

Q: How can GMP help?

A: GMP Press Office can help to manage the media. If the decision is to take part in a media facility we can arrange a place for the interviews to take place, contact the media to find out who is interested in attending and arrange times for them to attend. A press office representative will also come along to manage the journalists on the day and try to make the process as easy as possible.

If the decision is taken not to speak to the media we can send out a note to explain this.

Q: What do I do if the media continue to contact me when I've said I don't want to speak to them?

A: Always try to find out who the journalist is. In the first instance you can contact GMP Press Office who will issue a desist notice on your behalf, you can also attach a note to your front door asking the media to leave you alone. If the media continue to try to contact you, despite you asking them not to, this breaches the guidelines issued by the Press Complaints Commission. You can contact the Press Complaints Commission on 0845 600 2757.

NB: A desist notice can only be issued if the family has consistently refused to speak to all media. If this is broken you are likely to be approached by the media again.

If you decide you would rather handle the media yourself and do not require press office assistance that is entirely up to you. The only thing you need to bear in mind is that once you've spoken to one organisation it may open the floodgates for more to approach you.

GMP's Press Office is there to provide you with help and support at this most difficult time.



Dealing with the media

Information for bereaved families

When losing a loved one the last thing you can often expect is contact from the media. The following intends to explain the reason for this contact and the different ways you can deal with it.

Q: Why are the media contacting me?

A: When someone dies in unusual or suspicious circumstances the media are likely to want to cover the story.

They will get details of the incident from a range of sources including Greater Manchester Police. But what they really want is information on the victim as this personalises the story and makes it more real for the reader.

Q: How do they find out who I am?

A: This information will usually come from the local community. Journalists will tend to speak to neighbours to find out about the victim.

If someone has died in suspicious circumstances GMP press office will release the name – however, this will not be done until formal identification has been carried out and the family has been informed. Family members would never be named without giving their consent.

Q: How might the media approach me?

A: They will usually turn up on your doorstep, although sometimes they may contact you on the telephone. They may even approach other family members, friends or neighbours.

Q: Do I have to speak to them?

A: You don't have to do anything you don't want to do. It is completely your choice. If you don't want to speak to the media you should just tell the reporter that. If you're happy to do so that is also fine.

Q: Would it help the investigation if I speak to the media?

A: In many cases speaking to the media can help an investigation as it gets the appeal out to a huge audience, some of whom may have information that could help catch the person responsible. This is something you can discuss with the family liaison officer.

Q: If I do decide to speak to the media what are my options?

A: Greater Manchester Police has a team of press officers who specialise in dealing with the media and can be contacted via the family liaison officer.

If you would like press office assistance these are the options available:

The 'one-to-one' media facility

- This is where all print, radio and TV journalists will interview you one at a time. This is the ideal arrangement for them as they each get the opportunity to speak to you on a one-to-one basis.
- This can be the best way to maximise coverage for the case as each organisation gets the story with the angle they are looking for.
- This can be quite time consuming depending on the number of media organisations who want to speak to you.

The 'pooled' media facility

- This involves speaking to one representative from TV, radio and print media who are then obliged to give the information to all other media.
- This is less time consuming than speaking to all individual media organisations and means they all have the same information available to them.

Issue a written statement to the media

- This is not ideal for the broadcast media as they need audio/pictures for their broadcast. The print media will be able to use it without too many problems but would much rather have access to more spontaneous comments rather than a prepared statement.
- This may reduce the amount of coverage the story gets – especially by the broadcast media.