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<b>Contact for advice:</b>	<i>Press Officers – Marketing and Communications Department</i>
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**PROCEDURES – Media Policy**

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## **Media Management Procedures**

### **1.0 Making the most of the Media**

1.1 The Constabulary's aim is to build a safer and stronger Cumbria. It is up to each and every one of us to help achieve this and with more than 70 percent of the public preferring to get their information via the media, it has become a powerful tool for us to use. Effective media handling can make the difference to improving community confidence, particularly when an incident occurs, so the following guidance has been issued to help you make the most of every opportunity.

1.2 Proactive use of the media and linking in with the Constabulary's marketing activities is a great way to inform the communities we serve and help them to understand what we do and why. Being proactive ensures we are able to shout about our successes and dispel rumour and speculation when things go wrong so helping to maintain and improve public confidence.

1.3 There is no hard and fast rule on who should speak to the media but the best person is often the one who knows the most about what they are talking about, is comfortable speaking to the media, and doesn't stray beyond the immediate subject. Further tips on conducting a media interview can be found in Media Management Procedures Section 7.

1.4 We should only provide the media with factual information about incidents, investigations or issues we are directly involved in and only after permission from the SIO or OIC. Release will only be authorised providing that an embargo would not be broken and disclosure will not compromise an investigation, operation or the judicial process. If in doubt, please contact Press Office. Area Commanders and Directors of Departments should determine at what level it would be appropriate for their own staff to comment about matters that relate to their area or department's responsibilities and functions.

1.5 Anyone who provides information to the media should update Press Office as to their actions and what has been released wherever possible. As there are likely to be follow-up calls from other media organisations following the publication or broadcast of news stories. Making Press Office aware will allow for appropriate statements to be prepared in advance to deal with subsequent enquiries.

1.6 Reporters often carry out check calls to their local Police stations by telephone. These calls can be a quick and simple opportunity for you to get across an appeal, issue advice or raise awareness of an issue/campaign you are doing. General advice is to:

- Always ask who is calling, where they work and what their contact number is. This helps build a relationship and ensures the call is genuine.
- Take details of their enquiry and tell the reporter you will call them back. This allows you time to decide what you want to say, check the facts, or pass to the SIO/Press Office if necessary.
- Don't waste a good opportunity – give them good news.
- Stick to what you know and avoid jargon, ie 'men' not 'male persons'.

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- Never forget who you are talking to, throw away comments or humorous asides can become headlines.
- Get back to them - ignoring press calls will not make them go away.

1.7 Guidance as to what can be released in a large variety of incidents can be found in the Media Management Procedures Section 6. However, all cases are unique and can come with their own challenges - if you have any queries about what can and cannot be released to the media contact Police Press Office for guidance.

1.8 Our aim is to be as open and honest as possible, however there may be occasions where publication of the case would be detrimental to the enquiry (ie, in an investigation into an internal theft at a business) Press Office must be made aware at the earliest opportunity and the fact must be noted on the incident log. There will be occasions, for investigative or evidential purposes, when investigating officers will want to withhold putting certain information into the public domain. Whilst the publication or broadcast of this information may not necessarily be in breach of the Contempt of Court Act 1981, it could nevertheless disadvantage the investigation or subsequent prosecution.

1.9 We expect all officers and staff to maintain professionalism both inside and outside of work. There is a need for us to maintain professional working relationships with the media. However, when officers or staff do enter into personal relationships with anyone who is part of a media organisation it is expected that work matters are not discussed outside of work. Off-the-record comments are not permitted. The Constabulary will not tolerate any Police Officer, Police Staff and Special Constable who improperly discloses information or intelligence (either deliberately or recklessly) to the media.

1.10 Officers and staff are reminded of the Police (Conduct) Regulations Schedule 1 Code of Conduct, Article 7 – ‘Confidential Information which comes into the possession of the police should be treated as confidential. It should not be used for personal benefit and nor should it be divulged to other parties except in the proper course of police duty. Similarly, officers should respect, as confidential, information about force policy and operations unless authorised to disclose it in the course of their duties’. Anyone found to be breaching these protocols could be made subject to disciplinary procedures.

1.11 Where Police Officers, Police Staff or Special Constables become aware that a media organisation is planning to print or broadcast material that could impact negatively on an investigation or subsequent prosecution, they should alert the SIO or Police Press Office at the earliest opportunity.

1.12 At the scene of an incident, or operation, only dedicated spokespeople nominated by the SIO are permitted to provide information to the media. If you are approached by the media at the scene - make the SIO aware and refer them to Press Office or the SIO to ensure consistent and appropriate information is released. You are advised not to issue any unguarded or off-the-record comments but instead find out what the reporter wants to know then tell them you, the SIO or Press Office will get back to them. Further advice on media handling at the scene of a major/critical incident can be found in Media Management Procedures Sections 8 and 10.

1.13 If it is a question of policy, comment should come from ACPO, refer such calls to Press Office who will liaise with the appropriate Chief Officer or Area Commander.

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1.14 Crime cannot be treated as exclusive to one media organisation. If you give the media information which has wider implications tell the Press Office so staff can help you deal with follow-up enquiries, What you say to one organisation you should be prepared to say to all, no favourites and no special treatment.

1.15 It is not the role of any member of the Constabulary to comment unnecessarily or adversely on the activities of any other agency or partner, or on the decisions of Magistrates. However, when issues arise where it is felt appropriate to comment then you should seek the advice of a Chief Officer, Director, or the Press Office, who will be able to help. Where a joint operation, conviction or other issues arises consider issuing a joint press release.

1.16 On occasion newspapers and magazines may publish articles that are inaccurate or misleading about the Constabulary. Those who wish to respond in writing to correct such inaccuracies are asked to consult the Press Office prior to submitting letters for publication to ensure there is no duplication or that the matter is not being addressed in some other way.

## 2.0 Key Messages

2.1 If you speak to the media it is a good idea to be prepared with up to three key messages – here are some ideas which you can build on:

- Cumbria is one of the safest places to live and work in the country.
- Cumbria has very low levels of domestic burglary, robbery and vehicle crime.
- We are dedicated to building safer, stronger, more confident communities by policing the issues that matter most to local people.
- We record more low level incidents than we used to, and our presence on the streets at key times enables us to intervene early when trouble starts.
- We have excellent performance in customer service, investigating crime and promoting public safety.
- We're working to make our services accessible to everyone.
- We aim to give people in Cumbria a genuine say in how they are policed and the opportunity to play an active part in the solution to local problems.
- Effective partnership working is key to our approach, solving problems faster and more effectively.
- We think people should know who their local police officer is, who is in charge of policing locally, how they are performing, and how they can be held to account.
- Neighbourhood policing is the main way we provide services to the communities of Cumbria. Through Neighbourhood Policing Teams we work hard to tackle the issues which matter most to local communities and help create a safer, stronger Cumbria.
- We aim to give a professional, polite and quality service every time, regardless of the nature of the call.
- The ongoing Respect campaign aims to tackle anti-social behaviour, violent crime and criminal damage.
- We work to inspire trust and confidence in our policing service so that the people of Cumbria feel safe, satisfied and re-assured.

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### 3.0 Cumbria Police Press Office

3.1 It is up to each and every one of us to inspire trust and confidence in the community and the media can play a vital role in this – helping us to build a safer, stronger Cumbria. The Police Press Office is responsible for supporting you in your dealings with the media and help you to promote you work to create stronger, more confident communities.

3.2 There are three Press Officers in all, who are based at Police Headquarters in Penrith. Collectively they support all headquarters operations, CID and Uniformed Operational Support and separately they each support one BCU. All three are responsible for dealing with strategic issues and serious incidents, regardless of where they happen in the county.

3.3 A quick flick through local papers, radio stations and TV news programmes reveals the extent of news coverage the Constabulary receives. Press Office helps staff and officers to ensure that journalists receive accurate information, and report the facts correctly.

3.4 The media acts as a powerful tool to communicate with the public, and can be used to appeal for information relating to criminal investigations and to promote the positive work carried out by officers, whether that be charging a suspect or running an operation to tackle anti-social behaviour in a particular neighbourhood.

3.5 The Press Office play a key role in managing the reputation of Cumbria Constabulary and ensuring that a consistent message is given to the media. For this reason it is essential that officers and staff liaise with the Press Office before talking to the media. Due to the nature of information that officers and staff regularly deal with, there are guidelines to follow when disclosing information to the press and to members of the public, and disclosing certain details about an incident could seriously prejudice an investigation or prosecution. All of the Press Officers are trained in journalism and media law and are available to help whenever an officer or member of staff wants, or needs, to liaise with the media.

3.6 The office is staffed between 8am and 5pm on weekdays and out of hours a press officer is on call 24/7 and can be contacted via the Communications Inspector, who is the first person dealing with media enquiries in the evenings and at weekends.

3.7 General duties carried out by the press officers include:

- Issuing press releases on incidents, appeals for information, crime reduction advice, force initiatives, policies and operations;
- Updating the Constabulary Voicebank: To listen – can be issued to media – 0871 550 6075.
- Dealing with media enquiries and daily press briefings; Facilitation of press/TV/radio interviews;
- Media liaison at scenes of major incidents and organisation of press conferences;
- Organising media attendance on operations;
- Out of hours on-call cover;
- Internal media training/advice;
- Producing media strategies for major events/incidents;

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- Writing for internal/external publications and Internet site;
- Family liaison work/tribute pieces;
- Liaison with other agencies, including councils, health authority, Police Authority;
- Media monitoring and response to unbalanced/inaccurate coverage;

#### 4.0 Writing a Press Release

4.1 Public consultation shows that 78 per cent prefer to receive information from the media so it can be a powerful tool for us to inspire confidence in our service and build a safer, stronger Cumbria.

4.2 So it is important that we are proactive in our communication with the public by gaining maximum positive media coverage to promote understanding of what we do and why, so our communities can be confident and proud of the policing service they have. We can also use the media very successfully to release information for policing purposes such as crime appeals, road and public safety messages.

4.3 To issue a press release about an incident go to the Mail section of Outlook, click the arrow next to 'new' on the tool bar – select Choose Form – select Press Releases Not Protectively Marked, paste in your release following the guidance in the text box then hit 'send'.

4.4 Press Releases about incidents should include wherever possible:

- A description of the incident including date, time and location.
- Details of any property that was stolen/damaged and value (If applicable)
- The age and general address of victim(s) e.g "A 29-year-old man from Barrow was assaulted."
- The age and general address of anyone arrested plus outcome e.g police bail/NFA etc.
- The name, age and address of anyone charged with the offence, court being attended and date.
- Add any relevant crime prevention advice and explain what are police doing to tackle the problems as this can build public confidence.
- Check spellings of names of individuals and areas.
- Don't forget to add your name and how to contact you via the Constabulary contact number 0845 33 00 247. Information can also be passed to us anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.
- Consider the incident – is it a multi-agency issue – does it need a multi-agency response? Do you need a quote from the Local Authority or the Police Authority too?

4.5 For example:

*4.5.1 Police are urging Barrow residents to ensure their property is secure at all times after thieves entered a man's house and stole his TV. Offenders entered the house, on Lawson Street, Barrow, at 10:50am on Thursday, 29 March, whilst the owner was in the front garden, and removed a 40 inch LCD TV worth £1000 from inside. This is the third theft from insecure properties in the area in the last ten days.*

*4.5.2 Anyone with information on the theft or who is offered an LCD TV under suspicious circumstances is asked to contact PC James Quinn at Barrow Police Station on 0845 33 00 247 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. Officers*

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*from the local Neighbourhood Policing Team are available for anyone who would like further crime prevention advice.*

4.6 Avoid jargon or police speak – say ‘people’ rather than ‘persons’ and ‘walk’ rather than ‘proceeded’ and ‘car’ rather than ‘vehicle’.

4.7 For positive press coverage of court cases, larger appeals or initiatives you are involved in let Press Office know in advance and consider issuing a more in-depth release including quotes, photo, facts and figures.

4.8 Don’t forget press releases generate requests for interviews for the broadcast media so always make sure a spokesperson is available.

4.9 The Constabulary has a Diversity Strategy, which should be adhered to at all times. Care should be taken not to discriminate, either in language or action, against anyone on grounds of race, gender, disability, age, mental health, sexuality, religion, belief, or other difference, be it visible or non-visible. Any media organisations engaging in discriminatory or prejudicial behaviour or using exclusionary language can be referred to the press office and diversity unit.

4.10 Further advice can be sought from the press office or the Constabulary Diversity Advisor, however general guidance is as follows:

- Descriptions – It is expected and necessary that when giving descriptions of suspects the sex, appearance and any other relevant information can be given as long as it will not compromise an ongoing investigation. When describing someone’s ethnicity they may be described as white, black, Asian, or mixed heritage. Other acceptable descriptive terms include Mediterranean or Eastern European. Occasionally a victim may describe someone using a derogatory term. It is necessary to ensure that we do not repeat the victim’s description verbatim.
- Victims – We rarely confirm the ethnicity, sexuality, disability, religion, etc. of a victim as it is not relevant in most cases. However, if an incident is believed to be motivated by hate more details of the victim and/or offender may be given to underline the motive and the reason it is being treated as racist. N.B. Prior consultation with the victim is essential as, for example, they not make their sexuality or religious beliefs widely known.
- Offenders/suspects - When someone is arrested/charged/summonsed we do not give details of their ethnicity, sexuality, disability etc.
- Racist/Racially motivated incidents – When an incident is felt to meet the Macpherson definition of a racist incident it may be described as such. However, it is important that offences are not described as “racially motivated” or “racially aggravated” where there is no direct evidence to support this.

**5.0 Example press releases (alphabetical order):**

5.1 Assaults



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*Police are appealing for witnesses after a Workington man was punched in Barrow on Friday night. At 11.20pm on Friday, February 18, a 27-year-old Workington man was assaulted in Oxford Road and taken to Furness General Hospital for treatment of facial injuries. Police are investigating reports he was punched several times by another man. The offender was believed to be a white man, aged between 25 and 30, around six feet tall with dark brown hair. He was wearing blue jeans and a white jumper. Any witnesses or anyone with information is asked to contact PC Jim Smith at Barrow Police Station on 0845 33 00 347 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.*

## 5.2 Burglary

*Police are investigating after £1,000 of electrical equipment was stolen from a house in Carlisle. Between 5pm on Monday, February 14 and 8am on Tuesday, February 15, a house was broken into on Botcherby Avenue, Carlisle. Offender(s) broke in through the rear patio window and stole a television, DVD player, stereo system and various other items. Anyone with information on the incident or has been offered any electrical equipment for sale under suspicious circumstances should ring PC Erin Taylor of Carlisle Neighbourhood Policing Team on 0845 33 00 247 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.*

## 5.3 Collisions

*Two people were injured after two cars collided on the M6 today (Wednesday, January 9). A police investigation is underway after a blue Renault Megane, driven by a 34-year-old Ulverston woman, and a white Ford Orion, driven by a 26-year-old Wigton man, collided at 12.15pm. The collision occurred on the southbound carriageway of the M6 motorway, between junctions 37 and 38. Both drivers were taken to Westmorland General Hospital by ambulance. The 34-year-old woman remains in hospital in a stable condition, the 26-year-old man has been discharged following treatment for minor injuries. Lanes one and two of the southbound carriageway of the M6 were closed for three hours to allow an investigation to be carried out and the carriageways to be cleared. Any witnesses should ring Cumbria Police Roads on 0845 33 00 247.*

## 5.4 Criminal damage

*Police are appealing for help from the public to help catch vandals after three cars were damaged whilst parked on Quay Street, Whitehaven. Offenders, believed to be three young girls, ripped the wing mirrors off a white Ford Focus, a red Ford Sierra and a black Renault Clio which were all parked on Quay Street between 8pm on Saturday, March 26 and 8am on Sunday March 27. The total cost of the damage is in the region of £600 and police are keen to trace the offenders. Anyone with information should call PC Nicola Everett, of Whitehaven Neighbourhood Policing Team on 0845 33 00 247 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.*

## 5.5 Distraction burglaries

*Police are urging home owners to always check identification of cold callers after a 72-year-old woman had her purse stolen from her home in Whitehaven. At around 10.35am on Wednesday March 2 the woman was at her home in Orchard Rise, Whitehaven, when a man knocked at the door claiming to work for the water board. He said he needed to check the water pressure and was allowed into the kitchen. He began to look under the sink and asked the homeowner to go upstairs and turn on*

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*the bathroom taps. The woman did so and when she returned back downstairs the man had gone. She later found her purse was missing along with the £150 cash it contained. The cold caller was described as being white, around 40 years old, and around five foot ten inches tall. He was wearing a navy blue jumper and blue jeans. Police are warning the elderly to be on their guard against such callers, and to follow the stop, chain check rule etc....Anyone with information on this incident should ring 0845 33 00 247 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.*

## 5.6 Robberies

*Police have arrested a Sheffield man after a robbery at Tebay Service Station earlier today (Saturday, September 8). At approximately 6am a man wearing a black balaclava entered the service station holding what appeared to be a brick and told the assistant to hand over the money from the till. Fearing for her safety, the assistant opened the till and handed over some money. The man left the station and made off in a black Rover car northwards on the M6 towards Carlisle. The assistant was not injured but was shaken by what had happened. Police were called to the scene and a full scale police investigation was launched. A 23-year-old man from Appleby was arrested on the M6 at 8:30am in connection with the incident and has been taken to Carlisle Police Station where he will be interviewed later today. Anyone with information or any witnesses to the incident are asked to ring DS Kim Ashley, of North Cumbria CID, on 0845 33 00 247 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.*

## 5.7 Robberies/thefts from a person

*Police are appealing for information to help track down a boy who stole a woman's handbag in Penrith. At approximately 11.25am on Monday February 21 a 65-year-old woman was walking along Rowcliffe Lane, in Penrith, when she was approached from behind by a boy on a bicycle. As he passed the woman the youth grabbed her handbag, pulling her to the ground, before riding off towards the city centre. The woman was found by a passer by and was taken to Penrith Hospital for treatment of minor injuries. The boy was aged between 13 and 16, and was wearing a navy blue jacket and a black baseball cap. Any witnesses or anyone with information on the offender should ring police on 0845 33 00 247 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.*

## 5.8 Thefts of vehicles

*Police are appealing for information after a blue Vauxhall Cavalier was stolen from the driveway of a house in Manor Road, Carlisle on Monday morning. The car was stolen some time between 9am and 12 noon and police are working to trace its whereabouts and catch the thief. Anyone who thinks they may have seen the M-reg car, is asked to contact Sergeant Steve Miller, at Carlisle Neighbourhood Policing Team on 0845 33 00 347 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.*

*Note to reporters*

*A photo of the car is available by contacting Police Press Office on 01768 217009.*

## 5.9 Sudden death

*Police are investigating after the body of a man was found in a flat in Salthouse Road, Barrow, at 10.15am today (March 8). Police are treating the death as suspicious and have cordoned off the building while forensic examinations of the scene take place. Police are currently working to identify the man and inform the immediate family. A post mortem is due to take place by a Home Office Pathologist later today to establish the cause of death. The South Cumbrian coroner Ian Smith has been informed.*

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*Anyone who has any information which they think could help police with their enquiries is asked to contact Barrow CID on 0845 33 00 247 or alternatively report information anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.*

*Note to reporters*

*Further updates will be issued to the press in due course through Police Press Office. Press at the scene are asked to make themselves.*

## **6.0 Media Guidance for Individual Incidents**

6.1 Effective media handling when an incident occurs is vital to ensuring community confidence. So, remembering that every incident is unique, we have created general guidance about a wide range of issues to help you when you speak to the media or write a press release. This list is not exhaustive so please don't hesitate to contact Police Press Office direct, or your line manager, if you would like further guidance or advice. Don't forget you can use one of the suggested key messages to help too.

### **6.2 Animal cruelty**

Whilst it is not core Police business, animal cruelty cases are a very emotive issue for many members of the public and it is important when they do occur that Police are seen to have a strong stance against it. If we are the lead agency in an incident and it is believed witnesses may come forward press releases can be issued, giving general details of the offence and when and where it took place, and what Police are doing to catch the offenders. Liaison with the RSPCA is recommended - consider a multi-agency press release with quotes from both agencies.

### **6.3 Arson**

If arson is suspected a press release should ordinarily be issued appealing for witnesses and/or information. Details of where and when the incident took place and any descriptions should be given. If anyone was injured in the incident this should be confirmed alongside ages and extent of injuries provided the detail will not identify the persons involved.

### **6.4 Assaults**

Assaults which take place in a public place often warrant media appeals to aid the investigation and reassure local people that the incident is being professionally dealt with by Police. Details such as the location, time and background to the incident can be given along with descriptions of the offender(s) if known. The victim's name should not be released but their age/sex/and general area they live can be given as long as it does not directly identify them. (ie, a 29-year-old woman from Barrow has been....) It is worth making clear that it was not a stranger attack if this is the case.

### **6.5 Bogus callers/distraction burglaries**

This type of incident should usually be the subject of a press release, primarily to warn others and disseminate crime prevention advice. Details such as the where and when the incident took place and brief details of the victim and any stolen items should be given. Descriptions are important and advice on steps to be taken to avoid falling victim are vital in these cases. Don't forget to mention what police are doing to track down offenders to reassure the community.

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### 6.6 Burglaries

In the case of a burglary a brief press release may be issued appealing for witnesses or information. If the incident is particularly unusual or items of high value are stolen these incidents may attract increased coverage. Personal data, such as the house name, number or business name, should not be revealed but a road name can be given. (Be aware that in the case of a business – it is very likely that the business name will be discovered by reporters so we would always advise you inform the victim of your plans and the reason behind the appeal.)

Information on the time/date of the offence, brief details of what was stolen, approximate value, and details of any suspects/descriptions should be included. If there is a spate of burglaries in a particular area it is standard practice for a press release to be issued to warn other local people and offer crime prevention advice. For larger releases try including a reassuring quote and a key message around the area being a safe place to live.

### 6.7 Collisions

Press releases are often issued to appeal for witnesses and information on collisions. General information such as the time of the incident, where it occurred and the brief circumstances can be given. We can describe the type of vehicles involved, including colour/make, and the sex/age/approximate address of the driver or others involved, but not registration numbers or names. Rough details of the injuries sustained, i.e. serious/minor/life-threatening, can be given and the location of the hospital they have been taken to. Information should also be given as soon as possible about road closures and diversions. No comment should be made on the cause of a collision or who may be responsible, however if someone has been arrested/charged in connection with the collision this should be included in a press release, although the person should not be named unless charged (see arrests section below).

### 6.8 Criminal damage

Criminal damage may be newsworthy, particularly if the damage caused is extensive or a pattern is evident, and media appeals can successfully lead to offenders being traced. Details of where and when the offence took place along with a description of the damage caused and value should be included.

### 6.9 Court cases

Once a person has been charged and the media have been given the date of the first court appearance and/or the person's surname for guidance the media are expected to follow the case through the courts without assistance. However good court cases are a great way to highlight good police performance or crime prevention messages so consider what you want to say upon sentence.

6.9.1 If a case is particularly high profile, or a particularly good case in terms of gaining positive publicity, a media strategy or press release prepared in time for the conclusion of the case may be appropriate. This should be discussed with the press office at the earliest opportunity. Consider issuing CCTV, images of offenders, or other evidence used in the case to boost media coverage. It is also important to have a spokesperson available to undertake broadcast media interviews.

6.9.2 Upon the conclusion of a court case the photo of the offender can be released to the media as long as it meets the following criteria:

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- A custodial sentence of three years has been issued by the courts,
- Permission has been gained by an officer of Chief Inspector rank or above,
- Release of the photo is not going to identify a victim whose identity is protected or impact on any other investigation.

6.9.3 We do not routinely carry out “pre-trial briefings” but certain cases warrant contact between journalists and officers while a court case is in progress to ensure the reporters do not prejudice the court case. It may be worth considering a media strategy before the court case starts to determine exactly what can and cannot be released and when. (ie, upon conviction or sentencing.) Pre-trial briefings can only be held in exceptional circumstances after discussion with Press Office and they must be authorised by a Chief Officer.

#### 6.10 Domestic violence

Details of domestic violence incidents will not be proactively given out where they have taken place in private. If by some chance the incident has taken place in public and there is a realistic chance that witnesses may come forward a press release may be issued at the request of the officer in the case. Violent incidents in a public place can cause distress in the local community so a press release is advised in such cases to reassure local people that police are dealing with the issue.

#### 6.11 Indecent exposure

Details of incidents are often given out to warn people and appeal for information or witnesses. Care should be taken not to include inappropriate information. General phrases such as “the offender was engaged in a lewd act” can be used. Descriptions of the offender and time/location are paramount in addition to info on safety advice and information on what police are doing in relation to the reports. Always follow up with a press release once someone has been arrested to reassure the community. Where children are involved consider early liaison with local schools around info distributed to parents.

#### 6.12 Robberies

Where robberies take place at businesses, such as shops and banks, there is often a great deal of press interest and prompt press releases are important to maintain community confidence – especially when the case involves a high visibility police response. Appeals for information in the media can help trace offenders and details such as time/location and brief circumstances of the case should be given out. It is often best to check with the organisation concerned before issuing any press release, although if an organisation does not want publicity this is often overridden in the interests of the investigation. The exact amount of money taken should not normally be divulged and the identities of any staff injured/threatened should not be given out. Regular press updates are advised to ensure accurate reporting of the case and details of arrests/charges etc.

#### 6.13 Robberies/thefts from a person

Robberies and/or thefts from a person are particularly news worthy. Details are often given out and information such as time/location and brief circumstances should be

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included. Brief details about the victim should be given, such as age and approximate address, details of any injuries. Consider issuing personal/crime safety messages if necessary alongside a reassuring message about the rarity of such incidents in Cumbria.

#### 6.14 Thefts of and from vehicles

Press releases of thefts of and from vehicles can be helpful to issue crime prevention advice and appeal for information to aid the investigation. Details of when and where the offence took place and the type of vehicles involved should be given. In the case of a vehicle theft, the registration number can be given out however it is unlikely to be printed or broadcast by the media. A photograph of the stolen vehicle and interview with the victim are much more likely to generate press coverage and assist officers. For assistance contact Press Office.

### 7.0 Making the most of media interviews

7.1 Media interviews are essential to effective media handling and, if undertaken well, are a great way of inspiring confidence in the community. Interviews can be undertaken by anyone however general advice is that they are undertaken by the officer or staff member who knows the most about the incident or issue being discussed.

7.2 An effective interview requires a clear understanding of what you want to say, good preparation and a confident presentation. Below are a few general tips that can be applied when undertaking any interview with the press:

- Discuss the questions you will be asked during the interview so you are prepared
- Check your answers are in-line with policy
- Think about: Why are we doing the interview? And what's in it for the Constabulary?
- Can I improve public confidence?
- Is there a reputational risk?
- Create three key messages
- Plan what you are going to say
- Think ahead and be prepared for things you don't want to say
- No off-the-record comments

#### 7.3 Newspaper interviews:

- Take the call, get the brief details and tell the journalist that you will get back to them
- Don't be rushed but check when their deadline is
- Research and prepare what you want to say
- Check that it is in-line with force policy if necessary refer to Press Office
- If possible have up to three key messages that you want to get across
- Don't be afraid to say 'NO'

#### 7.4 Radio interviews:

- Get a brief outline of the interview

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- Check who else is going to be interviewed
- Ask if it is pre-record or live
- Prepare your points/facts/figures
- What the first question will be?
- Use the questions as openings to get your key messages across (Repeat your key message at beginning and end if possible i.e. an appeal)
- Paint a picture so listeners can imagine the scene.
- Don't be drawn into speculation
- Avoid repeating a negative comment
- Look out for the awkward question at the end – anticipate it and have something to say in response.

7.5 Television interviews:

- Check your uniform – TV interviews are 90% appearance and sound, 10% content
- Check your location/backdrop
- Remember the camera can be recording at any point
- Maintain eye contact with the reporter not the camera
- Don't repeat a negative
- Avoid jargon
- Be strong and prepared to think on your feet
- Relax.

**8.0 Media guidance for high profile/major incidents (alphabetical order)**

8.1 If a high profile or major incident occurs it is always advised to contact Police Press Office at the earliest opportunity so they can assist the SIO in the management of the media and help maintain community confidence.

8.2 SIOs are advised to begin drawing up a media strategy early on into the investigation to ensure effective communication with the media and the wider community during an incident. Press office is available to offer advice but in general, media strategies should encompass the following information:

- Background Information (Details of the incident)
- Aims of Media Engagement (What are we trying to achieve)
- Key Messages (Main points we are trying to get across)
- Tactics (ie, press releases, one to one interviews, release of e-fit, use of website, NPTs to raise key messages when out and about in community)
- Internal Communications
- Roles and Responsibilities (Who are the spokespeople)
- If-Asked Questions and Answers (What awkward questions could we be asked and how will we answer)
- Media Timetable (Ensures a record is kept of what has been released to the press and when)
- Useful Contacts

8.3 Bomb alerts/suspicious packages

Details of bomb alerts and suspicious packages are not routinely offered to the media as publicity is often being courted by the offenders and copy cat incidents may occur.

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Most media outlets will not publish or broadcast details of hoaxes unless widespread disruption occurs. In this case, and if there are evacuations or road closures etc, brief details should be given. Always contact Police Press Office at the earliest opportunity so they can manage the issuing of press releases in conjunction with a senior officer.

### 8.4 Firearms incidents

If a firearms incident/operation is covert we will not seek publicity. If the press become aware of such an incident through their own means rough details may be confirmed, but the press may be asked to respect an embargo until the operation is concluded. If a firearms incident is publicised brief details of where/when the incident took place may be given, including details of the outcome. If a firearm was discharged or a baton, gun, or taser used this may be publicised. Details of whether or not the matter has been referred to the IPCC should be confirmed. The media may be asked to obscure the identity of firearms officers in any coverage/photographs and the identities of firearms officers involved will not be given by the press office.

### 8.5 Kidnaps/blackmail

In case of abductions, kidnaps and/or blackmail specific guidelines are in place. For example, where it is thought a child has been abducted a Child Rescue Alert may be issued. In the case of a kidnap where life is at stake, a news blackout agreement may be invoked. The press office has strict procedures in place for such incidents and their involvement at an early stage is paramount.

### 8.6 Major emergencies

The press office has contingency plans and procedures in place for major emergencies. These plans have been formulated by the county's Local Resilience Forum media subgroup, which comprises of the emergency services and other relevant authorities. Press office involvement at an early stage is paramount. The media will arrive at the scenes of such incidents extremely quickly and officers at the scene should organise a media vantage point as soon as possible.

### 8.7 Sudden/suspicious/unexplained deaths

When sudden, suspicious or unexplained deaths take place the Press Office should be informed at an early stage and a media strategy prepared to manage community confidence and aid the investigation. In such cases, an initial press statement should be prepared immediately by the SIO in conjunction with the Press Office, in case of enquiries. General information such as when/where the body was found, how the death is being treated, and details of any other agencies involved, such as Coroner/pathologist/ambulance services, should be included. If there is a suspect their description and anything else which is relevant should be given out as long as it is not going to impact negatively in the investigation. An early appeal for witnesses and information, if relevant, can be given. As an investigation progresses regular updates should be given – this should be built into the media strategy.

### 8.8 Sex offences

Where an offence has taken place in public it may be helpful to issue a press appeal to seek witnesses and information. It is desirable that such incidents are publicised, unless the SIO can give a genuine reason why not, to raise awareness and help prevent similar offences. Care should always be taken not to identify the victim. The description of the suspect/offender should always be given if available. Care should



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be taken not to include graphic details – the phrase “serious sexual assault” is preferable to rape. If the suspect is known to the victim using the phrase “This is not a stranger attack” can help to minimise the impact on the wider community.

## 9.0 Publicising Arrests

9.1 Under the Contempt of Court Act 1981, when someone is arrested or a warrant or summons is issued proceedings become “active”. It is therefore vital that if a crime has been publicised the media are given information as soon as an arrest is made. If they don't know an arrest is made they are in danger of unwittingly committing Contempt of Court and jeopardising a case. We can give brief details of a person arrested – i.e. a 26-year-old Carlisle man – and what they have been arrested on suspicion of. We can tell the press if they have been bailed and what date they have been bailed to.

9.2 When a case is active care must be taken not to do or say anything which would cause “substantial risk of serious impediment or prejudice”.

9.3 When someone is charged we can tell the press their name, age, address, what they have been charged with and if/when they are to appear in court.

9.4 We will never give out the name of someone under-18 charged with an offence or the name of someone charged with a sexual offence if this would lead to identification of the victim.

9.5 If someone is cautioned they will not be named however their age and rough address can be given to the press.

8.6 If someone is given a fixed penalty notice or processed by summons they are still not named.

## 10.0 SIO guidance on handling the media during a major incident

10.2 Our aim is to build safer and stronger Cumbria. To do this we need to inspire trust and confidence in our policing service so the public feel safe, satisfied and reassured and this is never more vital than during a major incident. During such incidents it is important that we are able to effectively use the media as a resource to communicate with the communities we serve and to aid investigations. This guidance has been prepared so you can be proactive in your communication with the public by effectively managing the media so people continue to feel confident in our service when major incidents occur.

10.2 SIO is advised to make contact with the Press Office at the earliest opportunity.

10.2.1 As soon as the case is declared a major incident a call should be made to the on-call Press Officer to alert them. Do not wait until press arrive. This enables a Press Officer to be appointed to help you manage the media, give advice, discuss what can and cannot be released to the press, help create press statements and start planning for the longer term media strategy (For an example - see Annex A).

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10.2.2 An on-call Press Officer is available 24/7 through the Communication Centre Inspector.

10.3 Draft a holding statement to get control of the media messages early.

10.3.1 The community hear about incidents very quickly and it is best that the correct information is proactively issued to them directly from Police rather than hearing through inaccurate rumour and speculation.

10.3.2 Early statements about police activity can to reduce public fear and minimise speculation.

10.4 Ensure the media receive regular updates throughout the investigation.

10.4.1 Regular updates keep the community informed and so more confident when incidents arise so the SIO should try to keep Press Office/on-scene Press Officer updated at all times as to changes in the case/progress of the police investigation. This allows rumours to be dispelled and accurate information to be passed through to the media.

10.4.2 It is advised that the nominated Press Officer has good contact with the SIO/OIC, be included in briefings and have latest information on the case made available to them so they are able to advise appropriately.

10.4.3 If the incident is likely to last a number of days/weeks media interest will continue and to be able to help you manage this, the Press Office should be kept informed for the duration as to developments/what officers are doing so they can update the media strategy. In the days/week(s) following the major incident a dedicated Press Officer will attend morning briefings until the incident is closed or downscaled.

10.5 Nominate a spokesperson.

10.5.1 It is important to nominate a spokesperson at an early stage, whether this is the SIO or deputy SIO, to be able to provide public reassurance via TV and radio interviews. Few news items can generate more public sympathy than a police officer talking about their feelings at the scene of a tragedy or their actions when faced with an armed criminal.

10.5.2 If a senior officer not directly involved in the investigation is available it may be prudent to ask them to be the spokesperson therefore freeing up time for the SIO. The spokesperson will take part in Press Conferences and interviews.

10.5.3 Broadcast media interviews are just as important as issuing press releases. They are great opportunities to help improve public confidence by providing a reassuring face to the Police and the professional investigation which is underway as well as highlighting that the safety of the public as our main priority.

10.5.4 It is advised that interviews are undertaken at an early stage to reassure the public and also ensure we have control over the messages appearing in the media. Only in exceptional circumstances should requests for interviews be declined.

10.6 Everything is on-the-record. Beware of making 'off the record' comments – particularly during major incidents. We only deal in facts and off-the-record comments can still be published without reference being made to where the

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information came from. So if you don't want the public to know something don't tell a reporter. It is advised that all contact with the media follow consultation with Press Office.

10.7 Designate an area for members of the press to gather at the scene at a Media Liaison Point, preferably near the cordon with a view of the scene for filming. This allows the media to get the shots they want without trying to break the cordon.

10.7.1 Images of police activity and interviews at the scene can illustrate how professionally the incident is being dealt with and reassure the public. It is important that the on-scene press liaison communicates to members of the press when they will be updated with more information so they do not need to pester officers.

10.8 Media momentum will pick up during an investigation – be proactive to use this to your advantage.

10.8.1 As the investigation progresses, it will be necessary to release fresh nuggets of information on a regular basis to maintain media interest and update the community as to the police investigation – especially if there is an appeal for information or a 'wanted' image released.

10.8.2 It may be prudent to organise a reconstruction, and conduct interviews from the scene of the crime to help potential witnesses visualise the scene.

10.8.3 Giving details like: 'specially trained officers are supporting the victim, who has been left distressed by the incident' or 'the victim is coping well and doing what he/she can to help us track down the man who attacked him/her', also encourage the public to provide information to Police. Issuing factual details like; how many people spoken to as part of the investigation and how many officers are dedicated to the enquiry etc, all help to reassure.

10.8.4 During public appeals work with Press Office and Family Liaison Officers to discuss with victims/families of victims if they would consider issuing a press statement or undertake press interviews to show the suffering that this crime has brought, encourage people to come forward with information and/or possibly deter offenders.

10.9 Update the media at the conclusion of the investigation. It is important to issue press updates as soon as arrests/charges are brought so the public know the case is progressing – especially when we are satisfied we have the offender behind bars and we are not looking for anyone else in connection with the incident.

10.10 The media will continue to follow the case through court but it is worth considering issuing updates on bail and court dates to ensure the public are kept informed.

10.11 The conclusion of the court case is the perfect opportunity to highlight the good work of you and your team as well as filling the public with confidence in the work of the Constabulary so grab it by preparing a press release with Press Office and attending the sentencing at court to undertake media interviews.

**11.0 Media handling guidance during sex assault investigation**

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11.1 When a sex assault occurs it can have a significant impact on community confidence so effective media handling during these cases is important to help local people and visitors feel safe and satisfied that Police are doing a good job.

11.2 When the suspect is known to the victim it is important to make this clear by highlighting that: "This is not a stranger assault". This will immediately reassure the community that we are not investigating an indiscriminate sex attack.

11.3 Where someone has been raped by a person they know, it is unlikely that there will be a need to launch an appeal. However, it may still be necessary to reassure the public by, for example, issuing a statement to confirm that someone has been arrested on suspicion of rape, and that nobody else is sought in connection with the incident.

11.4 As sex assault victims have lifetime anonymity details of the victim and their relationship to the offender will not be released. (This can be waived only by the victim themselves in writing to the court should they choose.)

11.5 An attack where the suspect is not known to the victim will attract intense media interest at a local level, and this interest can be used to aid an investigation by launching appeals for information, issuing public safety messages and reassuring the community.

11.6 It is advised that a reassurance message be issued at the earliest opportunity with a quote direct from the SIO. The Press Office will arrange a time and location and manage the press at the scene, who will be invited to conduct a brief interview.

11.7 It is important to issue press updates as soon as arrests/charges are brought so the public know the case is progressing – especially when we are satisfied we have the offender behind bars and we are not looking for anyone else in connection with the incident.

## **12.0 On-scene media handling tips**

12.1 The media can attend the scene of any incident but they are particularly interested in high profile cases or those which cause widespread disruption or impact on the wider community.

12.2 We do not have a duty to "censor" the media, they have their own guidelines and procedures to prevent anything distressing or inappropriate from being broadcast or published.

12.3 Reasonable access to scenes should be given to Press after consultation with SIO - unless there are genuine safety concerns and/or evidence needs to be preserved.

12.4 There may be benefit in setting up a suitable media vantage point and certainly the media should be allowed to film/photograph anything they can see from outside the cordoned area or from a public place such as a road, pavement or neighbouring

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property. The media may be allowed supervised access inside the cordoned area after consultation with the SIO.

12.5 If you have concerns over images taken by a photographer at the scene inform Press Office who will liaise directly with the media organisation if necessary to discuss publication of these photos.

12.6 When an officer is approached by the media at an incident scene or operation it is advisable to ensure the journalist is carrying appropriate identification. The UK Press Card is the nationally recognised form of identification for journalists. Refer the press to the press office or the SIO.

12.7 Photographs of Police Officers in the course of their duties are encouraged as they improve confidence in our service and shows we are open in our dealings and have nothing to hide. Uniformed Officers at the scene of an incident should wear their hats at all times wherever possible. During interviews with the press hats can be removed so the officer's face can be clearly seen but it is advised they are visible either in their hand or under their arm.

12.8 On some occasions it may be inappropriate for an officer to be identified due to the covert nature of their role or for some other operational reason. This officer should make themselves known to the press so they can be kept out of photos/filming or their face can be blurred in the editing suites.

12.9 The media will continue to follow the case through court but it is worth considering issuing updates on bail and court dates to ensure the public are kept informed. The conclusion of the court case is the perfect opportunity to highlight the good work of you and your team as well as filling the public with confidence in the work of the Constabulary so grab it by preparing a press release with Press Office and attending the sentencing at court to undertake media interviews.

### **13.0 Releasing details of a fatality**

13.1 Any suspicious or sudden deaths in Cumbria impact heavily on the small, close knit communities we serve, so in these cases it is imperative that we are engaging with the media to help manage that impact as far as possible.

13.2 Our policy of openness and accessibility ensures we are able to quash rumour and speculation by proactively issuing the facts as we know them. When fatal incidents occur there is a lot to remember so we have worked with the Cumbrian coroners to develop the following guidance for when identity and further details can be released.

13.3 The identity of the person who has died will be released to the media through the Police Press Office once the body has been formally identified and immediate family members have been informed.

13.4 Details will only be released after consultation with the FLO/SIO to ensure that releasing the name will not impact negatively on any ongoing investigation and the immediate family is aware of the release of the details to the media.

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13.5 The name will be released through the Press Office Monday to Friday and if required through the Communications Centre at weekends.

13.6 Members of the press will often want to speak to the family and friends of the deceased to obtain more information or tributes. The officers who give notification of death to the family should explain this to the family and offer support in dealing with the media through the Police Press Office. (Further guidance available under point ... Family Liaison Officer Media Guidance)

13.7 Some families will be willing to speak to the press directly to pay tribute to their loved ones. If so, it is advised that the family nominate one spokesperson to speak on behalf of the family.

13.8 However some families may not wish to engage with the press directly therefore Cumbria Constabulary offer the service of issuing a tribute and photograph to media on their behalf via the Press Office. The options are explained to the family by the Family Liaison Officer (FLO).

13.9 Details of suicides are not given to the press as a matter of course however in cases where the death is not in a private home the media can become aware of the incident very quickly.

13.10 An incident should not be confirmed as "suicide" until the coroner's inquest but it can be confirmed that: "Police are not looking for anyone else in connection with the death" or "the death is not being treated as suspicious."

13.11 For further advice and support during fatal and major incidents see FLO/SIO Media Handling Guidelines on the Marketing and Communications Intranet site or contact Press Office on 01768 217009.

#### **14.0 Family Liaison Officer media handling guidelines**

14.1 Cumbria is made up of lots of small, close knit communities who are deeply affected when a fatal incident occurs in their area whether it is a murder or a crash on our roads. So it is vitally important that we are able to manage the media to ensure the communities get accurate information quickly and minimise impact of rumour and speculation. It is also a key time for us to use the media to help us catch offenders and inspire trust and confidence in our service by positively presenting the professional and community focussed way we work.

14.2 As a Family Liaison Officer (FLO) you have a key role to play in this by supporting the family who have lost a loved one in their dealings with the media. So to help we have developed a set of simple principles as guidance.

14.3 The local media are deeply embedded into the communities of Cumbria. They find out about serious incidents very quickly and begin conducting their own investigations to find out who has died.

14.4 We will proactively release the details once immediate family are informed and formal identification has been completed to ensure accurate information is passed to the community. (More information on releasing details of a fatality is available in Section 12 of this Procedure Document)

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14.5 Supporting the family through media involvement starts with letting them know as soon as possible that the media will be covering the incident, what to expect from them, what the family can do to manage it ,and what we can do to help.

14.6 The facts of the case will be proactively issued through Press Office in conjunction with the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) to help reassure the local community. However, on top of this, the media are always keen to speak to the family and publish articles paying tribute to the person who has died.

14.7 So, in order to support the family during this traumatic time and help them deal with the press it is important that as an FLO you explain their options:

14.7.1 The family can provide a tribute/statement and picture to Police Press Office through the FLO which a press officer can pass on to the media, therefore the family need not speak to the media at all.

14.7.2 By providing a statement or tribute early, the family can influence what is published about their loved one and help prevent upsetting inaccuracies being published by the media getting information from other sources. (ie, by interviewing neighbours/colleagues/other acquaintances – this can lead to the publication of misinformation.)

14.7.3 Alternatively, some families may be willing to speak to the press directly to pay tribute to their loved ones. If so, it is advised that the family nominate one spokesperson to speak on behalf of the family.

14.7.4 Police Press Office is here to help and their number can be passed to families who may want further advice before speaking to the media direct.

14.7.8 Some families may not wish to engage with the press at all. Where this occurs Press Office can alert the local media on their behalf. Whilst the media understand the trauma the family is going through they may still try and contact them direct in case they change their mind.

14.7.9 If the family choose not to engage with the press at all they should be made aware that they have no control over what is published/broadcast and if it is inaccurate – this can cause even more heartache.

14.8 Media interest in Cumbrian incidents where there is a need to deploy Family Liaison Officers may be high. The Senior Investigating Officer will have to balance the need to exploit any investigative advantage from family exposure to the media, with the need to protect the family from unwarranted media intrusion.

14.9 The Senior Investigating Officer should actively discourage the family from issuing statements to the media that are independent of the investigation and could impact on the investigative process. To achieve this it is important for the family to be involved in a partnership approach with police, with the appointed press officer and FLO to develop and agree the police media strategy. This is particularly important when media appeals involve publishing a photograph and specific information about the victim or family.

14.10 If the Senior Investigating Officer identifies that media attention, not generated by the police, concerning the victim, incident and/or investigation is likely to be

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published or transmitted, they are responsible for ensuring this is communicated to the family.

**15.0 Media attendance at incident scenes and operations**

15.1 We aim to use every opportunity available to build confidence in our service – which can include providing media access at scenes of incidents and on operations. Media attendance demonstrates that we are open and honest and we have nothing to hide. These opportunities are perfect for encouraging a greater understanding of what we do, how we do it and why. Greater understanding builds confidence and this is up to each and every one of us to help achieve. So we have developed these guidelines to help you make the most of these opportunities.

15.2 We can invite the media to attend operations as a method of gaining positive publicity and reassuring the public that we are taking action to tackle local issues. A media strategy should be included at the back of each operational order to address these issues.

15.3 Any media attendance at operations should be managed in conjunction with the Police Press Office and a risk assessment will need to be carried out by officers involved. An indemnity agreement must be signed and notes to media representatives distributed. (Appendix A)

15.4 Before an agreement is made for media/production company to attend an operation it should be clear why the Constabulary is taking part in the particular news item/documentary.

15.4.1 Does the proposed item:

- Address matters of public interest;
- Enhance the public's understanding of police work;
- Reassure communities that police are acting to address matters of public concern;
- Help in the prevention or detection of crime;
- Present an opportunity to enhance the Constabulary's reputation;
- Threaten the Constabulary's reputation?

15.5 It should be noted that the only people allowed to enter premises during the execution of a search warrant are those named on the warrant - this will not include the media. The media must seek their own permission from the property owners/occupiers to enter premises. Care should also be taken when informing the media of such operations in advance.

15.6 If publicity prior to the operation is not desirable, the media can be invited under an "embargo" with the agreement they will not publish or broadcast details until the conclusion of the operation.

15.7 While accepting that editorial control of what is filmed rests clearly with the programme maker, the Constabulary may wish to take steps to ensure that broadcast footage does not include material that may:

- Be factually inaccurate;
- Identify covert techniques;
- Jeopardise or prejudice pending or current court proceedings;



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- Identify any persons whose safety may be jeopardised by identification.

## 16.0 Release of Police held images to media

16.1 It is important that we are proactive in our communication with the public by gaining maximum positive media coverage to promote understanding of what we do and why, so our communities can be confident and proud of the policing service they have.

16.2 Releasing images can be extremely effective at enhancing public confidence alongside verbal and written updates. Images includes CCTV, photographs and other similar media. Positive images of the police at work can highlight quickly and effectively the good work we do, whilst releasing images of offenders after court cases can deter offenders and inspire confidence by emphasising the openness in the reporting of criminal investigations and proceedings. A picture tells a thousand words so we have provided this guidance to help you make the most of photo opportunities when they arise.

16.3 All staff and officers are encouraged to be proactive in their use of the media by taking photos of community events and initiatives they are involved in with a view to publicising the activity afterwards to build public confidence. This is important so the wider community know the good work that is going on in their area and they feel the issues that matter most to them are being tackled. It is just as important to publicise your activity as it is to do it in the first place.

16.4 All Neighbourhood Policing Teams have been issued with digital cameras by the Marketing and Communications Department for the sole purpose of publicising their events so please take advantage of this opportunity. If you email your photos to Press Office, alongside a short press release about your event, they can help you gain maximum positive coverage. If you can, invite the local media along to the event by publicising it before it happens – but don't rely on them to turn up – be proactive.

### 16.5 Publicising Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)

When someone is subject of an ASBO proportionate local publicity is essential to the enforcement of the conditions. It is advised that the photo of the person who is subject to the ASBO is released to the local media in the area where the ASBO is in effect alongside a press release detailing the condition of the order and why it was imposed.

16.6 Images of defendants are often issued at the end of a court case/trial to deter future offenders and reassure people that dangerous offenders are behind bars. The press are expected to attempt to obtain their own photos of individuals but often if a person is remanded in custody this is often not possible.

16.6.1 A custody photograph may be released after conviction if the offence was serious or has had significant impact on the community. It is advised that officers and staff release images to the press through Police Press Office to ensure consistent practice is maintained and the details can be officially logged.

16.6.2 Each decision should be taken on a case by case basis and before releasing a police held image of an offender the OIC/SIO or senior officer must note the legitimate purpose for releasing the image as listed below. A legitimate purpose will include, but is not limited to:

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- The prevention and detection of crime
- The apprehension of suspects
- Encouraging witnesses and/or victims to come forward
- Discouraging offenders
- Reassuring the public
- Reinforcing confidence in the criminal justice system
- The apprehension of people unlawfully at large

16.6.3 The image must be edited so the identification board and custody number is not visible. When photos are given to the press a copy of the photo release disclaimer below should be included in the email:

16.6.4 Photo or Document Release Disclaimer

PLEASE NOTE: as publishers, it is your responsibility to check whether any restrictions have been imposed by the courts that may affect the reporting of legal proceedings.

This document/photograph is being released to you for the purpose of reporting this particular case/incident and you should then destroy it.

Its use thereafter is not sanctioned by Cumbria Constabulary without the direct authority of the Chief Constable, who retains the copyright. You are reminded of your obligations under the Contempt of Court Act 1981, should this document/photograph be used again in any unrelated proceedings.

16.7 Images of people, known or unknown, who are wanted for offences, can be issued if it is felt that publicity is key to tracing an individual or the subject presents a serious risk to the public. An image of a person police want to interview in relation to a particular incident or crime can be issued prior to arrest or charge.

16.7.1 Care must be taken when releasing images of unknown people to ensure that the wording accompanying the image is accurate. With known people other means of tracing the person should have first been tried where practical.

16.7.2 There must be a balance between the rights of an individual suspect and those of the wider community. The general consideration is whether the need to warn the public about a dangerous person or prolific offender outweighs the possibility of jeopardising any subsequent court hearing or later identification evidence. Such photos should only be issued with the permission of a Senior Officer and following consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service. Any decision to release an image must take into account any impact on victims or witnesses and must comply with the requirements of the Victims Code of Practice.

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16.7.3 Releasing the photograph of a named suspect would allow the suspect allows them the opportunity to come forward and eliminate themselves from further enquires, especially if they are not aware that they are wanted for questioning.

16.7.4 Where an image has been released and a suspect has been subsequently arrested the media should be notified as soon as possible. If the suspect is located and/or later released without charge the media should be informed so they can publicise this and amend their coverage so they are not breaching any laws.

### **17.0 Release of Police held footage to media/production companies**

17.1 Police held footage can be useful for using the online and broadcast media to highlight safety issues and promoting crime prevention advice and in the interests of being accessible to the public consideration should be given to its release.

17.2 General considerations should be made as to the reason behind the release of the footage. Does it fill a policing purpose as outlined below?

- An appeal for witnesses or attempt to identify suspects;
- Where footage offers safety/crime prevention advice;
- Where police believe it is likely to provide reassurance;
- As an illustration of good police work which may have resulted in arrest or detection of crime;
- To demonstrate accountability within policing;
- It is in the public interest.

#### 17.3 Identification of individuals

Care should always be taken to ensure any victims or other innocent parties featured in the released material are aware of its potential use and, where possible, efforts should be made to seek their permission. In the absence of permission the identity of victims and innocent bystanders must be disguised, preferably before release. When dealing with victims and relatives, it is important they are notified before airing of the documentary and any repeat broadcasts.

Release of footage to the media should always be done in consultation with the Police Press Office and approved by a senior officer.

#### 17.4 Evidential Footage

Court cases are open to the public and footage which is shown in a court case can be passed to the media at the end of a successful court case. This includes key pieces of evidence such as the 999 call, reconstructions, CCTV or headcam footage. If this is police held footage it can be issued to the press, after the court case has ended and a guilty verdict has been granted, after consultation with CPS. If the case is thrown out of court or there is a Not Guilty verdict the footage cannot be released to the press.

### **18.0 Protocols for release of RPU footage to the media/production companies**

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18.1 Cumbria Constabulary regularly receives requests from production companies for footage of accidents, near misses etc caught on camera by Roads Policing Units. This footage can be an effective way of promoting safe driving, highlighting penalties and the dangers drivers face by driving dangerously, whilst also educating the public as to how the Constabulary enforces the laws of the road and prevent accidents.

18.2 In order to use this communication tool effectively we would urge officers to submit any footage to Press Office following the guidance below.

18.2.1 Some of the types of In-car/head-cam video footage regularly requested include: examples of bad driving, near misses, tailgating, dangerous overtaking, crashes and the consequences of not concentrating or driving when tired.

18.2.2 RPU officers who obtain footage such as this should send the clips, on DVD, to Police Press Office. If there are a number of clips these should be cut and copied onto one DVD before being submitted. If possible two copies should be made – and both sent to Press Office.

18.2.3 Please check that the case/incident has been completed. Only cases which have been dealt with or been through the court system will be considered for distribution.

18.2.4 Before sending the DVD to Press Office, officers MUST complete the RPU footage submission form (Available from Police Press Office). This will include the offence committed, the location, date and penalty received by the offender. Any issues regarding the offence/offender/case should be added to this form.

18.2.5 A Press Officer will review each clip and decide whether or not to release these to the production company/media. They are then responsible for sending the footage out.

18.2.6 Officers are urged not to send clips directly to production companies or other media without authorisation from Press Office.

18.2.7 All monies raised by the release of this footage will be received centrally within the Constabulary and will be used within RPU or to promote Road Safety initiatives.

### **19.0 Press Officer call-out protocol**

19.1 A press officer is on-call 24/7 via Force Incident Manager (F.I.M.). The on-call press officer performs this function as ancillary to his/her normal working hours.

19.2 When deciding whether to call the on-call press officer out, one of the considerations should be the potential impact upon the remaining business of the constabulary. For many incidents the press interest and therefore the media co-ordination required, is likely to be greater the following day. Ensuring the availability of Press Officer(s) the following day needs to be a consideration when deciding whether to call one out.

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19.3 All senior police officers (Inspector and above) and senior police staff (directors) have received media training and should have a reasonable degree of knowledge in dealing with simple media issues, and offering appropriate advice.

19.4 The on-call press officer should be called out only on those occasions where their ability to co-ordinate a media response is likely to bring added value to the policing operation, and where the co-ordination of the media response (or the part of it that he/she is asked to co-ordinate) is the responsibility of the constabulary.

19.5 Where the work required is simply to issue a press release, or consider a simple media strategy, this should ordinarily be undertaken by the Officer In Case (OIC), following consultation with the Duty Inspector and/or F.I.M.

19.6 Where an incident has necessitated the call-out of a Silver Commander and/or Senior Investigating Officer (SIO), then the decision to call-out the Press Officer should be taken by either of those officers, who still need to consider the factors outlined above. Where such an incident is in the early stages, the F.I.M is performing that role and can of course call out the Press Officer as soon as it is clear that they will be needed.

19.7 On the rare occasions where it is necessary to call-out the Press Officer when there is no Silver Commander or SIO, then the BCU Duty Inspector should be consulted but the F.I.M. will authorise the call-out.

19.8 The Duty Inspector has a role to play in ensuring such call-out is necessary. The F.I.M. must authorise such call-outs. If there is dispute between the Duty Inspector and F.I.M. then the Duty Inspector can contact the on-call Silver Commander.

## **20.0 Media Training**

20.1 By being proactive in their dealings with the media officers and staff can gain maximum positive media coverage, promote understanding of the Constabulary's policies, actions and decisions, as well as releasing information for policing purposes such as crime appeals and road/public safety messages.

20.2 Through regular media training we aim to help support all our officers and staff develop effective positive relationships with journalists from the wide range of news organisations that cover our work. Specialist media training packages tailored to rank, experience, role profiles and skills has been developed. Details of the types of training offered are publicised on the Marketing and Communications Intranet site. For more information, or to book yourself onto a course please contact Police Press Office.