

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

POLICY TITLE	Media Communications
REFERENCE NUMBER	WMP196
Version	1.0

POLICY OWNERSHIP	
DIRECTORATE	BUSINESS SERVICES
BUSINESS AREA	CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION DATE	July 2022
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	July 2025
RISK RATING	LOW
EQUALITY ANALYSIS	LOW

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

1.0 POLICY OUTLINE

To provide the best possible protection to our communities our force must communicate and engage effectively. There are many channels and mediums available and accessible to the force 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 force 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.

Our media service will acknowledge the value of effective working relationships with the media to our communities. Therefore we will endeavour to build and develop positive working relationships with these media outlets and their editorial teams. We will also seek to work with specialist media outlets to reach specific target audiences.

We will prioritise media requests that give us the greatest opportunity to protect people from harm. We will give clarity to the media around how we prioritise their requests and timescales for doing so and how they can contact us both in and out of office hours,. If we are not able to answer an 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 force is detailed in a service level agreement.

This policy details the kind of information and co-operation the media and public can expect from 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 West Mercia Police in an approach consistent to that detailed within:

- **The College of Policing's Communications and Engagement Authorised Professional Practice (First published May 2017)**
- The force [Communications Strategy 2022-2023](#)

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 West Mercia Police 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 **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 CONSULTATION

<i>Business Lead Consulted</i>	<i>Date Consulted</i>
Matt Stiff	July 2022

6.0 DOCUMENT HISTORY

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

Date	Author / Reviewer	Amendment(s) & Rationale	Date of Approval / Adoption
Jul 2022	Alexa Neville, Acting Head of Comms	Removal of old guidance document references and update to policy outline wording.	July 2022

7.0 ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

The Equality Analysis, Health & Safety and Risk assessment associated with this document are available on request.

8.0 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- Is a DPIA required – No as agreed with Audi, Risk and Compliance on the 18th July 2022.

9.0 MONITORING / EVALUATION

The monitoring and review of this policy is the responsibility of the policy owner