



NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

WEST MIDLANDS POLICE

Force Policy Document

POLICY TITLE:

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MEDIA POLICY

POLICY REFERENCE NO:

CC/02

Executive Summary.

This policy provides West Midlands Police officers and staff with guidance on the required relationship and rules of engagement with the media, in all its forms and sets out a framework that identifies the roles and responsibilities of its employees by establishing a clear and consistent approach, based on national guidelines and industry best practice.

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

Intended Policy Audience.

Officers and staff of West Midlands Police and wider public and media

Current Version And Effective Date.	Version 6.0	05/08/2013
Business Area Owner	Corporate Communications Department	
Department Responsible	Corporate Communications Department	
Policy Contact	Sarah Astbury/Joanne Hunt on extension	
Policy Author	Dan Barton Head of Corporate Communications	
Approved By	T/DCC Sharon Rowe	
Policy Initial Implementation Date	20/12/2013	
Review Date	20/12/2015	
Protective Marking	Not Protectively Marked	
Suitable For Publication – Freedom Of Information	Yes	

Supporting Documents

- College of Policing Guidance for Relationships with the Media
- Police Staff Standards of Professional Behaviour Policy
http://intranet2/hq_departments/human_resources/hr_guidance/values/police_staff_standards/policy.aspx
- Code of Conduct for Police Officers
http://intranet2/hq_departments/human_resources2/old_policy_guide_az/conduct_at_work.aspx
- Hospitality and Gifts
- Social Media Policy
http://intranet2/content/B_CorpServ/Support_Services/Social_and_Digital_Media_policy_V1.1.pdf.
- A – Z of Media Engagement
http://intranet2/hq_departments/corporate_communications/operational_comms/az_guide.aspx
- Guidelines for police/press relations at incidents

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 UPTO DATE VERSION OF ANY POLICY OR DIRECTIVE CAN BE FOUND ON THE EQUIP database on the Intranet.

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, officers and staff 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.”

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	5
2.	STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES	5
3.	GOVERNANCE.....	6
3.1	The Deputy Chief Constable.....	6
4.	FORCE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MEDIA.....	6
4.1	Appropriate Working Relationships with the Media	6
4.2	Personal Relationships with the Media.....	6
5.	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	7
5.1	Corporate Communications	7
6.	APPROPRIATE CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA.....	8
6.1	FCC Duty Officer	8
6.2	West Midlands Police Officers and Staff	8
6.2	Staff Associations, Trade Unions and Support Networks	9
7.	RELEASE OF INFORMATION	10
8.0	CONVERSATIONS WITH THE MEDIA.....	10
8.1	Definitions of:	10
8.1	Personal Information.....	11
9.	HOSPITALITY AND THE MEDIA.....	11
10.	SOCIAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA.....	12
11.	CRITICAL AND MAJOR INCIDENTS	12
12.	GUIDELINES FOR POLICE AND PRESS RELATIONS AT INCIDENTS	13
13.	COURT HEARINGS.....	13
13.1	Court Hearing Strategies	13
13.1	Pre-Trial or Pre-Verdict Media Strategies	13
14.	TELEVISION AND EXTENDED NEWS REQUESTS	14
15.	PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DEPARTMENT (PSD) AND INDEPENDENT POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION (IPCC).....	15
16.	A TO Z OF MEDIA ENGAGEMENT	15
17.	TERMS OF REFERENCE	15
18.	EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EQIA)	16
19.	HUMAN RIGHTS	16
20.	FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI)	16
21.	TRAINING	16
22.	PROMOTION / DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING	17
23.	REVIEW.....	17
24.	VERSION HISTORY.	17

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Acronyms

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
CAG	Communications Advisory Group
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
EQIA	Equality Impact Assessment
FCC	Force Contact Centre
FOI	Freedom of Information
GPMS	Government Protection Marking Scheme
IPCC	Independent Police Complaints Commission
LPU	Local Policing Unit
OIC	Officer in the Case
PSD	Professional Standards Department
SIO	Senior Investigating Officer
WMP	West Midlands Police

1. INTRODUCTION

A successful working relationship between the police service and the media is vital in maintaining and enhancing trust and confidence within all our communities.

Police interaction with the media must be guided by a legitimate policing purpose, and must be undertaken in a manner which lives up to the highest standards of impartiality and professionalism, transparency and capable of withstanding scrutiny.

The relationship between WMP (West Midlands Police) officers and staff with the media must be built on the provision of timely, accurate and relevant information supplied with a duty to safeguard the confidentiality and integrity of information of all offenders, victims and witnesses, which must be balanced against a need to be as open and transparent whenever possible.

This policy provides WMP officers and staff with guidance on the required relationship and rules of engagement with the media, in all its forms and sets out a framework that identifies the roles and responsibilities of its employees by establishing a clear and consistent approach, based on national guidelines and industry best practice.

The policy also identifies the roles and responsibilities of its employees and defines appropriate relationships between the police and the media.

The office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is covered by a separate policy.

2. STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

The key guiding principles of WMP are:

- Open and transparent in our communications to ensure we are accountable to those that we serve. We will only withhold information for investigative, operational or legal reasons.
- Always communicate with dignity and respect for individuals and communities ensuring information is managed legally, ethically and professionally.
- Communication will be timely, relevant and accessible, recognising the diverse audiences within the county based on ethnic origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.
- Deliver communication plans and activity in partnership to be more effective and efficient.
- Flexible and responsive to the needs of front-line, operational policing by offering and prioritising support to where it is needed.

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1 The Deputy Chief Constable

The Corporate Communications department falls within the Deputy Chief Constable's portfolio, which has corporate responsibility for the strategic management and oversight of media relations. Any changes to this policy need to be agreed through the relevant organisational framework.

4. FORCE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MEDIA

4.1 Appropriate Working Relationships with the Media

West Midlands Police is committed to open, honest and transparent dealings with the media and actively encourages officers and staff to develop appropriate working relationships, particularly at a local level.

We must not seek to constrain the media but allow them to accurately report news from which the principal beneficiary is the public. Any relationships developed or contact undertaken must be legitimate, professional and above all, in line with the guidance set out in this media policy.

Relationships and / or contact can be developed or take place in a number of ways – face to face meetings, telephone calls, emails or via force social media accounts. This contact **must** be recorded (see Section 7 of this policy) and must not:

- Compromise an individual employee
- Compromise an operation or draw attention to covert tactics in media interviews.
- Compromise the reputation of West Midlands Police
- Undermine public confidence in West Midlands Police
- Be preferential/offer exclusives, unless there are specific operational reasons which would determine otherwise

The force provides information to the media on an equitable basis and does **not** favour one organisation over another with exclusives or special advantages.

However, when a media outlet initiates its own enquiry, the force will respect the exclusivity of that and not divulge it to other media outlets unless they ask questions specifically about the same issue, or if it relates to an on-going incident. If in doubt, please contact the Operational Communications team (dealing specifically with media for the force) for advice.

4.2 Personal Relationships with the Media

It is acknowledged that police officers and staff may have legitimate personal relationships with members of the media outside of the working environment. Personal relationships with the media are governed by other policies including those on gifts, gratuities and hospitality as well as the force Professional Standards policy and codes of conduct (Appendix 1 and 2). Staff are also reminded of the principles of information security that form part of our terms and conditions of employment.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Where a police officer or member of staff has a family or personal relationship with a member of the media outside of their professional policing role, it must be disclosed and recorded as set out within the Vulnerable Association policy (Professional Standards Department).

Police officers and staff who are off duty must behave in a manner which does not discredit the police service nor undermine public confidence. Officers and staff have a clear duty to report to a line manager any corrupt practice or perception of corruption (eg offer of reward for information, any unacceptable level of hospitality, or seeking to engender an inappropriate relationship).

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Corporate Communications

The Corporate Communications department offers professional advice and support. As well as being a specialist resource to engage, inform and meet the considerable demand for information from modern media, it has a specialist role to play in a police operation or investigation, where an effective communications strategy is a critical aspect of success. The department is responsible for;

- The strategic direction of media relations for the force
- Formulating media policies in line with national guidance
- Proactive, reactive and crisis communications service for any issues which have the possibility of either positively or negatively impacting upon the reputation of the force
- High-profile operational media relations including:
 - Pre-planned operations including the execution of warrants
 - High risk missing people
 - Force CID-led investigations
 - Critical incidents
 - Disorder
 - Any operational incident likely to result in significant local, regional, or national interest
 - Any operational incident likely to impact on public confidence or the wider reputation of the force
 - Media relations linked to PSD/IPCC enquiries
 - Significant community tension as a result of an incident or issue.

For clarity, any issues or stories generating from, or relating to Local Policing Units (LPU), which have the potential to lead to regional, national and / or international interest must be brought to the attention of the Operational Communications team as the impact, either positively or negatively, will be one on the reputation of the entire force.

This could lead to a high level of media interest, which can be managed by Operational Communications and also allows for the following to take place;

- For positive stories, awareness to be raised with ACPO and for support to be provided to the LPU in the event of significant media interest;
- For negative stories, for a corporate position to be discussed with ACPO and LPU Commanders and for the force's reputation to be managed corporately.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Where, in these circumstances press briefings are required at LPU level, the Corporate Communications department will lead.

On occasions, it is good practice to challenge inaccuracies or lack of balance. There are a number of ways of doing this and the Operational Communications team will be able to advise how to go about this.

The Operational Communications office is open from 6am – 7pm Monday to Friday, 7.30am to 3.30pm on Saturday and also provides a 24-hour on-call service. The on-call Operational Communications representative can be contacted via the Force Contact Centre (FCC).

6. APPROPRIATE CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA

6.1 FCC Duty Officer

Outside of normal Operational Communications office hours, police officers can contact the FCC Duty Officer to make them aware of any incidents that may require a media response.

The Duty Officer will refer all calls of this nature to the on-call Press Officer who will make a decision, in conjunction with the Officer in the Case (OIC), on what information needs to be released and when and will make any necessary arrangements for any interviews.

6.2 West Midlands Police Officers and Staff

Most day-to-day contact between the force and the media will be facilitated by the Operational Communications team. In these instances, as a matter of course, interactions will be recorded on the Spotlight system which is accessible to the Corporate Communications team.

All officers and staff are actively encouraged to be open and honest in their dealings with the media and to provide timely, relevant and useful information to promote good police work. Each member of the force (officer or police staff member) has authority to speak to the media in appropriate circumstances **providing one or more of the following criteria are met:**

- They are the “officer in charge” of a particular investigation, incident, issue or geographical area and the release of the information is unlikely to require consideration by a more senior colleague;
- They have been nominated to speak on behalf of the “officer in charge”;
- They have another key role in the matter giving them a sufficient overview of the information and its consequences to make an informed judgement about the likely impact of the publicity.
- They have sufficient seniority and authority in their area of work (ie non-operational departments) to speak on behalf of the force.
- On a major criminal enquiry, only the Senior Investigating Officer or member of Corporate Communications is permitted to give the media information. A named ‘uniformed spokesperson’ may be appointed and that may be a Chief Officer, LPU Commander or another designated senior officer.
- They are an ACPO rank officer

It is highly recommended to have a member of the Corporate Communications department present when meeting or speaking with a journalist privately. If this is not

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

possible, police officers or staff must ask the Corporate Communications department for advice in preparation.

All police officers and police staff who have any contact with the media, however brief and in whatever way (ie, phone, email, in person), **must** make a record of it in their pocket notebook, or other appropriate notebook, or diary, detailing;

- The date, time and, if appropriate, location of the contact;
- The name of the reporter and their organisation;
- A brief account of the discussion and any information given.

These records may be asked for at any time by senior colleagues as part of a continual review process into how the force liaises with the media. If a police officer or member of staff shares information in a public forum, such as a public meeting, or through the internet or a social media feed such as Twitter, no additional record is necessary.

APCO rank officers and staff should record all contact with the media where policing matters are discussed. A record of contact should be made to the effect that communication has taken place and the subject matter of that communication. Informal or chance meetings where work-related issues are not discussed need not be recorded.

Advice and guidance can be obtained from the Corporate Communications Department or the Professional Standards Department in relation to appropriate contact/relationships with the media. If the matter being spoken about goes beyond force level and concerns national policing then advice can be obtained from the ACPO Press Office.

All media enquiries regarding corporate issues, force policy or anything which is likely to impact on the reputation of the force must be referred to the Operational Communications team. Providing members of staff behave reasonably and act in good faith and within this policy, the force will support them if they make a genuine mistake in the release of information.

Deliberate and cynical abuse of the media against the interests of the force or its members will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

In circumstances where individuals do not have authority to release information themselves, they must be polite in dealing with enquiries and refer the matter as promptly as possible to the Operational Communications team.

Even when no media enquiries have been received, officers dealing with incidents likely to be of interest to the media must pass details to Operational Communications as quickly as possible so that plans can be made and action taken, if necessary.

6.2 Staff Associations, Trade Unions and Support Networks

Staff associations and the trade union have authority to act independently of the force in dealing with public issues through the media. They are often contacted in relation to issues affecting staff directly such as, tribunals, job losses and pay deals. In general, there are real benefits to be gained by consultation and co-operation between the various groups and the force, in determining publicity objectives and media responses. Whenever practically possible the force, staff associations and trade union will liaise with each other, prior to significant publicity which could detrimentally affect public perception of the force or erode public confidence.

7. RELEASE OF INFORMATION

In general, information must be withheld if it would:

- Contravene the human rights of those involved, without justification;
- Be likely to constitute contempt of court or in any way interfere or jeopardise court proceedings;
- Directly assist in the commission of a crime;
- Identify the complainant/victim in certain sensitive enquiries such as blackmail, rape, or serious sexual offences, although a court may later alter that;
- Identify a juvenile (under the age of 18) charged with or cautioned for an offence, although the age and the offence concerned may be released;
- Pre-empt the verdict of an inquest;
- Pre-empt findings about the causes of an incident which might be investigated by the Health and Safety Inspectorate, Civil Aviation Authority, or other statutory body with investigative authority;
- Endanger life.

8.0 CONVERSATIONS WITH THE MEDIA

8.1 Definitions of:

Below are the types of conversations and general descriptions that officers and staff may encounter:

On the record – means all that is said can be reported, quoted and attributed. Where possible, all conversations should be on this basis and it should always be assumed that a conversation is on the record unless expressly agreed otherwise in advance. Personal information about suspects, witnesses or victims must not be disclosed without assurance that there are no legal restrictions which apply.

Non-reportable briefing – this phrase covers a background briefing which is not to be reported. It can be used to provide further context around an ‘on the record’ statement. The information provided must only be given if it is not detrimental to the investigation if it is reported in the media. Guidance is sometimes used to provide further context around an on the record statement. It must be clear that the information is for guidance/background understanding, and not an attributable quote.

Embargoed briefing – means content of the briefing can be reported, but not until a specific event or time.

If there’s any doubt about whether a reporter intends to use the information given for guidance, colleagues are advised to follow-up phone conversations with and email, repeating the information released and reiterating the basis on which it is provided. This must then be recorded within our Spotlight system.

The ability to converse informally and frankly on an unattributable basis where appropriate is generally uncontroversial. For example, the Chatham House Rule is used by a range of organisations to allow speaker anonymity, encourage openness and information sharing. There will be occasions when it may be appropriate for police officers or staff to speak on these terms to clarify or illustrate a point, for example, to guide media away from an inaccurate story. Any such occasions should be authorised and recorded. The principle that police officers and staff should speak on matters for which they are responsible and where there is a policing purpose for doing so should apply.

8.1 Personal Information

There is nothing to prevent WMP from naming an arrested person where there is a policing purpose for doing so. The media will often identify and name an arrested person without assistance from the police. Individuals themselves have the right to inform others of their arrest.

WMP will balance an individual's right to respect for a private and family life, the rights of publishers to freedom of expression and the rights of defendants to a fair trial. Decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis but, save in clearly identified circumstances, or where legal restrictions apply, the names or identifying details of those who are arrested or suspected of a crime will not be released by WMP to the press or the public. Circumstances when an individual might be named may include a threat to life, the prevention or detection of crime or a matter of public interest and confidence. This approach aims to support consistency and avoid undesirable variance which can confuse media and public.

The decision to release the name of an arrested person will be made by the Head of Corporate Communications (or designated deputy in their absence) and a record made of the reason for releasing the information. WMP will provide non-identifiable information such as the age, gender, offence and a general location of arrest. Personal information about witnesses or victims should not be disclosed without assurance that there are no legal restrictions which apply and should be done in agreement with witnesses or victims. Where no agreement can be reached, there must be a public interest reason for releasing that information.

At the point of charge, the release of information can include the name, address, occupation and charge details for an adult and should be released where no legal restrictions apply. The Crown Prosecution Service has advised that if there are circumstances where an individual is not named at point of charge, that decision should be taken in conjunction with them.

9. HOSPITALITY AND THE MEDIA

A common-sense approach needs to be taken in relation to offering and accepting hospitality from the media. If in doubt, advice must be taken from a senior colleague or from Corporate Communications. The force policy on gifts, gratuities, hospitality and discounts gives detailed guidance to help officers and staff, regardless of rank or grade to understand what is and what is not acceptable.

For example, whilst it would be appropriate to have a cup of tea or coffee as part of a meeting with a media representative, it would not be appropriate to accept a ticket to a sporting event.

All hospitality and gifts received must be entered in the appropriate register which can be found under Force Policies/Part One Orders. (Appendix 4)

10. SOCIAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA

West Midlands Police was one of the first forces to use social media as a tool to communicate directly with our local communities with accounts operating on a local level as well as a force.

The social media accounts are populated with news updates, crime prevention advice and general information as well as details of force and local campaigns. There is regular interaction between account holders and users with members of the public.

The corporate sites are updated by the Corporate Communications department whereas other force accounts are maintained by the account holder having been given guidance and knowledge of the force's social and digital media policy.

Cases or work-related issues must not be disclosed on private accounts via Facebook, LinkedIn or any other social media.

11. CRITICAL AND MAJOR INCIDENTS

The demand for up-to-date information from the public during an emergency will be intense and our colleagues in the media can help us to disseminate information to a wide range of people very quickly.

It is imperative that co-ordinated media liaison arrangements are put into place as quickly as possible, accepting that the media will, in the first instance, base themselves as close to the incident as possible and contact as many agencies as they believe will be able to provide information.

The Corporate Communications Department replicates the force's incident command structure during major incidents with representation from the department at each level of the structure.

The Corporate Communications Dept should be informed immediately of any major incident likely to attract large-scale media interest.

Media officers can take a lot of pressure off police officers at the scene of a major incident, be it a murder or a plane crash. The media officers operate a 24-hour rota and can be contacted out-of-hours by the Duty Officer in the FCC. The force has a contingency plan, the Media and Communications Emergency Plan, which sets out how to respond.

The increasing use of social networking sites, wireless technology and citizen journalism adds to the challenges associated with communicating during a major incident, this is documented in the force's Media and Communications Emergency Plan. (Appendix 6).

12. GUIDELINES FOR POLICE AND PRESS RELATIONS AT INCIDENTS

A frequent problem experienced by reporters has been unnecessary obstruction by officers at the scene of an incident. This can cause bad feeling and contribute to a poor impression of the force.

To help clarify the issue of what is acceptable practice at an incident, the following protocol was drawn up by the force and local editors. It is the responsibility of an editor to censor what is published, not the force. Officers need to be familiar with these guidelines and that journalists carry copies of this agreement with them. (See Appendix 7).

13. COURT HEARINGS

13.1 Court Hearing Strategies

The Corporate Communications department will develop bespoke communications strategies for all high profile or complex trials, in conjunction with the Senior Investigating Officer, LPU Commander and, where necessary, ACPO.

This strategy will take into account the media management of the trial (pre, during and post), key messages that may be required at its conclusion and arrangements for ensuring, with Family Liaison Officers, that families are supported in any contact they have with the media and are made aware of the likely media coverage.

Officers involved in cases which they believe will attract media attention because of their circumstances must ensure that they make contact with Operational Communications team at the earliest possible opportunity prior to the trial starting.

If the media have not been present during a court case, police officers or staff must not attempt to recount the evidence. It is the job of the journalist to cover the case, not to rely on the police to provide a record of who said what. It is, though, good practice to encourage the media to attend at the start of the case and this can be facilitated through Corporate Communications.

13.1 Pre-Trial or Pre-Verdict Media Strategies

ACPO CAG guidance allows for the consideration of embargoed briefings to journalists about forthcoming or current criminal court cases in some circumstances with the overriding principle that nothing is done to prejudice the forthcoming trial.

In consultation with the Corporate Communications Department, consideration must be given to such briefings if it is felt that the level of media interest has been so great that a controlled briefing may help to divert media attention from witnesses, reduce the fear of crime, minimise distress to victims and/or their families, aid accuracy of reporting and add context, or minimise potential damage from ill-informed media speculation.

Use of such briefings must be kept to a minimum and each case will be considered separately and discussed with the SIO, the Head of Corporate Communications and, where appropriate, ACPO.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Where reporting restrictions are in place, or where it is anticipated that they be put in place, no pre-trial briefing can take place unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Where such briefings do take place, a record will be kept by the Corporate Communications Department of all journalists attending. They are reminded at the outset of their obligations under the Contempt of Court Act and any other relevant legislation and, if considered necessary, be asked to sign a document to say they understand. The briefing will be recorded by Corporate Communications to ensure an accurate and auditable account is retained.

The media will be asked to sign an indemnity/background briefing form requiring them not to broadcast or publish information given before any or all of the defendants are convicted, unless the material is introduced as evidence at trial. They will also be advised that any notes or recordings taken might have to be disclosed to the defence.

The rationale for holding the briefing, and the details of the decision maker, will be recorded on the Spotlight system within the Corporate Communications department.

14. TELEVISION AND EXTENDED NEWS REQUESTS

Requests for the force to take part in documentaries, television series, or extended news items must be made in writing to the Corporate Communications department. A member of the department will then consult the relevant officers or staff to assess the request against a number of criteria. Does the proposed documentary/series/news item:

- Address matters which are in the public interest;
- Enhance the public's understanding of police work;
- Reassure communities that police are acting to address matters of public concern;
- Enhance public confidence in West Midlands Police;
- Help in the prevention or detection of crime;
- Present an opportunity to enhance the force's reputation;
- Threaten the force's reputation.

Once assessed, each request will be considered on its individual merits by the Head of Corporate Communications before any that seem worthy of further consideration are passed to the Deputy Chief Constable, or the Chief Officer lead, for a final decision on whether to go ahead.

Approved requests will be managed by an appointed Communications Officer/Manager from the Corporate Communications Department.

The lead Corporate Communications officer will also ensure that all necessary indemnities and agreements are signed and kept as a record, along with any other associated documents as necessary. Where permission is granted, the reasons will be recorded.

Broadcasters will be reminded that all film footage taken during the course of the project is subject to the rules of disclosure (including footage not broadcast) and that, in the event of a prosecution, that footage may be required for the purposes of disclosure.

15. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DEPARTMENT (PSD) AND INDEPENDENT POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION (IPCC)

While most complaints continue to be handled by the police, the IPCC may independently investigate or manage a police investigation into the most serious incidents such as police shootings or deaths in custody.

A media protocol has been established between the police and the IPCC and the aim of this agreement is to ensure that both groups address aspects they are responsible for – the IPCC investigating a death and police offering wider operational detail or community reassurance, for example.

Comments relating to any incident being investigated by the IPCC must only be drafted by Corporate Communications, in liaison with ACPO and the Professional Standards Department.

Media requests in connection with any Professional Standards issues must be dealt with by the Corporate Communications Department in liaison with the Professional Standards Department.

16. A TO Z OF MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

The A-Z document is a comprehensive guide of 'dos and don'ts' for officers and staff for dealing with every eventuality in dealing with the media, from what to do if you receive a bomb alert through to more everyday occurrences such as collisions and ASBOs.

In many cases covered within the A-Z document, media requests will be dealt with by the Corporate Communications Department however it does provide some guidance for officers and staff in the first instance.

17. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Operational Communications – within the Corporate Communications department, this team is the direct link between West Midlands Police and media organisations operating both locally and nationally. The team deals with internal and external communication for major incidents and reputational issues, whilst offering a specialist communications service from our dedicated newsdesk.

Organisational Communications - territorial communications teams are responsible for a wide variety of issues from organising campaigns and initiatives to producing newsletters and literature.

18. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EQIA)

The Policy has been reviewed and drafted 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 WEST MIDLANDS POLICE 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.

19. 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 and values of WEST MIDLANDS POLICE (and its partners), to uphold the law and serve/protect all members of its community (and beyond) from harm, effecting that of:

20. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI)

20.1 Public disclosure of this policy document is determined by the Force Policy Co-ordinator on agreement with its owner. Version 06 of this policy has been GPMS marked as Not Protectively Marked

20.2 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

21. TRAINING

Appropriate officers/members staff will be trained accordingly

22. PROMOTION / DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING

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

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

- News Beat
- Message of the Day
- Intranet
- Briefing to Heads of Dept and Commanders

23. REVIEW

The Policy business owner, Corporate Communications Department, maintain outright ownership of the policy and any other associated documents and in-turn delegate responsibility to the department/unit responsible for its continued monitoring.

The policy should be considered a 'living document' and subject to regular review to reflect upon any Force, Home Office/ACPO, legislative changes, good practice (learning the lessons) both locally and nationally, etc.

A formal review of the Policy document, including that of any other potential impacts i.e. EQIA, will be conducted by the date shown as indicated on the first page.

Any amendments to the Policy will be conducted and evidenced through the Force Policy Co-ordinator and set out within the version control template.

Feedback is always welcomed by that of the author/owner and/or Force Policy Co-ordinator as to the content and layout of the policy document and any potential improvements.



CHIEF CONSTABLE

24. VERSION HISTORY.

Version	Date	Reason for Change	Amended/Agreed by.
Draft version 3.0	24/07/2012	New Force policy for consultation	Sarah Astbury – Force Comms
Draft v 4.0	23/05/13	New College of Policing document	Dan Barton – Head of Corporate Communications
Draft v 5.0	11/06/13	Typographical amendments	Sarah Astbury – Corporate Communications Department
Draft v 6.0	5/8/13	Approved by Command Team	Dan Barton – Head of Corporate Communications
V6	20/12/2013	Added CC signature, review dates, Policy reference no	56408 Couchman