



# Media service-level statement

## Overview

This is our service-level statement (SLS) that sets out the service Warwickshire Police will provide to the media.

Our Corporate Communications team is required to cover the spectrum of corporate communications responsibilities for the force and prioritises work accordingly.

We use our resources in a way that supports a policing purpose or builds public confidence in the police and is open and transparent.

The Corporate Communications team is changing the way that it works to deliver more proactive work for the force. To do that we need to refine our processes and the enquiries that we deal with.

We recognise the media's role in holding the police to account and that like us, the media works in the interest of the public and based on public interest.

Our media service-level agreement is informed by a number of sources, including:

- College of Policing authorised professional practice (APP) for media relations.
- Other codes of practice, including those that protect victims, personal data and operationally sensitive information.
- Warwickshire Police's strategic priorities.
- British media law, including the Contempt of Court Act and Defamation Act.
- It is also based on force-agreed objectives for how we prioritise our service.

[Part 1](#) explains how we provide a service to the media, how we work, and the ways journalists can gather information under our SLS.

[Part 2](#) provides a quick reference about different types of enquiries under our SLS.

This statement will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Head of Communications.



## **Part 1**

This section explains how and when to submit media enquiries, how we work and the service we offer the media.

### **What is a media enquiry?**

An enquiry from a trained, professional journalist who is working on behalf of a recognised media outlet. As a recognised media outlet, the organisation you work for will be regulated by a recognised code of ethics for print, online or broadcast media.

### **How do I submit a media enquiry?**

Before submitting an enquiry, you should check Warwickshire Police's news channels by visiting the news section of our [website](#) or our [social media channels](#).

Please note that if the information you are enquiring about is already on our website the information that is published is everything that is available at that point in time and you will not receive a response, so it's worth checking this beforehand.

In addition to these, a few of our policing teams also choose to keep the public updated on topics that are of interest to the public or that reflect their lives as police officers. Officers use social media to engage with the public positively. We will not respond to requests for information on routine incidents, and social media is not used for reporting crimes; we will only look into critical or force-priority incidents, such as indictable-only offences.

Our main channels are regularly updated with items of media interest, so if we have anything to say about a police incident or a criminal case, it is likely to be on there already. If not, you can email us on [news@warwickshire.police.uk](mailto:news@warwickshire.police.uk).

### **Will you respond to all media enquiries?**

This SLS sets out what sort of enquiries we will respond to, what information your enquiry should contain and what our response is likely to consist of.

Please note that we receive many media enquiries per month, from local, regional and national media, and we won't respond to enquiries which do not meet the terms of this SLS.

### **What will happen to my media enquiry?**

Your media enquiry will be dealt with by the Corporate Communications team, which is open between the hours of 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

Where a response is required, we aim to provide a response within one working day, subject to officer availability/shift patterns. We will take genuine deadlines into consideration.



## **How do I submit a media enquiry outside these hours?**

Outside these hours, if your media enquiry is urgent, call 101 and speak to our Force Control Room (FCR). Introduce yourself and ask to speak to the Duty Inspector. If appropriate, the message will be relayed to the on-call media officer.

Please note that the FCR Inspectors and managers have responsibility across the whole force area and will need to prioritise your enquiry against other ongoing work.

When an on-call corporate communications officer is deployed, they will publish information on the police website and/or social media channels. Journalists are advised to check these channels.

The communications officers are on call for the force and critical incidents only.

Alternatively, you can email your enquiry to [news@warwickshire.police.uk](mailto:news@warwickshire.police.uk) and it will be picked up as soon as possible or latest, the next working day. Unless it is a critical incident, please note that the news inbox is not usually monitored out of hours and that you should not expect a response outside office hours as you would during office hours.

## **What information should I include in my enquiry?**

The police systems that the Corporate Communications team uses to search for information are not predominantly set up for media enquiries and searches are not intuitive.

Providing an incident number or crime reference is preferable. These are supplied to victims of crime and everyone who reports incidents.

Incidents are listed by time and street. If you need to enquire about an incident that is not on our website and/or without an incident or crime reference number, we will need to know:

- The town, city, or village it happened in/near.
- The road or street it occurred on.
- An approximate time, to within one hour.
- A rough description of the type of incident.
- Where you obtained the information (if this is possible to share).

Providing as much information as possible helps to find an answer to your query quickly and efficiently.

We cannot provide or search for information about [police helicopter](#) deployments without the information above, as the air support service uses different systems which we are not able to search. National Police Air Service (NPAS) should be able to provide details of an incident and a Warwickshire Police incident number.



## **I want more information. Will you provide it?**

The media should work on the assumption that information published by Warwickshire Police Corporate Communications team reflects all the information available to the media. If we haven't published it, we are not in a position to share that information. This includes photographs. We will therefore not respond to these enquiries.

We will not provide information in relation to routine social media posts by officers unless, as previously stated, of a critical or force priority nature. Communications officers will only give more details if the posts relate to an incident of this nature.

## **Queries**

If you wish to report police involvement in public meetings, please be aware that the Corporate Communications team cannot clarify or expand on comments – reporting should be taken from the meeting itself or the supporting documentation.

## **How do I get updates about an incident or case?**

Updates are provided proactively and regularly on our website and/or on our social media channels when there is a policing purpose in doing so. Please make sure you check our channels in the first instance.

During live incidents, our focus will be on providing regular updates on our channels. Responding to individual media enquiries slows this process down and diverts our resources. So please monitor our website and social media channels for updates – we are unlikely to be able to respond to individual enquiries during a live incident.

For incidents that have moved to an investigative stage, we will also endeavour to keep the media updated by using our website and other channels. This includes arrests, criminal charges, initial court appearance and other key developments. Please check our website regularly, as this is our primary channel for these updates.

If a reasonable amount of time has passed since the last update, the Corporate Communications team may be able to source an update for the media, which we may also publish on our website.

Updates about court appearances should be directed to the courts.

For updates about specific kinds of incidents, such as those involving fatalities, please see [Part 2](#).



## **What systems do you have in place to ensure important information is shared with the media and public?**

We have numerous systems in place that enable us to share information that supports a policing purpose. This information is regularly added to our website and social media channels. Much of this information is expanded on in [Part 2](#).

It includes:

- Regularly updated information about significant police incidents, operations and investigations in Warwickshire.
- Justice outcomes, including court results.
- Wanted and missing people appeals.
- Information about serious/fatal collisions and major disruption to our road network.
- Special policing activities and campaigns covering Warwickshire Police's various policing priority areas.
- Corporate performance and governance systems, many of which are explained on our website.

## **Part 2**

This section outlines how our service-level agreement is applied to media enquiries. It is presented in alphabetical order for quick reference.

### **Abduction/kidnapping**

In cases of abduction or kidnapping where a life is genuinely thought to be at risk, the media may be asked to impose a news blackout. However, this will only be considered as a last resort and where necessary. The media will be asked not to report the incident if it is likely to make the release of the hostage more difficult. Any request for a news blackout must be endorsed by a senior officer.

### **Advice given by officers**

Officers may sometimes resolve an incident or complaint by giving 'words of advice' to a member of the public instead of taking formal action. In such cases, it may be possible to confirm this outcome depending on how the information is recorded. No elaboration can be provided on the details of that advice.

### **Air support/air ambulance**

Please refer to [Police helicopter](#).



## **Amounts of cash stolen**

Specific details of cash or securities stolen in raids on banks, building societies and post offices will not be confirmed. This is for security reasons. Quantities of cash will only be described as small/large, or simply 'a quantity of cash'.

## **Arrests and charges**

We publish information about arrests and charges on our website and other channels as part of the information we routinely share about an incident or investigation. If an arrest has been made or a person has been charged, we will clearly state this in the relevant web copy. Journalists are advised to check these channels regularly.

Please see [Part 1: How do I get updates about an incident or case?](#) and [Part 2: Naming a suspect/defendant due at court](#) for further information.

## **Arsons and fires**

Media enquiries about fires should initially be directed to the relevant fire service. If the fire service confirms the incident is being investigated as a suspected arson, Warwickshire Police may publish details about the incident.

Details of [lower-level incidents](#) are shared as and when appropriate. Media enquiries about these lower-level incidents will not be responded to, as information is provided proactively where there is a policing purpose.

No information will be released about the cause of a fire until this has been established as a criminal investigation.

## **Businesses**

Businesses may be routinely identified as part of police investigations, for example as part of an appeal for witnesses. In some cases, operational policing may prevent businesses being identified – for example where it could impact upon an investigation. The need to protect private information may also prevent businesses being identified, e.g. in circumstances where identifying a business might indirectly identify a suspect. Warwickshire Police will publish this information proactively where it supports a policing purpose.

## **Cautioning**

Warwickshire Police does not release the identity of anyone cautioned. If asked about a specific case, the force can confirm the fact that a person was cautioned.



## **Collisions and major traffic disruption**

We are not able to respond to media enquiries about minor collisions unless there has been a significant impact on local infrastructure or communities, and only if the information requested is part of a live or ongoing incident. If there is a policing purpose, such as to appeal for witnesses or to notify motorists of major disruption, the police have systems in place to identify this and we will share this information proactively on our channels.

Information relating to serious and fatal collisions will be published on our website and social media channels.

We are not in position to update on roads closures unless there is a policing purpose. We would signpost to the local council or route planners.

## **Complaints against the police**

Information may be provided in response to media enquiries about complaints against the police. However, it may not be appropriate to publicise full details of the incident, as this may unduly affect the outcome of an investigation.

## **Condition checks**

Warwickshire Police do not routinely carry out condition checks and it is only in very rare circumstances, where there is a policing purpose, that this information would be sought and released. If this information is available, it will be published proactively online, by way of update or addition. The media therefore do not need to ask for this and are advised instead to monitor our channels.

Warwickshire Police is not able to carry out condition checks at the request of the media. These enquiries need to be directed to the relevant hospital.

## **Deaths and bereaved families**

We will release the identity of people who have died only where there is an operational policing purpose in doing so.

In some circumstances we may identify people who have died in suspicious circumstances, providing it supports a policing purpose. This will be done following completion of the proper identification procedures, and consultation with the deceased's next of kin. We will publish this information proactively, using our channels, and the media should monitor these rather than approaching the Corporate Communications team.

We will not proactively publish the identities of those who have died in road traffic collision, unless there is a specific request from an officer to do so. We may also publish if there is a request from the family of the person who has died.



We do not routinely identify people who have died in non-suspicious circumstances. This includes suspected suicides, medical episodes and most collisions. Identity queries should ordinarily be directed to the relevant coroners' offices.

Family tributes or photographs will be provided proactively in line with the wishes of a bereaved family and on our channels.

## **Deaths in police custody**

Following a death in police custody an initial statement will be released on our channels. It will normally include:

- Confirmation that a death has occurred.
- Details of the deceased, subject to next of kin having been informed.
- Details of the incident, in so far as possible in line with ongoing investigations.
- Confirmation that the matter has been referred to the IOPC.

## **Firearms officers**

Firearms officers respond to all types of calls, not just firearms jobs. We will not respond to speculative enquiries about firearms officers in a certain location. They are part of operational business across Warwickshire.

## **Identifying people and businesses**

Please see [‘deaths and bereaved families’](#), [‘deaths in police custody’](#), [‘businesses’](#), [‘naming suspects/defendants due in court’](#), [‘wanted people’](#) and [‘victims and witnesses’](#).

## **Incidents: lower-level**

Warwickshire Police Corporate Communications supports officers investigating lower-level crimes including theft and burglary, lower-level assaults or disturbances, anti-social behaviour and criminal damage.

Despite being on the lower end of the criminal scale, it is important that these offences are thoroughly investigated, and information is published if it supports a policing purpose. So, during every investigation of this nature, an officer considers whether a local appeal is necessary to support a police investigation, prevent crime or reassure the public. This information is then provided proactively on our channels.

## **Incidents: higher-level**

A higher-level incident may include (but is not limited to) a serious assault or sexual assault, murder or attempted murder, a siege, high-value theft, high-level drugs activity, high-value fraud, and other matters that are typically dealt with as indictable offences. Warwickshire Police will usually provide details of incidents proactively on its channels, to support a



policing purpose. This will typically include details of when an incident happened, where it happened, the type of incident, arrests and other actions taken, injuries if applicable, and appeal information. The media are encouraged to check our channels before making enquiries. Please see [Part 1: What information should I include in my enquiry?](#) for further information.

**See also [major incidents](#) (below).**

## **Injuries**

When releasing details of an incident involving injuries, Warwickshire Police will try to give an indication of the level of injury if this information is available. This will be done proactively so we would encourage the media to use our channels to get this information – if we haven't published this information, the media should work on the premise that it is not available from Warwickshire Police. Specific details that could identify a person, or about injuries, treatment received, or hospitals attended will not be provided by police, and should be directed to the appropriate medical organisation.

## **Major incidents**

'Major incident' is a specific categorisation of incident – not every big police incident is a major incident.

If a major incident is declared, Warwickshire Police will be collaborating with the other emergency services and the agency with primacy will be confirmed. We will work closely with other agencies to co-ordinate our messages to provide key messages to the public.

If urgent messages need to be delivered to the public, we will prioritise the use of social media channels. Please note that during major incidents, our communication channels are used to proactively share available information, and this is our priority. The media should refrain from submitting individual enquiries, as we are unlikely to have the capacity to deal with them and all available information will be provided online.

## **Medical information**

Refer to [Condition checks](#); refer to [Incidents: Higher level](#).

## **Minor incidents**

Refer to [Incidents: lower-level](#).

## **Misconduct**

The force follows the College of Policing's authorised professional practice which can be found at [app.college.police.uk/app-content/engagement-and-communication/media-relations](http://app.college.police.uk/app-content/engagement-and-communication/media-relations).



Warwickshire Police publishes information about public misconduct or special case hearings and misconduct hearing outcomes on its website, unless exceptional circumstances prevent release of information. Details of any upcoming misconduct hearings to be held in public, including details of how to attend, are published on the force's website.

## **Missing people**

We will publicise details of high-risk missing people where there is a requirement for public support in finding them.

Appeals are reserved for the most urgent cases. Due to the sensitivity of these cases, information provided will not normally be expanded upon.

Updates will be provided to the media when there is specific new information that is relevant to the investigation or when the appeal is no longer active – the media should check our website for these updates rather than approaching the Corporate Communications team.

We will only respond to media enquiries about missing people appeals published.

Updates will be provided to the media when an appeal is no longer active, at which point we ask that you remove the appeal and photos from your websites.

## **Naming a suspect/defendant due at court**

The force follows the College of Policing's authorised professional practice regarding naming suspects.

As such, prior to charge, Warwickshire Police will neither confirm nor deny names put to them and will not provide guidance.

Suspects may be named proactively by Warwickshire Police if they are wanted by police, and on arrest the name of the suspect will be reiterated to enable the media to identify and close the appeal. For more information about this process, please see 'wanted people'.

When a person over the age of 18 is charged with a criminal offence they will be named by Warwickshire Police unless there is an exceptional and legitimate policing purpose for not doing so or reporting restrictions apply. This information can be given at the point of charge.

The name of a defendant who is due at court but who cannot be named for reasons stated above may be provided to the media to aid court reporting. This is for guidance only and is not intended for publication, as it could contravene current or future reporting restrictions.

## **Naming a victim or witness**

Refer to [Victims and witnesses](#).



## **Photographs – custody**

Where available, custody images held by Warwickshire Police will be provided on sentence. It is the media's responsibility to check whether any reporting restrictions apply that prevent the defendant from being identified. These can only be released contemporaneously following a sentencing unless there are exceptional circumstances where a custodial sentence is definite (such as a murder conviction).

As a rule, Warwickshire Police require a defendant to have received a minimum of one year (12 months) in order to release their picture, unless there are circumstances where the release of the image will support prevention of re-offending.

In certain cases, we will not release a custody image but will explain the reason(s) why if we have declined to release a photograph. This decision will be made by the officer leading the case or the Head of Corporate Communications.

To enable us to locate a custody image, please provide:

- Name of the defendant.
- Date of birth or age of the defendant.
- Address of the defendant.
- What they were convicted of, including date of the offence.
- What sentence they received
- The court at which they were sentenced

## **Photographs and video footage – investigations**

Photographs or moving images relating to ongoing investigations will be provided proactively on our channels, if the officer leading the case determines this is appropriate, devoid of operational sensitivities, does not compromise an investigation or justice outcome, and has a policing purpose. A package will be provided proactively if available, so journalists are advised to check our channels. Media can approach to ask but we will make an appropriate assessment of videos.

## **Photographs and video footage – evidence shown in court cases**

The CPS has a protocol for releasing evidential images used in court which we also try to honour. If you require CCTV or footage, contact the Corporate Communications team and your request will be considered. This will include liaising with the CPS press office, victims and the Investigating Officer before a decision is made. We will try to release footage where possible.

## **Traffic disruption and road closures**

Refer to [Collisions and traffic disruption](#).



## **Police helicopter**

Air support for policing operations is provided by National Police Air Service (NPAS). If NPAS has directed you to Warwickshire Police regarding a media enquiry, we will require the following information to find details of an incident:

- The town, city, or village it happened in/near.
- The road or street it occurred on.
- An approximate time, to within one hour.
- A rough description of the type of incident.

NPAS should also be able to provide a Warwickshire Police incident number.

Assuming your enquiry falls within the terms of our SLS, we will provide the details available via our channels. Please note that we cannot begin to search for information about an incident without all the information above.

## **Social media posts by officers**

If you would like more information about something an officer or policing team has published on local force/team social media accounts, please note the Corporate Communications team will only be able to provide additional information and in a position to respond to these enquiries if the enquiry has a clear policing purpose and/or supports force priorities.

## **Suicide**

Refer to [Deaths and bereaved families](#).

## **Statistics/Freedom of Information requests**

The Corporate Communications team does not hold the force's statistical information but may be able to assist in obtaining some forms of statistical data. However, this may take several days and is done as a courtesy to the media.

If information is not available in this way, journalists may wish to submit a Freedom of Information request. Visit the [Make a Freedom of Information request page](#) for more information.

## **Tributes and photographs of deceased**

Refer to [Deaths and bereaved families](#).

## **Updates**

See [Part 1](#).



## **Victims and witnesses**

Warwickshire Police follows codes of practice to protect victims, witnesses, and their families. Surviving victims of, or witnesses to a crime, will not be identified under any circumstances, even if this information was provided in court. The only exception is if the victim or witness specifically consents for their identity to be made public, for policing purposes.

## **Wanted people**

We use an appeal process to trace people who are wanted on bail or warrant in connection with a criminal matter. This information is supplied proactively when there is a clear and legitimate policing purpose. Before we release a wanted person's details, we have a comprehensive process in place to ensure that all checks have taken place to both identify the individual and address any possible areas of vulnerability.

Updates will be provided to the media when an appeal is no longer active so that details and images can be removed from your websites and social media as soon as possible.

As this communication process is carried out proactively by the police, reporters do not need to do spot-checks for updates but should carefully monitor the police channels.

**Please note that we receive many media enquiries per month, from local, regional and national media, and we won't respond to enquiries which do not meet the terms of this SLS.**

**Our main channels ([website](#) and [social media](#)) are regularly updated with items of media interest, so if we have anything to say about a police incident or a criminal case, it is likely to be on there already. If not, you can email us on [news@warwickshire.police.uk](mailto:news@warwickshire.police.uk).**

**This statement will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Head of Communications.**