will be a corporate approach to internal marketing to ensure consistency of messages and style of delivery. The Media and Marketing Team is available for advice and guidance as to how this can be achieved.

3. Specific Instructions, Tactics, Methods, Practices and Procedures

Media and Marketing Officers have access to the force incident logs for the purposes of releasing information to the media. They will generally be expected to consult with an officer before releasing material to the media. In the event of the relevant officer not being available, they are authorised to release basic factual information not capable of being open to interpretation.

This may include:

- The date, time and location of an incident
- The number of people / vehicles involved
- The types of vehicles involved
- The ages of those involved (if known)
- Whether the incident resulted in any injuries

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- A general appeal for witnesses

It should not include:

- Names of anyone involved, without their consent
- Speculation about the persons responsible
- Speculation about any motive
- Specific descriptions of any weapons used

4. Individual Roles and Responsibilities

All Media and Marketing Officers are expected to be involved in all aspects of these procedures.

5. Related Protocols, Other Policies, Practices or Service Agreements

ACPO Media Advisory Group Guidance on Media Liaison

Lord Chancellor / CPS Protocol on release of information to the media post-trial

Human Resources and Training Implications

Media and Marketing Advisors have received training in media law

Administration

All media enquiries and media releases are logged on the Media Management System.

All promotional activity will be documented as part of individual communications plans stored as Word documents in the Marketing folder.

Management Procedures for the Maintenance of Audits and Inspections of Decision-Making and Complaints

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Any information given to the media will include, for reference purposes, the name of the officer / staff member supplying the information and a DHM number if appropriate.

Brief Description of the Attached Appendices

Please list and briefly describe any attached appendices to this section of the policy documentation.

Appendix 1:

Guidance notes drawn up by the Media Advisory Group of the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Appendix 2:

Protocol covering the reporting of criminal proceedings in the UK, drawn up in consultation with the CPS, the Attorney General, ACPO and the media.

Appendix 3:

Contact between members of the force and members of the media.

Media and Marketing Guidance – Appendix 3

Reason for Appendix:

An HMIC report on police integrity, held in the wake of the News of the World phone hacking enquiry, found that the Constabulary and Authority has sound governance arrangements for the vast majority of systems and processes.

However, it also found that there was no specific guidance for officers and staff around contact with the media, and recommended that this be rectified.

Professional Standards Department has been consulted and has agreed that the most appropriate place for this guidance is as an appendix to the Media and Marketing Guidance aims to address that. It should be read on conjunction with the PSD Gifts and Gratuities and Notable Associations policies.

This guidance is supplementary to regulations governing the unauthorised release of police-held information to a third party.

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Contact with the Media

Durham Constabulary officers and staff are encouraged to have an open and transparent relationship with the media, in the furtherance of the prevention and detection of crime.

However, this relationship should always be on a professional footing. Situations where the line between professional and personal relationships could become blurred should be avoided at all costs.

Exchange of hospitality should be proportionate. It may be acceptable to buy drinks for or accept drinks from individual members of the media at one-off social occasions.

However, employees should be aware that if they regularly accept larger items of hospitality, such as tickets to premiership games, days at the races etc, on a regular basis from the same members of the media, their impartiality may be called into question. They are also leaving themselves open to opportunist reporters wishing to call in favours.

All hospitality offered and received must be recorded in line with force policy on gifts and gratuities.

If you do pass information on to individual reporters, it should always be for a genuine policing purpose, not just because they asked for it and you feel you owe them a favour.

The message is: journalists are not your friends, they only want to talk to you because they hope you will pass on information which would otherwise be denied them.

