

 WARWICKSHIRE POLICE		POLICY
Security Classification	OFFICIAL	
Disclosable under Freedom of Information Act 2000	Yes	

POLICY TITLE	Media Engagement Policy
REFERENCE NUMBER	WP049
Version	2.0

POLICY OWNERSHIP	
DIRECTORATE	ENABLING SERVICES
BUSINESS AREA	CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION DATE	October 2024
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	October 2027
RISK RATING	LOW
EQUALITY ANALYSIS	MEDIUM

Warwickshire Police welcomes comments and suggestions from the public and staff about the contents and implementation of this policy. Please e-mail policiesandprocedures@warwickshire.police.uk

1.0 POLICY OUTLINE

- 1.1 This policy details how the force aims to engage with media representatives and outlets effectively as part of the broader strategic communications strategy. It sets out the information and co-operation the media can expect from Warwickshire Police. It also provides the workforce with guidance on best practice in managing relationships with the media.
- 1.2 The policy is aligned with the [Authorised Professional Practice \(APP\) on Media Relations from the College of Policing](#). It should also be read alongside:
- [College of Policing Code of Ethics for Policing \(updated January 2024\)](#)
 - [Warwickshire Police strategic priorities as set out in our Vision and Values](#).
 - Warwickshire Police [Social Media and Mobile Devices Policy](#).
 - Publicly-recorded chief officer contact with the media – published on the Warwickshire Police website in accordance with the APP.
 - British media law, including the Contempt of Court Act and Defamation Act.
 - Warwickshire Police Major Incident Communications Plan (available internally)
 - [APComm Documentaries guidance](#) (note that this is on a password-protected website; Corp Comms has access)
- 1.3 Also aligned with the APP and policies listed at 1.2, this policy sets out the criteria that the force applies to requests from production companies for tv, film or online documentaries to feature Warwickshire Police.

2.0 PURPOSE OF POLICY

- 2.1 This policy sets out how Warwickshire Police will engage with the media in a proactive, open and transparent way as part of the force's overall communications strategy.
- 2.2 It outlines our ambition to strike a balance between proactive and reactive engagement with media and how we measure and audit that engagement as part of our broader communications.
- 2.3 Through this policy, the force ensures that interactions and relationships with media representatives are built on integrity, professionalism and transparency, and withstand appropriate scrutiny.

3.0 APPROACH TO ENGAGING WITH THE MEDIA

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- 3.1 The force uses a range of communication channels to engage with audiences to build trust and confidence in policing. We use a proactive, integrated, multi-channel approach across paid, earned, shared and owned (PESO), ensuring channel choice is primarily determined by audience, with priority given to digital communication. Other influential factors include content strategy, cost efficiency and measurability. We apply our time and resources to the channels that will give us the greatest impact and operational benefit. This can mean prioritising the channel that enables us to reach the most people, or sometimes it can mean focusing on channels that may have smaller but very specific audiences, e.g. minority ethnic communities, students or certain age groups.
- 3.2 One channel within our overall framework is media. We recognise that traditional media - publicly-accessible mass broadcasting platforms such as newspapers, newspaper websites, radio and TV - represent a respected and established source of information and news for some of our communities. We also recognise the role of media in influencing and representing public opinion, and in holding policing to account.
- 3.3 We value all local, regional, national and specialist media organisations as key stakeholders and seek to maintain a positive working relationship with media as we do with all audiences and across all channels.
- 3.4 Force media engagement is led by the Corporate Communications team through the team's role as the expert public relations function within the force. With guidance and support as appropriate from the Corporate Communications team, officers and staff are encouraged to engage positively with media as they would any members of the public. All members of the workforce are expected to follow force guidelines on communications and policy requirements as set out here.

PROACTIVE MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

- 3.5 The force proactively shares content with media, where appropriate, including stories, data and information published on force-owned channels.
- 3.6 Some crimes are solved as a result of information from the public who have seen crime prevention guidance and understand where to report concerns, or who have seen appeals for information. We therefore engage with media where this can support public engagement to prevent and detect crime and to gather intelligence and information on offenders and witnesses.

FORUMS AND BRIEFINGS

- 3.7 Where appropriate, we provide forums for journalists/editors to engage with senior officers and investigating officers.
- 3.8 We may facilitate pre-trial or pre-verdict media briefings ahead of significant, sensitive or complex criminal cases. These will be organised jointly by Warwickshire Police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). All pre-trial briefing material is disclosable to the defence.

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RIDEALONGS

- 3.9 Where appropriate, we invite accredited media to accompany officers on operations and investigations ('ridealongs'). As set out in the College of Policing APP, this can help inform the public about police work and demonstrates our commitment to openness and transparency. Media representatives may be asked to sign an indemnity agreement prior to access to any police operation.

INTERVIEWS AND PROGRAMMES

- 3.10 When required as part of communications strategy or requested by the media and deemed appropriate, officers/staff are expected to facilitate media interviews. The Corporate Communications team will support this process, and the interviewee should provide feedback on the interview to Corporate Communications on completion.
- 3.11 The force will consider any documentary or news programme bids made by media outlets in accordance with strategic or operational priorities. Bids should be submitted to news@warwickshire.police.uk. See section (10) for more information.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

- 3.12 We ask journalists to check content/updates on the Warwickshire Police website and social media channels before making a specific enquiry.
- 3.13 The force responds to media enquiries in accordance with the seriousness of the crime and threat, risk and harm to the public. For high priority topics, we aim to provide a response within one working day, and within a maximum of three days for other enquiries. This is subject to liaison with the relevant Senior Investigating Officer (SIO).

Examples of high priority enquiries are:

- Murder, stranger rape, terrorism offences, attempted murder, sexual assault, arson with intent to endanger life
- Incidents formally classified as 'Major Incidents'
- Ongoing kidnap/abduction investigations where there is no media blackout
- Fatal/serious road traffic collisions
- Assault

Examples of general enquiries are:

- Burglary
- Robbery
- Arson where there is no intent to endanger life

- Other sexual offences
- Historic fatal road traffic collisions
- Drugs offences
- Other offences such as vehicle crime, theft and criminal damage

3.14 To support our commitment to improving public trust and confidence, we will respond only to enquiries from accredited journalists working for recognised media outlets and/or adhering to a recognised code of conduct and ethics, such as the Independent Press Standards Organisation.

4.0 POSITIVE ACTION

4.1 As part of the force's broader communications approach, we are committed to identify the needs of different audiences and their communications preferences in order to inform effective engagement. This may inform engagement with media representatives/routes for seldom heard groups and potentially for groups with protected characteristics to support improved engagement with particular audiences.

5.0 IDENTIFICATION

5.1 We do not confirm or deny identities of suspects or those arrested either proactively or in response to media enquiries. We only confirm identities of those who have been charged. We also only confirm the identity of murder victims when they have been formally identified. All identification is subject to risk assessment.

6.0 PUBLISHING PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO FOOTAGE

6.1 Where there is a policing purpose, in line with APP guidelines and subject to risk assessment and consultation with the OIC, the force publishes photos and video footage as part of communications activity. These include photos of wanted individuals, custody photos on conviction, CCTV and images/video used in court proceedings. These can be used by media.

7.0 MEDIA ENGAGEMENT REPORTING

7.1 The Corporate Communications team uses a media database for a comprehensive and centralised record of force media engagement. Through this database, we record media enquiries, media organisations and contacts and enquiry subjects.

7.2 This data enables the force to understand media demand and engagement. The Corporate Communications team uses this data to inform broader communications evaluation and planning.

8.0 OUT OF HOURS CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS PROVISION

- 8.1 Office hours for the Corporate Communications team are 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Urgent messages out of office hours will be published on the force website and other appropriate communications channels in accordance with operational priorities as listed at 3.13.
- 8.2 Officers and staff are able to contact the team for urgent and critical enquiries, including those relating to the media, using on-call communications provision listed on the [on call rota intranet page](#). The team is not usually available to the media out of office hours but would liaise with the OCC in specific instances where this changes.

9.0 TOOLS AND TRAINING

- 9.1 The Corporate Communications team provides professional support and guidance to members of the force to enable effective communications across force engagement channels. This includes general communications training, social media training, specialist media training and provision of prevention and awareness assets for teams to use in public engagement, including with the media.

10.0 MEDIA COMPLAINTS

Complaints from the media are considered in accordance with the force complaints procedure published on the force website at [Complaints | Warwickshire Police](#). Complaints may be made directly to the team via news@warwickshire.police.uk or via the [online complaints form](#), which is received by the Professional Standards Department (PSD) and referred to the team for consideration.

11.0 DOCUMENTARY REQUESTS

- 11.1 The Corporate Communications team considers all documentary requests against a consistent criteria, and makes informed recommendations to Chief Officers to make the decision on whether Warwickshire should participate.
- 11.2 In making a recommendation to Chief Officers on whether the force should participate, the Corporate Communications team will consider:
- level of remuneration and charging applied for access by production companies to reflect in-house support and expenses incurred for documentary production
 - access requirements and implications, including but not limited to support required from the Corporate Communications team and operational policing teams.
 - expectations for documentary requestors to support assessment of impact and return on investment for the force.
 - views of stakeholders such as blue light partners, social services, charities

11.3 The force criteria to support decision-making on documentary requests is aligned with the Association of Police Communicators (APCOMM) Documentary Working Group Report published on the APCOMM members portal in 2023:

- Does the proposal support Warwickshire Police priorities and values?
- Will it be a source of pride for our people?
- Will it benefit recruitment?
- Will it benefit and resonate with our communities, including harder to reach audiences, and improve their trust and confidence in the force?
- Will it benefit UK policing in general?
- What policing issue does it cover and what are the implications for Warwickshire and other forces?
- Anticipated filming timeline, broadcast timing, audience demographics, channel, viewing figures, repeat or resaleable broadcasts.
- Are other organisations involved/already approached?
- Anticipated resourcing requirements for Corporate Communications team and other supporting functions.
- Previous experience or references available.
- What evaluation insights are there?

11.4 In line with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) National Policing Guidelines on Charging for Police Services and APCOMM recommendations 2023, the force will forge terms of access with any documentary-maker with whom we have agreed to engage, setting out jointly the rights and conditions for filming, including timeframes, safety, consent, termination, charging rates and expenses, filming logs, vetting requirements, ownership of rights, editorial control, liability, indemnity, interviews, disclosure, evidential value, exceptions, access to materials, what the producer is intending to produce, metrics and timeframe for evaluation and costs.

12.0 IMPLICATIONS OF THE POLICY

In complying with the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) from the College of Policing this takes into consideration and manages:

- a. The Management of Police Information;
- b. Risks and Health and Safety considerations;
- c. Human Rights, Equality, Data Protection and Freedom of Information considerations, and
- d. Legal considerations

13.0 CONSULTATION

The Authorised Professional Practice (APP) on Media Relations from the College of Policing was introduced following a consultation process, and the force consulted other UK police forces on media engagement policy and strategy as part of amendments made in February 2024 and in September 2024.

14.0 DOCUMENT HISTORY

The history and rationale for change to policy will be recorded using the below chart:

Date	Author / Reviewer	Amendment(s) & Rationale	Approval / Adoption
May 2013	Kate Quilley, Head of Corporate Communications	Amendment to Warwickshire's Media Communications Policy and implementation of a policy for West Mercia Police.	JNCC 13/09/2013
October 2016	Kate Quilley, Head of Corporate Communications	Minor amends to update key national guidance changes	Nov 2016
December 2020	Mike Fox, Senior Corporate Communications Manager	Minor amends to reflect end of alliance and confirmation of introduction of national guidance	24/02/2021
March 2024	Laura Thompson, Deputy Head, Corporate Communications	Amendments to include documentary requests and access agreements, plus to cover proactive media engagement, media training and media engagement tracking.	
September 2024	Laura Thompson, Deputy Head, Corporate Communications	Amendments to contextualise as part of broader force communications approach in line with Engagement Strategy and force priorities. And to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment and add a section on positive action accordingly.	October 2024

15.0 PROCEDURE

- 15.1 All members of Warwickshire Police will interact and engage with the media as detailed within the Engagement and Communications section of Authorised Professional Practice (APP).
- 15.2 Supporting documents to help our workforce with positive media engagement and adhering to this policy are available on the [Corporate Communications](#) intranet portal.
- 15.3 This policy should be read alongside the [Social Media and Mobile Devices Policy and Procedure](#) and the [Code of Ethics](#).