

 Warwickshire POLICE		 West Mercia POLICE	POLICY
Security Classification	OFFICIAL		
Disclosable under Freedom of Information Act 2000	Yes		

POLICY TITLE	Media Communications Policy
REFERENCE NUMBER	A021
Version	1.1

POLICY OWNERSHIP	
DIRECTORATE	ENABLING SERVICES
BUSINESS AREA	CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

IMPLEMENTATION DATE	September 2013
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	November 2019
RISK RATING	LOW
EQUALITY ANALYSIS	MEDIUM

Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police welcome comments and suggestions from the public and staff about the contents and implementation of this policy.
Please e-mail contactus@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

1.0 POLICY OUTLINE

To provide the best possible protection to our communities our forces must communicate and engage effectively. There are many channels and mediums available and accessible to the forces to enable us to engage, motivate, inform and influence people. One such channel is the traditional media.

A successful working relationship between the police service and the media is vital. It enables the police to engage with the public in a way that would not otherwise be possible. The relationship between the police and the media should be robust but formed on the basis of the forces being open, honest and accountable. Our principle objective should be to treat all media outlets in a fair and equal manner and withhold only what we must.

Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police values all local and regional media organisations as key stakeholders. Therefore we will endeavour to build and develop positive working relationships with these media outlets and their editorial teams. We will also seek to respond to all media enquiries in a timely fashion, providing as much information as we are able to do so at the time. If we are not able to answer the enquiry, we will endeavour to inform the media organisation as soon as possible. More detail in relation to the service local and regional media organisations can expect from the forces will be detailed in a service level agreement.

This policy details the kind of information and co-operation the media and public can expect from Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police. It also provides our workforce with guidance on how to manage the relationship between the police service and the media.

All media communications, interactions and engagement will be delivered by Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police in an approach consistent to that detailed within:

- **The 2010 Communications Advisory Group's Guidance**
- **The College of Policing's 2013 Guidance on Relationships with the Media**
- **The forces' Communications Strategy 2017-2021**

This will be superceded by the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) from the College of Policing, which is anticipated in early 2017. This new guidance takes into account:

- Recommendations of the Leveson Inquiry into the Culture, Practices and Ethics of the Press (2012)

- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) report Without fear or favour, published in 2011.

2.0 PURPOSE OF POLICY

This policy is designed to guide our workforce, communities and media through the release of information into the public domain via the media. It identifies areas of difficulty to help our workforce understand the practical and legal restraints and recognises that all members of our workforce have a shared responsibility to improve our relationship with the media and, through them, the public.

The majority of crimes are still solved as a result of information from the public, through an anonymous call to Crimestoppers, an informant, a person who sees or hears something suspicious, or someone who reads an appeal in a newspaper or online, listens to the radio or sees news coverage on the television, on a website or via social media. It is important that we engage with the media to promote our successes, enlist the support of the public in the prevention and detection of crime and be accountable for our errors and mistakes on occasions when things do not go as well as we would like.

This policy provides the basis on which we will further enhance our relationship with the media.

In following this policy it will mean that both forces ensure that their interactions and relationships with all media representatives are built on integrity, professionalism, transparency, and are capable of withstanding scrutiny.

3.0 IMPLICATIONS of the POLICY

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

- ◆ The Management of Police Information;
- ◆ Risks and Health and Safety considerations;
- ◆ Human Rights, Equality, Data Protection and Freedom of Information considerations, and
- ◆ Legal considerations

4.0 CONSULTATION

The approach to harmonise how both forces deal with the media, as detailed above, was originally agreed by the Executive Board in May 2013.

The **Communications Advisory Group Guidance** was produced in consultation with the Society of Editors, the Newspaper Society and the Crime Reporters Association and the **Authorised Professional Practice (APP) from the College of Policing has undergone a consultation process.**

5.0 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

6.0 PROCEDURE

All members of Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police will interact and engage with the media as detailed within the Engagement and Communications section of Authorised Professional Practice (APP). This means all members will be compliant with the two guidance documents from ACPO and the College of Policing whilst still in place and subsequently with the new APP once approved in 2017.

Supporting documents which will help support our workforce in adhering to this policy are available on the Corporate Communications section of the intranet.