

GWENT POLICE MEDIA POLICY



Heddlu
Gwent
Police

SUMMARY

Gwent Police recognises the crucial role the media play in providing the public with information as well as assisting the Force with enquiries and appeals. The Gwent Police Media Policy is designed to assist all employees when dealing with the media, and illustrates the role of the Corporate Communications department in this work.

Co-operation with the media is vital to good public relations and the marketing of Gwent Police.

The Force media policy is based on the following three simple principles:

1. The force will issue information to the media where there is a policing purpose. This could be an appeal for information or a pro-active press release to provide reassurance and inform/ update the public following an incident or to promote police initiatives. In doing so we will endeavour to release timely, relevant and accurate information.
2. In releasing information to the media the force will adhere to reasonable standards of privacy and follow human rights, data protection and freedom of information principles.
3. The Force will be open, helpful and fair and treat all sections of the media in a consistent way.

This policy incorporates the Media Guide (which is a separate document) which can be accessed via our intranet site and every station has a hard copy. Version changes will be monitored and reviewed by the Corporate Communications Department.

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PRINTED VERSIONS SHOULD NOT BE RELIED UPON. THE MOST UP TO DATE VERSION CAN BE FOUND ON THE INTRANET POLICIES SITE

All material contained within this document and associated working procedures, may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or The Environmental Information Regulations 2004, subject to specific exemptions/exceptions as required. This document should be used in association with the Force Risk Management.

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1.0 Policy Identification Page

This policy has been drafted in accordance with the principles of Human Rights Legislation. Public disclosure is approved.

Policy Title: Media Policy

Reference: 313/2a issue 4

Policy Ownership: Corporate Communications

Portfolio/Business Area Owner: ACPO Operations

Policy Written By: Head of Corporate Communications Department

Department Responsible: Corporate Communications

Policy Lead: Head of Corporate Communications Department

Links to other Policies: Equal Opportunities Policy, Race Equality Scheme, Hate Crime Policy, Stops Policy, Direction and Control (Organisational Complaints), Lay Observers, Data Protection, Information Security, Professional Standards Reporting, Direction and Control Complaints, Fairness at Work, Awards and Commendations, Independent Advisory Group, National Intelligence Model, CHIS, Surveillance, Management of Vehicle Pursuits, Domestic Abuse, Child Protection, Health and Safety, Personal Safety, Interpreters.

Policy Implementation Date: Approved STCG 28th March 2006; Reviewed OPG 17th April 2007; Reviewed & approved by OPG 02 December 2008 (by circulation to OPG members).

Policy Review Date: November 2011

2.0 Policy Statement & Intentions

2.1 Principle & Scope of Policy:

This policy outlines and informs our involvement with the media in providing information both reactively and proactively.

2.2 Aims of Policy

The aim of the policy is to outline the role of the Corporate Communications department and the remit they work under in terms of media liaison. It informs employees on the nature of information that is released to the media and the restrictions that have to be adhered to.

3.0 Introduction

3.1 Origins/Background Information

Our policy follows accepted practices in other forces, lawful practices and adheres to guidelines suggested by ACPO's Media Advisory Group (MAG). It adopts a common sense approach that reflects the needs and objectives of Gwent Police.

3.2 Motivators/Driving Forces

The policy is needed in order to maintain a good working relationship with the media and enhance and protect the reputation of the force. It benefits the Force by outlining the role of the Corporate Communications department in terms of media liaison. It creates an understanding of the role of the press office function internally, amongst all employees, and the guidelines that must be worked to.

3.3 The Legal Basis and Legitimate Aims

The procedural guidance that accompanies the Media Policy refers to the following legislation: The Broadcasting Act 1990, The Children and Young Persons Act 1933, The Criminal Justice Act 1991, The Contempt of Court Act 1981, The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988, The Defamation Act 1952, The Data Protection Act 1984, The Disclosure Act, The Human Rights Act, The Magistrates Courts Act 1980, The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

4.0 Implications of the Policy

4.1 Financial Implications/Best Value

The policy has no additional resource implications. The Corporate Communications Department is responsible for promoting the work of the Force and, therefore, play an important part in maintaining public understanding and goodwill. Media coverage can save officers' time when making enquiries and produce practical results in support of service delivery.

4.2 Human Resources/Training

Additional staff will not be required as a result of this policy.

There are media courses delivered for Gwent Police which are facilitated via the Force Training Department. These courses are tailored to suit individual roles and requirements.

The training of personnel is dependent on funding being approved by the Training Strategy Group.

4.3 Strategic Plan Links

Promoting the objectives of the Force: promoting safety and reducing disorder; reducing crime and the fear of crime; contributing to delivering justice in a way which secures and maintains public confidence in the rule of law.

4.4 Partnership Links

Several members of the Corporate Communications Department are members of the Association of Police Press and Public Relations Officers (APPRO) which formalises links between counterparts in other forces. Whilst there are no formal partnership links with the emergency services, local authorities or other relevant agencies such the Environment Agency, the Corporate Communications Department works with counterparts in these organisations regularly on an ad hoc basis.

4.5 Diversity

In the application of this policy, consideration must be given to the possible social impact on the community. A social impact assessment concerning the use of the IAG is a requirement to ensure all issues are considered. This is also a requirement of the Gwent Police Race Equality Scheme. Social impact assessments must be undertaken before and after the application of this policy.

Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 Gwent Police is required to undertake proactive work to meet the General Duty of :

- Eliminating unlawful racial discrimination;
- Promoting equality of opportunity;
- Promoting good relations between people of different ethnic groups.

The General Duty is outlined in Section 71 (1) of the Act, and must be met **in its entirety**.

Monitoring undertaken by the IAG will seek to ensure that in service delivery there is no adverse impact either positive or negative upon any one particular social group or individual. The results of monitoring must be analysed and be available for publication, and appropriate changes made.

All individuals using this policy must be aware of the potential impact that this procedure has on the individuals to whom it is applied. The following strands of diversity and their corresponding pieces of legislation must be considered when answering these questions.

- Welsh Language Act 1993
- Race – Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Disability - Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Gender – Sexual Discrimination Act 1975
- Equal Pay Act 1971
- Age – Article 13 Treaty of Amsterdam (2006)
- Sexual Orientation – Article 13 Treaty of Amsterdam (2003)
- Religion – Article 13 Treaty of Amsterdam (2004)
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

4.6 Links to Other Policy/Procedures

This policy incorporates the Media Guide which can be accessed via our intranet site and every station has a hard copy. Version changes will be monitored and reviewed by the Corporate Communications Department.

4.7 Consultation

Police Authority
ACPO
Divisional Departmental Heads
Superintendents Association
Force Solicitor
Police Federation
UNISON
Gwent Police Women's Association
Gwent Black and Asian Police Officer's Association
Gwent Police Disability Group
Freedom of Information Officer

5.0 Human Rights Consideration Certification

5.1 Auditing for potential interference and discrimination

Q1. What articles of the Human Rights Act 1998 may be engaged?

Articles 1 to 14

Q2. Where individual rights are engaged what is the potential to discriminate against the parties involved?

In the application of this policy the Force will not discriminate against any persons regardless of sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with national minority, property, birth or other status as defined under article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

5.2 Key Human Rights Principles

Q1. What is the legal basis for your policy?
See Section 3.3

Q2. Does the policy provide details of what would be considered as a legitimate aim for the potential interference with an individual's rights, through the exercising of this policy?

The following articles are engaged:-

Article 8 – The Right to Privacy

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Article 9 – Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion
Article 10 – Freedom of Expression
Article 14 – Freedom from Discrimination

A legitimate aim for the interference of individual rights in respect of the above articles may be broadly stated as:-

- National Security
- Public Safety
- The Protection of Health and Morals
- The Prevention of Disorder or Crime
- The Protection of Rights or Others

Any restrictions relating to human rights will be in accordance with the above principles.

Q3. How are staff made aware of the clearly defined decision making processes?

These are outlined in the Media Guide.

Q4. What are the minimum standards of documentation in relation to decision making?

These are outlined in the Media Guide.

Q5. How does your policy provide guidance on the justification for actions and assessment to whether the action is the least intrusive?

When operating this policy, it must be considered as to whether there is a pressing social need for interference and the restriction on rights must correspond to that need. Staff are advised that any response must be proportionate, relevant and sufficient.

5.3 Rights, Publication, Audit and Inspection

Q1. How is the policy made available to the public?

This can be made available to the public via the Force internet by inclusion in the force Freedom of Information Scheme.

Q2. What rights to make representation are available?

If an employee suffers loss, damage or injury as a result of a breach of this policy, independent legal advice can be sought and appropriate redress can be pursued through the criminal or civil courts. Persons who wish to make representations regarding the operation of this procedure will have recourse to both civil and criminal law. There is also the right to use both formal, informal and organisational complaints procedures in respect to the operation of this

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procedure.

Q3. What appeal process is available?

Any issues with the process that cannot be resolved should be relayed to the policy owner. This policy has been drafted in accordance with the principles and rights contained within the Human Rights Act 1998. It will be reviewed and continuously assessed in the light of any relevant changes and developments in the application of the Act.

Q4. What internal review and audit process is in place or is proposed?

Corporate Communications will continue to monitor and review in particular the Media guide.

Q5. What external independent scrutiny is recommended?

External scrutiny will be managed through the Corporate Services Department in line with Force Inspectorate arrangements. Independent audit will be through the Police Authority, HMIC.

5.4 Certification of Compliance

Consideration has been given to the compatibility of this policy and related policies and procedures with the Human Rights Act; with particular reference to the legal basis of its precepts: the legitimacy of its aims; the justification and proportionality of the actions intended by it; that it is the least intrusive and damaging option necessary to achieve the aims; and that it defines the need to document the relevant decision making process's and outcomes of actions.

5.5 Legal Vetting

There are no issues in this policy under ECHR which cannot be resolved.

This policy has been vetted by the Policy Officer.

6.0 Promotion and Distribution

The Media Guide is promoted on the Policies site and Corporate Communications Department's intranet site.

The policy is available on the Force internet. The main audience for this policy are police officers and police staff

A 'user friendly' guide is available to all employees, as well as a full version.

7.0 Monitoring / Review

7.1 Monitoring

The Corporate Communications department is responsible for reviewing this policy and the A-Z Media Guide. This will be done annually or when version changes are required. The number of people accessing the site will also be monitored.

Monitoring will be in line with the principles of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

Every press release will be reviewed for quality assurance, and the guide formally reviewed twice yearly.