

## **MPS Media Policy Toolkit**

The MPS has adopted the [College of Policing's Media Relations Authorised Professional Practice \(APP\)](#) as its media policy with the supplementary and additional MPS specific guidance as specified below.

The APP covers the following headings:

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Key themes
- 3 Police and the media
  - 3.1 Defining speaking terms
  - 3.2 Respecting suspects' rights to privacy
  - 3.3 The corporate communications department
  - 3.4 Attendance at media interviews
  - 3.5 Recording contact with the media
  - 3.6 Managing inaccurate or misleading media coverage
  - 3.7 High-profile or sensitive investigations or operations
  - 3.8 Media briefings
  - 3.9 Taking the media on police operations
  - 3.10 Reporting from a scene
  - 3.11 Exclusives
  - 3.12 Documentaries
- 4 Arrests, charges, and judicial outcomes
  - 4.1 Referring to reports of a crime
  - 4.2 Naming on arrest
    - 4.2a No further action
  - 4.3 Responding to enquiries about arrests
  - 4.4 Information about a police investigation or ongoing operation
  - 4.5 Naming on charge
  - 4.6 Identifying victims or other witnesses
  - 4.7 Businesses
  - 4.8 Information during criminal proceedings
  - 4.9 Information at the end of criminal proceedings
  - 4.10 Deaths
  - 4.11 Images/footage
  - 4.12 Registered sex offenders in the community
- 5 Police under investigation
  - 5.1 Publicising internal investigations and misconduct matters
  - 5.2 Incidents investigated by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)
- 6 Freedom of information
  - 6.1 Media requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000MPS Additions

In addition to the APP the MPS policy includes guidance on the following areas:

7. Circulating a missing person in the media
8. Whistleblowing to the media
9. Employment Tribunals brought against the MPS
10. Personal Media Engagement
11. Social media
12. Filming in the street or other public places
13. Technical advice to film-makers
14. MPS contractors and the media
15. MPS publicity materials
16. Media engagement during election times

The Supplementary MPS Guidance and additional MPS Guidance is detailed below. However, it may be more helpful to read the composite document published with this document where these provisions can be read alongside the relevant APP guidance.

**Supplementary MPS Guidance to Section 2:** In high profile or sensitive investigations advice must be sought from Press Bureau prior to communicating with the media. Those who have a role in a particular investigation or operation and are approached by a journalist for comment should only do so with the agreement of the Gold Commander or Senior Investigating Officer after discussion with the Press Bureau. (See Section 3.3 for details of matters that should be referred to the Press Bureau).

Requests by journalists for information or comment on MPS-wide issues, policy matters or events that could bring the Service into disrepute or dispute, should be referred immediately to the relevant (B)OCU commander or department head who should liaise with the DMC about how best to respond. The DMC may liaise with the Information Rights Unit where the request could constitute a FoIA request.

### **Writing articles giving views on policing issues**

Police officers and members of police staff may be approached to write articles, blogs or undertake interviews on policing issues for newspapers and magazines, broadcasters or online publishers and social media content providers. In such cases advice should always be sought from the DMC and authority obtained from the (B)OCU commander or Head of Branch. MPS personnel must not seek to profit from their experiences of working in the Service and therefore should not accept payment for anything they write or produce. Nor should the MPS incur additional costs such as overtime to facilitate such activities without prior agreement from line managers. Officers or staff who are asked to write an article should have a firm understanding of the subject area they have been asked to comment on. Otherwise the request should be declined or passed on to a more appropriate person or unit.

Individuals should not pass negative comment on MPS policy or practices and the content of any article should not bring the Service into disrepute or divulge information which could compromise operations, investigations, the judicial process, victim confidence or which breaches the Official Secrets or Data Protection Acts. Individuals should also be mindful of the MPS Information Code and METSEC Code.

NB: Guidance on the use of social media can be found in section 11 of this document.

### **Writing books**

Serving police officers or police staff who wish to write a book about their policing experience must ensure that it complies with the [Publishing and Broadcasting in a non-official capacity policy](#). All content must be submitted to your unit commander / head of unit for approval.

### **Speaking to the media as a representative of a Staff Support Association or Trade Union**

The media sometimes contact MPS representatives from the Police Federation, Trade Unions or Staff Support Associations for comments about policing issues and activity. Whilst it is up to the individual concerned (in consultation with their relevant staffing body) to decide whether or not to issue a statement or give an interview, it must be made clear to the reporter that statements or comments are given in the capacity as a Federation, union or Staff Support Association representative and not as a representative of the MPS. Interviews on camera should not be undertaken in uniform and name captions must make it clear which

Union or Staff Support Association the individual is representing.

A number of MPS senior officers and staff lead on NPCC policy and business areas and are called on to do media interviews or briefings in this capacity. Whilst officers may undertake interviews in uniform it should be made clear to reporters that they are representing NPCC.

**Supplementary MPS Guidance to Section 3.3:** The CCD for the MPS is the Directorate of Media and Communication (DMC).

The DMC responds to critical incidents, day-to-day enquiries, and provide round the clock advice and support to the organisation in both operational and reputation issues.

DMC proactively promotes positive stories as they occur, deploys staff to facilitate the regular flow of interview requests and attends the scenes of operations and events to provide media support on the ground where appropriate.

DMC initially responds to media enquiries, and where necessary, rebuts or challenges unfounded claims or provide context to help balance criticism.

DMC is available to provide advice and guidance about:

- incidents that are breaking any time of day or night
- major or critical incidents
- stories or issues likely to be of interest beyond local papers, e.g. the Evening Standard, BBC London, national newspapers, LBC

Matters that should be referred to DMC include:

- Murder & serious violence
- Fatal collisions
- Rape & serious sexual offences
- Flying Squad investigations
- SO investigations
- Serious organised crime investigations
- DPS investigations particularly causing community concern such as use of force
- Child abuse investigations
- Corporate or policy issues

Additionally, the below matters should be highlighted to DMC:

- When officers would like wider media coverage for an operation, investigation, appeal or initiative
- When there are vulnerabilities for the MPS that could have an impact on community confidence
- Unusual crimes
- Anything involving high profile individuals and organisations
- Stories where you would reasonably expect interest beyond your local media

DMC can be contacted at any time by officers and staff by emailing [press.bureau@met.police.uk](mailto:press.bureau@met.police.uk) or calling 763300 (020 7230 3300). The line for media is 020 7230 2171.

Please ensure that you give DMC sufficient notice of upcoming operations or court cases especially where these are likely to involve releasing large amounts of CCTV, body-worn video or other moving footage. This will ensure that they are able to work with you to provide

the best media package possible to support your release.

The MPS has an established corporate and local presence on social media platforms and channels. Increasingly, many audiences we want to reach do not consume traditional media. Bespoke messaging and visual content tailored to online audiences can help achieve operational and communication objectives. (see section 11 – Social Media).

### **Supplementary MPS Guidance to Section 3.5:**

A Media Contact Register for Management Board members and NPCC rank officers is collated and published monthly on the MPS website. Officers below NPCC rank and staff equivalent level should keep their own note of their contact with a journalist and what information they have provided which can be audited by line managers on an ad hoc basis.

Details of what information should be entered on the Media Contact Register can be found in the [Media Contact Instructions](#).

There is no requirement to keep a record if you meet a journalist in a social group.

#### Personal relationships with journalists

If you have a relationship with a journalist on a personal basis outside of your role as a police officer or police staff - such as a relative or close friend – this is not classed as a declarable association. However, you should follow the MPS Professional Standards Policy in the same way that you would in other areas. Therefore, if that relationship with that individual could be seen to impact either on a job that you are involved in or your role, then you should highlight this to your line management so that they are aware.

#### Hospitality from journalists

Hospitality taken from journalists should be the exception not the rule. All MPS officers and staff should start from the presumption that meetings with journalists should not be accompanied by alcohol.

It is recognised that there are some circumstances such as a formal event or professional gathering where this presumption would not apply, but you are expected to act professionally at all times and only drink in moderation.

When considering accepting hospitality from a journalist it is worth bearing in mind the criteria cited in the guidance to The Bribery Act 2010 ‘that the recipient should not be given the impression that they are under an obligation to confer any business advantage or that the recipient’s independence will be affected.’

You should also consider the following points if you are offered hospitality by a journalist:

- the motivation for the offer,
- the public perception of acceptance,
- the potential impact of acceptance on public confidence in the integrity of the MPS
- and whether what at first sight appears to be an innocent offer could later become the subject of adverse comment or criticism.

Where hospitality is received from the media, officers and police staff must ensure that the [Gifts and Hospitality Policy](#) is adhered to. If in doubt refer to the policy and discuss it with your line manager.

**Supplementary MPS Guidance to Section 3.6:** Officers and staff involved in a case or issue which generates inaccurate or misleading coverage should liaise with the DMC about whether a response is called for. This can take the form of a correction, online and/or in print, a letter for publication or a request for another, more balanced, article to be published. DMC should be consulted on the content of any letters for publication.

Should DMC, MPS spokespeople or Official MPS social media accounts issue inaccurate information it should, in most circumstances, and in consultation with the relevant operational leads, be corrected correction to the same media organisation(s) that received the incorrect information or on the same social media accounts as applicable. Where wide coverage of the error has occurred the correction should made to an appropriately wide audience.

**Supplementary MPS guidance to Section 3.9:** Officers and staff must never wear body worn cameras or any other recording equipment including microphones provided by a media organisation in an operational environment unless pre-agreed with the DMC. Doing so could potentially jeopardise the integrity of any resulting investigation and should only be considered as part of a documentary or similar project for which appropriate contractual arrangements are in place.

Recording equipment provided by media may be worn by officers and staff for non-operational scenarios such as training and for media interviews where for sound quality reasons the media would like to “mic up” the interviewees.

In any situation, where recording equipment is worn by MPS personnel, the consent of MPS personnel whose voice or image may be recorded should be obtained and agreement reached by DMC representatives with the media re copyright and data ownership. (There will be a presumption that copyright and data ownership will remain with the media organisation unless otherwise agreed.)

The MPS Media Indemnity Agreement and an MPS Note to Media Representatives should be completed and signed when taking journalists on operations (these documents should be used in place of those linked to in Section 3.9 of the CoP APP). In addition journalists - and any DMC Press Officers if present - must be included in any health and safety risk assessment. If necessary a member of the Safety and Health Risk Management Team (SHRMT) is available to provide advice. They are also on call 24/7 via MetCC.

NOTE: MPS officer and staff should not sign media release forms without consultation with DMC. Permission to do so by DMC will only be given where this has been agreed in a contract with documentary makers and the MPS.

Unless DMC staff are named on a warrant, or permission from the owner/occupier of private property has been obtained, they should not enter any premises when accompanying officers on operations to execute warrants. DMC or officers should not agree to media representatives entering such a property without such permissions.

**Supplementary MPS Guidance to Section 3.10:** [There is a useful guide available on how to deal with reporters, photographers and film crews on the MPS website](#). It is designed to help ensure that both police and the media can do their work without hindering each other and includes details about media access to private property.

**Supplementary MPS Guidance to Section 3.11:** It is DMC practice to contact a journalist who made an original “private inquiry” to make them aware another journalist has also subsequently requested the information where the subsequent inquiry is prior to an initial

article being published.

**Supplementary MPS Guidance to Section 3.12:** Documentaries and dramas about policing provide opportunities to promote our work and achievements - and sometimes generate income but they can be time-consuming and often require considerable resources. One proposal may be at odds with another or with MPS priorities.

All approaches from television documentary or drama programmes must be filtered through DMC staff who, when necessary, will consult with other relevant units and officers to decide whether to pursue the proposal. All filming within MPS premises and the use of police property for dramas must be approved by Property Services, unless it is linked to operational activity.

Access based documentaries will be subject to a legal documentary agreement that is arranged via DMC.

Where there is a potential for income generation or recovery of costs for officer and /or staff time, negotiations with the production company will be conducted through the Intellectual Property team.

Officers and staff contacted by programme makers seeking to make a documentary involving the MPS should advise them to contact the DMC.

The DMC does not assist in the making of dramas and staff contacted by drama makers should pass on the inquirer's contact details to the Intellectual Property team.

**Supplementary MPS Guidance to Section 4.2:** For the police to name and/or otherwise identify a suspect to the media/public, a clear policing purpose and public interest is required and should be recorded both on DMC and operational record systems. Any decision should be proportionate, legal, accountable and necessary. For further advice refer to the Information Rights Unit and/or Directorate of Legal Services.

The naming of an arrested person, or a person interviewed under caution, before they are charged should be authorised by an officer ranked Commander or above and the rationale for doing so logged with the Press Bureau. The authorising officer should consider consulting the CPS.

Note: The identification of a suspect or escaped prisoner as "wanted" in an appeal should be authorised in accordance with Appendix A in section 4.11. Any decision to identify a wanted suspect should be proportionate, legitimate, accountable and necessary. Where a suspect has been named and is subsequently arrested, DMC should inform the media of the arrest and name the suspect as the person arrested. This applies whether the arrest is in Britain or abroad, where the suspect may be subject to extradition proceedings.

Professional judgement must be used to consider whether the information provided regarding an arrest or other police activity could lead to the identification of the suspect. If this is the case, consider reducing or broadening the information made available.

For example: Not giving a specific age but saying "in their 30s" and giving a borough or other geographical area rather than a street address to avoid confirming identity. In some exceptional circumstances we may decline to give any indication of age or location at all.

Care must also be taken for police activity outside London where towns and villages may be quite small, particularly where this combines with an elderly suspect as there may be fewer people of that age group in an area. Care must also be taken in cases where there is a



relationship between a victim and suspect, or the suspect can be otherwise linked to a known address (domestic murders for example) and therefore confirmation of the identity of the individual is more likely.

(None of the examples above are prescriptive, nor are they exhaustive – individual judgements based on the available information must be made in each case)

This requirement does not only apply to people in the public eye – we need to be equally cautious of releasing info that could confirm identity for people who are not in the public eye.

The basic details of the arrest may only be completely withheld if agreed by an officer ranked Commander or above and the rationale for that decision is logged with the DMC.

NB: Where a risk of a suspect's identity being confirmed as a result of information we might release has been identified and consideration given to reducing the specificity of the information provided, the rationale for any decisions in this regard must be recorded on DMC record systems – even where a decision not to alter the information is made.

**Supplementary MPS guidance to Section 4.2a:**

**No further action (NFA):** We should not use the phrase “insufficient evidence” or similar when explaining the reasons for discontinuing an investigation or releasing a person with no further action. We should state that people have been released with no further actions or the case has been discontinued with no further action.

Should we need to give a reason we should say: “The case failed to meet the evidential test.”

If the decision to take No Further Action has followed CPS advice then we should replicate their reasoning for the decision in our lines e.g.: The evidence did not meet the evidential stage of the full code test set out in the Code for Crown Prosecutors or charges are not in the public interest. Making it clear this was their assessment and that as a result we are taking no further action in relation to the case or suspect.

DMC should check with investigating officers that the suspect has been informed of the NFA decision prior to informing the media unless exceptional circumstances prevent this or the circumstances are such that a suspect could not identify themselves from the information released (e.g. large scale public order arrests).

**Supplementary MPS Guidance to Section 4.3:** As with general media enquiries about whether police have attended a particular incident, a journalist wishing us to pursue an enquiry about whether an arrest has been made (irrespective of whether they are aware of the person's identity) will need to supply the press office with sufficient detail to be able to trace the arrest or interview under caution through MPS IT systems. No searches will be made on the basis of names alone.

The reporter will need to supply a location, date and the nature of the offence or the circumstances in which the arrest was made to assist with the search.

It should always be made clear that we are not confirming identity, and it should also be made clear that we will not guide if a name is wrong.

If someone arrested is bailed to return, neither a specific returning location or specific bail date will be provided to media – style should be, “bailed to an east London police station on a date in early March”.

If the name put to us is of someone who has been charged with an offence related to the incident being asked about but the journalist was unaware of this; the usual charge details should be provided.

NB: It must be recognised that by providing details of the police activity in response to a reporter supplying a location and other details (as per Section 4.3) there is a risk of helping to confirm identities in circumstances where individuals can be closely associated with that location.

When responding to enquiries from reporters about an arrest, the same consideration regarding the risks of confirming identity as outlined in Section 4.2 and the supplementary guidance to Section 4.2 must be made.

**Supplementary MPS guidance to Section 4.5:** Once someone has been charged then nothing should be reported that could potentially prejudice legal proceedings. Do not, therefore, provide any statements to the media or publish anything on social media after a charge (other than basic charge and court details) unless there is specific operational requirement and it has been discussed and agreed with a DMC press officer and, where it may impact on any active proceedings, in consultation with the CPS.

If you become aware that a media organisation is planning to print or broadcast material that could compromise or prejudice an operation, investigation or subsequent prosecution, alert the DMC as soon as possible. CPS should also be alerted where a suspect has been charged and publication or broadcast may prejudice active proceedings.

**Supplementary MPS Guidance to Section 4.7.** Whilst individuals have a qualified right to privacy, organisations, including businesses but not limited to them, do not hold the same rights.

Therefore the MPS may provide information to media about criminal allegations it may have received regarding an organisation in order to properly inform the public about its activities and maintain public confidence in policing. Due consideration must be given in such cases as to whether identifying an organisation may identify any individuals involved, particularly where they may be victims of crime.

#### **MPS Supplementary guidance to Section 4.11:**

##### **Releasing custody images post-conviction**

The default position for the MPS is to release images of defendants who have been convicted of criminal offences either on request or for a policing purpose, unless there is an exceptional reason not to do so.

In most cases the authority of a senior officer is no longer required (See Appendix A) however, each case must still be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Images relating to investigations by Specialist Operations or involving sexual offences, child sexual abuse or professional standards, do require authority and specific risk assessment from a senior officer.

The DMC will release custody images on the day a person has been convicted. If it is not possible to release the image on conviction, it will be released on sentence. As a general rule, material and images will not be released if the story is no longer contemporaneous. We generally consider the limit for such reporting to be within three months of the conclusion of a case.



Where a delay to the release of an image of a convicted defendant of more than three months has been necessary due to reporting restrictions on another related case, DMC should consult with a Superintendent or above before release and record any rationale for or against release.

The investigating officer will be expected to provide the image. Where the officer does not have access to the image the DMC will obtain it from the Custody Imaging System and ask the officer to confirm it is the correct person.

The DMC will inform the investigating officer when the custody image will be released and give the officer the opportunity to object due to exceptional circumstances.

If there are exceptional reasons and the image is not released, the officer will be expected to provide these to the press officer who will log this.

The following is a list of exceptional reasons, it is not exhaustive:

- A risk assessment has been completed and has identified that releasing the image will put the person, or his/her family and friends at risk of harm.
- Reporting restrictions are in place which prevents the media from reporting the person's identity.
- Releasing the image could interfere with other ongoing proceedings, because identity is an issue.
- The individual is a juvenile and reporting restrictions have not been lifted.
- The individual is a vulnerable adult due to mental health issues.

The following does not generally amount to an exceptional reason, not exhaustive:

- The individual was on bail during his/her trial and was photographed entering/exiting court.
- Releasing the image could breach the person's human rights. If release is legitimate, necessary, and proportionate, it is not likely to breach HRA.
- The person has been convicted of a domestic homicide/incident.
- The victim, defendant or a family member does not want the image to be released.
- A custodial sentence is not expected/received. If convicted of a minor offence, the release could still be proportionate if, for example, it is committed against a vulnerable victim or there is national interest.
- The individual has/will be sentenced to a hospital order under the Mental Health Act (MHA). In most cases where a hospital order is given an image will not be released, however this is not definitive. If in any doubt seek legal advice.

### **CCTV and BWV footage (Not during trial)**

Releasing footage is an operational decision for the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) who should record their decision in their decision log.

Footage must be appropriately edited to contain only the portion that has been approved and should be pixelated before it is provided to the DMC.

Anyone other than the suspect/defendant must be pixelated to protect their identity. If a victim of crime features in the footage then they should be advised accordingly.

The DMC can arrange for material to be pixelated but the resultant footage must be viewed and approved by the SIO (or an officer to which the task has been delegated) before it is issued to the media.

In the exceptional circumstances where the MPS cannot pixelate the footage, the DMC press officer may select a media organisation which is willing to do the pixelation on a pooled basis and agree that police retain final approval for the release of the pixelated material.

The media organisation should be given one copy of the selected material. Once pixelated it should be viewed by the press officer and the SIO (or an officer to which the task has been delegated) for approval prior to publication.

The original un-pixelated disc must be returned to the SIO, or if shared electronically deleted by the media, and a copy of the pixelated footage should be kept with DMC and may be provided to other media. Written confirmation that the un-pixelated footage has been deleted must be obtained from the media organisation.

The DMC press officer will be responsible for monitoring the broadcast to ensure that what is shown has been correctly pixelated. If it hasn't been, the Head of Media should be notified and the media organisation contacted and advised to rectify it.

## **Appeals**

Releasing images and/footage as part of an appeal is an operational decision for the SIO and endorsement by an officer of the appropriate rank - see Appendix A.

The footage must be pixelated as outlined above. When the suspect is arrested and charged, the officer must inform the press office which must then advise the media of this fact and request that they stop using the image.

Where press officers have offered the name of a suspect wanted for interview and he or she is subsequently arrested, they should inform the media of the arrest and name the suspect as the person arrested. This applies whether the arrest is in Britain or abroad where the suspect may be, subject to extradition proceedings.

Images and appeals should also be removed from MPS digital platforms and channels.

Appeals may also be required post-charge if it is deemed operationally necessary by the SIO, who must consult with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) before approaching the press office where this may impact on active proceedings.

Careful consideration should be given, when issuing appeals involving the images of large numbers of people, to ensure that the release does not unnecessarily associate any group (with protected characteristics) with criminality. Where this is a possibility, it should be carefully balanced against the operational need - ensuring that doing so is proportionate, legitimate, auditable and necessary (PLAN).

## **Documentaries**

There will be occasions when the MPS will agree to provide custody images to a documentary maker sometime after sentencing. This will usually be if the documentary has been approved by the DMC and the MPS is actively participating i.e., officers are being interviewed. The DMC must consult with the SIO who will need to agree that the image(s) are suitable for release.

Similarly, the MPS own the copyright to custody images and if needed can prevent their use without our permission. The Intellectual Property Unit can provide further advice with regards to copyright issues.

The press officer dealing should record the decision making process in respect of all documentary requests.

### **Footage filmed by the media on police operations**

There is a presumption that all uniformed officers and staff operating in public spaces are identifiable and may be filmed by the media other than in exceptional circumstances.

The press officer should agree with the SIO or Gold for the operation, whether officers and staff can be filmed and where, and if some officers or staff should not be identified - this is usually because officers have confirmed posting to a covert role in the future which would be jeopardised by being identifiable as a police officer. Officers and staff may have other reasons which should be considered prior to filming.

The agreement with the media should be reflected in a decision log and on the press log.

Before the operation begins and any filming takes place the press officer should make journalists aware of the specific officers or staff that must not be filmed or photographed and also if they may not be filmed at all, or only filmed without their faces being visible, or have their faces pixelated after filming.

NOTE: MPS officers and staff should not sign media release forms without consultation with DMC. Permission to do so by DMC will only be given where this has been agreed in a contract with documentary makers and the MPS.

### **Release of photographic material after charging**

Once a person has been charged material that is to be used as evidence should not be released as this could be prejudicial.

Photographs of a murder victim that have previously been issued may be re-issued to the media, on request, after a charge has been put.

### **Photographs of missing people and victims**

The MPS often issues photos of missing people and deceased victims of crime to assist inquiries. Their next-of-kin or legal guardians may request that the images are not released but the SIO/OIC can decide that there is operational justification to override their wishes if he/she deems it necessary to assist the investigation.

Where missing people are wards of court, legal advice from DLS must be sought before identifying them or issuing appeals/images.

See section 7 for more guidance on circulating appeals for missing people.

| <b>Appendix A – Authority Levels for the</b>                                | <b>Release of Photographs and Other Images.</b>   |
|---|---|
| Criminal Behaviour Order - Post conviction                                  | Default position is to release. As CBO's are post-conviction the same considerations should be applied as for publicity/images related to the conviction. |
| Homicide - Convicted defendants   | Default position is to release, unless exceptional reason not to.   |
| Borough, convicted defendants   | Default position is to release, unless exceptional reason not to.   |
| Child Sexual Exploitation, convicted defendants.                            | Chief Supt, may be delegated to Superintendent  |
| DPS, convicted defendants.  | OCU Commander   |
| Counter Terrorism Command convicted defendants.                             | Commander   |
| SO, all other departments   | Commander   |
| Flying Squad, convicted defendants  | Default position is to release, unless exceptional reason not to.   |
| Economic & Specialist Crime   | Superintendent  |
| Non-MPS images of a convicted defendant                                     | Providing the images were used in court, they can be authorised as above.   |
| Domestic abductions - victim and suspect                                    | B/OCU Commander.  |
| Victims   | SIO or DCI if SIO is below this rank (in consultation with victims or their families where appropriate).  |
| E-fit / photo fit / artist's impression                                     | SIO or DCI if SIO is below this rank  |
| Escaped convicted prisoner - juvenile or adult                              | SIO to consult with B/OCU Commander to authorise.   |
| Escaped remand prisoner - juvenile or adult                                 | SIO to consult with CPS.  |
| Wanted person not known (including those who may be juveniles)              | SIO or DCI if SIO is below this rank.   |
| Named wanted person   | Superintendent or above. Juvenile suspects – Commander. Consideration should be given to consulting the CPS.  |
| Wanted registered sex offender  | Commander and consult Operation Jigsaw  |
| Police custody video or audio of interview with defendant (post-conviction) | SIO if it was used in open court, or Commander if it wasn't.  |
| Unknown witnesses   | SIO or Superintendent or above if SIO below this rank, to authorise.  |

| <b>Appendix A – Authority Levels for the</b>  | <b>Release of Photographs and Other Images.</b>   |
|---|---|
| Police images pre-charging / pre-court case (e.g. material from taking media on raids to demonstrate police action). Media should agree to pixelate suspect images where proceedings are active (i.e. post arrest). | SIO, or Gold for the operation.   |
| Body Worn Video   | B/OCU Commander or SIO, in liaison with DMC   |
| Knife Crime Prevention Orders   | <p>B/OCU Commander or above and only where applied on adults by an adult court and not subject to reporting restrictions and where publicity is proportionate and necessary.</p> <p>NB: KCPO proceedings in the Youth Court are subject to automatic reporting restrictions by virtue of section 49 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.</p> |

**Supplementary MPS guidance to Section 5.1:** It is important for public confidence in policing that the MPS is open and accountable about wrongdoing by officers and staff and has a clear and consistent approach in communicating information about professional standards issues.

Potentially high profile internal investigation or discipline cases should be brought to the attention of the DMC at the earliest opportunity. A media statement in consultation with the SIO from DPS can then be drafted. The individual under investigation or facing discipline will be provided with a copy of the media statement by DPS in as timely a fashion as possible and told when it is likely to be released to the media.

No information should be disclosed that could prejudice the outcome of any proceedings or comment made on an individual's guilt or innocence before the appropriate body has made its decision. If needed, advice and support on how to deal with intrusive media attention as a result of publicity surrounding a case may be provided to the individual under investigation by a press officer at the discretion of the DMC's Head of Media. Similar advice and support may be sought from Staff Support Associations or Unions.

A DMC/DPS Media Guidance document has been compiled which gives detailed guidance on what information should be released to the media regarding DPS investigations, public complaints and how discipline matters are handled.

### **Additional MPS Guidance to College of Policing Media Relations APP**

#### **7. Circulating a missing person in the media**

Unless there is a significant operational reason, in the first instance all missing person appeal must be publicised locally, and in any other relevant local areas, via local Twitter account(s). Any initial tweet may generate contact from local media; queries should be dealt with by local officers.

If, after a period of time, a high-risk person remains missing and the officer in charge believes that wider media circulation, in addition to the local appeals already published, could assist, DMC should be consulted.

See section 4.11 for authority level guidance on circulating images of missing people.

## **8. Whistleblowing to the media**

The MPS has robust reporting procedures in place to expose wrongdoing. The [Whistleblowing and Wrongdoing policy](#) provides comprehensive advice about the numerous ways wrongdoing can be reported including through the 'The Right Line' confidential telephone helpline and 'The Right Line online' confidential intranet link as well as through a number of easily accessible internal and third-party organisations.

The MPS is responsible for a vast amount of confidential information and data and we have a legal and moral duty to protect it. In the case of personal or sensitive personal data, the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) must be followed - see further [Data Protection Act 2018 \(DPA\) – Compliance Policy and Guidance](#).

A justification sometimes cited for the leaking of confidential information to journalists is that police officers or staff are whistleblowing about wrongdoing in the organisation and it is therefore in the public interest. Whilst there may be genuine instances of this, it is important that the leaking of information for different motives - such as a personal grievance or for financial gain - is not misrepresented as whistleblowing.

The [Government's Guide to Whistleblowing](#) is published on the internet which makes it clear that if an employee can't tell their employer about the wrongdoing they suspect, they should contact a 'prescribed person or body'. A worker can only tell the prescribed person or body if they think their employer:

- will cover it up
- would treat them unfairly if they complained
- has not sorted it out and they have already told them

The prescribed bodies for police in London are the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) and the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC).

The advice given here will be considered by the Directorate of Professional Standards when assessing potential misconduct relating to allegations of improper disclosure of information.

## **9. Employment tribunals brought against the MPS**

High profile employment tribunals (ETs) should be brought to the attention of the DMC at the earliest opportunity.

Although it is unusual for the MPS to comment on ETs until they have been heard, other than to set out the nature of the claim, and whether the MPS is defending it, circumstances sometimes arise where the person bringing the ET publicly criticises the MPS, then the service may need to respond to this criticism. In doing so it must be mindful not to disclose any information that could prejudice the outcome of any proceedings. Any statements should be prepared in consultation with the MPS Senior Client and DLS. Public comment on cases must only be made through the DMC.

In such cases the individual bringing the action will be provided with a copy of the MPS's



statement released via their line manager and/or the MPS Employment Tribunal Unit.

If required, advice and support on how to deal with intrusive media attention as a result of publicity surrounding a case may be provided to the individual by a press officer at the discretion of the DMC Head of Media. Similar advice and support may be sought from Staff Support Associations or Unions.

## **10. Personal media engagement**

Officers and staff may engage with the media about activities outside their work for the MPS such as charitable or other voluntary work, registered business interests or where they are involved in public civil legal proceedings involving the MPS such as Civil Actions or Employment Tribunals, but must obtain prior permission from their line management.

Line managers must consult with DMC and DPS where any personal media engagements are likely to be high-profile, controversial, prolonged, involve financial reward, require extended absence from work or raise questions as to the propriety of police officers or staff involved.

Careful consideration should be given to the extent of any permission if given. For example, it could be time-limited or limited to a particular interview/appearance. It should not normally be open-ended except where an officer or member of staff is nominated to act as a regular spokesperson for a recognised Staff Support Association, Union or the Police Federation or Superintendents' Association.

Where an officer or staff member requests permission as a nominated spokesperson for a Staff Support Association the line manager should consult with the Crime Prevention, Inclusion and Engagement command which oversees SSA's to ensure they understand the role the officer/staff member is performing on behalf of the association.

Line managers should not arbitrarily withhold permission and where they do refuse permission should provide reasons for doing so.

We do advise officers to consult their legal representatives, or Police Federation / union representatives, before deciding whether to speak to journalists when they are involved in legal proceedings or subject to an investigation.

Officers and staff are also reminded that they must continue to follow the expected standards of professional behaviour whether speaking as a police officer or as a private individual.

If you are in doubt about whether or not it is appropriate for you to engage with the media, seek advice from the DMC.

You are not allowed to appear in the media in uniform unless agreed beforehand by an officer of Commander rank or above, nor can you allow or arrange filming in your workplace.

We also advise caution before revealing your policing role to media whilst undertaking media activity in a personal capacity and if you do reveal this then you should keep details of your role to a minimum.

If you and/or colleagues want to take part as an MPS team in any media activity you must obtain the prior permission of your OCU commander (or Head of Branch) who must consult with the DMC, before giving permission.

NB: Officers and staff who are approached to talk to the media whilst attending a public event in a private capacity as a participant or spectator do not require prior permission but should remember that they are still expected to follow the Met's standards of professional behaviour.

## 11. Social media

Official MPS social media accounts have been set up to achieve a tactical or operational objective, change or influence behaviour for the better and build capacity and trust with the public. Our content will assist in the prevention and detection of crime, as well as inform the public of Metropolitan Police related news, events, online facilities and major incidents across the Capital.

This includes:

- Operational updates about the policing of events
- News and imagery highlighting how the MPS is policing boroughs, wards, major criminal investigations and prosecutions
- Appeals for information and assistance from the public
- Crime prevention advice or local community information.
- Advice about protecting yourself from crime
- Information from emergency services partners relevant to the safety and wellbeing of Londoners and visitors to the capital

All authorised social media users must ensure that the information they are posting is accurate, up to date and relevant, with a regular flow of new content to maintain user interest. Anything that has the potential to be of interest wider than the local media should be brought to the attention of DMC. Content must be removed immediately it becomes out of date to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, including the removal of missing people appeals

Only social media accounts created by the MPS Directorate of Media & Communication are defined official MPS accounts - there are no exceptions.

Official accounts belong to the organisation and not the individual.

Anyone nominated to use an official account will only be authorised to do so after receiving the relevant training.

The DMC Social Media Desk and local social media SPOCs will monitor and support social media accounts to check usage and content, as well as any inappropriate posts. If it is deemed that a post is inappropriate then the post may be removed and the individual contacted and offered guidance.

You are reminded in particular that the sections of this policy covering what information can be released regarding identities of suspects or victims must be observed at all times. You should also play close attention to what may inadvertently be revealed, for example in the background, by any images posted from police premises or an operational situation.

Content and images posted on the MPS social media accounts may be re-used provided that it is for a non-commercial use and any reproduction is attributed to the relevant MPS account.

[The Met Information Code of Conduct and the Use of Met Computer Systems Policy](#) are also relevant in respect of using social media applications on MPS **systems and devices**.

All users are expected to conduct themselves professionally at all times, whether on or off duty, in person or using social media. You should remember that the Code of Ethics applies whether on or off duty and familiarise yourself with the [MPS Ethical Social Media and Online Communication Principles](#) – this applies to official MPS accounts and personal use of social media.

In accordance with Police Regulations and the Code of Ethics, officers are required to act upon complaints made and act upon and/or report instances of suspected criminality they may encounter on or off duty – this obligation extends to the personal use of social media and messaging applications.

Personal accounts are not permitted to use MPS branding, logos or use similar 'usernames' to the official MPS channels.

Personal accounts are not permitted to publish any form of operational information or policing activity: including images, audio or video. Disciplinary action may be taken for inappropriate disclosures of operational information. Stating 'views are my own' does not absolve you of your professional responsibilities towards your employer.

Recognised Staff Support Associations, Unions or Federation are entitled to create and run their own social media channels. These channels are distinct from MPS official accounts and do not receive formal instruction or guidance from DMC. Officers and staff nominated to use social media on behalf of a recognised Staff Support Association, Union or Federation are still bound by the [MPS Ethical Social Media and Online Communication Principles](#) and guidance referred to elsewhere in this policy.

**Making best use of social media** - Further practical guidance is available on the [DMC's Using Social Media intranet page](#).

## **12. Filming in the street or other public places**

The MPS Film Unit facilitates TV and Film productions in London.

This includes arranging for film companies to safely use the roads and river or airspace and film with imitation firearms in public areas.

If you are approached by a production company wishing to arrange filming you should direct them to the [MPS Film Unit](#).

Please note that any road closures or filming licences must be arranged by the production company with the relevant local authority or TfL.

## **13. Technical advice to film-makers**

TV, films, books and other media production with a police element have a need for appropriate and up-to-date information of various practices and procedures. [The Intellectual property team](#) can arrange technical interviews with experienced officers and members of staff to assist productions in many different areas of policing.

Any such requests must be routed via the IP Team. The MPS charges for this service. Any officer of staff member approached for assistance should not provide it unless arrange via the IP Team.

The IP Team should not arrange any access without consultation with DMC.

#### **14. MPS contractors and the media**

The MPS works with many contractors some of whom may want to use their relationship with us for promotional purposes. It is important that officers and staff working with contractors do not agree to any publicity about the product or service without first consulting the [MPS Endorsement Policy](#)

#### **15. MPS publicity materials**

DMC is the guardian of the MPS corporate brand identity and promotes our policing priorities through a series of orchestrated advertising and publicity campaigns. DMC works with contracted advertising, media planning and market research agencies to produce publicity campaigns.

The Hub is an online portal that provides officers and staff with the tools and resources they need to communicate with the public as quickly, effectively and professionally as possible, while minimising the time and money it takes to create their own material. The Hub contains details of how to order existing publicity material, the use of the MPS logo, useful documents, templates and guidance to assist you.

We should all use existing publicity material wherever possible. However, if you have a budget available and have been asked to create new material or place an advert, the DMC can advise you on how to use their contracted agencies, including a number of design and print suppliers.

#### **16. Media engagement and politics**

Crime and policing are an important part of the political agenda so special care needs to be taken that the impartiality of the MPS is not called into question, particularly in the run up to elections.

During elections (i.e. General, Mayoral, London Assembly and London Borough Councils) the MPS issues specific protocols to assist staff in providing information to candidates, managing requests for facilities and guidance on media management.

The External Relations Team own and publish the MPS guidance on pre-election protocols.

Should you have any concerns or questions regarding political engagement during election or at any other time please contact Strategy and Governance's External Relations Team.

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