

Corporate communications

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Corporate communications departments (CCDs) provide a broad range of professional support for internal and external communications, digital and media engagement. In some organisations, these may be called directorates or media services departments.

Chief constables should consider what capacity and specialist skills within their corporate communications department is sufficient to deliver their statutory warning and informing duties under the [Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#), together with the locally agreed service.

This should include the following.

- Arrangements for managing media engagement and enquiries. These details should be published on the force website, including operating hours, any out-of-hours arrangements, and the complaints process for the media and members of the public for police-published information.
- Documented and audited workflow between CCDs and other business areas responsible for managing or handling public contact or engagement.
- Timely triage processes for assessment and joint decision-making between CCDs and other relevant business areas.
- Arrangements to deal with increases in contact and engagement during critical and major incidents, including to ensure that responsibility for media engagement does not interfere with force incident manager or core police control room duties.

To ensure that the release of information is legally compliant and does not compromise policing tactics, police communicators with responsibility for releasing information to the public or the media should receive adequate training in:

- relevant media law
- operational security awareness

Police communicators should receive adequate training relevant to their role in:

- major incident communications protocols

Risk management of public communications

CCDs are available to provide additional advice and support to police officers and police staff who engage with the public and media.

Heads of communications should consider developing a simple risk-assessment framework for all public communications. This should make clear where advice and support should, or must, be sought from CCDs or senior operational leads.

Examples of where CCD advice should be sought include cases or events that:

- could have an impact on, or cause, community tensions
- are high-profile with significant media interest
- involve national issues or security
- could damage confidence in policing
- are likely to generate interest from other media
- are considered contentious or highly politicised
- are complex cases requiring specialist legal or regulatory guidance

Multi-agency communications

Where an investigation, operation or related matter involves multiple forces or agencies, the operational and communications leads for each organisation should liaise proactively. As far as practicable, they should either:

- agree information sharing, media engagement and which organisation is leading the communications prior to publication
- where relevant, follow the established local resilience forum communications protocol

In the event of a suspected terrorist incident, force communications teams should work with Counter Terrorism Policing to agree which organisation is leading the communications, aligned with existing management protocols.

For issues that have the potential to affect national policing or are likely to generate significant national media coverage, CCDs should consider contacting the [NPCC Press Office](#) (on operational issues) or the [College of Policing Press Office](#) (on national standards and guidance).

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