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**The Leveson Inquiry into the Culture Practices and Ethics of the Press**

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**Exhibit Ref:** IM/1

**Witness:** Ian Marratt

**Date Produced:** 28 February 2012

**Description:** Surrey Police A-Z Media Guidance

**Signature:** .....

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**Guidance**

**A-Z Media Guidelines**

**INTRODUCTION**

*"We need to respect the rights of the media and recognise the very important work they do. They can help us engage with the public and they greatly influence the general reputation of the Force. It is to everyone's benefit if we maintain a good working relationship with them. "The media are as much 'customers' of Surrey Police as anyone else in our county and Customer Service is a key commitment in the Force Policing Plan. We must be accessible, approachable and polite, and build trust by listening and responding to their needs wherever practically possible. "Public confidence is a key commitment in the Force Policing Plan and by providing the media with timely accurate information their reporting can support this objective."*

*Surrey Police Chief Constable Mark Rowley.*

Surrey Police will maintain a positive and open relationship with the news media by providing a prompt and helpful response to all inquiries. It is key that all responses are managed either through the HQ Media Relations Office or the relevant Divisional Media Relations Officer.

Information should only be withheld for legal, operational or security reasons or where there is a duty of confidentiality.

Each division will have one Media Relations Officer and one Communications Assistant whose role includes dealing with all press enquiries, and providing regular briefings for local media.

These guidelines seek to promote consistency and good practice across the Force. They were completed following an extensive period of consultation, and take into consideration all the statutory issues which may apply. In particular, they take full account of the Human Rights Act and the Data Protection Act. The guidelines are reviewed regularly.

Subject to compliance with these guidelines, information may be given by any officer to the media (subject to agreement from the HQ Media Relations Office or relevant Divisional Media Relations Officer), provided he or she has direct knowledge and responsibility for the matter under inquiry.

The Force Media Relations Office staff should always be consulted before any contact is made with the media, or in the case of planned regular face to face media briefings, the local Media Relations Officer should be updated on material given and issues raised. The HQ Media Relations Office and Divisional Media Relations Officers are always available to give support and guidance. A 24 hour call-out rota is operated by HQ Media Relations Office staff, details of which are held by the Incident Handling Centre Duty Inspector.

These are guidelines and it is not possible to allow for every eventuality. The Media Relations office holds a great deal of reference material from which these guidelines have been formulated and is always happy to refer to this source material when ever necessary.

Refusing, for no apparent reason, or seeming reluctant to release information can sometimes lead to destructive speculation, misunderstandings and inaccuracy. By seizing the initiative we can get our messages across, increase public confidence, provide reassurance, and help earn the trust, respect and support of our communities.

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

HQ Media Relations Office numbers:

- general number to be given to media

-  Media Relations Manager

Forcewide voicebank (to listen to messages)

Divisional Media Relations Officers:

<i>Division</i>	<i>Internal extension</i>	<i>External number</i>
East Surrey	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
West Surrey	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
North Surrey	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**ABANDONED CHILDREN**

Urgent publicity should be given to all children and babies who have been abandoned. Appeals and photographs should be issued to the media as soon as possible. If the child has been placed in a children's home, liaison with the Social Services Department should be conducted via the HQ Media Relations Office. Appeals should be handled sensitively, balancing the need to trace parents and the likely welfare needs of the mother or family concerned.

The media should be told of the progress and outcome of appeals. In cases of successful reunion, the mother or family should be identified only if they specifically request this, unless it is deemed to be clearly in the general public interest to do so.

### **ACQUITTAL**

Officers are often asked to comment on a trial that has ended in acquittal. Care must be taken not to say anything that suggests disagreement with the verdict. In particular officers should avoid any comments to the effect that no one else is being sought in connection with the case or that the case will not be re-opened.

Officers should limit themselves, if asked, to words to the effect that:

"The case will now be reviewed in the light of the court's judgement/ jury's decision/ the judge's comments. The file will remain open until someone is convicted of this offence, but we do not have sufficient evidence to prove the guilt of any other suspect at this time. We will continue to investigate in a search for new evidence or until a decision has been taken to scale down the inquiry but it will be carefully reviewed from time to time in the hope that new evidence will eventually emerge."

### **APPEALS AND RECONSTRUCTIONS**

The timing of appeals for witnesses and other information or help from the public should be co-ordinated with the investigation. Any appeal needs to be made after consultation with, and at least the passive co-operation of, the victim. It is important not to identify an offender or imply guilt.

As a general rule, appeals should be made as soon as possible to ensure greatest media interest. Give a contact number and the Crimestoppers number (0800 555 111) for callers who want to remain anonymous.

Several national TV programmes (including Crimewatch UK) broadcast appeals, and may enact reconstructions of more serious crimes. Televised appeals should be arranged through HQ Media Relations Office or the Divisional Media Relations Office.

The media should be told of the outcome or progress of appeals wherever possible.

### **ARMED ROBBERY**

Members of the public are often witnesses to armed robberies and can give invaluable help. It can be in our interests to seek publicity, although banks and building societies may be sensitive about this.

Showing video from security cameras can help to trace offenders so it may be useful to persuade them to make footage available for TV news bulletins. (**See CCTV and VIDEO FOOTAGE**).

The investigating officer may wish to withhold certain details about how the robbery was carried out. As a general rule, information which can be released includes:

- the circumstances of the robbery
- descriptions of suspects, vehicles used etc.
- any injuries caused
- details of charges arising from the robbery, including the amount stolen, only if it forms part of the charge.
- details of any reward, if applicable, on a non-attributable basis.

Personal details of witnesses and victims must not be released.

Take care when discussing the amount stolen, as there may be a standing agreement with the loser, as in the case of the Post Office, not to disclose values.

### **ARRESTS**

We do not offer information about every arrest. But sometimes - particularly in high-profile cases - it may be in our interest to say that an arrest has been made. Examples might include public order disturbances, pre-planned raids, investigations where there have been extensive appeals, where the public has shown particular concern, or where the arrest is due to good police work.

Details can include:

- the age and sex of the person and the general area where he or she lives.
- the area in which the arrest took place and the time.
- a broad reason for the arrest.
- whether the person has been formally arrested or is attending a police station voluntarily.

If a person is subsequently released without charge, bailed to reappear at a police station or cautioned, this can be given to the media.

Under no circumstances can the identity of an arrested person be released or confirmed.

### **ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDER (ASBO)**

Surrey Police and partners will use publicity as a means to enforce ASBOs and reduce the occurrence of anti-social behaviour within Surrey. Publicity is not to be used to punish, "name and shame," or embarrass the individual.

Unless anti-social behaviour is extremely localised, enforcement of the order will normally depend upon the general public being aware of the order and of the identity of the person against whom it is made.

The main purposes and benefits of publicity are:

- Enforcement of the order
- Public reassurance about safety
- Public confidence in local services
- Deterrent to the perpetrator
- Deterrent to other perpetrators (This should not be the main or only aim).

The decision to use publicity will be assessed on the details of each individual case and will only be allowed once a full order is given. The use of publicity will be the norm not the exception.

There are no automatic reporting restrictions on ASBOs made in any court. The presumption is that an ASBO can be reported unless otherwise stated by the Court.

The Court retains a discretion under Section 39 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 to impose reporting restrictions on any or all of the details of the case; but is required to give reasons if a decision is made to impose such restrictions. The Court will have to have good reason, aside from age alone, to impose any discretionary measures to prevent the identification of any child or young person concerned in the proceedings.

- Where an ASBO is made on conviction in the youth court the details of the criminal conviction and sentence remain subject to automatic reporting restrictions.
- Breach of an ASBO is a criminal offence and in the case of under 18s, will normally be heard in the youth court. Reporting restrictions DO NOT automatically apply in accordance with The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act (2005).

Publicity does not usually apply to Interim ASBO cases.

Publicity will be considered for an order made against a child or young person under the age of 18, if no reporting restrictions were imposed at Court.

A recent photograph of the individual subject to the ASBO will be required for identification purposes, along with personal details such as name and address.

Any agreed publicity will include details of non-association, particularly where those named are also subject to ASBOs or have a recent history of anti-social behaviour. (A non-association term is where an individual with an ASBO is prohibited from associating with other named individuals in public.)

Even in cases where the named individuals with whom association is prohibited are not subject to an ASBO it will usually be appropriate to name them. ASBOs are frequently used to target the ringleaders of a group that has caused problems and for the order to be effective, non-association needs to be enforced. It should be made clear in the publicity whether these named individuals are themselves also subject to an ASBO or not.

In all ASBO cases the following can be used as content for publicity:

- Details and date of the court making the order

- Name, age and home address of the individual subject to the ASBO
- Photograph of the subject
- The prohibitions listed in the order, including any exclusion area with a clearly defined map
- Details of non-association terms where applicable
- Expiry date of the order
- Details of how the public can report breaches
- Names of local agencies responsible for obtaining and publicising the order.
- Date of publication
- Details of anti-social behaviour

The distribution of publicity will usually take place within the area/neighbourhood where the anti-social behaviour originated from. However, it may be necessary to extend publicity beyond this area where there is a risk of the anti-social behaviour being displaced.

Victims and witnesses will be informed immediately when an order has been made and the use of publicity is being considered.

Community Incident Action Groups (CIAGs) will have agreed publicity/media protocols and strategies in place for promoting the awareness of orders and dealing with publicity for specific ASBO cases.

Prior to an ASBO being granted the ASB Manager/ASBO Case-builder or a nominated OIC where appropriate will prepare the publicity strategy and contact the Divisional Media Relations Officer at the earliest opportunity, to involve them in this process. The latter is responsible for all press releases and for informing local media of forthcoming ASBO applications, to allow them the opportunity to attend court and report on the outcome.

### ***ASSAULTS ON POLICE***

The number of officers who are assaulted on duty each year is published in the Annual Crime statistics on the Surrey Police website. We do not routinely offer details unless an officer has been seriously injured or there are a lot of media enquiries. Details such as name, rank, station and a photograph will only be released with the consent of the officer or the family, unless there are overriding legitimate reasons for doing so, e.g. public safety, prevention of crime and disorder.

### ***ASSAULTS ON MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC***

Victims should not be identified, or their photographs published, without their consent or that of their family where the victim is incapable of giving consent due to the extent of his injuries. Addresses should not be given. Information which may be given includes age, sex and broad address, brief details of the assault and appeals for witnesses.

### ***ATTENDANCE BY POLICE***

Individuals should not be identified as being the subject of police attention unless or until they have been charged with an offence.

If attendance is as a result of a call from a member of the public (rather than a

pre-planned operation where other considerations apply), confirmation may be given that the police were called to a disturbance, incident, report of a crime etc. The area or road may be given, but not the house name or number, or the road if it has very few buildings. Care must be taken when houses are easily identifiable (for example, a large house in a small village).

### **BAIL**

There are several circumstances under which suspects can be released on bail to appear at a location on a date in the future. The main issue to be considered in each case is whether or not to release the identity of the person released on bail. The release on bail has no effect on the rules governing the release of information about suspects, i.e. information about the suspect is not released until, and only if, that person has been charged. For exceptions to this rule, see CHARGES.

### **BLACKMAIL**

In cases of blackmail the identity of the victim should not be divulged. Otherwise, guidelines are as described under KIDNAP.

### **BOGUS OFFICIALS**

If the problem is prevalent in an area, a warning to residents can put them on their guard and bring further information. Victims' identities and addresses should not be given.

### **BOMB ALERTS, HOAXES AND EXPLOSIONS**

#### **Genuine hoaxes**

These are designed by terrorists to cause maximum disruption. HQ Media Relations Office must be informed immediately and will deal with media enquiries after consulting with the appropriate senior investigating officer from Protective Services and Special Branch or NSY. No unauthorised comment must be made to the media.

#### **Non-terrorist hoaxes**

Information must be kept as low key as possible, and restricted to the fact of the hoax and the extent and duration of any disruption caused. The media should be asked not to give any undue publicity in order to avoid copycat calls. HQ Media Relations Office must be informed and any press statement agreed with the officer in charge of the incident.

Publicity should be given to any arrests or charges resulting from hoax calls in order to deter others. See ARRESTS and CHARGES.

#### **Suspicious Packages**

If a suspicious package is found, details should be given of time and place, whether a bomb disposal team has been called and if there is disruption to traffic and the public.

An appeal can be included urging members of the public to be vigilant in the current climate and to trust their instincts if anything strikes them as potentially suspicious. Surrey Police encourages anyone who receives a suspect package to report it immediately.

### **Unexploded devices**

HQ Media Relations Office must be informed immediately and will deal with media enquiries after consulting with the officer in charge, Special Branch, the army and NSY as appropriate.

### **Explosions**

In the event of a terrorist explosion, HQ Media Relations Office must be informed immediately and will deal with all media enquiries in consultation with the appropriate senior investigating officer from Protective Services, Special Branch, NSY and the army. No unauthorised comment must be made to the media.

Non-terrorist explosions will be dealt with by HQ Media Relations Office in consultation with the appropriate agencies.

### ***BRAVERY, POLICE AND PUBLIC***

Every effort should be made to publicise good police work and acts of bravery. If criminal proceedings are pending, caution should be used when giving information and usually publicity is sought at the conclusion of the trial.

Public bravery in assisting the police should be publicised, if those involved give their consent. Care should be taken not to encourage members of the public to take undue risks or put themselves in danger.

Publicity events, e.g. Chief Constable's or Divisional Commendations should also be publicised to recognise bravery and good deeds.

### ***BREATH TESTS***

If asked, the details which may be given are:

- the fact that a motorist has been breath tested.
- the area where the motorist was stopped and tested.
- an explanation of why the motorist was stopped.
- whether the motorist has been charged with a drink driving offence.

Details which must not be given or confirmed are:

- the name of the person unless charged.
- the results of any tests.
- whether a second breath test was taken or if urine or blood samples were obtained.

### ***BURGLARY***

Publicity may make people more security-conscious but this has to be weighed



against increasing the fear of crime.

If a victim requests no publicity there are only a few details that can be confirmed:

- that the police are investigating a burglary or break-in.
- the street name as long as this does not identify the house.
- basic information which can include a broad description of property stolen.

The potential benefits of publicity - tracing witnesses, increased chance of recovering stolen property etc. - should be discussed with the victim. It is up to the senior investigating officer to decide whether it is in the public interest for a victim's request for no publicity to be over-ruled.

With permission, the media can be offered details of:

- the burglary, including broad information about the means of entry.
- details of property stolen, description of suspects and anything else which may help the enquiry.
- possibly the facility to film/photograph/interview the victim.

Before releasing the name of a commercial premises liaise with an appropriate representative. Some companies have a strict media policy in relation to release of crime related information. Do not identify individual victims involved, unless permission has been given.

#### **CALL-OUT**

HQ Media Relations Office operates a call-out rota covering the whole of the Surrey Police area at all times outside of the normal working day (8am to 5pm). The on-call officer can be contacted for advice or to attend via the Force Incident Handling Centre Duty inspector.

#### **CAUTIONS**

Cautions are treated in a similar way to arrests. They can be confirmed in broad terms, if asked. Nothing that may identify the person who has been cautioned may be given. See **ARRESTS**.

#### **CCTV AND VIDEO FOOTAGE**

It is not force policy to routinely release CCTV or video footage. The release of video material will only be authorised to:

- further an investigation.
- aid identification of an individual, vehicle or object.
- trace a vulnerable missing person.
- reassure the public by highlighting success post-trial and thereby enhancing a feeling of safety and security.
- inform the wider public of matters of interest (e.g. notification of serious RTC resulting in several miles of tailback and traffic chaos).
- educate the public about specific threats, risks or safety measures.

Decisions to release footage in these circumstances should be based upon an assessment of an individual's wishes and wider needs, for example, prevention of crime and disorder.

A licence agreement must be drawn up for every release of material to the media. It will detail terms and conditions of use, rules on copying and archiving clips etc. Signed licences should be retained in the HQ Media Relations Office who should be consulted in every case.

Any request to the media to show video footage or still pictures in order to further an investigation or to help with identification should be accompanied by a written press release or letter.

There may be a need to publish video footage showing members of the public. This should only be done in accordance with the law and where it is deemed necessary in the interests of national security, public safety, for the prevention of crime and disorder or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Any CCTV footage released (for example for educational purposes) should be depersonalised so as not to identify any individuals involved.

If there is any doubt, advice should be obtained from HQ Media Relations Office which will refer cases to ACPO as necessary.

Town centre CCTV systems operate in accordance with a code of practice which has been agreed with partners in the scheme. These codes must be complied with.

No video material shall be sold or released for a commercial purpose without the specific approval of an ACPO officer. No material will ever be released purely for entertainment purposes.

### **CHARGES**

It is Surrey Police policy not to identify people until they have been charged and a court appearance is imminent or certain. When a person has been charged, the details that may be offered to the media are:

- name, age, sex, and occupation of the person charged.
- address of person charged unless there are legal or practical implications in providing it.
- details of charge and the time it was made.
- date and venue for first court appearance.

The principal exceptions to this are juveniles, who must not be named, and cases involving victims of sexual offences where the person charged must not be named if there is any danger that by doing so a surviving victim is identified. On other occasions, there may be operational reasons why the OIC wishes to withhold the name of the person charged until the court appearance.

It is not possible to tell the media about every charge, but serious crimes, those with wide public interest and those involving good police work should be given wherever possible.

If a case is discontinued before court appearance and the defendant's details have already been released, the fact of discontinuance must be released to the media as soon as practicable.

### **CHARGES AGAINST POLICE OFFICERS**

Police officers are dealt with in the same way as any member of the public. Details of the charges should be released but for security reasons the officer's home address should not be given, only the station at which he or she is based.

### **CHILDREN IN CARE**

Any child who is subject of a local authority care order must not be identified.

### **COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE**

Media enquiries about complaints against the police should be referred to HQ Media Relations Office which will liaise with the Professional Standards Department and/or the Deputy Chief Constable before releasing details. The response will normally be confined to confirming that a complaint had been lodged and is being investigated. The name of the officer under investigation will not normally be released. The following additional details may be given, if asked:

- whether the officer has been suspended or transferred to another police station as a result.
- the rank and station of the officer.
- who is investigating the complaint.
- if the complaint has been referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).
- whether the officer has been cleared or found guilty of any misconduct charges at the conclusion of a misconduct hearing, and the broad details of the charges, including any sanctions imposed.
- if the officer has appealed against the finding or sanction to the Chief Constable or the Home Secretary.
- the name of any officer found guilty who is dismissed or required to resign from the Service.
- if the IPCC is supervising any complaint then any media statement must be approved by them and issued by them. Independent release of information in such cases is not permitted. Once an IPCC supervised case has been concluded it will be a matter for the Deputy Chief Constable to determine whether any other information should be provided to the media.

Depending on the circumstances, Surrey Police reserves the right to vary the amount of detail given to the media in the case of disciplinary hearings, as these are internal matters. Details which will not normally be released include:

- the identity of complainant, other than in exceptional circumstances, for example where the complainant has already sought publicity.
- specific details of any complaint which is the subject of an investigation, except in exceptional circumstances.

### **CORONER**

Coroner's Officers work for the Coroner, and work to the Coroner's rules, rather than Force guidance. Media inquiries about inquests and non-suspicious deaths should be directed to the Coroner's officers to deal with. Media Relations Officers should continue to work with SIOs/OICs on suspicious deaths, and liaise with Coroner's officers on non-suspicious deaths, accepting that they are subject to the Coroner's views on releasing information to the media.

Weekly Inquest lists are provided by the Coroner's Officers, and not by the HQ Media Relations Office.

### **COUNTERFEIT MONEY**

The only information given about counterfeit money should be advice on how a genuine note varies from a forgery e.g. quality of paper, colour of ink, watermarks and silver strip. Details of amounts thought to be in circulation should not be released.

### **COURT CASES**

A conviction in court is usually a police success story. Wherever possible, the media should be told of interesting cases in advance so that coverage can be arranged.

There are strict guidelines on conducting media briefings for publication after the end of a trial. HQ Media Relations Office should be consulted. Briefings should only be given once the judge commences summing up and only after consultation with the SIO and Crown Prosecution Service.

If asked for comment at the end of a trial, officers should avoid showing satisfaction or anger at verdicts or sentences.

The media may ask for a picture of the convicted person. In line with national guidelines from ACPO's Media Advisory Group, Surrey Police considers the release of convicted offenders' custody photographs on a case-by-case basis. If the case shows good police work, and there is no other photograph available, consideration should be given to releasing a picture as this can increase coverage. The release of photographs should be dealt with by a Media Relations Officer in liaison with a DCI and the OIC.

Factors considered prior to release of a photograph include the seriousness of the offence committed, the severity of the sentence given, whether or not the convicted person is a prolific offender, and public interest. Also taken into account is whether the media has had an opportunity to obtain a photo themselves, e.g. when the defendant enters court. The DCI will take any local circumstances into account too when making the decision on release.

Any photograph released must be produced without any prisoner reference numbers.

### **CRIME PREVENTION**

Every opportunity should be taken to publicise crime prevention measures and to put crime into perspective in order to allay unnecessary fear.

### **CRIMINAL RECORDS**

Criminal records are confidential and should not be discussed under any circumstances.

### **CRIMINAL LIBEL**

Care should be taken if discussing a case of criminal libel as it is possible that confirmation of a police investigation may give grounds to the media for using the victim's name and repeating the libel. Confirmation of an investigation should not be automatic. It may in some cases be advisable to refuse to comment until such time as charges result from the investigation.

### **DEATH IN POLICE CUSTODY**

The Home Office definition of a death in the care or custody of the police covers those who die while detained by police, while in the hands of police or as a result of the actions of a police officer in the execution of his or her duty. Within this definition, a death in police care or custody can also include cases where a person or persons are trying to avoid being arrested, in police vehicle pursuit, for instance, or have been stopped and searched or questioned by the police and deaths arising from a siege or firearms operation.

All deaths in custody are automatically and immediately referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).

As the circumstances can vary greatly, each case should therefore be dealt with individually. There can be circumstances where an initial statement of fact should be prepared for the media. This will only be done on the authority of an ACPO officer who will consult with Professional Standards Department (PSD) and the HQ Media Relations Office and will include:

- a. confirmation that a death has occurred;
- b. the details of the deceased, subject to next of kin having been informed;
- c. confirmation of the cause of death, subject to the agreement of the Coroner, IPCC, and the investigating officer;
- d. confirmation that the matter has been referred to the IPCC;
- e. the name of the investigating officer, once appointed;
- f. confirmation whether an officer (s) has been transferred or suspended, names should not be given;
- g. details of any charges in connection with the investigation;
- h. if appropriate, details of any police prisoner procedures;
- i. as many facts as possible within the constraints of the investigation, but no assertions of responsibility for the death should be made or accepted.

There are likely to be a number of stages following a death in custody when media interest is at a peak. These might include:

- a. when initial news of the death reaches the public;
- b. when the cause of death is announced;
- c. during the Coroner's inquest;
- d. on publication of the IPCC's findings.

Additional factors would be criminal/civil proceedings or a public enquiry.

At each stage, police should address the range of issues which might be highlighted and the possible effects in the community. We should endeavour quickly, factually and as openly as possible to say what has happened, what we are doing and what will happen as a result and, if applicable, other bodies from which people can get further information. The effect on confidence in the police in local communities should be taken into account and necessary steps taken to maintain that support and cooperation. Possible rumours or allegations of a police 'cover-up', which might lead to tensions in the community, should be dealt with swiftly and fully. The setting up of an independent enquiry and its nature should also be fully explained. Consideration should also be given to providing information, where relevant, on, for example, the role of custody staff; how cells are designed to prevent such cases; or the professionalism and level of care provided by police officers and other staff. Internal force communications issues should be addressed, and officers closely involved in the case should be aware of what has been said publicly.

Throughout, the various parties who have a close interest in events following a death in custody need to be taken fully in to account in the dissemination of information. These will vary according to the circumstances of each case but might include:

- a. next of kin and members of the deceased's family;
- b. IPCC;
- c. Coroner's office;
- d. Police Authority;
- e. Community and religious leaders and representatives (if appropriate), Community Incident Action Group (CIAG);
- f. Police officers and support staff and their staff associations;
- g. Lay visitors;
- h. Home Office;
- i. Consular Staff (if a foreign national is involved).

#### **DEATH OF A SERVING OFFICER**

Details of deaths of serving police officers will be released to the media in the same way as any member of the public and only after next of kin have been informed. Photographs and funeral details will be offered only with the consent of the next of kin.

#### **DESCRIPTIONS**

Descriptions of offenders may aid detection, but can cause problems in subsequent court cases. Advice should be sought from the investigating officer.

Descriptions form part of the Disclosure of Information and should be carefully recorded as details may be requested.

Information normally released to the media includes sex, age range, skin colour, hair style, height, build and clothing plus any other special characteristics.

#### **DIPLOMATS**

Diplomatic incidents should be referred to HQ Media Relations Office. If a person claiming diplomatic status is arrested for an alleged offence the following can be

confirmed if asked:

- the alleged offender has immunity and faces no further police action.
- the matter will be reported to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

All further enquiries must be referred to the FCO.

If a person with diplomatic status is involved in an accident where details would normally be given, the incident can be confirmed.

The name of anyone with diplomatic immunity should not be released.

### ***DISCIPLINE***

Information about discipline matters is not routinely offered to the media. However, journalists sometimes get to hear about them, and if asked the HQ press office will confirm or deny claims, without identifying individuals concerned, in consultation with the Professional Standards Department. See COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE.

### ***DOMESTIC ABUSE***

Specific cases of domestic abuse are not discussed with the media but the active role taken by the Force in partnership with other agencies should be stressed.

Opportunities should also be taken to emphasise the positive attitude adopted by officers who attend such incidents.

### ***DRUGS AND POISONS***

The estimated black market value of seized drugs can be given, on an unattributable basis, in consultation with other agencies in the case of joint operations.

A value should not be placed on drugs stolen from chemist shops.

Care should be taken about comment on what the 'substances' may be, until they have been analysed.

Often drugs seizures can demonstrate good police work and details should be offered about arrests. Seized drugs may be put on display for photos. A briefing about the operation may be given, through HQ Media Relations Office, once a drugs trial has ended.

Warnings to the public should be issued promptly if dangerous drugs or poisons go missing.

### ***ESCAPES FROM POLICE CUSTODY***

Brief details of the escape can be given. The identity of the escapee is not normally given, unless it is in the public interest to do so, as the matter may be sub judice.

### ***ESCAPES FROM H. M. PRISONS***

Escaped prisoners are, in the main, a matter for the Prison Service and media enquiries should be referred to the prison governor or the Home Office.

If police are asked to assist in a search, the following can be given:

- name of escapee.
- sentence being served.
- home town but not full address.
- description and last known whereabouts.
- warning of any potential danger to the public.
- action being taken by the police.
- a photograph if necessary.
- recapture.

The circumstances of an escape from Prison Service custody must not be discussed nor details of the escapee's past criminal record given.

#### ***ETHNIC ORIGINS AND MINORITY STATUS***

Surrey Police staff should never use any language which could be considered racist, sexist, homophobic or in any other way discriminatory. When describing a person (e.g. A missing person, crime victim or suspect) no reference should be made to a person's colour, ethnic origin, or sexual orientation unless it is strictly relevant. It would be wrong to say someone is African-Caribbean unless a witness knows for certain that he/she is. It is better to say black, white, Asian, of Asian appearance etc

Do not use words that may give offence such as 'coloured' or 'half-caste' (use 'mixed race' or 'mixed parentage'). 'Traveller' is preferable to 'gypsy'. Do not use identity codes.

#### ***FALSE ALLEGATIONS***

If a reported crime has been given to the media and the allegation is later found to be false, reporters should be told. Phrases like 'no further action...' or 'we are considering an offence of wasting police time...' may be used.

#### ***FATALITIES***

The name, age, broad address and occupation of anyone who dies as a result of a collision or crime can be given when the body has been formally identified and the next of kin have been told. See VICTIMS.

#### ***FILMING REQUESTS***

A wide range of requests for filming facilities is received constantly from both news and commercial organisations. These should always be referred to HQ Media Relations Office to negotiate agreements for filming where requests are granted.

Any proposed programme should:

- a. address matters which are in the public interest; or
- b. enhance the public's understanding of police work and provide



- some reassurance to the public that police are acting to address matters of public concern; or
- c. help in the prevention or detection of crime.

Local Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) advice should be sought in all instances where filming of police work is likely to have an impact upon a current or future prosecution. In such cases media presence on an operation should always be disclosed to the CPS.

Before agreeing to such a request there will always be clarity about the reasons for working with a production company on such a project which may be time-consuming in the making and unpredictable in the outcome. There will always be a clear framework at the outset of such projects so that all parties are clear about their respective roles and their legal obligations. This will be documented in a written agreement.

Such agreements are likely to include the following:

#### **FILMING**

Crews will stop filming when requested to do so for operational or safety reasons by the Media Relations Officer or senior officer present

#### **Sight of film**

The Chief Constable or his representative will be allowed to view the film to be broadcast and to exclude any material which may:

- be factually inaccurate.
- identify covert surveillance equipment or personnel.
- jeopardise or prejudice a prosecution.
- reveal methods that would jeopardise future operations.

#### **Consent**

No film of police service employees, victims or their relatives, witnesses or suspects will be broadcast without their consent. Responsibility for obtaining written permission rests with the broadcaster.

#### **Retention of film**

The broadcaster should retain all film taken so that, in the event of a prosecution, duties of disclosure can be properly performed.

#### **Indemnity**

Media staff working with police personnel or on police premises will be required to sign indemnity forms. Each form has a unique reference number and may only be issued by HQ Media Relations Office. Blank forms must not be copied.

#### **FIRE**

If people have been seriously injured or killed in a fire, names should not be given until a positive identification has been done and the next of kin have been

told. Details of damage to property can be given. Evacuation information and public warnings should be given as appropriate.

The cause can be given if known. If arson has been confirmed or is suspected this should be said and appeals made if necessary.

Acts of bravery may be discussed, but individuals identified only with their consent.

The Fire and Rescue Service should be consulted on information provided to the media.

### ***FIREARMS***

Firearms officers and their vehicles should not be identified. The number of armed officers deployed should not be given, but their attendance at an incident can normally be confirmed if asked. Tactics should not be discussed.

Any incident involving the discharge of a police firearm is automatically referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission and this may be said. The following can also normally be given:

- very brief details about the incident that led to the shooting.
- the type of police firearm used.
- whether an officer is suspended from firearms duty pending an enquiry.

There should be no discussion about the identity or service record of any firearms officer.

In the event of an officer, in the course of duty discharging a firearm resulting in a fatality, application will be made to a Coroner's Court for the identity of the officer to be protected.

### ***FIXED PENALTY TICKETS***

The identity of people in cases dealt with by fixed penalty should not routinely be given or confirmed. However, specific cases may be reviewed according to the level of media interest, the views of the individual concerned and judgement on whether a refusal to confirm remains tenable. The issue of public interest should also be considered because, in uncontested cases, there is no Judge or Magistrate to make the decision.

If a member of the public complains directly to the media giving his or her name, this can be regarded as consenting to publicity.

### ***FOUND PROPERTY***

Details and pictures of found property may be given to the media in order to trace owners. Care should be taken not to give information that would enable someone else to reclaim the property.

### ***FRAUD***

Flexibility is required when dealing with fraud and the circumstances of each case should be discussed with the investigating officer before decisions are

made about the information to be released to the press. It may be in the interests of the investigation to alert the public and encourage victims to come forward. However, there may be good reasons for avoiding publicity.

The issues to be considered include:

- the danger of a suspect being alerted.
- the possibility that allegations may be malicious or without foundation.
- commercial sensitivity.

With the consent of the investigating officer, it can be confirmed on an if asked basis that allegations against a company or organisation are being investigated. The identity of individuals must not be given or confirmed and it should not be confirmed that enquiries about an individual are taking place.

### **HONOURS**

Police employees who have been honoured in the New Year or Queen's Birthday lists should be encouraged to give interviews and photographs to the media. Exact addresses should not be published.

### **HOSPITALS**

Information about the condition of a hospitalised victim of crime or road collision, and requests for permission to take photographs, are the responsibility of the hospital administrator, providing the victim has given consent. Most hospitals have their own Media Relations Officers, to whom enquiries should be directed.

If a victim has not been named, HQ Media Relations Office and Divisional Media Relations Officers may make condition checks on behalf of the media.

### **HOSTAGE NEGOTIATIONS**

Great care should be taken when giving details of hostage incidents to the media, as hostage takers may have access to radio, television, internet, mobile phones and other technology.

The following may be given:

- confirmation that negotiators are involved.
- brief details about the incident.
- confirmation that the Force has officers trained as hostage negotiators.

Never, at any time, discuss tactics or training.

Requests from the media for information about any aspect of hostage negotiation should be referred to HQ Media Relations Office, which will seek specific advice from the negotiator co-ordinator as necessary.

### **IDENTITY PARADES**

The fact that a video parade is to be held, or has been held, should not be given to the media. Confirmation that a parade has been held may be given if asked.

The result must not be given. The disclosure that a parade is to be held may have adverse or prejudicial effects on the investigation.

A request for volunteers to add their pictures to the video library may be made.

### ***ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS***

This is generally a matter for the Immigration Service of the Home Office, to whom media enquires should be referred. If suspected illegal immigrants are being held at a police station this fact can be confirmed.

Special Branch assists HM Immigration Service to deal with detention, deportation and illegal immigrant enquiries.

### ***INDEMNITY AGREEMENTS***

See FILMING REQUESTS - Indemnity.

For further advice contact HQ Media Relations Office.

### ***INDUSTRIAL TRIBUNALS***

All media enquiries must be referred to HQ Media Relations Office.

In general no information will be offered to the media. If the complainant has sought publicity the following may be confirmed:

- the name and station of the complainant.
- the date and location of the hearing.
- the nature of the allegation.

A statement may be issued through the HQ Media Relations Office after the hearing has finished, in consultation with the relevant senior officer.

### ***INQUESTS***

Most enquiries about inquests should be referred to the Coroner's Office but the date and venue can be given and whether an inquest has been opened and adjourned.

### ***JOURNALISTS - DIRECT CONTACT***

All police officers and police staff are reminded that any phone calls from any member of the media must be passed to either the HQ Media Relations Office or a Divisional Media Relations Officer to respond to and manage, unless the contact is with a Neighbourhood Inspector or officer, and is appropriate to their role, and the relevant Divisional Media Relations Officer is aware and happy with the contact. Similarly, all interview requests should always be agreed in advance by a Media Relations Officer, before they have taken place. This process applies, regardless of the subject matter.

Anyone who would like further advice in relation to media handling is invited to contact the HQ Media Relations Office on ext 32000, or speak to their local Divisional Media Relations Officer.

## **JUVENILES**

People aged 17 or below must not be identified if charged with a criminal offence. If a juvenile is charged, either separately or with adults, no details other than age and the charge may be given. People aged 17 or below who appear at a youth court either as defendants or witnesses must not be identified.

However for those aged between 15 and 18 the court may allow them to be identified once they are convicted for a serious crime, such as murder.

Parents or guardians must normally be consulted before personal details or photographs of young victims are released.

ASBOs are an exception to these general rules. See **ASBO**

## **KIDNAP**

In cases of kidnapping or abduction, where life may be at risk, the media may be asked to impose a news blackout. Only the Chief Constable or his Deputy can make such a request. As part of a voluntary agreement the media will be given regular confidential briefings and will be informed as soon as the threat is lifted. As a general rule, a press conference will be held, subject to the victim's consent.

HQ Media Relations Office should be informed immediately of any kidnap incident and will handle all media enquiries in consultation with the senior investigating officer.

## **LEGAL QUESTIONS**

Comment on or interpretation of legal questions should not be given. Information may be provided on how the Force will apply a specific law.

## **LEGISLATION**

Generally the Force will not comment on proposed legislation, the recommendations or findings of official committees, Bills or Acts of Parliament.

## **MAJOR CRIME**

Media communications for serious crime investigations run by the MCIT is handled by HQ Media Relations Office which will make a record of and retain all information given to the media, whether by written press release, verbatim record of any group or one-on-one briefings/interviews, photocalls, etc, and supply to the police disclosure officer for notification to CPS as required. See **Major Incidents** (next).

## **MAJOR INCIDENTS**

In the event of a major criminal incident or civil emergency the Surrey Police Major Incident/Serious Crime Media Plan will be put into action. Copies are available from HQ Media Relations Office and on the intranet.

### **MEDIA HANDLING AT A SCENE**

Many officers and staff across Surrey come into daily contact with photographers, reporters and television crews, particularly in the aftermath of incidents. How we interact with them and how we facilitate their work without adversely affecting our own can sometimes cause misunderstandings. The following is designed to help you take the appropriate action when you have to deal with members of the media.

- Members of the media have a duty to report from many of the incidents we have to deal with – crime scenes, demonstrations, collisions and major events. We should actively help them carry out their responsibilities as long as they do not interfere with ours.
- Where it is necessary to put cordons in place, it is much better to provide the media with a good vantage point from which they can operate rather than to exclude them; otherwise they may try to get around the cordons and interfere with police operations. Providing an area for members of the media does not exclude them from operating in other areas to which the general public has access.
- Members of the media have a duty to take photographs and film incidents and we have no legal power or moral responsibility to prevent or restrict what they record. It is a matter for their editors to control what is published or broadcast, not the police. Police have the power under common law and PACE to seize any pictures that they believe to be evidence in an investigation. Any officers taking such material from journalists, photographers or camera operators should explain this to them and thank them for their assistance.
- If someone who is distressed or bereaved asks for police to intervene to prevent members of the media filming or photographing them, officers may pass on their request but they have no power to prevent or restrict media activity. However, police officers have a duty to prevent a possible breach of the peace and a duty to protect the rights of individuals under Articles of the European Convention on Human Rights. If members of the media are trespassing on private property it is up to the person who controls the property to require them to leave. Police officers may only assist that person in order to prevent a breach of the peace.
- To help you identify genuine members of the media, ask to see their identification, which they will produce to you on request.
- Members of the media do not need a permit to photograph or film in public places.
- To enter private property while accompanying police, the media must obtain permission, which must be recorded, from the person who owns or is in control of the premises. We cannot give or deny permission to members of the media to enter private premises whether the premises are directly involved in the police operation or not. This is a matter between the person who owns or is in control of the premises and the members of the media. All media who are invited to accompany police must sign an indemnity form, which should be obtained from the HQ Media Relations Office in advance of the operation.
- Giving members of the media direct access to incident scenes is a matter for the senior investigating officer (SIO). The gathering of evidence and forensic retrieval make direct access unlikely in the early stages and this should be explained to members of the media. Such requests should be passed to the SIO who should grant permission in appropriate cases as soon as practicable. The SIO should liaise with the Media Relations Office on the best way to go about this.

- Advice and assistance in dealing with members of the media is available during office hours via HQ or Divisional Media Relations Officers. Out of hours the on-call Media Relations Officer can be contacted via the IHC.

### **MISSING PEOPLE**

When police have been unable to locate a missing person the media may be asked to help by publicising the disappearance. The aim is to do this causing as little distress to the family as possible.

Media interest will be greater if the missing person is vulnerable (very old or young) or has been missing for several days.

Whatever course of action is decided i.e. posters, radio interviews, press conference, it is vital that all relevant people such as family are fully aware of how publicity is being sought.

Information which should be offered includes:

- details of the person, age, description, last known address, possible places they may visit, contact numbers etc.
- a recent photograph
- advice to the media of the outcome of the appeals, particularly if the missing person is found, through appeals or otherwise.

If the person is a ward of Court or in the care of Social Services, permission must be obtained before releasing any details.

The wishes of the family should be borne in mind. If they have expressed a wish to be left alone the media should be informed.

### **MURDER**

When a murder or suspicious death occurs, HQ Media Relations Office will normally be called in to co-ordinate the media response in consultation with the MCIT senior investigating officer.

In the case of a murder enquiry, knowledge of the death is usually offered to the media as soon as possible, subject to the views of the investigating officer and next of kin.

Details which can normally be released include:

- once the next of kin have been informed, the name, age, address (street name only) and occupation of the deceased if known.
- for guidance only information about the injuries sustained, for example "shot to head". The official cause of death will be determined by a post mortem result which, if known, can be given on a non-attributable basis.
- appeals and descriptions of suspects, incident room telephone numbers.
- the time the police were called and to what location.
- the relevant circumstances of the death, in consultation with the senior investigating officer.

HQ Media Relations Office will organise press conferences as required, possibly

with relatives of the victim.

### ***NEXT OF KIN***

In cases of death or serious injury names will not be released or confirmed to the media before the next of kin have been informed and their wishes taken into account and HM Coroner or representative has completed a formal identification.

### ***NO COMMENT***

To offer "No Comment" surrenders the opportunity to influence media coverage and ensure it is accurate. "Not prepared to discuss" may be the appropriate response but only in the most exceptional cases. It should be regarded very much as a last resort.

### ***OLD CASES***

There are benefits in releasing old cases to the media i.e. to gather further information in unsolved cases or to enhance the Force's reputation by publicising a successful case.

Any decision to release information in what are mainly serious cases, particularly murder, must strike a careful balance between relatives'/victims' privacy and the Force's policy of openness with the public.

In many old cases detections may be achieved as a result of changes in police methods or technology, e.g. DNA profiling. Each case will be treated on its merits but may present opportunities to publicise improved policing.

All requests should be referred to HQ Media Relations Office which will consider each on its own merit making use of national guidelines.

### ***PAEDOPHILES***

HQ Media Relations Office should be informed of all paedophile enquiries, many of which lead to wider investigations.

Due to the sensitive nature of the subject and the frequent involvement over time of other agencies e.g. Social Services, Education, NSPCC, other forces, a police Media Relations Officer may be appointed to co-ordinate media response on behalf of all the parties.

At no stage must the victim be identified and anything that could identify the child to any member of the public – which in legal terms means anyone who is not the victim – must not be given to the media. The media is not permitted to use this information, no matter how obtained. It is vital that no details are released that could inadvertently lead to jigsaw identification, even if this means not identifying the offender or his relationship, if any, with the victim or his place of work, once he has been convicted.

Prior to conviction, extreme care should be taken about the release of details of allegations, names, photographs and addresses of the accused as this could potentially prejudice any criminal proceedings and/or breach the provisions of the Data Protection Act. Following conviction similar caution must still be



exercised in regard to police disclosure of photographs and addresses of those convicted and such details should not be released to the media unless authorised by the officer in charge of the case that there is a legitimate need for us to do so.

### ***PHOTOFITS, E-FITS, CD-FITS AND ARTISTS' IMPRESSIONS***

These should be issued to the media as soon as possible once the officer in the case is satisfied with their likeness and quality.

Ensure sufficient copies are made and kept at the local station and, if appropriate, at HQ Media Relations Office.

### ***PHOTOGRAPHS***

Force Media Relations Officers are encouraged to release photographs, cctv and other similar media of suspects and defendants to the media where appropriate and at the earliest opportunity. As with any issues which impact on Human Rights there must be a balance between the rights of an individual suspect and those of the wider community. The risk to the public from a dangerous or prolific offender may support the release of images in certain circumstances, but it does not follow that the offence needs to be serious. Any decision to release an image must take into account any impact on victims or witnesses.

A photograph may be issued to:

- prevent and detect crime
- investigate alleged offences
- apprehend suspects or persons unlawfully at large
- reassure and inform the public
- reinforce confidence in the criminal justice system.

### ***Wanted persons***

Photographs of both known and unknown suspects are issued only in extreme circumstances bearing in mind possible breaches of the Contempt of Court Act. 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.

A photograph should not be released without the agreement of the SIO and in consultation with the HQ Media Relations Office. It is important not to imply the guilt of the subject of the photograph for the specific offence alleged. The wording used must be very carefully considered as there may be a need to warn the public but without prejudicing the case. Care must be taken when releasing images of unknown people to ensure that the wording accompanying the photograph is accurate. With known people other means of tracing the person should have first been tried where practical. Where an image has been released and a suspect has been subsequently arrested the media should be notified.

### ***Unlawfully at large***

People who have escaped or absconded from custody can have their images released to the media.

People wanted on warrant for an offence or for failing to appear can have their image released to the media but other means of tracing the person should have first been tried where practical.

### **Victims**

Photographs of assault victims, injured officers etc. can say more than a press release and prompt a better public response.

Permission must be obtained from the victim or relative before issuing the photograph.

Photographs of dead bodies needing identification are not normally issued to the media unless the face is in such a condition that it could pass for that of a living person. Reporters must be told that the picture was taken after death.

### **Police officers**

Photographs of officers involved in heroic actions such as life-saving rescues should not be released to the media without the officer's permission.

Photographs of officers are given to the media with officers' consent when they are promoted, unless there is an operational reason for not doing so.

### **Convicted persons**

See Court Cases for release of police photographs after conviction.

### **Issuing photographs of convicted persons to a restricted audience**

Police officers may wish to release photographs of convicted people to a restricted audience, such as shop owners, in an effort to prevent and detect crime. Before making this decision it is advisable for the SIO to discuss with HQ Media Relations Office who have access to national guidelines and hold a proforma for recording the release of photographs to a restricted audience.

### **Photography in public places**

There are no long-term restrictions which have been placed on photography in public places by Surrey Police, however a decision may be made to restrict or monitor photography in certain circumstances where operations or where national security may be potentially at risk. In particular section 76 of the Counter Terrorism Act 2008 may be applicable but will depend on the circumstances of each case.

In the course of their duty officers may also enquire as to why a person is taking photos of certain things such as public transport networks, as a safeguard against potential terrorism attacks, or if someone is taking photographs of young children in a public place to ensure they are acting in the best interests of the children. This is not a local restriction as such, but would involve police interaction with photographers.

### ***PHOTOFITS, E-FITS, CD-FITS AND ARTISTS' IMPRESSIONS***

These should be issued to the media as soon as possible once the officer in the case is satisfied with their likeness and quality.

Ensure sufficient copies are made and kept at the local station and, if appropriate, at HQ Media Relations Office.

### ***POLICE ATTENDANCE AT SPECIFIC ADDRESSES***

The physical presence of numbers of police in response to any call may attract media attention. Each enquiry must be dealt with on its merits but the main consideration is not to identify individuals as being the subject of police attention until or unless they have been charged with an offence. We should therefore respond by reference to general locations rather than specific addresses.

Provided the incident is based on a call from a member of the public (rather than a pre-planned operation, where other considerations apply), we may confirm in general terms that police were called to a disturbance, incident, or report of a crime, for instance. In doing so we can identify the village, locality, or even an urban street, but not the house number, or house name, or indeed the street name if it is a tiny cul-de-sac. Care needs to be taken where houses are easily identifiable ( e.g. a large house in a small village).

### ***POLICE VEHICLE ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISIONS***

If a police vehicle is involved in a collision, it is important to be open and honest to avoid any suggestion of cover-up, in line with the Force's open information policy.

HQ Media Relations Office should be informed of serious police vehicle collisions as soon as possible.

The media may speculate about "chases" and other contentious issues which need to be dealt with immediately. Use the word "pursuit" or "follow" instead of "chase".

The following information can be given to the media:

#### **Marked Surrey Police vehicle:**

- confirm involvement of Surrey Police car and give usual details, e.g. location, sex and approximate ages of people involved, injuries, hospital, type and number of vehicles, damage, direction of travel, delays or road closures, and weather, without apportioning blame.
- station where vehicle is based, whether responding to an emergency and if blue lights on.
- confirm if matter is under internal investigation and if the driver has been suspended from driving duty.
- name the officers involved, with their or their relatives' consent, after relatives have been informed, usually the next day (unless a prosecution is likely). Do not give home addresses.
- If an officer is killed, refer the matter to HQ Media Relations Office which will release the identity, a photograph and details of police service, with the permission of the next of kin, as soon as possible. Superintendent Operational Support must be consulted in such a case.

### **Marked vehicle from another force**

- Confirm force involved and give the usual details such as location, sex of people involved, injuries etc, without apportioning blame. Refer all other enquiries to the force involved and inform their Media Relations Office.

### **Unmarked vehicle.**

Withhold any information that would jeopardise operational activity, security or officer safety in consultation with the officer in charge. If in doubt, refer to HQ Media Relations Office.

### ***POLITICS***

The police service must be and be seen to be, independent of politics.

Care should be taken in the period immediately prior to elections as police must not be seen to be supporting any particular candidate. Policing and people's feeling of safety are likely to be prominent issues in the lead-up to an election and information provided or comments made by staff are liable to be seized upon. It is important for us to be open and balanced and that, where applicable, comments reflect Force policy.

### **Photographs**

Special arrangements should not be made for candidates simply to have publicity photographs taken with police officers. A candidate can be photographed as part of a visit or event he/she is attending on the strict understanding that similar opportunities must be provided to other candidates if they are requested.

### **Endorsement**

Any media coverage which implies police endorsement of a particular candidate or indicates that we agree with a controversial or disputed policy should be corrected. HQ Media Relations Office can advise on the best approach to be taken in such circumstances.

### ***POST OFFICE***

Specific details of cash or securities stolen in main or sub-post office raids are not normally given to the media unless permission has been given by the Post Office Head Office or senior Investigating officer. Usually general guidance such as several thousand pounds is acceptable.

General details about an incident can be given but questions about security at a building or Post Office policy will be referred to the Post Office.

The identity of a Post Office employee who has been a victim of a robbery should only be released with the agreement of both the individual concerned and the Post Office.

### ***PRESS CONFERENCES***

These elevate the status of an enquiry in the media's eyes, and usually heighten publicity. They are an efficient way of dealing with all media questions and requests for interviews during a major enquiry.

Press conferences for major incidents and serious crimes will be set up by HQ Media Relations Office which will attend, draft a statement with the senior investigating officer beforehand and record all information given to the media.

The senior investigating officer should be aware that following the general open session, he or she will usually be asked to give one-to-one interviews with individual members of the broadcast media.

Help with preparing further press statements and advice on sustaining publicity can be given by HQ Media Relations Office.

### **Appeals by relatives**

Press conferences where relatives appeal for witnesses or new information need careful thought. The decision to involve relatives is reached after balancing the needs of the investigation with the willingness and suitability of relatives and their ability to cope emotionally with the media invasion of their privacy.

Statistically, conferences at which families make an appeal after a murder are unsuccessful in bringing forward new evidence leading to a conviction.

Appeals by relatives aimed at wider sections of the community, e.g. in the case of a missing person, may prove more successful.

Sometimes relatives want to help police but may not be suitable. HQ Media Relations Office can provide guidance on the viability of such appeals, and whether they should be made directly or indirectly.

HQ Media Relations Office will prepare the family prior to meeting the media and ensure proper arrangements are in place during the conference.

### ***PRE-VERDICT MEDIA BRIEFINGS IN CRIMINAL CASES***

While media briefing pre-conviction may be desirable the over-riding principle is that nothing should be done to prejudice the forthcoming trial. These briefings will only take place when the SIO has consulted with the C.P.S. and the HQ Media Relations Office who have access to national guidelines.

### ***PUBLIC ORDER***

General details about public unrest, disorder, picketing, strikes or demonstrations should be released to the media. These include:

- number of people arrested
- charges brought
- ages of people concerned
- approximate area of residence

Avoid giving specific numbers of officers deployed or specific tactics.

Since publicity is often the main aim of such events no reference should be made to the political persuasion, religious view or ethnic origin of those detained.

Surrey Police must be seen to:

- apply the law equally and fairly to everyone
- ensure safety of everyone, including police officers, is paramount
- be fair but firm and take action when people break the law.

### ***PUBLIC WARNING***

Warnings about public safety should be given priority. The media will normally provide good cover.

### ***RAIDS***

Media representatives are sometimes allowed to accompany officers to see how operations are conducted. This can help give the public real insights in to police work and assist in the prevention and detection of crime. Officers planning operations should always consider the media as part of their overall strategy.

If agreeing to co-operation with the media the senior officer involved must always consider whether such action would:

- a. interfere with an individual's rights to a fair trial under the Human Rights Act;
- b. interfere with an individual's rights to privacy under the Human Rights Act (which may be affected by entering private property without permission, taking film or photographs on private property without permission and broadcasting or publishing any such material);
- c. cause unjustifiable distress or harassment to those being investigated;
- d. prejudice the innocent;
- e. cause distress to innocent members of the public; or
- f. jeopardise future police operations.

HQ Media Relations Office must be informed in advance and each accompanying media representative must individually sign an indemnity form (**see Indemnity**), and receive a copy of the 'Notes to Media Representatives' receipt of which must be acknowledged.

The reasons why it was felt the attendance of the media was justified should be recorded.

If the media is accompanying police officers and any identifiable risks come to notice, consideration must be given to completion of a full risk assessment.

Before accompanying police, media should normally be allowed to attend relevant briefings to give them a better understanding of the operation.

See also ***FILMING REQUESTS, MEDIA HANDLING AT A SCENE***

### **REPORTS FOR PROCESS**

If reports have been submitted so that prosecution can be considered this may normally be confirmed to the media if asked. The identity of the person will not be given.

### **REWARDS**

Details of rewards must not be given without the authority of the senior investigating officer and organisation concerned. Wording should normally be along the lines of 'a reward of £x is being offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person...'

### **ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISIONS**

See Victims and Police Vehicle Road Traffic Collisions.

Surrey Police usually only releases details of killed or serious injury (KSI) road collisions. However, information about unusual non-injury road collisions will also be released, for example if they resulted in severe traffic congestion, multiple vehicles were involved.

Details which can be given include:

- confirmation that the collision has happened.
- where and when it happened.
- the number, type and colour of vehicles involved.
- the number of people killed or injured and the hospitals to which they have been taken.
- approximate ages and sex of victims and vehicles in which they were travelling.
- direction vehicles were travelling.
- appeals for witnesses.
- delays and diversions.

Opinion about cause should not be offered. Avoid implying blame by using a phrase like 'in collision with'. Use the words 'crash' or 'collision' rather than 'accident'.

Press photographers and camera crews will want to take pictures of the scene of a major road collision. Try and find them a vantage point such as a bridge, to view the recovery. The officer in charge may give permission for the media to visit the scene, under supervision, once bodies have been removed and with the understanding that casualties at the scene will not be identified without their permission. Care must be taken not to identify or allow identification (e.g. an unusual car) of victims. Vehicles and number plates should not be clearly shown before there has been time to inform relatives. Contact HQ Media Relations Office if you need a Media Relations Officer to attend the scene.

It may be that a party to a road crash has been identified to the media. If this has happened we should not discuss whether the individual is being reported or investigated until they are charged or there is a final decision of no further action.

### **ROYALTY**

Any media enquiries about incidents involving members of the Royal Family should be referred to HQ Media Relations Office.

When a royal visit takes place, the Central Office of Information (COI) will make arrangements on behalf of Buckingham Palace to co-ordinate media facilities if necessary. Any request for media assistance made by the COI, or Special Branch, must be referred to HQ Media Relations Office.

Media arrangements for low key royal visits are the responsibility of the host organisation but HQ Media Relations Office will advise if asked. In these cases our only other responsibility is to handle queries relating to the policing aspects of the visit and normal security considerations will apply. It is unlikely that a police Media Relations Officer's presence during low key visits will be necessary.

A Special Branch officer will act as security co-ordinator.

### **SECURITY**

Matters of security in relation to terrorism or personal protection are not to be discussed under any circumstances. Any enquiries should be referred to HQ Media Relations Office which will seek Special Branch advice as necessary.

### **SECURITY COMPANIES**

Names and/or home addresses of security personnel should not be released to the media.

### **SEX OFFENCES**

With sex offences such as rape/sexual attack/indecency, nothing must be released to the media that could identify the victim.

Details of an incident may be released after consultation with the investigating officer, but graphic descriptions of the sexual aspects of an assault would normally be avoided. The age, sex and marital status of the victim may normally be given as long as this cannot, directly or indirectly, lead to the identification of the victim.

Rape is a specific act with a strict legal definition. If there is any doubt about the nature of an attack refer to 'a sexual assault' or 'serious sexual assault'.

The name of the person charged may be given, providing there is no other direction from the court and these details would not lead to the identification of the victim.

Where offenders are registered sex offenders, decisions about the disclosure of information will be made by the Divisional Chief Inspectors based upon advice received from the divisional crime manager who must consult other relevant parties and agencies. Disclosure should be part of the overall plan to manage the risk posed by the sex offender.

As a general principle officers should neither confirm nor deny the identity of, or address of, a Registered Sex Offender to the public or the media.



In all Very High-Risk cases the Detective Chief Inspector SO-CSO must be consulted at an early stage, and he/she will be actively involved in a decision about disclosure. An inter-agency media strategy will be co-ordinated by the HQ Media Relations Office.

### ***SPECIAL BRANCH***

Do not discuss the work undertaken by Special Branch. Refer any persistent enquiries to HQ Media Relations Office.

### ***SUB JUDICE***

Care should be taken when releasing information to the media once proceedings have become active under the Contempt of Court Act 1981 in order to avoid risk of prejudice.

### ***SUICIDE***

Details of suicide should only be given if asked. Only a Coroner's Court can decide that a death was 'suicide' and the word should be avoided before the hearing. Phrases such as 'police are satisfied that no other person was involved' or 'police are not treating the death as suspicious' should be used.

Personal details must not be released before the next of kin have been informed and cause of death should only be released after a post mortem.

Details that can normally be given include:

- confirmation that a death has occurred and that police are investigating.
- age, name, broad address, marital status and occupation, once next of kin have been told.
- guidance that the death is not being treated as suspicious.
- brief circumstances, not full details, of the death.
- whether a suicide note was found.

Under no circumstances must the contents of a suicide note be discussed. The name of a person attempting suicide must not be released or confirmed.

### ***SUMMONSES***

The existence of a summons should not be confirmed before it is served on the person accused. Identity is only given once it is confirmed the summons has been served on the person named.

### ***SUSPECTS***

Names and photographs of unconvicted suspects should only be released to the media in exceptional circumstances, and usually only when it is in the public interest. Such cases will be dealt with by HQ Media Relations Office to which all enquiries should be referred.

See Photographs - Wanted persons.

### ***TELEVISION DOCUMENTARIES***

Whilst release of material in all cases of documentaries about the police will remain a matter for Surrey Police, if the subject matter has a nationwide perspective the HQ Media Relations Office will always contact the ACPO press office.

All requests for documentary filming of Surrey Police will be referred to the HQ Media Relations Office.  
**See Filming Requests**

### **TERRORISM**

See Bomb Alerts, Hoaxes And Explosions. Also Security.

All enquiries about terrorist-related incidents must be referred immediately to HQ Media Relations Office.

Under no circumstances must code words be discussed.

High profile police activity and the need for increased public vigilance, in response to a terrorist threat, should be publicised in a non-alarmist way in order to give reassurance and seek co-operation.

### **VICTIMS**

#### **Victims of crime**

The Force encourages proactive questioning by officers to gain victim/witness consent to release details. Wherever possible the wishes of the victim/witness should be sought and considered when deciding whether to publicise identity. In cases of serious injury or those involving children, where the victim is not able to express a view, the wishes of the next of kin should be ascertained if practicable.

If a victim asks for no personal publicity this should be respected in light of an individual's right to private and family life, unless the investigating officer considers there is an overriding reason for releasing details, for example when others may be at risk or for the prevention of crime and disorder.

If the victim does not want to be identified this need not prevent details of the incident being released as long as the victim is not identified inadvertently by what is said. The media must be advised that the victim requests no personal publicity.

No information should be given which would make a victim vulnerable to further crime.

If the media request personal details it is for the officer in the case to specifically ask the victim if those details can be given and their wishes must be respected. The officer in the case will only recontact victims when there is a benefit in releasing such detail e.g. increased publicity to catch an offender.

In cases of fatalities, victims should always be named as soon as positive identification has been made and immediate relatives have been informed.

### **Victims of road collisions**

All victims will automatically be asked for consent to release their details and the response recorded.

Where a victim, or next of kin in the case of a child or of serious injury, makes a specific request for details to be withheld, the request must be respected.

We recognise in cases involving fatalities, it is best practice to name the victims once immediate relatives have been informed and positive identification carried out in order to avoid unnecessarily intrusive media activity. The Data Protection Act does not apply to deceased persons as their names will become a matter of public record. The effect of intrusive media interest should be made clear to the family of the victim and the media strategy behind releasing details explained. The deceased's family should be made aware of potential media interest and the fact that the victim's details will become a matter of public record. Name, age, and broad address, for example 'In the Guildford area', can be given unless the information is so unusual that it could make a relative or the victim's property susceptible to crime. On this occasion this should be explained to the media.

If the arrest of a person involved in a collision is likely, identity should be withheld until a charge has been made. If no criminal proceedings are instigated, identity should only be released as described above.

The senior investigating officer can delay the release of the identity of victims after consultation with the Media Relations Officer but only in extraordinary circumstances.

### **Victims of other accidents**

In cases involving accidents not in a public place, particularly in the home, identities will not be revealed without permission.

Accidents in the workplace (industrial accidents) should be handled in a way similar to that for road accidents. There should be liaison with any other agency taking a leading role such as the Health and Safety Executive.

### **WARRANTS**

Applications for the issue of arrest warrants when police are actively seeking publicity about a named suspect can be confirmed to the media. In most cases however the application for, or issue of, warrants is not discussed. If one has been executed and the suspect is in custody, the fact that an arrest was on warrant can be confirmed if it was served under the jurisdiction of the courts.

### **WITNESSES**

Under no circumstances may the names or addresses or any other identifying details of witnesses be released or confirmed to the media.