

Witness: Sara Cheesley
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The Leveson Inquiry into the Culture Practices and Ethics of the Press

Witness: Sara Cheesley
Occupation: Senior Information Officer
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1. I have been asked to provide a statement for the purposes of the Leveson Inquiry. In preparing it I have sought to address all the questions asked of me in the Notice served pursuant to s.21 (2) of the Inquiries Act 2005. I begin each section of this statement by listing the questions to which I am responding.

Personal History

- (1) Who you are and a brief summary of your career history.
 - (2) Please describe your role and responsibilities as Senior Press Officer for Specialist Operations. To whom do you report?
 - (3) Please explain whether your role forms part of the Directorate of Public Affairs and Internal Communication or whether you work in a separate office/department. If you work separately from the Directorate of Public Affairs and Internal Communication, please explain the management structure, how the two offices interrelate and the nature and level of contact you have with staff in the Directorate (and had with Director Dick Fedorcio).
2. My name is Sara Cheesley. I am the Senior Information Officer (SIO) on the Specialist Operations (SO) Press Desk in the Directorate of Public Affairs (DPA) at the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). My line manager is Chief Press Officer Ed Stearns.

3. As the SIO on the SO Press Desk my role includes:
 - a. Providing a strategic overview of the work of the SO Press Desk.
 - b. Providing communication advice and support to the Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations (ACSO), members of the SO Chief Officers group and any other police officer or member of police staff within SO.
 - c. Ensuring that the SO Press Desk provides press lines, statements etc. where required.
 - d. Dealing with daily enquiries from local, national and international print, broadcast media, on-line and digital media.
 - e. Responsibility for managing the SO press desk which consists of 2 press officers.

4. I began my career in 1980 as Secretary to the Head of Engineering, Radio Outside Broadcasts at the BBC. In 1984 I joined the *Express & Star* newspaper in Wolverhampton, where I eventually became Chief Reporter. I left the newspaper in 1997 and became Information Officer at the Department of Social Security, based in Whitehall, before moving to my current post at the MPS in 1999.

Former Assistant Commissioner John Yates

- (4) What contact did you have with former Assistant Commissioner John Yates? The Inquiry would like an overall picture of the working relationship that you had with him, including the frequency and purpose of your contact with him.
- (5) What do you know about Mr Yates' dealings with the media (both local and national, and in all its forms)? For instance:
- a. Did he make you aware of communications between him and the media? If so, do you believe that he always did so or only in certain circumstances? If so, in what circumstances?
 - b. Did he consult you/seek advice from you before communicating with the media? If so, do you believe that he always did so or only in certain circumstances? If so, in what circumstances?
 - c. Were you present at any meetings between him and the media? Were records kept of such meetings?
 - d. Did he have "off-the-record" conversations with the media? Were records kept of such conversations and of any information given to the media on this basis?
- Insofar as you are able to do so, the Inquiry would like you to give an overall picture of the type, frequency, duration and content of his contact with the media, including personal contact.
- (6) What do you know of the hospitality that Mr Yates accepted from the media? Were you ever present when he accepted hospitality from the media? Please give full details. To your knowledge, were records kept of such hospitality?
- (7) What do you know of the hospitality that Mr Yates provided to the media? Did you consider it to be appropriate? Were you ever present when he provided hospitality to the media? Please give full details. To your knowledge, were records kept of such hospitality?
- (8) Insofar as you are able to do so, please set out the contact that he had with the following persons employed by (or formerly employed by) News International and the purpose of that contact:
- a. Neil Wallis.
 - b. Rebekah Brooks.
 - c. Andy Coulson.
 - d. Colin Myler.
- (9) Are you aware of Mr Yates meeting with James or Rupert Murdoch whilst he was serving with the MPS? If so, please describe the circumstances; give approximate dates; and give your understanding of the purpose of the meeting(s).

5. Following his appointment as ACSO in April 2009 I provided AC Yates with communication advice and support on a wide range of issues falling within the remit of SO. This included drafting press lines and statements on his behalf in relation to media enquiries. It was not my responsibility to draft speeches for SO officers, but on occasions I would be required to provide input as and when required. Depending on the issues which arose, I would have had more contact with him some weeks than others. This contact was in person and/or on the phone or by email. The contact would vary depending on the nature of the policing issue, which could either be an investigation or other police-related

issues specifically in relation to SO. Where issues attracted press interest the role of SO press desk was to respond to these and prepare press lines for the media.

6. AC Yates, along with other senior officers from the MPS, would and do meet different members of the media as part of their roles. I was aware of occasions when AC Yates met members of the media. I was present at Crime Reporters Association (CRA) business lunches with AC Yates, speeches he made and interviews which he gave to the media. Records would have been kept of such meetings in the appropriate place: for example the Press Bureau kept a record; there was the Hospitality Register; and any public speeches would have been a matter of public record. AC Yates may have had 'off the record' conversations with members of the media, which I would not necessarily have been aware of.
7. The subject matter covered in AC Yates' speeches and interviews with the media included issues being dealt with by SO, such as terrorism and phone-hacking. There was no set frequency or regularity to his contact with the media. This was co-ordinated by the SO press desk as and when required.
8. AC Yates gave public speeches, which the media may have attended, and gave radio and television interviews. I am aware that AC Yates had meetings with different newspapers accompanied by the Director of the DPA. Meetings would be recorded in the DPA hospitality register maintained by DPA staff.

9. AC Yates accepted hospitality at CRA business lunches, most of which I attended with him. It is possible that he also attended other CRA social functions along with other officers and police staff. I do not remember any specific event where he provided hospitality to members of the media.
10. The only knowledge I have of any contact AC Yates had with Rebekah Brooks, Andy Coulson or Colin Myler is that which is now in the public domain. So, for example, I am aware that AC Yates had dinner with Colin Myler because in 2011 he included the details in a letter to John Whittingdale, chair of the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, which was published. I am also aware he had contact with Neil Wallis because AC Yates had made that public. During a number of conversations I had with AC Yates at around this time he told me he knew Neil Wallis, but he didn't class him as a very close friend but saw him a few times a year.
11. I am not aware of any meetings AC Yates had with James or Rupert Murdoch during his time at the MPS.

Former Assistant Commissioner Andy Hayman

- (10) What contact did you have with former Assistant Commissioner Andy Hayman? The Inquiry would like an overall picture of the working relationship that you had with him, including the frequency and purpose of your contact with him.
- (11) What do you know about Mr Hayman's dealings with the media (both local and national, and in all its forms)? For instance:
 - a. Did he make you aware of communications between him and the media? If so, do you believe that he always did so or only in certain circumstances? If so, in what circumstances?
 - b. Did he consult you/seek advice from you before communicating with the media? If so, do you believe that he always did so or only in certain circumstances? If so, in what circumstances?
 - c. Were you present at any meetings between him and the media? Were records kept of such meetings?
 - d. Did he have "off-the-record" conversations with the media? Were records kept of such conversations and of any information given to the media on this basis?

- Insofar as you are able to do so, the Inquiry would like you to give an overall picture of the type, frequency, duration and content of his contact with the media, including personal contact.
- (12) What do you know of the hospitality that Mr Hayman accepted from the media? Did you consider it to be appropriate? Were you ever present when he accepted hospitality from the media? Please give full details. To your knowledge, were records kept of such hospitality?
 - (13) What do you know of the hospitality that Mr Hayman provided to the media? Were you ever present when he provided hospitality to the media? To your knowledge, were records kept of such hospitality?
 - (14) Insofar as you are able to do so, please set out the contact that he had with the following persons employed by (or formerly employed by) News International and the purpose of that contact:
 - a. Neil Wallis.
 - b. Rebekah Brooks.
 - c. Andy Coulson.
 - d. Colin Myler.
 - (15) Are you aware of Mr Hayman meeting with James or Rupert Murdoch whilst he was serving with the MPS? If so, please describe the circumstances; give approximate dates; and give your understanding of the purpose of the meeting(s).

12. I provided the same communication advice and support to AC Hayman as I did to AC Yates. Again, depending on the issues which arose, I would have had more contact with him some weeks than others and the contact would be in person and/or on the phone or by email.

13. The subject matter of AC Hayman's contacts with the media was broadly the same as those of AC Yates, namely the issues being dealt with by SO, especially terrorism.

14. Due to my role I was aware of occasions when AC Hayman met members of the media. As with AC Yates, I was present at CRA business lunches with AC Hayman, speeches he made and briefings and interviews he gave to the media. Again, as with AC Yates, records would have been kept of such meetings, where appropriate - there would have been the Press Bureau record and the Hospitality Register. It is possible that he also attended CRA social functions along with other officers and police staff.

15. AC Hayman also held the position of Chair of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Media Advisory Group (MAG). I would not be expected to know the details of all contacts he had with the media, in this capacity. ACPO Press Office would also have assisted AC Hayman in his role as chair of ACPO MAG. As with AC Yates, AC Hayman may have had 'off the record' conversations with members of the media of which I'm not aware.

Neil Wallis

- (16) What, if anything, do you know about how Neil Wallis was selected to work for the Directorate of Public Affairs and Internal Communications?
- (17) Before Mr Wallis was selected, were you privy to any conversations about his bid for the contract or about his suitability to work for the MPS? If so: (i) when did the conversation(s) take place? (ii) who participated in the conversation(s)? and (iii) what was the gist of the conversation(s)?
- (18) What did you believe the relationship to be between Mr Wallis and Mr Yates?
- (19) Did you have any concerns about Mr Wallis working for the MPS? If so, what were your concerns? Did you express those concerns to anyone? If so, when and to whom?
- (20) Describe the contact, if any, that you had with Mr Wallis whilst he was working for the MPS. Please give full details.
- (21) What, if anything, do you know of Mr Wallis' contact with the media whilst he was working for the MPS? Please give full details.
- (22) When did you first know that Mr Wallis was of interest to the MPS in relation to the phone hacking investigation? From whom/what source did you learn this?
- (23) Once you had found out that Mr Wallis was of interest to the MPS in relation to the phone hacking investigation, did you discuss this with any senior MPS officer? If so, please give full details.
- (24) Do you know whether or not it is true that Neil Wallis sold stories to the media whilst working for the MPS? Please explain what, if anything, you know about the truth of this allegation. For the allegation see, for example, the article published by the Daily Telegraph online on 23 September 2011.
- (25) What do you know, if anything, about how Amy Wallis (Neil Wallis' daughter) came to secure work at the MPS? Please give full details.
16. I had no knowledge of and was not involved in the recruitment of Neil Wallis by the MPS / DPA. As I explained in paragraph 10 above, at around the time the MPS made the information public about the recruitment, AC Yates told me he knew Neil Wallis but he didn't class him as a very close friend but saw him a

few times a year. My knowledge of Mr Wallis' employment at the MPS for the DPA comes predominantly from the MPS public statement about the matter released on 14th July 2011 and subsequent information put into the public domain. The MPS statement on 14th July 2011 stated:

"Chamy Media, owned by Neil Wallis, former Executive Editor of the News of the World, was appointed to provide strategic communication advice and support to the MPS, including advice on speech writing and PR activity, while the Met's Deputy Director of Public Affairs was on extended sick leave recovering from a serious illness.

In line with MPS/MPA procurement procedures, three relevant companies were invited to provide costings for this service on the basis of two days per month. Chamy Media were appointed as they were significantly cheaper than the others. The contract ran from October 2009 until September 2010, when it was terminated by mutual consent.

The Commissioner has made the Chair of the police authority aware of this contract."

17. I only became aware of the existence of Mr Wallis' contract with the MPS in July 2011, by which time the contract had been terminated. I was told by Chris Webb, Deputy Director of the DPA, shortly before the MPS made the above statement on 14th July 2011 in connection with the matter.
18. I had no contact with Mr Wallis whilst he was working for the MPS. I therefore do not know what work he did for DPA or what contact he may have had with the media whilst working for the MPS.
19. More specifically, I do not know if Mr Wallis sold stories to the media whilst working for the MPS. I first became aware that Mr Wallis was of interest to police as part of an MPS investigation when he was arrested on 14th July 2011

I did not discuss the fact he was of interest to the phone hacking investigation with any senior MPS officer.

20. Similarly, the only knowledge I have concerning Amy Wallis, Mr Wallis' daughter, are those disclosed in public statements by AC Yates. Again, during a number of conversations with AC Yates at around this time he informed me that he had passed on an email to the Human Resources Department in connection with Amy Wallis but did nothing further.

My Approach to Media Relations

- (26) What is your impression of the culture of relations in general between the MPS and the media (the media in all its forms)? Please give illustrative examples.
- (27) What is your impression of the culture of relations between the media and officers of the rank of Deputy Assistant Commissioner and above? Please give illustrative examples.
- (28) What do you believe the media seek to gain from contact with police officers of the rank of Deputy Assistant Commissioner and above?
- (29) What do you believe that police officers of the rank of Deputy Assistant Commissioner and above seek to gain from their contact with the media?
- (30) Are you aware of any meeting between James or Rupert Murdoch and any person serving with the MPS (other than Mr Yates and Mr Hayman)? If so, please identify the individual(s); describe the circumstances; give approximate dates; and give your understanding of the purpose of the meeting(s).
- (35) What do you know about whether there were any such communications between other parts of the media and the MPS? Please give details.
- (76) What limitations, if any, do you consider there should be on police officers and police staff leaving the Police Service to work for the media and vice versa?
- (77) In relation to dealing with the media in general, do you consider that there is a basis for applying different standards and rules to police staff from those that apply to police officers (the latter having the powers of the office of constable)? If so, (i) do you consider that different standards and rules should apply and (ii) please specify what you consider the differences should be.
- (78) What is your view of the practice of police officers and police staff having "off-the-record" conversations with the media?

21. My impression of the culture of relations between the MPS and media are framed from my specific working experience within SO as a senior press officer and the wider DPA. In my own view staff within DPA act entirely professionally and provide an extremely high level of service both to police officers and police

staff and to the wide-ranging media they deal with on a daily basis. This is a view I have held since I joined the MPS in 1999.

22. In relation to the culture of relations between the media and officers of the rank of Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) and above, my experiences are confined to the two DACs who are in SO. I do not have daily interaction with other DACs within the MPS. I do provide the current AC SO with communication advice and support on a wide range of issues falling within the remit of SO in the MPS. One DAC has responsibility for terrorism and has contact with the media as and when operationally necessary. The other DAC who is responsible for security and protection also has contact with the media as required. This includes contact with the media in relation to her role as the ACPO lead on e-crime.
23. The media contact the MPS to get information about a wide range of incidents, operations and policies which they are reporting on. Often, the journalists ask to have direct contact with officers of all ranks. Officers of all ranks can have contact with the media as part of their role to inform the public about a range of issues. However, the current Media Relations Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) states that if they are below the rank of Inspector they must seek the permission of a senior officer.
24. I agree with the Media Relations Policy which states that the public has a huge interest in law and order issues and the media pays significant attention to matters that involve policing and crime. It is therefore right for the MPS to be

both pro-active and re-active in its media relations. This is to help build public confidence in the police service and to get maximum media coverage to give the public and media an understanding of MPS actions decisions and policies. It is important as it allows the MPS as an organisation to get its point of view across when there is a need to respond to a situation or issue.

25. Many crimes are solved as a direct result of assistance from the media, who communicate with the public at large. Some officers may find they become high-profile figures in the media due to the high-profile nature of the investigations they are leading.
26. I am not aware of any meetings taking place between James or Rupert Murdoch and any MPS personnel.
27. There are circumstances when it can be appropriate for police officers and staff to provide 'off the record' conversations with the media, as made clear in the current MPS Media Relations SOP (which can be found at tab A of the MPS Master Bundle). This can be in the form of guidance to journalists to help them increase their understanding of policies, issues and procedures.
28. I am aware that all police officers and staff are subject to a duty of confidentiality after they leave the MPS. I do not believe there is any basis for applying different standards to police officers from those that apply to police staff.

Media Relations within the MPS

- (40) Describe your impression of the culture of dealings between your office and the media (the media in all its forms)? Do you consider the relationship between your office and the media to be a successful one? What changes would you like to make to the relationship (if any?)
- (41) Does your office have a gatekeeper function for controlling the flow of information to the media?
- (42) Does your office have a gatekeeper function for controlling access to police personnel by the media?
- (43) Set out your understanding of the type of contact which staff working in your office have with the local and national media covering nature, extent, frequency and (in general terms) topics / content.
- (44) Does your office prioritise some sections of the media over others? For instance, does it prioritise communications and relations with the national media over those with the local media? If so, please give details and explain why.
- (45) Does your office give any priority/different access to information to members of the Crime Reporters' Association? If so, what priority/different access is given and why?
- (46) Are there mechanisms in place to ensure that information is disseminated widely to the media rather than to select journalists or titles? If so, please specify. If not, do you consider that there should be?
- (47) What is the media's attitude towards your office? In particular, are they satisfied by the provision of information and the routing of communications through your office or do they prefer direct contact with individual personnel within the MPS?
- (48) Do you or staff working for your office ever give "off-the-record" briefings or have "off-the-record" conversations with the media (both local and national)? If so, please give full details and illustrative examples. Please also explain why they take place and what you consider to be the benefits of such communications.
- (49) Insofar as applicable, what records are kept of information shared on an "off-the-record" basis? Are records kept of all "off-the-record" briefings and the information provided at them?
- (50) Do counter-terrorism operations bring different types of media attention than other operations? Please provide your views of the types of media attention/contact which counter terrorism policing attracts and whether or not you consider these to be in the public interest.
- (51) Describe in general terms and with illustrative examples, the personal contact which you have with the local and national media. The Inquiry would like an overall picture of the type, frequency, duration and content of your contact with the media.
- (52) Describe what you seek to gain for the MPS through your personal contact with the media.
- (53) Describe in general terms and using illustrative examples what you consider the local and national media have been seeking from you in personal dealings with them?
- (65) Do incidents that attract national media interest present particular challenges? If so, what are those challenges and do you consider that your office is adequately equipped to respond effectively and appropriately to such media interest?
- (75) Describe the culture of relations between your office on the one hand and police officers and other police staff working for the MPS on the other. Do you consider that there is a relationship of trust and confidence? What changes, if any, would you wish to make to the relationship and why?

29. I have not sought to answer questions (36)-(39) and (68)-(69) because SO Press Desk is part of the DPA.

30. I would say that the SO Press Desk has a good relationship with the wide range of media we deal with.

31. Staff on the SO Press Desk deal with pro-active and re-active communication activity relating to commands within SO. They deal with enquiries from the local, domestic, national and international media on a daily basis. For example in February this year I led the SO press desk in liaison with the DPA publicity department and the MPS Counter Terrorism Command to develop and launch a publicity campaign to encourage the public to come forward with information and contact the confidential Anti -Terrorism Hotline.
32. Understandably counter-terrorism operations and incidents attract a high volume and wide range of global media interest. It is in the public interest to provide the public with as much information as possible about counter-terrorism operations and incidents. Public safety is always the priority for the police service.
33. As with non-terrorist criminal investigations, there is always a need to consider both the integrity of an operation and any effect on future judicial proceedings when releasing information to the public.
34. The SO Press Desk receives media calls daily about a range of issues relating to the SO commands. I deal with some of these media enquiries which may be answered immediately if press lines are already logged on the Press Bureau system. At other times they will take longer to deal with, particularly where the media enquiry is new and we have not already cleared press lines. Press lines are cleared by the appropriate officer dealing with the matter. It is not possible

to be prescriptive about the type, frequency, duration or content of contact with the media. The DPA receives on average of 200-300 calls per day. During periods of intense media scrutiny this can increase significantly. The MPS Press Bureau is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

35. The DPA has a number of mechanisms which enable it to pro-actively inform the press about current MPS issues. This includes emailing press lines and statements to the media, publishing this information on the MPS website and using digital media.
36. In the main, I believe there is a relationship of trust and confidence between SO press desk and police officers and staff within SO. I do not believe that there is a need for any significant changes in order for SO press desk to fulfill its role.

Gifts and Hospitality

- (31) What do you know about the level of hospitality accepted by officers (other than Mr Yates and Mr Hayman) of the rank of Deputy Assistant Commissioner and above? Do you consider the level to be appropriate now and to have been appropriate in the past? In addressing this issue please give your reasons and set out what you consider to be an appropriate level of hospitality for police personnel to accept from the media (if any).
- (54) To what extent have you accepted hospitality from the media whilst working in your current position?
- (55) Insofar as you have accepted hospitality from the media, what has been the nature of the hospitality that you have accepted?
- (56) To what extent have you provided hospitality for the media?
- (57) Insofar as you have provided hospitality to the media, what has been the nature of that hospitality?
- (58) Have you ever accepted gifts from the media? If so, please give full details (including who gave you the gift, when, what the gift was, and why you believe they gave you the gift).
37. I have accepted some hospitality from the media, this would primarily be business lunches, which have been recorded in the hospitality register. I have bought members of the media drinks at social occasions, which includes CRA

functions and occasional drinks after work. Some reporters are also long-standing personal friends. I cannot recall ever having accepted gifts from the media. Details of my hospitality with the media are contained in the MPS Master Bundle (Gifts & Hospitality).

38. The CRA comprises journalists from national newspapers, broadcast organisations and freelancers. The general rule of CRA business lunches which I attended with senior police officers, was that all conversations were agreed to be 'off the record' and therefore not for publication or broadcast. The purpose of the CRA business lunches was to develop working relationships with journalists and where appropriate provide guidance to them to help increase their understanding of policies, issues and procedures.

Phone Hacking Investigation

- (32) What do you know about whether there was any political lobbying in relation to the MPS' handling of the phone hacking investigation and subsequent prosecutions in 2006/2007? Please give details.
- (33) What do you know about whether there was any media lobbying in relation to the MPS' handling of the phone hacking investigation and the subsequent prosecutions in 2006/2007? Please give details.
- (34) What do you know about whether there were any communications between the MPS and anyone employed by the Murdoch empire in relation to the investigation and prosecution of phone hacking by, or on behalf of, the News of the World in 2006/2007? Please give details
39. Journalists from a wide range of media organisations, including those working for Rupert Murdoch's companies such as News International would no doubt have contacted the MPS to get press lines in relation to the phone-hacking investigation and subsequent prosecutions. I would have dealt with some of these personally. I was first briefed about Operation Caryatid shortly before the arrests. I drafted the press lines, which had been cleared by the senior officers

involved, and were made available to the media following the arrests of Goodman and Mulcaire.

40. I do not know if there was any media or political lobbying in relation to the MPS' handling of investigation and prosecutions in 2006 and 2007.

Politicians

- (59) Have you ever discussed the media, or media coverage, with politicians? If so, how important is such communication and why?
41. I have never discussed the media with any politicians whilst I have been employed by the MPS. I would not have contact with politicians as part of my role within DPA.

Training/Guidance/Improvements

- (60) Do you consider that you have been adequately trained and/or given sufficient guidance on the appropriate handling of the media?
- (61) Do you consider that you have been adequately trained and/or given sufficient guidance to enable you to give sound advice and/or leadership on handling the media to your staff?
- (62) Do you provide training or guidance to your staff on (i) conducting and maintaining appropriate relationships with the media; (ii) accepting/offering hospitality; (iii) bribery and (iv) requests for 'off-the-record' comments? If so, please specify. Does that training/guidance reflect/follow the ACPO guidance?
- (63) Do you consider that your staff feel confident that they understand what is, and what is not, appropriate contact with the media? When answering this question, please explain what you consider to be "appropriate contact" with the media.
- (64) Do you consider that the staff within your office generally feel comfortable briefing the media and responding to media requests?
- (66) What improvements, if any, do you think could or should be made to the systems, policies and/or training in your office to ensure that your staff conduct and maintain appropriate relationships with the media?
- (82) What steps do you consider should be taken to ensure that all parts of the media have transparent, impartial and equal access to information?
- (84) Do you consider that there are different or further steps which could and/or should be taken to ensure that relationships between police personnel and the media are and remain appropriate?

42. I do feel I have been adequately trained and given sufficient guidance on the appropriate handling of the media and that I am able to give sound advice and provide sound leadership on handling the media to my staff. We provide training covering various topics, which reflects or follows the MPS Media Relations SOP, ACPO Communication Advisory Group Guidelines and 'Essential Law for Journalists'. I feel that my staff and I are confident that we understand what is, and what is not, appropriate contact with the media, and generally feel comfortable briefing the media and responding to media requests.
43. DPA provides media awareness and broadcast training to police and staff who are likely to have contact with the media. The training helps to identify what information they should and should not give to the media when being interviewed. It also provides guidance on setting out parameters before agreeing to an interview and that they should not mislead the media when doing so.
44. All press lines logged in the MPS Press Bureau are available to any journalist that contacts the MPS and asks for them. Internal communications are a vital part of the MPS and there is always room to develop and improve the way in which the key messages are relayed to police officers and staff to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted when interacting with the media.

Associations

- (67) Are you and/or your staff members of the Association of Police Communicators? From your perspective, what are the benefits of membership of this Association? Could the Association assist or assist further in ensuring that relations between police personnel and the media are appropriate. If so, how?

45. All press officers within DPA are members of The Association of Police Communicators (APComm). APComm is led by a group of police communicators from all over the UK. The senior executives are all heads of profession in their respective organisations. APComm provides a network of professional communicators and represents professional police staff who work in specialist media and corporate communications roles supporting the police service. Membership allows them to share best practice and discuss how they have dealt with particular issues. Members also benefit from having access to information and resources, training courses, job opportunities and links to relevant professional bodies and organisations.

Leaks/Bribery

- (70) In the last 5 years, how many investigations have been conducted into actual or suspected leaks from your office and how many have led to the successful identification of the source of the leak? What was the outcome of the other investigations?
- (71) In the last 5 years has disciplinary action been taken against any member of staff working for your office for leaking information to the media and/or private detectives? If so, please identify the number of cases and their outcome. There is no need to identify the person or persons the subject of the disciplinary process.
- (72) Insofar as you are able to say, in general, to what extent are leaks from the MPS as a whole to the media and/or private detectives a problem for the MPS?
- (73) Insofar as applicable, what do you consider are the driving forces behind, or the main causes of, leaks from (i) your office and (ii) the Police Service in general?
- (74) To what extent do you believe bribery of police personnel by the media to be a current problem for the MPS (if at all)?

46. I am not aware of any investigations having been conducted into actual or suspected leaks from the SO Press Desk.

47. To my knowledge there has not been any disciplinary action taken in the last five years against any member of staff working on the SO Press Desk, or DPA more generally, for leaking information to the media and/or private detectives.
48. I believe that there is a relationship of trust and confidence between the SO Press Desk and police officers and police staff, within the SO commands and those that we deal with across the wider MPS.

Reports

- (79) What is your view of the recommendations contained in the HMIC's recent report "*Without Fear or Favour*" insofar as they concern relations between the media and the police? (If you have not seen it, the report is available online).
- (80) What is your view of the recommendations contained in Elizabeth Filkin's report "*The Ethical Issues Arising from the Relationship Between Police and Media*"? (If you have not seen it, the report is available online).
- (81) As to sections 3.2 and 4.6 of Elizabeth Filkin's report, to what extent do you consider that the MPS or your office does not give equal and impartial access to information to all parts of the media (but that certain relationships have developed selectively)?
- (83) As regards Elizabeth Filkin's findings at paragraph 3.3.2, to what extent do you agree that disproportionate resources are invested in the central press handling operation and the reactive work arising from negative coverage in the national media? Do you consider that changes should be made to the delineation of responsibility for providing information to the media, or to the working relationship, between Local Borough communications staff and the corporate team? Do you consider that there should be changes to the apportionment of resources? If so, what changes?
49. The recommendations in the Filkin Report: are wide-ranging and address communication issues not just relating to DPA but across the MPS. They need careful consideration. However, some of the advice given in the report is already best practice within DPA and no doubt across the MPS.
50. In terms of section 3.2 and 4.6 of the Filkin Report there may be occasions when information about a particular incident is targeted at particular media outlets by the DPA. For example a police appeal for information about a

murder in a borough may be targeted at local media, if it is felt by the investigating officer that local people are more likely to have information about the crime. However, any journalists contacting the Press Bureau will be given the press lines.

51. It is important that press officers and the media develop effective and positive working relationships with each other. I have never worked in any other part of the DPA so I do not have first hand experience of being an area press officer. However, in my opinion the work of our area press officers working with local, national and international media has proved very important and fundamental to maintaining a trusted relationship with the press and informing and increasing their understanding of policies, issues and procedures. Clearly, there is always room for improvement in any department and a review of the DPA structure is currently being carried out.

52. In relation to the HMIC's recent report "*Without Fear or Favour*" I agree that police officers and police staff should conduct themselves with integrity in whatever roles they perform. I understand that the MPS contributed to this report and the findings will be considered as will those contained in the Filkin Report by the MPS. In addition the MPS is also reviewing both its Media Relations Policy and SOP.

I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true

Signed..........

Dated..... 14 FEBRUARY 2012