



WEST MIDLANDS POLICE

Force Policy Document

POLICY TITLE:	Critical Incident Policy
POLICY REFERENCE NO:	Ops/23

Executive Summary

West Midlands Police (WMP) have a duty to respond to and recognise that any incident, even if managed correctly, can have a significant impact on the confidence of a victim, their family and the community thereby subsequently developing into a Critical Incident.

This policy provides guidance for Critical Incidents concerning recognition and identification, roles and responsibilities, phases associated with management of the incident and the subsequent restoration of public confidence including structured debriefing.

***Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be made be made directly with that of the policy contact / department shown below.*

Intended Policy Audience

This policy is intended for all WMP employees. However, it is especially important for Front Line Officers, Contact Centre Staff, LPU Duty Inspectors and Force Incident Managers.

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Supporting Documents

- *The codes of practice for victims of crime, Criminal Justice System, 2004*¹
- *IPCC report into the contact between Fiona Pilkington and Leicestershire Constabulary 2004-2007*²
- *Part One Order 09/2011, Critical Incidents, Version 1.0 February 2011*
- *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, Sir W Macpherson, Feb 1999*³
- *HMIC Report on the Investigation by Cambridgeshire Constabulary into the murders of Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells at Soham on 4 August 2002, Sir Ronnie Flanagan*⁴.
- *College of Policing 2013 Authorised Professional Practice (APP)*
- *Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP)*⁵
- *ACPO Community Tension Intelligence Process from Local to National, ACC S Rowe, ACPO Lead for National Intelligence Model, 2011*

Evidence Based Research

Full supporting documentation and evidence of consultation in relation to this policy including that of any version changes for implementation and review, are held with the Force Policy Co-ordinator including that of the authorised original Command Team papers.

Please Note.

PRINTED VERSIONS SHOULD NOT BE RELIED UPON. THE MOST UP TO DATE VERSION OF ANY POLICY, GUIDANCE or FORCE DIRECTIVE – ORDER, CAN BE FOUND ON THE INTRANET EQUIP POLICIES SITE.

¹ http://www.cps.gov.uk/victims_witnesses/victims_code.pdf

² From www.ipcc.gov.uk

³ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, Types of Critical Incidents

⁴ <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/media/investigation-by-cambridgeshire-constabulary-20040530.pdf>

⁵ The latest JESIP doctrine can be found from <http://www.jesip.org.uk/> on publication on this policy this was version18

Force Diversity Vision Statement and Values

“Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations by embedding a culture of equality and respect that puts all of our communities, staff and officers at the heart of everything we do. Working together as one we will strive to make a difference to our service delivery by mainstreaming our organisational values”

“All members of the public and communities we serve, all police officers, special constables and police staff members shall receive equal and fair treatment regardless of, age, disability, sex, race, gender reassignment, religion/belief, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership and pregnancy/maternity. If you consider this policy could be improved for any of these groups please raise with the author of the policy without delay.”

Code of Ethics

West Midlands Police is committed to ensuring that the Code of Ethics is not simply another piece of paper, poster or laminate, but is at the heart of every policy, procedure, decision and action in policing.

The Code of Ethics is about self-awareness, ensuring that everyone in policing feels able to always do the right thing and is confident to challenge colleagues irrespective of their rank, role or position

Every single person working in West Midlands Police is expected to adopt and adhere to the principles and standards set out in the Code.

The main purpose of the Code of Ethics is to be a guide to "good" policing, not something to punish "poor" policing.

The Code describes nine principles and ten standards of behaviour that sets and defines the exemplary standards expected of everyone who works in policing.

Please see http://www.college.police.uk/docs/Code_of_Ethics.pdf for further details.

The policy contained in this document seeks to build upon the overarching principles within the Code to further support people in the organization to do the right thing.

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Abbreviations

- **ACPO** - Association of Chief Police Officers
- **AIMS** - Action Information Management System
- **APP** - Authorised Professional Practice
- **ASB** - Anti-Social Behaviour
- **CID** - Criminal Investigation Department
- **EDL** - English Defence League
- **EQIA** - Equality Impact Assessment
- **FCC** - Force Contact Centre
- **FIM** - Force Incident Manager
- **FLO** - Family Liaison Officer
- **FOI** - Freedom of Information Act
- **IAG** - Independent Advisory Group
- **IIC** - Incident Information Centre
- **IPCC** - Independent Police Complaints Commission
- **JDM** - Joint Decision Model
- **KIN** - Key Individual Network
- **LA** - Local Authority
- **LPU** - Local Policing Unit
- **OSU** - Operational Support Unit
- **PCSO** - Police Community Support Officer
- **PIM** - Post Incident Manager
- **SIO** - Senior Investigating Officer
- **WMP** - West Midlands Police

Definitions

- **Critical Incident** - *“any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community.”⁶*
- **Major Incident** - *“Any emergency that requires, implementation of special arrangements by one or more of the emergency services, the involvement, either directly or indirectly, or large numbers of people.”⁷*
- **Community Tension** - *“Community Tension is a state of community dynamics which may potentially lead to disorder, threaten the peace and stability of communities, or raise the levels of fear and anxiety in the whole, or part of the local community”⁸*

⁶ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, Types of Critical Incidents

⁷ College of Policing, APP Contents, Civil Contingencies, Emergency Preparedness

⁸ Institute of Community Cohesion June 2010 <http://www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk>

1 INTRODUCTION

Any incident within the West Midlands Police (WMP) area has the ability to become a Critical Incident depending on the surrounding circumstances and factors that may affect it.

Critical Incident Management is about providing a response that satisfies the needs of the victim, their family and the community, but also provides an effective and proportionate solution to the incident⁹.

Critical Incidents can occur through any event and are not restrained to responses to incidents, public enquiries, human resource issues or internal matters.

It is imperative to manage risk during a Critical Incident. However, a number of principles underpin Critical Incident Management and it is rarely one factor or action of an individual which will cause an incident to become critical.¹⁰

This policy provides guidance for the identification of factors that may lead to incidents becoming critical, the required management and processes to undertake for a proportionate response.

1.1 Aim

To provide a framework for WMP in our response for the identification and management of Critical Incidents.

1.2 Objectives

To identify the characteristics of a Critical Incident (see Section 3.2).

To identify the authority level required for 'declaring' a Critical Incident (Section 1.5.3).

To identify the roles and responsibilities required for managing a Critical Incident (Section 2).

To identify Command and Control Flagging requirements (Section 1.5.5).

1.3 Scope

This policy identifies the declaration of and response to Critical Incidents for WMP **only**.

This policy **does not** provide guidance or processes for any other partner agency or individuals to an incident being classified as Critical. Any guidance for Critical Incidents that other agencies follow will be within their own policies and procedures.

This policy identifies the process for classifying an incident as Critical.

⁹ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, Types of Critical Incidents

¹⁰ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, Types of Critical Incidents

1.4 Definition

A Critical Incident is:

“any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community.”¹¹

This definition is deliberately broad and should ensure that incidents, which are likely to escalate into a Critical Incident, are not missed.

This definition recognises the fundamental importance of community trust and confidence in the police response to Critical Incidents.

It applies equally to serious, less serious and internal incidents.

1.5 What makes an Incident Critical?

A Critical Incident can escalate from any incident depending on any number of factors that may be present. (See Critical Thinking Matrix Section 1.5.1)

Internal incidents involving staff, professional standards investigations or human resources have the potential also to escalate critically and should not be disregarded.

A Critical Incident may pose a significant threat to life, disrupt essential community routines or vital services, or may require large amounts of resources to manage the incident.

A Major Incident will always be a Critical Incident. However not all critical incidents are major incidents (see definition section).

The number of resources required to manage an incident is also not be a factor in deciding if an incident should be declared critical. The impact of the policing response on the victim, their family and the community are the deciding factors.

¹¹ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, Types of Critical Incidents

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1.5.1 Critical Thinking Matrix¹²

A number of different characteristics can affect an incident and its potential to become critical. It is important to identify these characteristics early so that the incident can be effectively managed.

A critical thinking matrix has been developed as a tool to help responders identify incidents that have or may escalate into Critical Incidents. The matrix identifies factors that should be considered, although it is not exhaustive.

Does the incident contain any of the following features?			
Death	Media Interest	Failure to Follow Standard Operating Procedures/Policy	Wider Community Issues
Serious Injury	Significant Damage	Local Interest	Regional Interest
National Interest	Vulnerable Victim	Prominent Victim	Repeat Victim
Repeat Location	Repeat Offender	Prominent Offender	Large Numbers of Victims
Policing Error	Minority Community Issues	Prominent Location	Police Misconduct
Failure within the Criminal Justice System	Victim from within the Police Service	Offender from within the Police Service	Political Interest
Kidnap	Abduction	Child abduction	Sexual Offences
And there is likely significant impact on:			
The Victim	Their Family	The Community	

Notification

A key element of Critical Incident Management is giving senior officers early notification of incidents that contain the Critical Thinking Matrix factors. Early identification and intervention can make the difference between an incident becoming critical or not.

¹² College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, phase 2 managing critical incidents

1.5.2 Who can identify a Critical Incident?¹³

Any officer or member of police staff may identify an incident as critical but cannot officially declare it as such, below the rank of inspector.

All officers or member of police staff dealing with an incident (including call handlers and initial attending officers) should consider these questions;

1. What am I dealing with?
2. What might it develop into?
3. What impact might this incident have on the victim, their family or the community?
4. Who should I tell if I think this may escalate into a Critical Incident?

Where, in the officer or member of police staff's opinion, an incident is or has the likelihood to escalate into a Critical Incident, it is essential that this is communicated immediately to a Duty Inspector, Force Incident Manager (FIM), the Force Contact Centre (FCC) Inspector or another line manager above the rank of inspector.

Inspectors and above should encourage officers or police staff to report these incidents to them when identified so that early interventions can be implemented.

1.5.3 Who can declare a Critical Incident?

Whilst anyone can bring an incident to the attention of an officer of the rank of inspector or above, only they can officially declare an incident as critical. Officers of the rank of inspector or above, who are notified of an incident that is, or has the likelihood to escalate into, a Critical Incident need to decide whether the:

- Report is valid;
- Current response is effective;
- Incident has become more serious and now be declared a Critical Incident.

Each incident should be assessed on its own merit and declaring officers should ensure that they have access to all the relevant information, incident logs, Family Liaison Officer, (FLO) logs, current assessment of community tensions, intelligence and briefings.

The declaration is a means of supporting a competent and well-managed police response in line with WMP plans and policies.

Where an incident is declared critical, the subsequent response should quickly identify the cause. Plans should then be implemented to ensure or restore the quality of the police response and maintain or rebuild confidence.

Officers should ensure that they clearly record their decisions and rationale within the Oasis Incident Log, their pocket notebook or MK25 policy document.

¹³ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, phase 2 managing critical incidents

1.5.4 Command and Control

Tiered response

- Using a tiered response will allow the command structure to be scaled up or down with changing circumstances, being able to identify the expected resources that may be required to police the incident.

Tier	Response	Command
1	Where a Critical Incident is within the capability of management with the resources and where the risk and actions are limited to one Local Police Unit (LPU) or Department.	<p>Strategic – LPU Commander</p> <p>Tactical – A member of Local Command Team</p> <p>Operational – Members of the LPU designated by Silver</p>
2	Where the Critical Incident has an impact on more than one LPU, or has a series of linked incidents in different LPUs but there is limited potential for it to spread further.	<p>Strategic – Lead LPU commander designated by ACC</p> <p>Tactical – A member of Local Command Team designated by Gold</p> <p>Operational – Members of the LPU designated by Silver</p>
3	Where a Critical Incident has an impact on a force, cross-force or national dimension and where there is significant threat to public confidence and the reputation of the forces involved.	<p>Strategic – Designated ACC</p> <p>Tactical – Designated by gold</p> <p>Operational – As designated by Silver</p>

1.5.5 Critical Incident Flagging

The WMP Command and Control System OASIS uses flagging of Critical Incidents for ease of identification of the impact of the response.

When an incident is declared as Critical by an officer of the rank of inspector or above there is the requirement for the incident to be flagged within OASIS to identify the potential impact on the force.

Justification for the identified flagging will be recorded within the incident log by the declaring officer.

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Flagging	Response
<p align="center">White</p>	<p>Where the Critical Incident is located on a single LPU, the resources on the LPU have the capability to manage the incident and there is no likelihood of incident escalation for force mobilisation.</p>
<p align="center">Red</p>	<p>Where the Critical Incident has an impact on more than one LPU, or requires a response from resources at force level.</p> <p>Note: The deployment of specialist resources, e.g. Operational Support Unit (OSU) or Force Traffic, does not automatically classify for red grading alone.</p>

2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section highlights roles and responsibilities that would be expected to be involved in the identification and management of a Critical Incident.

Role	Responsibility
<p align="center">Initial Identifying Officer</p>	<p>Identify if the incident has any identified features within the Critical Thinking Matrix (Section 1.5) whilst considering the following questions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What am I dealing with? ▪ What might develop? ▪ What the impact of the incident or police response may be. <p>When identifying an incident that may escalate or be a critical incident liaise with an officer of the rank of Inspector or above.</p> <p>Ensure the creation of an Oasis incident log with full details and actions taken.</p>
<p align="center">Declaring Officer</p>	<p>The declaring officer must be of the rank of Inspector or above and will typically be a Duty Inspector, although other departmental inspectors may be expected to make the declaration.</p> <p>Liaise with the initial identifying officer and gather all relevant information to gain a full overview of the incident.</p>

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Role	Responsibility
	<p>Decide if the incident is to be designated critical, liaise with the FIM and identify the required flagging (Section 1.5.5).</p> <p>Ensure that the incident is correctly flagged within the OASIS Command and Control system with a full rationale for the decision making and flagging, ensuring the log is switched to the Force Contact Centre (FCC).</p>
<p align="center">Force Incident Manager</p>	<p>Consult with the declaring officer to ensure the incident has been correctly declared, tiered and flagged.</p> <p>Inform the ACC in the event of any incident being graded red or tier 2 and 3.</p> <p>In the event of the Critical Incident being declared and is a result of a crime, inform the Force Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Duty Superintendent.</p>
<p align="center">Contact Centre</p>	<p>Ensure that all updates and rationale within a Critical Incident are entered into the incident log.</p> <p>Ensure that flagging has been inputted into the incident log.</p> <p>Ensure that the incident is switched to the Force Contact Centre (FCC)</p> <p>Identify if an Action Information Management System (AIMS) package exists that may support the response to the incident and activate it.</p>
<p align="center">Force Contact Centre Inspector</p>	<p>Ensure the duty FIM has been informed in the event of a Critical Incident being declared.</p> <p>Inform corporate communications department through contact procedures.</p>
<p align="center">Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)</p>	<p>The duty ACC will undertake duties of Strategic Commander if identified as being required.¹⁴</p> <p>Consider the demands on the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO), and who is best placed to meet those</p>

¹⁴ See Gold Activation Guidance Document, http://intranet2/content/A_OCU/IEM/Emergency_planning/Forcewide_Plans/Gold_Activation_V2.0.pdf.

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Role	Responsibility
	demands so that the appropriate appointment is made. ¹⁵
Force CID Duty Superintendent	Allocate most suitably trained Senior Investigating Officer (SIO). Record rationale for SIO allocation within duty Superintendents policy document.
Corporate Communications	Monitor social media to assist in the assessment of community tension and feed information through intelligence to FIM or Tactical Commander, in line with Corporate Communications plans. Formulate a media strategy in conjunction with Strategic Commander to assist with the release of relevant information to the media and public about a Critical Incident.

¹⁵ Recommendation from Sir Ronnie Flanagan's report into Operation Fincham

3 CRITICAL INCIDENT BACKGROUND

3.1 Types of Critical Incidents

Different types of incidents can become Critical. Often they are identified as high profile, serious or homicide related, but this is not always the case as any incident has the ability to escalate.¹⁶

Anti-Social Behaviour or Hate Crime

As with any Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) incident whether hate related or not, if it is not managed effectively and is allowed to continue, may have the potential to escalate and develop into a critical incident.

Repeated ASB and Hate crime can occur over time which can compound the effect perceived by the victim, their family or the community, if the series is not identified early and mitigation put in place, this can quickly escalate into a critical incident.

Pre Planned events

Any event that is not planned sufficiently or involving attendees where tensions are high has the potential to escalate and may become a critical incident, especially if the police response is not sufficient.

The reputation of WMP can be seriously affected if a planned event is not managed sufficiently and results in disorder or injury to the public, failure to plan and obtain an accurate intelligence or tension assessment can result in an event becoming a critical incident.

Internal Incidents¹⁷

There are occasions when internal incidents can seriously affect morale of staff or the actions of a group or individual may have a serious effect on the reputation and public's perception of WMP, these could become critical incidents.

The actions of WMP employees on or off duty and the following media approach can have a serious effect on both the internal community of the organisation or the reputation of WMP held by the public, early identification and mitigation is imperative to prevent escalation of such an incident.

3.2 What is a Critical Incident?

There are three identified characteristics of Critical Incidents:¹⁸

- Police response;
- Community impact;
- Decision making.

¹⁶ These are examples of types of incident and this list is not exhaustive

¹⁷ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, types of critical incidents

¹⁸ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, types of critical incidents

3.2.1 Police response

When the police fail to respond and deliver the service that is expected of them by the victim, their family or a community, and raising tension levels are not identified and sufficiently managed then a Critical Incident has the potential to occur.

Alternatively when the police response is not proportionate to the incident, tactics may be seen as heavy handed by the community which may cause an increase in community tension and a reduction in the reputation of WMP.

3.2.2 Community Impact

Any incident has the potential to have an impact on a community group dependant on the circumstances of the incident and group it is connected to.

Community Tension and Cohesion should be considered on a daily basis at operational level during Daily Management Meetings (DMM), this will ensure that critical incidents are managed effectively and significant changes in tension levels are assessed.¹⁹

3.2.3 Decision Making

In order to prevent, identify and deal with a critical incident, the correct decision must be made. The wrong decision or failure to act has the potential to further escalate an incident.

It is important that all of the relevant information is gathered and assessed before making a timely, justifiable and accountable decision, as per the Joint Decision Model (JDM) (appendix A).

Risks and benefits must be assessed when making decisions, considering at every stage of any wider impact.

3.2.4 Critical Incident Areas:

The police response, community impact and decision making must be considered in any response to a critical incident in order to resolve the issues that have enabled it to escalate. Each of the three characteristics can equally be affected by the following compounding factors:

- Assumption Stereotyping;
- Decision Making;
- Family and Community;
- Procedures;
- Management.

(For more information see **Appendix D**)

3.3 Critical Incident Phases

Irrespective of who the victim or community is, the police response to the Critical Incident must always adhere to the phased approach (see Appendix F for more detail)

The three phases to Critical Incident Management are:

- Preparing (Section 3.3.1);
- Managing Critical Incidents(Section 3.3.2);
- Restoring public confidence (Section 3.3.3).

¹⁹ ACPO Community Tension Intelligence Process from Local to National pg 7, Sec 3.11

3.3.1 Preparing²⁰

There are a number of key elements that are fundamental to preparing for the management of a Critical Incident. These include: (See **Appendix E** for further detail)

Leadership

Effective leadership is key to management of resources and incidents, poor leadership can have a detrimental effect on the resolution of an incident.

Policy and Processes

Effective planning processes and policies can ensure that procedure and tasks are adhered to which can go some way to managing incidents when they occur and preventing escalation into Critical Incidents.

Operational Risk Management

Managing risk correctly is potentially the most important way of negating the potential for an incident to become critical, the JDM should be considered when managing any risk and consideration of the nationally recognised risk principles. (See Appendix A and B)

The ACPO Community tension policy which includes a risk grading process and a Community Tension Summary document should be used to monitor community tension on a daily basis through the DMM and Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group (TT&CG) processes.²¹

Critical Incident Training

Critical Incident training is to be delivered to staff, appropriate to their role, providing them with a clear understanding of the concepts and terminology of Critical Incident Management, Learning and Development have a number of training inputs that incorporate Critical Incident recognition and management, specific commanders courses also provide inputs into command of Critical Incidents.²²

Partnership and Resources

Successful policing depends on building positive relationships with the public and Key Individual Network (KIN) and other community groups prior to the occurrence of a Critical Incident.

It is important to build relationships with community groups in order to assess tension levels and enable communication channels to both deliver and obtain information.

It is increasingly difficult to establish these relationships following a Critical Incident, which can have an adverse effect on public perception and tension levels if not already in place.

²⁰ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, phase 1 preparing for critical incidents

²¹ Located on intranet, Corvus documents within Intelligence pages

²² Full training list available from Learning and Development Website on intranet

3.3.2 Managing a Critical Incident

Whilst in all cases early identification of Critical Incidents is paramount, it is particularly important that we are more perceptive to incidents that initially may not be considered as critical, but when the local / individual context is fully considered, these can have a long term impact on community confidence if early intervention is not undertaken. **Appendix E**

Considerations should be given to:

- Needs of the victim, their family and the community;
- Open and transparent media and communication strategies;
- Ensuring that a Critical Incident receives ongoing monitoring to ensure the effective and appropriate use of resources.

In order for a Critical Incident to be resolved efficiently, successful management will be required; this will involve ensuring that identification is made as early as practicable and that any impact or risk is identified.

If the person raising the concern is a victim or family member of someone who has been killed or injured, they may be particularly vulnerable. In these cases, it may be appropriate to provide a level of victim care through a named contact or FLO.

3.3.3 Restoring Public Confidence

Communicating with the public, being open and transparent is paramount to ensuring that WMP can build or maintain public confidence. Once public confidence is affected or reduced, steps must be made to rebuild this.

The key principle to restoring public confidence is to be transparent and ensure that the issues raised are dealt with.

A number of considerations should be made including, the reason why public confidence has been lost, the level of community tension, early identification of potential damage to public confidence and ensuring that any complaint has a proportionate response.

If it is immediately clear that the police response was inadequate, it may be appropriate to make an early apology on behalf of the force.

- This can be a commitment to identify and address the issues that caused the loss of confidence.
- A verbal apology via the FLO or
- A public apology via the media.

Identifying what caused the problem can help to determine the best way to restore public confidence.

3.4 Post Incident Procedures

Post incident procedures involve the formal, independent review of police operations by a relevant investigative authority and should commence when an incident, operation or Critical Incident:

- Has the potential to cause or has been identified to have caused serious damage to confidence in policing;
- Has resulted in death or serious injury;
- Has revealed failings in command;
- Where the police actions may have caused danger to the officers or the public.

The following are a number of options or actions that should be considered following a Critical Incident, these may aid in identifying good practice and equally areas for development.

Community Engagement

This is defined as the process of enabling citizens and communities to participate in policing at their chosen level, ranging from providing information and reassurance, to empowering them to identify and implement solutions to local problems and influence strategic priorities and decisions.²³

WMP community partnerships teams and neighbourhood teams engage with the community through Police and Communities Together Meetings and KIN groups in order to full fill this level of engagement.

Intelligence teams at LPU and Force level monitor community tension and through the Community Tension Summary documents, identifying how communities feel and the impact of the incident on the community.

An investigation should be commenced at the earliest opportunity. The investigation must keep the parties involved up to date with the progress of the enquiry.

Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) Referral

Mandatory referrals to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) must be made in cases which result in death or serious injury.

Cases that reveal failures in command, have caused danger to the public, or are in the public interest should be voluntarily referred.

Following any incident but particularly Critical Incidents, any police force may voluntarily refer the incident to the IPCC for an independent review of the operational performance.

²³ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, phase 2 managing critical incidents

Independent Advisory Group (IAG)

The use of IAGs improves communications through consultation and enables direct engagement with the community.

IAGs are seen to be a critical friend to the police service and can provide a real time critical appraisal of police actions.

The use of IAGs can be a positive step in improving transparency.

IAGs can be compiled by KIN or other community members to assist the police in direct engagement.

Public Inquiry

Following a Critical Incident, there is potential that due to the media or public interest there may be a number of questions asked in relation to the police response, this may result in a public inquiry being requested.

Public inquiries do not occur without warning; there may have been a history of dissatisfaction which could have extended over years. In the majority of cases the matter would have generated wide public interest with comprehensive, and often critical, press coverage. A number of interventions may have taken place but interested parties may still feel that the only way to resolve outstanding questions to issues is by a full independent inquiry, open to public scrutiny.

Peer review

A peer review is identified as good practice, where a similar geographical force investigates the processes and actions taken during the management of the critical incident.

A peer review can be requested during or following a Critical Incident. An invite can be made of operational counterparts from similar, specialist or neighbouring forces to evaluate operational performance²⁴.

4 CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Record Keeping

Contact Centre staff must ensure that the Oasis incident log is updated with the rationale for flagging, resources allocated to the incident and that before closing a full update, crime reference numbers and debrief requests are added.

Officers should ensure that their decision making is recorded, this may be by way of a MK25 policy document, pocket note book, OASIS log entry or witness statement, to ensure adherence to an auditable and transparent process.

²⁴ **Note:** This action is recognised within the "Report on the investigation by Cambridgeshire Constabulary into the murders of Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells" by Sir Ronnie Flanagan as being "good policing practice", although is not normally taken, until, after 28 days have elapsed.

Not Protectively Marked

Decision logs and policy documents are not just about protecting the organisations reputation. They should provide an open, honest and accurate account, and where necessary, determining the impact of the police response.

This should be done as a matter of routine within WMP. Particularly through the various stages of the incident through the JDM (see Appendix A)

4.2 Debriefing

On stand down of a response to a critical incident all officers and staff deployed should be debriefed as outlined in the WMP Debriefing Policy.

4.2.1 Post Incident Review

A post-incident review should be undertaken as appropriate to look at the WMP response to an incident. This may be based on an official force structured debrief or use the results from the hot debrief to inform the review process.

On completion a copy of this report should be sent to all departments with any actions within the report which need to be carried out to address any issues identified, this is governed by the review investigator but the responsibility to ensure the issues are address is with the department heads.

In the case of a Critical Incident it is recommended that a community impact assessment is undertaken to ensure that any impact on the community has been captured and managed.

5 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EQIA)

The Policy has been reviewed against all protected characteristics in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty embodied in the Equality Act 2010. The policy has therefore been Equality Impact Assessed to show how WMP has evidenced 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Supporting documentation in the form of an EQIA has been completed and is available for viewing in conjunction with this Policy.²⁵

6 HUMAN RIGHTS

This policy has been implemented and reviewed in accordance with that set out with the European Convention and principles provided by the Human Rights Act 1998. The application of this policy has no differential impact on any of the articles within the Act. However, failure as to its implementation would impact on the core duties of West Midlands Police and its partners, to uphold the law and serve/protect all members of its community (and beyond) from harm.

²⁵ Available on equip policy portal

7 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI)

Public disclosure of this policy document is determined by the Force Policy Co-ordinator on agreement with its owner. Version 1.7 of this policy has been GPMS marked as Not Protectively Marked.

Public disclosure does not automatically apply to supporting Force policies, directives and associated guidance documents, and in all cases the necessary advice should be sought prior to disclosure to any one of these associated documents.

Which exemptions apply and to which section of the document?	Whole document	Section number

8 PROMOTION / DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING

The following methods will be adopted to ensure full knowledge of the Policy:

- Publishing on force intranet and use of 'message of the day' identifying new policy in force.
- Distribution to FIMs and force inspectors.
- Published within the Equip Policy Portal.

9 REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed in twelve months from sign off to ensure compliance and adherence to legislation.

In the event of a Critical Incident that identifies further process, receives external inquiry or review by IPCC, this policy will be reviewed to ensure any recommendations are included.



CHIEF CONSTABLE

10 VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date	Reason for Change	Amended/Agreed by
V1.0	February 2011	Part One Order 09/2011 implemented	Part one order migrated into new policy document by PC Kris Beardsmore
V1.1	February 2012	Initial Policy Document created by Sanjay Balu	Document not published,
V1.2	29 th July 2013	New policy updated by PC 1323 Kris Beardsmore	
V1.3	23 rd September 2013	Policy updated following consultation with Laura Crofts and T/Insp Keith Holliday.	Amended by PC 1323 Kris Beardsmore
V1.4	23 rd September 2013	Policy Updated following consultation with T/PS Susan Mabbett and Kate Hitchcox	Amendments made by PC 1323 Kris Beardsmore
V1.5	21 st October 2013	Policy update following consultation.	Amendments made by PC 1323 Kris Beardsmore
V1.6	10 th January 2014	Policy update following review by T/Insp Keith Holliday.	Amendments made by PC 1323 Kris Beardsmore
V1.7	3 rd march 2014	Introduction of JESIP programme into WMP.	Amended by Kirsty Butterworth
V1.7	15 th August 2014	Code of Ethics added, Ops ref No Added and CC signature, slight formatting amendments	56408 Couchman

APPENDIX A JOINT DECISION MODEL

- The Joint Decision Model has six elements.

Note:- For more information see the JESIP Joint Doctrine: The Interoperability Framework plus also the Aide Memoir for commanders



APPENDIX B UNDERSTANDING RISK

JESIP - Achieving a Joint Understanding of Risk

Identification of hazards – individual agencies should identify hazards and then share appropriate information cross-agency with first responders and control rooms. Use METHANE to ensure a common approach.

Dynamic Risk Assessment – undertaken by individual agencies, reflecting tasks / objectives to be achieved, hazards identified and likelihood of harm from those hazards.

Identification of tasks – each individual agency should identify and consider the specific tasks to be achieved according to its own role and responsibilities.

Apply control measures – each agency should consider and apply appropriate control measures to ensure any risk is as low as reasonably practicable.

Multi-agency response plan – consider hazards identified and service risk assessments within the context of the agreed priorities for the incident. Develop an integrated multi-agency operational response plan.

Recording of decisions – record the outcomes of the joint assessment of risk, the identified priorities and the agreed multi-agency response plan.

APPENDIX C CRITICAL INCIDENT BACKGROUND

Anti-Social Behaviour or Hate Crime

- Cases of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), when they are persistent or repeated, can collectively be determined as critical. Early recognition and management of the situation is paramount.
- Incidents of ASB can be of a minor nature initially but, as in the cases of Fiona Pilkington²⁶ and David Askew,²⁷ they have the potential to become serious Critical Incidents if not managed sufficiently.
- Hate crime and racist incidents, whether involving violence or not, have the potential to affect communities. They can be broadcast by media and can develop very quickly, and become of national interest. These incidents can have an effect on community tension and cohesion. Police forces therefore need to be prepared to react quickly so as not to compromise public trust and confidence²⁸.

Pre Planned events

- Sporting events or other events where public order duties are undertaken have the potential to escalate into Critical Incidents if the effectiveness of the police response falls short of what is required by the event, or fails to take account of the needs of the community.
- The potential for a pre-planned event, particularly where emotions are high, to develop into disorder or violence cannot be underestimated. Where this does occur the quality of the police response may have a significant impact on public trust and confidence²⁹.
- Critical Incident Management should be included in the planning for events, especially where:³⁰
 - There may be a history of tension between the local community and visitors³¹;
 - There is intelligence which suggests disorder may be likely³².
 - LPU and Force Tension Summary Documents identify a current or likely tension.³³

²⁶ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, Types of Critical Incidents

²⁷ These were both identified by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) as being poorly managed in the early stages resulting in the escalation to critical status.

²⁸ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, Types of Critical Incidents identifies that A racist incident broadcast on the 'Big Brother' Television show, against Shilpa Shetty, was identified by the media with national and international interest. Hertfordshire constabulary were placed under intense pressure to act quickly and effectively. A failure to do this resulted in criticism, and undermined public confidence that the police were taking such behaviour seriously.

²⁹ The London student protests evidenced this in November 2010, the police response heightened community concerns and undermined confidence in the ability of the police to prevent disorder (College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, Types of Critical Incidents)

³⁰ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, Types of Critical Incidents

³¹ E.g., The Appleby horse fair in Cumbria

³² E.g. Prior to the EDL marches of 2010

³³ Located on intranet, Corvus documents within Intelligence pages

APPENDIX D CRITICAL INCIDENT AREAS:³⁴

Assumption Stereotyping - This includes allowing personal assumptions, perceptions and stereotyping to affect the mindset. Such views, unless challenged, can adversely influence the direction and/or the priority of an investigation.

Decision Making - Poor decision making, whether it is because of a lack of time, information, experience or flawed working methods, can have a significant impact on the progress and direction of an incident.

Family and Community - A failure to address the diverse needs of a victim, their family or the community may inadvertently alienate them or cause misunderstandings. Victim care and community engagement must recognise and be sensitive to individual needs and views. Community tension and cohesion should be measured and considered daily by way of Daily Management Meetings at operational level.³⁵

Procedures - A lack of auditable record keeping will hinder the supervision and review of cases. It may also result in important information being lost to an investigation. If a public inquiry or other review is conducted, officers will be unable to recollect the decisions and actions they took, and why.

Management - Failure to manage, prioritise or delegate workloads efficiently will result in officers being swamped with unnecessary work. It will also hinder the progress of incidents.

³⁴ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, types of critical incidents

³⁵ ACPO Community Tension Intelligence Process from Local to National pg 7, Sec 3.11

APPENDIX E CRITICAL INCIDENT PHASES

Preparing³⁶

There a number of key elements that are fundamental to preparing for the management of a Critical Incident, these include:

Leadership

- Early intervention can prevent a minor problem escalating into one that could have a significant impact on the overall quality of the police response.
- Emphasis should be placed on effective supervision and support with access to mentoring and information sharing.
- All officers should expect to have their decisions and actions reviewed as part of routine supervision. Therefore all decisions, actions and rationale for these must be recorded.
- Where issues or problems are identified the priority is to consider what immediate actions or support is needed to address them and lessen the impact.

Policy and Processes

- Ineffective and / or inconsistent implementation of force protocols, policies and procedures can trigger a Critical Incident to develop.
- Policies and procedures are typically developed over time, incorporating current legislation and good practice.
- Implementation of these is the most effective way to prepare and of reducing the number of Critical Incidents.
- Quality Assurance, through debriefing, should be used to identify good practice, this can be used to improve the quality of future police responses and overall performance of the police service
- Chief Officers should ensure that force policy and procedures are developed and implemented for the prompt notification and assessment of incidents likely to escalate or are Critical Incidents.

Operational Risk Management

- The complex environment of policing makes a rational, effective and defensible decision making process difficult. This can lead to uncertainty when assessing risk.
- There is always focus by the media in events where decisions made lead to poor outcomes. This in turn may lead to risk aversion within the police with some officers and staff being reluctant to make decisions in case things go wrong.
- Ten risk principles (see risk principles) have been identified to encourage a more positive approach to risk by supporting decision makers and building their confidence in taking risk.
- The Joint Decision Model (**Appendix A**) should be adhered to in line with the risk principles to allow multi-agency risk assessment on scene(s) more flexible multi-agency environment, being better equipped and supported in exercising professional judgement.
- The ACPO Community tension policy which includes a risk grading process and a Community Tension Summary document, should be used to monitor

³⁶ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, phase 1 preparing for critical incidents

Not Protectively Marked

community tension on a daily basis through the Daily Management Meeting (DMM) and Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group (TT&CG) processes.³⁷

Risk Principles

- The willingness to make decisions in conditions of uncertainty is a core professional requirement of all members of the police service.
- Maintaining or achieving the safety, security and wellbeing of individuals and communities is a primary consideration in risk decision making.
- Risk taking involves judgement and balance, with decision makers required to consider the value and likelihood of the possible benefits of a particular decision against the seriousness and likelihood of the possible harms.
- Harm can never be totally prevented. Risk decisions should, therefore, be judged on the quality of the decision making, not by the outcome.
- Taking risk decisions, and reviewing others' risk decision making, is difficult so account should be taken of whether they involved dilemmas or emergencies, were part of a sequence of decisions or might appropriately be taken by other agencies.
- The standard expected and required of members of the police service is that their risk decisions should be consistent with that of officers of similar rank, specialism or experience would have taken in the same circumstances.
- Whether to record a decision is a risk decision in itself which should, to a large extent, be left to professional judgement. The decision whether or not to make a record, however, and the extent of that record, should be made after considering the likelihood of harm occurring and its seriousness.
- To reduce risk aversion and improve decision making, policing needs a culture that learns from successes as well as failures. Good risk taking should be identified, celebrated and shared.
- Since good risk taking depends on quality information, the police service will work with partner agencies and others to share relevant information about those who pose risk or those who are vulnerable to the risk of harm.
- Members of the police service who make decisions consistent with these principles should receive the encouragement, approval and support of their organisation.

To help aid risk assessment the JESIP programme also encourages a joint understanding of risk between all of the service involved during the response stage. (See Appendix A and B)

Critical Incident Training

- Staff should receive Critical Incident training appropriate to their role, providing them with a clear understanding of the concepts and terminology of Critical Incident management.
- Training is particularly important in commander roles, where there are fewer staff and increased likelihood of the requirement to manage Critical Incidents.
- Police Constables, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and call handlers are considered as front line and, as such, typically provide the initial response to an incident. Therefore it is crucial that they understand their role in Critical Incident management (**Section 3**).
- There is a personal responsibility to ensure that WMP staff and Officers are adequately trained for their role so that they know how to access resources,

³⁷ Located on intranet, Corvus documents within Intelligence pages

Not Protectively Marked

support and supervision whereby subsequently allowing them to provide a professional, effective and motivated response.

Partnership and Resources³⁸

- A proactive response to victim support and community engagement will increase trust and confidence and encourage open lines of communication.
- The community is a key resource in tackling crime and the fear of it.
- The police need to recognise and understand the diverse needs and issues of their local community, identifying levels of tension and cohesion and building positive relationships with recognised representatives or KIN.
- Consideration should be given to include in the response; internal staff resources, independent advisory groups or community cohesion groups, independent observers and multi-agency partners.

³⁸ College of Policing, APP Contents, Critical Incident Management, phase 1 preparing for critical incidents

APPENDIX F MANAGING CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Identification

- It is impossible to provide an all encompassing fail safe risk model for identifying if or when a Critical Incident may occur.
- Any incident can become a Critical Incident. (Section 1.5)
- The quality of the police response can be undermined by many issues, these are also compounded by poor quality assurance, poor victim care and / or poor community engagement.
- The impact the incident may have on individuals, irrespective of the police response, cannot be predicted.
- Gauging general feelings of tension and vulnerability of the community and predicting factors that are likely to have an effect on the victim, their family or the community will help to identify incidents that may escalate.
- It is not just a specific type of incident that can have a significant impact on the victim(s); there can be particular factors that can increase its impact (See Critical Thinking Matrix **Section 1.5.1**).

Impact

- It is not always possible to predict the impact that an incident may have on an individual or community and the reasons why.
- The greater the impact of the incident on those closely effected by it, the greater their expectations will be about the quality of the police response.
- The impact of an incident on an individual may be affected by their circumstances, the emotional, mental or physical impact, and the general feelings of security or vulnerability.
- A minor criminal act may be nothing more than a nuisance to some, but for others it may have a greater significance. This may be due to the vulnerability of the victim, or their experience of a series of similar incidents, or that they feel not enough has been done to prevent it.
- A traumatic event involving bereavement, may effect how a person responds towards the police and their perception of the service received, these events can have a significant impact on a victim or entire community.
- The requirement for FLOs should be identified as soon as practicable; this will aid in communication between the police and victims, their families and close relatives and can deter an escalation in community tension.