

Witness: Ian Marratt
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The Leveson Inquiry into the Culture Practices and Ethics of the Press

Witness: Ian Marratt
Occupation: Communications Manager
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1. I have been asked to provide this statement for the purpose of assisting the Leveson Inquiry. In preparing this statement I have sought to address all the questions asked of me in the Notice served pursuant to s.21 (2) of the Inquiries Act 2005.

(1) Who you are and a brief summary of your career history.

2. I am the Fast-time Communications Manager (Interim) at Surrey Police HQ in Guildford. I report to the Head of Corporate Communications. I joined Surrey Police on 9th January 2012. The substantive holder of this post is currently on maternity leave. The role of the Fast-time Communications Team, which I manage, is detailed under (2) below.
3. My previous job was Interim Director of Communications with the National Childminding Association (NCMA). My responsibilities there included managing two teams covering external relations (which included media relations) and marketing.

4. Prior to that, I was Head of Communications at the Safer Sutton Partnership Service (SSPS). SSPS was a community safety partnership between the London Borough of Sutton and Sutton Police (part of the Metropolitan Police Service). I had a small team of staff and their responsibilities included acting as the press office for Sutton Police Station along with handling web-editing, design and publications. However media enquiries about serious crime were handled by the Metropolitan Police's main press office.
5. I was Executive Head of Communications at the London Borough of Sutton prior to becoming Head of Communications at the SSPS. I was responsible for three teams of staff handling: Media & PR; Corporate Design; Web-editing.
6. Prior to the above, I have held other positions dealing with public relations, media relations and marketing issues in various London boroughs.
7. I am a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations and I have a CNAA Post-graduate Diploma in Marketing.

(2) Please describe the role and remit of the press office within Surrey Police.

8. The Fast-time Communications Team, often referred to as the Press Office, is part of the Corporate Communications Department which is managed by the Head of Corporate Communications. Corporate Communications consists of the Fast-time Communications Team, The Planned Communications Team and the Channels Management Team. The main contact with the media is via the Fast-time Communications Team. The current structure was introduced in June 2011.

9. The Fast-time Communications Team is responsible for handling urgent or imminent communications requests, both internal and external, and delivery of media training. This includes dealing with media enquiries, issuing press releases and providing media support and advice for breaking or major incidents and events. Internal and external communications on complex, high risk or Force reputation issues are also managed by this team. The team runs an 'out of hours on call' service for media issues and advice which can be accessed via the Force Control Room.
10. In support of operational incidents the team may support the investigation by issuing appeals, avoiding prejudice to future legal action, keeping the public informed and reassured, and maintaining positive relationships with the media, thus allowing police officers to concentrate on their core role.
11. Members of the public can be of enormous assistance to the police. They can help identify offenders, respond to appeals for witnesses, and help to spread public safety information. The media relations office has a vital role to play in this, by working with the media to keep the public informed, ensuring that the media report accurately and ensuring that any inaccuracies are corrected.
12. The increase in 24 hours media has increased the pressure on all police forces in the country and Surrey is no exception, particularly given its proximity to London. Even relatively small incidents, or relatively minor criminal cases, may receive a significant amount of coverage so a press office of experienced professionals is essential.

**(3) Please describe your role and responsibilities within the press office.
To whom do you report?**

13. I am the Fast-time Communications Manager, heading up the Fast-time Communications Team. Further details of my role and that of the team can be found in (1) and (2) above.

(4) Describe the culture of relations between the press office on the one hand and other Surrey police staff/officers on the other. Do you consider that there is a relationship of trust and confidence? What changes, if any, would you wish to make to the working relationship and why?

14. Based on my very limited tenure, I would say that there is a very positive relationship between the press office at Surrey Police and police officers and staff. There is definitely a strong relationship of trust and confidence between the press office and police officers & staff. Press officers are regularly involved with operational teams and ACPO level officers as part of the planning process for sensitive or serious operations.

15. Police officers trust press officers and the current arrangements work well. Obviously in any organisation there is room for improvement. Surrey Police is a large and complex organisation based on many sites across the county, so internal communications can be challenging at times. This inevitably means that some of the excellent work undertaken by police officers and staff does not receive the publicity and promotion that it deserves.

(5) Does the press office have a gatekeeper function for controlling the flow of information to the media?

(6) Does the press office have a gatekeeper function for controlling access to Surrey Police personnel?

16. The press office does have a gatekeeper function for controlling the flow of information to the media and for controlling access to officers and staff. Our aim is to provide a prompt and helpful response to all media inquiries.
17. Each of the three main police operating bases has a Fast-time Communications Officer, who is a member of the Fast-time Communications Team, whose role includes liaising with officers, dealing with routine media enquiries and providing regular briefings for the local media.
18. An internal A-Z of media guidance is published on the Surrey Police intranet site. This guidance was prepared by the Fast-time Communications Team. The guidance is currently the subject of a detailed and extensive review. It is available to all staff and officers and provides detailed guidance on dealing with the media and a variety of requests and scenarios. I produce the Surrey Police A-Z of Media Guidance as exhibit IM/1.
19. The A-Z of media guidance on the intranet advises: "Force-wide matters of interest to the national media, contentious issues touching on Force Policy or complaints and discipline, and kidnap/contamination incidents demanding news blackout must always be referred to the Fast-time Communications Team, who will seek guidance from the appropriate Senior Officer. Subject to the safeguards outlined, information may be given by any officer to the media provided he/she has direct knowledge and responsibility for the matter under enquiry and the Fast-time Communications Team is aware of the information being provided. The Fast-time Communications Team is always available to give support and guidance to strands and departments. A '24 hour call out' rota is operated by the staff, details of which are held by the Force Control Room Duty Inspector. Officers and police staff who are likely to come into contact with the media may request appropriate advice/training from the Fast-time Communications Team."

(7) What is your impression of the culture within Surrey Police in relation to its dealings with the media (the media in all its forms)?

20. The policy of Surrey Police is to maintain a positive and open relationship with the news media although there may be times when the media request more information than we can provide: for example, we do not name somebody who has been arrested but not charged.

(8) Describe your impression of the culture of dealings between the press office and the media (the media in all its forms)? Do you consider the relationship between the press office and the media to be a successful one? What changes, if any, do you consider should be made to the relationship?

21. The relationship between the Fast-time Communications Team and the media is generally good, with no significant complaints although, as stated above, there are times when the media request more information than we are in a position to give.

(9) Set out your understanding of the type of contact which press office staff have with the local and national media covering nature, extent, frequency and (in general terms) topics / content.

22. See (14), (15), and (16).

23. The majority of contact which the press office has with both local and national media is by telephone and email. Face to face contact is fairly rare. Contact with local media is more frequent, while contact with national media is more sporadic and will obviously rise when a major issue or incident arises such as a murder. The topics that journalists call about are wide-ranging and cover a number of issues so are difficult to quantify. Calls will include questions such as "Why was the police helicopter flying over a particular area last night?"; "Why have

police closed a section of road?"; "Has anybody been arrested or charged yet for a particular offence?"; "Is the death of somebody being treated as suspicious?" All media enquiries are recorded on a computer programme called Solcara.

(10) Are contacts with the media restricted to certain staff or are all personnel within Surrey Police able to deal with the media?

24. Please see responses to (5), (6), and (9).

(11) Does the press office prioritise some sections of the media over others? For instance, does it prioritise communications and relations with the national media over those with the local media? If so, please give details and explain why.

25. The manager and staff in the Fast-time Communications Team will agree workload priorities where necessary. Decisions on what to prioritise will be based on factors such as the journalists' various deadlines, the potential impact of a story on the reputation of Surrey Police, or the need to publicise an appeal for information quickly. We would not normally prioritise national over local media.

(12) Are there mechanisms in place to ensure that information is disseminated widely to the media rather than to select journalists or titles? If so, please specify. If not, do you consider that there should be?

26. We have a wide variety of distribution lists that we use to send out press releases and statements electronically. So, for example, we might target the media in a single borough in the county if this relates to an incident of only local interest; we might target the whole county for a story of wider interest; we might send information to members of the national Crime Reporters' Association about a new crime fighting initiative; or we might target national and local papers with a story that

has widespread interest. We would not usually send a proactive press release to just one individual journalist.

(13) What is the media's attitude towards the press office? In particular, are they satisfied by the provision of information and the routing of communications through the press office or do they prefer direct contact with Individual personnel within Surrey Police?

27. Please see (8)

(14) Describe In general terms and with illustrative examples, the personal contact which you have with the local and national media. The Inquiry would like an overall picture of the type, frequency, duration and content of your contact with the media.

28. I have only been at Surrey Police for a few weeks and during that time I have only dealt directly with a few journalists. These inquiries have all been handled on the telephone or email.

29. Looking at the Solcara system (our electronic recording system for media inquiries and actions) it shows a wide variety of reactive and proactive work with the media at local and national level. For example, recently we issued two appeals regarding a murder in the county which resulted in many requests from local and national media for more information. Such cases are very time consuming and involve a lot of liaison with the investigating team because, for example, issuing certain information may hamper their investigation, while releasing other information may provide useful leads. Meanwhile other press releases were issued by more junior staff in Corporate Communications regarding village coffee mornings to meet local neighbourhood police officers!

30. Inquiries from the media are typically about appeals for missing persons, major road traffic collisions, robberies. Every day is different and it is very difficult to describe a typical day.
31. A quick review of Solcara suggests that every day around 10 to 20 records of some form of media issue are recorded on the system. The Solcara system is a complex database which contains a large amount of information, much of which is sensitive or confidential. There was some increase in calls during this period because of interest around the Leveson inquiry. In order to provide an example of the incidents, and the media organisations who contact us, I produce a print out from Solcara between 1st February to 27th February 2012 as exhibit IM/2.

(15) Describe what you are seeking to gain for Surrey Police through your personal contact with the media.

32. Working with the media to engage the public, either to help solve crimes or reassure residents and visitors, is a key part of our business. I believe that a productive, professional working relationship with the media is essential.

Primarily contact with the media relating to the operational side of policing is done to assist Surrey Police in solving crime by using the media as a channel to reach members of the public i.e. witness appeals, missing person appeals etc. It is also about using the media for warning and informing e.g. traffic disruption due to a road traffic collision (RTC), travel advice during extreme weather etc. We are also seeking to reassure the Surrey public about crime in their area and maintain confidence in the police by updating on successful outcomes and addressing criticism.

(16) Describe in general terms and using illustrative examples what you consider the local and national media have been seeking from you in your personal dealings with them?

33. The role of the media is to publish news stories and arguably to scrutinise the role of public bodies. Like any business, the media wish to be profitable and therefore to have interesting and, if possible, exclusive, copy. Both local and national media will approach the police communications office seeking comment and information about a wide-range of issues including updates on local crimes – for example the time, location and nature of an incident, whether any arrests or charges have been made, what action is being taken by police, whether a victim is willing to speak to them. They may seek broader information to explain why the Force has taken certain actions, how the Force is performing and where money is being spent. The response provided may be in the form of a verbal or written statement or in a phone or broadcast interview.

34. There are times when the aim of the police and the desires of the media are not the same. For example, if police are investigating a rape and have arrested and charged a man almost immediately then the Force may decide not to pro-actively publicise this case if there is no operational requirement for an appeal, if no community reassurance is needed and out of consideration for the victim. However the media may still become aware of the incident and chose to report it as a matter of interest seeking answers to questions such as those outlined above. If asked, the communications office must confirm an incident has occurred and can provide a response in line with guidelines on what we can say to the media for legal/operational reasons at that time.

35. I have found in my general experience, not specifically at Surrey Police, with both the local and the national media that journalists will push for more information than I am able to give and are seeking information which will give them something their competitors do not have.

(17) To what extent have you accepted hospitality from the media whilst working in your current position?

36. I have only been in this post for a brief period and I have accepted no hospitality from the media during my time at Surrey Police. In fact, in the whole of my career in the public sector I have rarely accepted hospitality from the media; when I have it has been very minimal.

(18) Insofar as you have accepted hospitality from the media, what has been the nature of the hospitality that you have accepted? What records have you kept of such hospitality?

37. As stated above I have accepted no hospitality from the media in my current post nor, as far as I can recall, in my previous two posts.
38. A hospitality register has been in place at Surrey Police since 2006 for all police officers and staff. Policy and Procedures indicate that for all officers and staff, a Hospitality Declaration Pro Forma should be submitted via their line manager to the Head of the Professional Standards Department. This system applies for all hospitality and gifts, whether they relate to the media or any other party. All ACPO Officers have to submit Hospitality Declaration Pro Forma's. Since November 2011, all completed Hospitality Declaration Pro Forma's are sent to PSD who add them to the Surrey Police Hospitality Register. This information is then disclosed to the Surrey Police Authority. Prior to this date the Hospitality Register was owned by the Finance Department.

(19) To what extent have you provided hospitality for the media?

39. I have only been in this post for a brief period and I have provided no hospitality to the media during my time here. I have, however, reviewed the Fast-time Communications records which show that Crime Reporters' Association (CRA) social events were held in October 2006, March 2008, and November 2008. These were arranged by what

was then called Surrey Police Media Relations Office at a local bar in Guildford. Surrey Police paid for a light buffet and those attending paid for their own drinks although inevitably people bought one another drinks. The purpose of these events was not to provide information to the media on specific cases but rather to gain a better understanding of each others' methods of working and requirements and to put faces to names.

40. Local Editors' Events were also held in June 2003, July 2004, and in April 2007, hosted by Surrey Police at HQ. Soft drinks and snacks were provided by Surrey Police.

(20) Insofar as you have provided hospitality to the media, what has been the nature of that hospitality? What records have you kept of such hospitality?

41. Please see (18) & (19).

(21) Have you ever accepted gifts from the media? If so, please give full details

(including who gave you the gift, when, what the gift was, and why you believe they gave you the gift).

42. I do not recall ever having accepted gifts from the media and I have certainly not done so in my time at Surrey Police.

(22) Have you ever discussed the media, or media coverage, with politicians? if so, how important is such communication and why?

43. I have never discussed the media or media coverage with politicians in my current role at Surrey Police, nor am I aware of any of my team having done so. However during my time in local government I did regularly discuss media coverage with leading local councillors e.g. Leader of the Council, Cabinet member for Education. This would be

normal practice for the Head of Communications or the Communications Manager in a local authority.

(23) What do you know about the level of hospitality accepted by Surrey Police, including by officers of the rank of Assistant Chief Constable and above? Do you consider the level to be appropriate now and to have been appropriate in the past? In addressing this issue please give your reasons and set out what you consider to be an appropriate level of hospitality for police personnel to accept from the media (if any). What records are kept of such hospitality?

44. Please see (18) & (19) which partly answers this question. I have only been here a short time and I am not aware of ACPO level officers accepting any hospitality during that period.

45. Crime Reporters' Association (CRA) social events were held in October 2006, March 2008, and November 2008. These were arranged by what was then called Surrey Police Media Relations Office at a local bar in Guildford. Surrey Police paid for a light buffet and those attending paid for their own drinks although inevitably people bought one another drinks. Local Editors' Events were also held in June 2003, July 2004, and in April 2007, hosted by Surrey Police at HQ. Soft drinks and snacks were provided by Surrey Police. Some ACPO officers may have attended these events.

(24) Do you consider that you have been adequately trained and/or given sufficient guidance on the appropriate handling of the media?

(25) Do you consider that you have been adequately trained and/or given sufficient guidance to enable you to give sound advice and/or leadership on handling the media to your staff?

46. I believe that I have been given adequate training and guidance on appropriate handling of the media. My staff are well trained and qualified to deal with the media.

47. The Fast-time Communications Team provides media training to police officers who are likely to have to deal with the media. Further detailed guidance is available on our intranet site.

(26) Do you provide training or guidance to your staff on (i) conducting and maintaining appropriate relationships with the media; (ii) accepting/offering hospitality; (iii) bribery and (iv) requests for 'off-the-record' comments? If so, please specify. Does that training/guidance reflect/follow the ACPO guidance?

48. i. The Fast-time Communications Team provides training for police officers who are likely to come in to contact with the media. Officers are given advice on what sort of information is or is not appropriate to provide to the media. For example it is not appropriate to provide the name of someone who has been arrested but not charged. Meetings with the media, requests for interviews, press releases, and responses to media inquiries are logged on the Fast-time Communications Teams computer based system which is called Solcara.
49. ii. At present our training for police officers does not include guidance on accepting or offering hospitality, largely because this has not been a significant issue in the past. However, we will address this in future training courses.
50. iii. Bribery is a criminal offence and any such incident would be investigated by our Professional Standards Department. All police officers and staff understand this.
51. iv. I am not aware of specific training for 'off-the-record' comments.

(27) Do you consider that press office staff feel confident that they understand what is, and what is not, appropriate contact with the

media? When answering this question, please explain what you consider to be "appropriate contact" with the media.

(28) Do you consider that press office staff generally feel comfortable briefing the media and responding to media requests for information?

52. I have every confidence in our press office staff and their ability to deal with the media. Many of the team are themselves former journalists and the team provides a professional level of service. Appropriate contact with the media means acting in an entirely professional manner and in accordance with the various guidelines, professional standards and training already detailed.

(29) Do incidents that attract national media interest present particular challenges? If so, what are those challenges and do you consider that the press office is adequately equipped to respond effectively and appropriately to such media interest?

53. Major incidents which attract widespread media interest, whether that be from local and/or national press, obviously pose challenges to any relatively small press office. The main challenges from a major incident are: the volume of work it generates; the fact that the case may be fast moving with new information coming in all the time; there may be complex issues about what information can or cannot be given to the media for legal and operational reasons; the need to provide a 24/7 service; journalists will rely on other sources of information which may not be accurate; journalists will demand quick responses to a range of different questions. The press office has had to deal with a number of high profile, major incidents in the past. It has always endeavoured to deal with these effectively, efficiently and professionally while providing a 24 hour response service.

54. One of the incidents attracting the most sustained media interest in Surrey Police in recent years was the disappearance of Milly Dowler in March 2002. I was not in post at the time but I have studied this case

and Surrey Police's media response in overview for the purposes of preparing this statement as it provides a vivid example how the press office coped with a major incident:

55. The scale of media interest generated from the outset of Milly going missing on 21 March 2002 was unprecedented – from the first press release and “missing” poster of Milly, on 22 March 2002 at 7pm – followed by first press conference on 24 March - the investigation captured the imagination of the media and it never dropped from the news agenda. From 2002 to 2011, the demand for information and the appetite to cover the case has remained high. In the first 24 hours after she went missing, the national media set up outside the police station at Staines, and they did not leave until many weeks later and frequently returned at each step or development of the enquiry.
56. Milly's case attracted a new, competitive and intense level of interest, and there was an insatiable appetite for any news and developments in the case. The demand was so great that we moved half of the press office into offices at Staines Police Station after a few days to try and better meet the demand for new information – the first and only time we have ever done this. Any new search pictures, new pictures of Milly, new lines of enquiry, new filming opportunities or access to the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) or Force spokesperson for the case, who was giving daily media updates, would be seized upon. We had to set up a shift system of press officers, so there was never a time when the office was not staffed in the first few weeks of the enquiry, and daily messages were produced for the media and a set of daily Q & As. We endeavoured to “pool” pictures and filming opportunities e.g. searching or underwater dive teams in action, or press conferences with the family and friends, to avoid having to repeat it and to ensure some consistency of message. As an example of the first few days:
57. Day 1 (March 22) – we put out a press release and photo and set up interview.

Day 2 (March 23) – renewed release/appeal, family statement put out, more interviews with DI, pic opportunity of searches on allotments

Day 3 – (March 24) – press conference at Staines, interviews, new family picture released, video released of Milly, picture opportunity of river searches

Day 4 – (March 25) – Headteacher interviewed about Milly, and briefing by police spokesman at railway station

Day 5 (March 26) – Crimewatch start filming reconstruction, picture opportunity on railway station roof, two media briefings – 11am and 5pm

58. Our communication objectives were to maximise the publicity to encourage the public to come forward with information, to promote the work being undertaken to reassure the public that we were doing everything possible to find her and to ensure the public were updated with developments in the investigation. We achieved this through providing a regular flow of stories and updates to keep media interest and maintain the high profile in the hope it would bring forward a crucial piece of evidence from a member of the public. Milly's case was unusual because she literally disappeared off the street in broad daylight. During this time, there was exceptional uncertainty – especially in the first six months – about what had happened to Milly. There were a number of possible hypotheses, including missing person, abduction or murder until her remains were found in September 2002, so we had to ensure that we and the media kept an open mind. There were also multiple credible lines of enquiry and a relentless day to day investigation via house to house enquiries, searching waterways, sightings and examination of sex offenders locally. As well as trying to harness the media coverage to good effect by releasing pertinent information, the press office was also trying to ensure that journalists did not run stories that could have been damaging to the investigation. At Mr and Mrs Dowler's request, the press office was also handling all requests for interviews, comment or photographs the media were making of the Dowler family. The demand

for access to Mr and Mrs Dowler was extremely high. The press office was also involved in negotiating a reward – which the *Sun* and the *News of the World* were both vying to offer.

(30) What improvements, if any, do you think could or should be made to the systems, policies and/or training in your office to ensure that press office staff conduct and maintain appropriate relationships with the media?

59. I believe that the current systems etc. at Surrey Police for dealing with the media are adequate. The Solcara system (see 26i) in the Fast-time Communications Team is about to be updated and new software systems to track and monitor issues relevant to Surrey Police are being installed shortly.

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

60. Permanent staff in the Corporate Communications Department are members of the Association of Police Communicators (APCOM). Membership of APCOM has allowed staff to network with other police forces and share examples of good practice.

(32) Insofar as you are able to say, to what extent are leaks from Surrey Police to the media and/or private detectives a problem for Surrey Police?

61. Leaks from Surrey Police to the media have not been a significant issue for the organisation. However, as in any police force where officers have access to sensitive material that journalists would be interested in, leaks are not unknown. A Surrey Police Officer was

arrested by the Metropolitan Police on 11th February 2012 as part of Operation Elveden. Obviously we cannot make any further comment at this stage as that investigation is continuing.

(33) Insofar as you are able to say, to what extent are leaks from the press office specifically to the media and/or private detectives a problem for Surrey Police?

62. Insofar as I am aware there have been no leaks from the press office to the media and/or private detectives. I am not aware of this having happened since I joined Surrey Police, nor have I been informed that there were any concerns about leaks from the press office to the media / private detectives before I arrived.

(34) What systems and procedures do you have in place in the press office, if any, to identify, respond to and detect the source of leaks? Do you consider that they are effective? What changes, if any, do you consider should be made?

63. We do not currently have specific systems in place to identify and detect leaks. If it was suspected that a leak had occurred, the matter (and – if they could be identified - the member of staff thought to be responsible) would be referred to our Professional Standards Department for investigation.

(35) In the last 5 years, how many investigations have been conducted into actual or suspected leaks from the press office and how many have led to the successful identification of the source of the leak? What was the outcome of the other investigations?

64. I have been informed by PSD that there have been no such investigations.

36) In the last 5 years has disciplinary action been taken against any member of press office staff for leaking information to the media and/or

private detectives? If so, please identify the number of cases and their outcome. There is no need to identify the person or persons the subject of the disciplinary process.

65. I have been informed by PSD that there has been no such disciplinary action.

(37) Insofar as applicable, what do you consider are the driving forces behind, or the main causes of, leaks from (i) police press offices and (ii) the police service in general?

66. As far as I am aware no substantiated leaks (see 32) have yet been identified at Surrey Police so there is not much experience on which to base an opinion. I assume that there are a number of reasons why either a Press Officer or a Police Officer might leak information to the media: financial gain; personal reasons to put particular information into the public domain; a sense of importance; in error (an inexperienced officer might provide information unwittingly that should have remained confidential) or due to lack of experience or training.

(38) To what extent do you believe bribery of police personnel by the media to be a current problem for Surrey Police (if at all)?

67. As per (32)

(39) Do you or, to your knowledge, staff working for the press office ever, give "off-the-record" briefings or have "off-the-record" conversations with the media (both local and national)? If so, please give full details and illustrative examples. Please also explain why they take place and what you consider to be the benefits of such communications.

68. We occasionally use off-the-record briefings to journalists. An example was the trial of Levi Bellfield, who was found guilty of the murder of

Milly Dowler. The Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) provided members of the Crime Reporters' Association with an off-the-record briefing about the case and our investigations leading to Bellfield's arrest. The Crime Reporters' Association is a trusted group of journalists and this briefing enabled them to have information, which had not yet been revealed in court, in order to prepare backgrounders for use once Bellfield was found guilty. This information was given to them on agreement that if he had been found not guilty the information would not be used

(40) Do you or, to your knowledge, staff working for the press office, ever confirm information for the media (i.e. information which the media have obtained from other sources) on an "off-the-record" basis? If so, please give details and explain why this is done.

69. See (39).

(41) Insofar as applicable, what records are kept of the information shared on an "off-the-record" basis? Are records kept of all "off-the-record" briefings and the information provided at them?

70. See (39). Information regarding off-the-record briefings is recorded in press office folders and may also be recorded on Solcara.

(42) What do you understand "off-the-record" to mean in this context? Do you believe that members of the media always interpret it this way? Is there scope for the media misunderstanding the intentions of the police officer/police staff member when s/he provides information on an "off-the-record" basis?

71. Off-the-record guidance can provide a greater understanding to journalists of the issues an organisation is facing 'behind the scenes'. It can also be used to ensure accuracy of reporting and can be used to

guide as to the nature of the incident so it is not sensationalised. The source of the information will not be revealed by the media and often, as in the example above, the information will not be published for some time or not at all. This can have the positive effect of ensuring that media reporting is accurate and that the media do not report unhelpful theories that might be arrived at by uninformed suspicion. Off-the-record briefings can also help to explain to journalists why certain information cannot be released at a given time.

(43) What is your view of the practice of police officers and police staff having "off-the-record" communications with the media?

72. In certain circumstances off-the-record briefings can serve a useful purpose.

(44) In your experience, insofar as applicable, where information is provided on an "off-the-record" basis, do the media tend to honour the wishes of the person providing the information? Please give illustrative examples.

73. In our experience, in particular in dealing with the Crime Reporters' Association, the media do honour off-the-record briefing agreements in order to preserve a working relationship. If a journalist did not honour the arrangements, they would lose their professional credibility and not be given further off-the-record briefings by Surrey Police.

(45) In your experience, when police officers/staff ask the media to delay publishing particular information because of the risk of prejudice to a criminal investigation or future criminal trial, to what extent and in what circumstances do the media comply with the request? Please give illustrative examples.

74. This does occasionally happen and when it does the press are usually co-operative. For example, recently a journalist on a local paper contacted the Fast-time Communications Officer at one of our bases.

A shop owner had provided the journalist with CCTV footage of a theft at his store in Surrey; he was seeking further information on the case. The investigating officer was not happy for the CCTV footage to be published as it could jeopardise the case. The position was explained to the journalist and consequently the CCTV footage was not used.

(46) In your experience, when police officers/staff ask the media not to publish particular information at all because of the risk of harm to the public interest, to what extent and in what circumstances do the media comply with the request? Please give illustrative examples.

75. See (45).

(47) Have there been occasions where, to your knowledge, the media have obtained information (from whatever source) and voluntarily not published the information because of the harm it might do the public interest or the interests of justice? Please give examples of the circumstances in which this has occurred.

76. See (45).

(48) What limitations, if any, do you consider there should be on police officers and police staff leaving the police service to work for the media and vice versa?

77. All officers and staff sign the Official Secrets Act so if they released certain information they could be liable to prosecution. An option to consider might be having something in police officer and police staff contracts forbidding them from working for certain categories of organisation for a given period after leaving the police service.

(49) In relation to dealing with the media in general, do you consider that there is a basis for applying different standards and rules to police staff from those that apply to police officers (the latter having the powers of

the office of constable). If so, (i) do you consider that different standards and rules should apply and (ii) please specify what you consider the differences should be.

78. In practice police staff, other than press officers, are not likely to be dealing with the media. Nevertheless the same standards should apply to both police officers and staff.

(50) What is your view of the recommendations contained in the HMIC's recent report "*Without Fear or Favour*" insofar as they concern relations between the media and the police?

79. The report noted that the overarching principle of police relationships with the media is that the police should not seek to constrain the media and should allow them to accurately report news. However, the report describes how police press offices have become corporate communications departments which manage internal communications, corporate marketing and corporate identity alongside dealing with media queries. It goes on to say that the "public relations" aspect of these departments seems to have brought a tension to the relationship between police forces and the media. The report quotes one journalist as saying: "*All too often, the official release of information is formal, narrowly defined and delayed.*" The obvious danger then is that journalists seek out more informal sources of information for their articles.

80. The report notes that all forces have a media policy but that only three provide any policy or guidance around the integrity of relationships between staff and the media. The HMIC report recommended that forces and authorities adopt robust systems to ensure risks arising from relationships, information disclosure, gratuities, hospitality, contracting and secondary employment are identified, monitored and managed. It goes further and suggests that "consideration should be given to the development of a national media policy to include

appropriate levels of interaction, social interaction and relationships, alongside practical guidance. The policy should be supported by a structured programme of media training and awareness and link into the broader legal and ethical framework and the Service's standards and values."

81. I would personally support this approach and I think that Surrey Police is probably already some way towards achieving it. For example considerable training, support and guidance are provided on how to deal appropriately with the media; records of hospitality received are maintained and press contacts are recorded. We have a policy of openness and transparency with the media. Specifically, the report also notes that there is evidence of relationships being facilitated through social networking sites between officers and journalists from the national media. While this is not a major problem in Surrey Police, looking ahead there is work to be done to ensure that there is guidance in place to ensure that social media sites are used appropriately by Surrey's police officers.
82. I am not in a position to comment in more detail on the above as I have only recently joined Surrey Police.

(51) What is your view of the recommendations contained in Elizabeth Filkin's report "*The Ethical Issues Arising from the Relationship Between Police and Media*"? (If you have not seen it, the report is available online).

83. I think that the practices that I have encountered since I joined Surrey Police largely reflect the approach advocated by Filkin. Senior Officers set a good example with little regular or direct contact with the media other than, for example, formal interviews arranged through the press office.

84. Our approach to the dissemination of information to the public via the media is open and impartial. We do not favour one section of the media over another.
85. Detailed guidance on dealing with the media is provided to officers by specific training and online information. Contacts with the media are recorded on an electronic database and across the Force records are kept of gifts and hospitality received.
86. Regular internal communications are sent to all officers and staff to keep them up to date on key issues and changes in any procedures and practices.
87. Surrey Police demands high standards of officers and staff. Allegations of improper practice are rare but when they do occur they are robustly investigated by our Professional Standards Department who may refer them to the IPCC.

(52) Do you consider that there are different or further steps which could and/or should be taken to ensure that relationships between police personnel and the media are and remain appropriate?

88. Surrey Police has experienced few problems. There have been a number of high profile cases recently outside Surrey which have shown some of the relationships between the police and the media to have been questionable. In many cases there are adequate legal restraints and professional standards already in place to deal with any inappropriate contact.

I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true

Signed..........

Dated.....1/3/12.....