

**DERBYSHIRE CONSTABULARY**  
**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR DERBYSHIRE**



**Media Protocol**

**Date of Agreement:**

**Date of Review:**  
**Media Communications Protocol**

Media communications protocol between the Police and Crime Commissioner (Commissioner) for Derbyshire and the Chief Constable of Derbyshire Constabulary.

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**1. Background**

The Commissioner and Chief Constable recognise that good liaison between their respective communication teams is essential to ensure an effective, co-ordinated and informed approach to media and public relations activity.

To prevent any lessening of public confidence through respective approaches to media activity, it is necessary to consider the key roles of the respective parties.

It is also necessary to acknowledge that these are hitherto untested roles, without previous guidance or best practice to follow. Therefore, it is sensible to expect a necessary degree of flexibility in relation to this protocol and put in place measures to facilitate this.

**The Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Commissioner has a wide range of responsibilities, which include local community safety issues and crime reduction as well as policing. To achieve this, they will commission services from organisations such as community safety partnerships and criminal justice agencies.

Other key duties include:

- Setting the budget for policing in Derbyshire and the amount of council tax local people pay towards policing;
- Setting policing priorities for Derbyshire;
- Holding the Chief Constable to account for performance;
- Working to ensure local voices are heard;
- Preparing the Police and Crime Plan;
- Appointing (and, if required, dismissing) the Chief Constable;
- Publishing an annual report to show results;
- Ensuring victims and the most vulnerable individuals are consulted;
- Addressing national issues as well as local concerns;
- Cooperating with partners to ensure an efficient and effective Criminal Justice System;
- Ensuring the Constabulary delivers value for money.

## **The Chief Constable**

The Chief Constable and Commissioner will work closely together and the Commissioner will not restrict the operational independence of the Chief Constable.

The Chief Constable's responsibilities include:

- Direction and control over the Constabulary's officers and staff;
- Day to day responsibility for operational policing in the county;
- Supporting the Commissioner in the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan;
- Tackling national threats such as terrorism, public disorder, cyber-incidents and organised crime;
- Managing complaints against the Constabulary, officers and staff except the Chief Constable;
- Day to day responsibility for the financial management of the Constabulary;
- Reviewing opportunities to work with other police forces and organisations.

## **2. Purpose**

This protocol is intended to:

- ensure effectiveness, transparency, clarity and timeliness of action when matters concerning one or both parties are, or are deemed likely to be, of public/press interest.
- make clear the areas of responsibility and associated working practices across both parties to enable a coherent and informed response to public/media interest.
- ensure a good working relationship between the two parties, with particular emphasis on the respective communications leads.
- maximise the opportunity to promote and enhance awareness of shared messages on performance, crime reduction, and community reassurance.
- minimise the potential for conflicting or contradictory messages to be given to the public due to lack of communication between the two organisations.

It does not under any circumstances, seek to place restrictions on, or influence the message of, either party.

## **3. Principles**

It is important to recognise that the Commissioner and Chief Constable are independent of each other and have their own distinct functions, services and priorities. The former, in particular, will reasonably seek to establish a specific public profile via their media communications.

The Commissioner has a statutory duty and electoral mandate to hold the Chief Constable to account on behalf of the public and undertake an important scrutiny function.

It is accepted that a co-ordinated approach, wherever possible, with regards to media communications will benefit both organisations in achieving the shared objectives of promoting and enhancing public safety.

Working together – and being seen to work together – can enhance the quality, consistency and reliability of information released to the media and in so doing the reputation of each organisation.

There will be occasions when each organisation will have different views and direction or when a statement or message contains potentially conflicting information. In such circumstances both communications teams will keep each other informed in advance, if possible, to allow preparation of a balancing comment or response.

Similarly, on those occasions when comments are made to the press that cause surprise in one or both organisations, it is agreed that the media representatives will keep each other informed of both comment and response in a timely fashion.

It is acknowledged that the unforeseen does happen and equally upon occasion, the best laid plans go awry. The aim will always be to maintain a quality information service to the public by working together in a constructive and timely manner

The public, and the media, have a right to information about what each organisation does, a right extended by the Freedom of Information Act.

#### **4. Philosophy**

The Commissioner is to represent the public and to hold the Chief Constable to account for the totality of policing in the county. As such the Commissioner will be required to review and on occasions challenge the Constabulary's on such matters as, use of resources and performance delivery.

Fundamentally the relationship between the Commissioner and the Chief Constable is expected to be one of mutual support as both parties share the same long-term goals of cutting crime and improving the safety of the public.

There will be opportunities for proactive, confidence-raising PR activity to be co-ordinated across the parties in order to improve public confidence and provide reassurance.

It is accepted that the key areas of media/PR activity for the Commissioner will be promoting issues relating to priorities, performance, budget accountability and matters relating to the overall effectiveness and the efficiency of the Constabulary.

One of the prime functions of the Commissioner's PR activity will be to support and promote any decisions that seek to deliver local community priorities and to communicate the objectives and success of the Police and Crime Plan, against which the Commissioner will be judged by the electorate.

The Constabulary is more likely to focus its efforts on operational matters, appeals and feedback and responding to serious incidents including homicide, firearms incidents and serious breaches of public order. In addition is the provision of appropriate support to Divisional Command Teams and fielding enquiries from journalists on subjects that could be deemed controversial or sensitive.

It is anticipated that on occasion, issues will surface which combine elements of performance and operational activity, raising wider questions of effectiveness and efficiency. In that event discussions will take place as required between the Commissioner's communications team and the Constabulary's Media Department to agree the appropriate strategy and to agree which department will be the main press contact from where any enquiries will be handled.

Agreement will also be reached at this stage over the content of information to be issued and who will undertake its dispatch and follow-up. Wherever practicable, associated press releases should be shared with each party prior to despatch – at the very least a copy should be lodged immediately with the other department for information purposes. Similarly, a log should be kept of any other information given out verbally in response to individual enquiries and a copy lodged with all relevant parties to ensure that neither looks ill informed. Should a press conference be required the format of this will similarly be a matter for agreement between the two parties.

## **5. Scope**

All varieties of media communications activity from traditional printed and broadcast vehicles, including interviews and opinion pieces, to social and new media, can have an impact in terms of reputation and the public's feelings of safety. The full range of channels and techniques will need to be assessed for suitability against any given communication challenge.

This protocol is intended to cover both proactive and reactive media communications activity by the Commissioner and the Chief Constable and defines media communications as:

- Press releases and written statements given to the print and broadcast media
- Interviews and opinion pieces given to the print and broadcast media
- Briefings, interviews, verbal statements and press conferences
- Publicity material, including posters, brochures, leaflets, newsletters and reports
- Media information, blogs and commentary released across each organisation's social media websites
- Broadcast interviews, documentaries and public interest programmes
- Information published on each organisation's website

## **6. Objectives**

- To enable the selection and implementation of effective media/PR activity in support of the responsibilities of the Commissioner and the Chief Constable and where appropriate, to facilitate a joint approach to managing these activities
- To enhance the quality, accuracy, transparency and timeliness of public information
- To promote and enhance awareness of shared messages on performance, crime reduction and community reassurance
- To promote a positive image of the Commissioner and Chief Constable, increasing public confidence in policing and community safety
- To promote a close working relationship between the Commissioner and Chief Constable, sharing information on matters that have a significant impact on the image or reputation of either organisation
- To minimise the possibility of conflicting messages being issued due to lack of advance communication between the parties

- To ensure that where there are matters of sensitivity both parties are aware of any conflicting or potentially damaging views
- To increase dialogue between the two organisations at a media communications level.

## 7. Operation

Specific operational commitments required to enable the effective implementation of the media/PR activity discussed in this protocol are:

- Communications professionals in each organisation shall undertake to inform each other at the earliest opportunity of likely or actual relevant media communications activity, as defined in this protocol
- Communications professionals in each organisation shall manage the activity in the most appropriate way, being mindful of issues of confidentiality. This could include:
  - sharing key messages or deciding on a joint statement, briefing or press conference
  - an agreement that one organisation is the lead partner
  - separate activity reflecting that one organisation may disagree with the other's position or proposed course of action
- Material issued by either party, which relates to the activities or work of the other party, will be shared, in advance where possible, with the relevant communications team
- Material issued by both parties will be placed on their respective websites, and shared electronically with a named individual in the respective communications teams
- All press releases must be copied to each media office at the time of dispatch, by e-mail
- Drafts of direct marketing, social media articles/commentary and other information material or strategies will be exchanged where appropriate. Consultation, where necessary, regarding content will take place in a timely fashion
- An archive of material issued will be maintained
- A record of press enquiries, where the enquiries potentially impinge on the activity of the other party, will be kept and shared in a timely fashion
- Communications professionals in each organisation shall meet regularly to discuss strategies to achieve the long-term aim of reassuring the public, to develop joint key messages and to discuss challenges facing the parties, thereby ensuring early consideration of any issues
- In instances of sensitive, or conflicting, positions communications professionals representing each organisation undertake to keep each other informed on a 'no surprises' basis. Any confidentiality or embargo relating to this information will naturally be upheld
- Communications professionals in both organisations agree to respond to requests for information or other support in a timely fashion, with the minimum response being an acknowledgment of any request within one working day

- Contact details will be provided for requirements outside normal working hours

In the event of an unresolved difference of opinion on issues of strategy, activity or responsibility this will be referred to the Commissioner (or Deputy Commissioner) and the Deputy Chief Constable (or nominee) for discussion and resolution.

## **8. Review**

The protocol should be reviewed six months after its implementation date.

## **9. Key Contacts**

Communications Lead:

- Name Sallie Blaire
- Better Times
- Tel 01283 821012
- Mobile 07702 541401
- Email [sal@bettertimes.co.uk](mailto:sal@bettertimes.co.uk)

Chief Executive:

- Name Helen Boffy
- Tel 01773 733779
- Email [helen.boffy.4808@derbyshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:helen.boffy.4808@derbyshire.pnn.police.uk)

Police and Crime Commissioner for Derbyshire.

- Name Alan Charles
- Tel 0300 122 6000
- Email [pccoffice@derbyshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:pccoffice@derbyshire.pnn.police.uk)

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Derbyshire

- Name OPCC
- Tel 0300 122 6000
- Email [pccoffice@derbyshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:pccoffice@derbyshire.pnn.police.uk)

### Derbyshire Constabulary

Communications Lead:

- Jonathan Leach, Head of Corporate Communications
- 01773 573180
- [pressoffice@derbyshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:pressoffice@derbyshire.pnn.police.uk)

Chief Officer Lead:

- Name DCC Alan Goodwin
- Tel 01773 572679
- Email [Beverley.penney.5692@derbyshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Beverley.penney.5692@derbyshire.pnn.police.uk)

**Signed Police and Crime Commissioner for Derbyshire**

Signature

Print

Date

**Signed Chief Constable of Derbyshire Constabulary**

Signature

Print

Date