Practice Advice on

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Second Edition

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2011

Produced on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers by the National Policing Improvement Agency

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Foreword

In 1994, the investigation into the murder of Stephen Lawrence led the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), and the wider police service, to acknowledge that some incidents, even if managed properly, will have a significant negative impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and the wider community.

The public inquiry, which followed the investigation into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, found that the way in which the police had responded to the family's concerns about the conduct of the investigation had arisen as a consequence of institutional racism. To address this and other shortcomings in the investigation process, the MPS developed guidance to assist police officers dealing with similar cases, which they termed 'Critical Incidents'.

The MPS guidance defined a critical incident as:

> **Any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community.**

In 2004, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) report on Operation Fincham (the murder investigation into the deaths of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in Cambridgeshire), Sir Ronnie Flannigan noted that nationally there was still significant confusion about the concept and terminology of critical incident management. This led to the development of the ACPO (2007) Practice Advice on Critical Incident Management, which provided clarity about the management of critical incidents, and included good practice.

ACPO adopted the MPS definition of a critical incident. It is easy to remember and, more importantly, should make sense to first responders, whom the Police Service depends on, to identify criticality factors (see 2.5 Criticality Factors).

In 2008 an HMIC Thematic Inspection; Leading from the Front, found that although the practice advice had been published, it had not been implemented. The HMIC found it untenable that a national document of such importance had not been fully implemented. In particular, the report stated:

'…the Police Service are not equipping frontline sergeants to recognise and effectively manage critical incidents, and the risks associated with them.'

This is particularly relevant as critical incident management has now been identified of one of a number of Protective Service strands – 'those aspects of policing which require forces to lift their focus above local and predictable threats to more complex challenges'; see HMIC (2009) An HMIC Report on Critical Incident Management by Forces in England and Wales.

Since 2008, an ACPO working group led by ACC Steve Devine of Hertfordshire Constabulary has been established and Critical Incident Management has now been embedded into mainstream policing. In addition, there is enhanced national training for sergeants and inspectors, as well as input to a wide range of training for other ranks and roles.

This Second Edition of the ACPO (2007) Practice Advice on Critical Incident management reflects the national development and understanding of critical incident management drawing on the experience of the police service to further improve practice.

Particular thanks are extended to ACC Devine, Supt Hawkins and Det Insp Bowerbank at Hertfordshire Constabulary for their assistance, specialist expertise and advice in the preparation of this Second Edition.

1

Development of Critical Incident Management

Contents

1.1 Introduction

The police respond to many thousands of incidents every year and while many are dealt with well, some are not. In the 2009-10 British Crime Survey, sixty-nine percent of victims were 'very' or 'fairly satisfied' with the police response they received. While this is an improvement on previous years, approximately a third (thirty-one per cent) of victims were less than 'fairly satisfied'.

When crime, disorder or Anti-social behaviour (ASB) happens, and the police response does not meet the expectations of the victim, their family or the community, a critical incident might occur. It may have been caused by police action or inaction, or because of incompetence or indifference. Whether these factors are real or imagined, or based on unrealistic expectations, their presence will indicate a critical incident.

A single critical incident will have a significant, and potentially long-term, impact on both existing and future community engagement and neighbourhood policing. It may also generate a sense of insecurity among vulnerable members of the community and increase any general fear of crime and disorder. More importantly, there is a risk that by failing to provide an effective response to the victim, the failure will in itself amount to repeat victimisation.

Critical Incident Management has now been identified as a priority under the Protective Services agenda and as such the police service has an obligation to ensure that critical incidents are identified and managed effectively. See the ACPO (2010) Protective Services Minimum Standards, Standards and Definitions. The standards highlighted are reflected in this practice advice.

This practice advice has been produced to help police officers and staff manage critical incidents.

1.2 Definitions

A critical incident is defined as:

> *Any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community.*

The definition is intentionally wide. Although high-profile or large-scale incidents have an increased likelihood of developing into, or containing multiple critical incidents, less serious incidents (eg, criminal damage, harassment, or ASB), as well as internal incidents (see 1.7.3 Internal Critical Incidents) can, and do, escalate into critical incidents. A critical incident may appear to come from nowhere, but history shows there are usually warning signs.

For example, the Fiona Pilkington case, in Leicestershire in 2007, had its origins in ASB, but despite repeated reports of disorder, and frustration about a lack of police intervention, Fiona Pilkington felt she had no other option than to take her own life and that of her daughter, Francecca.

1.3 Principles

The overriding principle of Critical Incident Management is one of risk management. The definition (likelihood and significant impact) reflects this.

It is about providing a response which satisfies the needs of the victim, their family and the community, but which also provides an effective and proportionate solution to the incident.

- The definition is deliberately broad and should ensure that incidents which are likely to escalate into a critical incident are not missed.

- It recognises the fundamental importance of community confidence and trust in the police response to critical incidents.

- It applies equally to serious, less serious and internal incidents (see 1.7.3 Internal Critical Incidents).

1.4 Keywords

- Effectiveness - this is a measure of the professionalism, competence and integrity evident in the police response to an incident.

- Significant impact - significant should be interpreted as being particular to each incident but critically relates to the impact on the individual, family or community.

- Confidence - this is a reference to the long-term confidence of victims, families and communities in policing.

- Likely – all incidents that the police deal with **could** have a significant impact on confidence, but are they **likely** to?

1.5 Characteristics of Critical Incidents

To improve police understanding of critical incidents, a review was carried out in 2006/07 which looked at a number of cases which, although not labelled as critical at the time, nevertheless had characteristics that would now result in the declaration of what would now be recognised as a critical incident. For full details of the 2007 review, see: ACPO (2007) Practice Advice on Critical Incident Management.

Public inquiries and Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) investigations were used as source material for the review, as these forums had provided a formal opportunity for the facts of each case to have been considered and good practice and lessons for the future to be identified.

The review found that the factors which may cause an incident to escalate to critical could be divided into five broad areas. These are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Characteristics of Critical Incidents
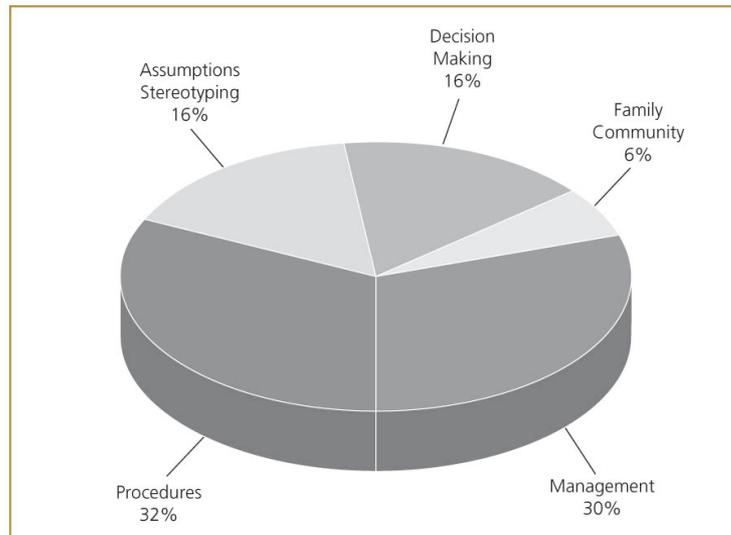
The review found that it was rarely one factor alone, or the actions or inactions of just one person that undermined the police response as a whole. A critical incident usually developed because of several factors which separately may have had little or no impact but, when compounded, had a significant impact on the overall quality of the police response.

The findings of the review are as applicable today as they were in 2007. Crucially, in all cases, however, the central theme to preventing or managing a critical incident is effective decision making in difficult situations.

1.6 Decisions, Errors and Avoiding Decisions.

There is a growing body of research which focuses on police decision-making during critical incident management. It has become increasingly important that police officers and staff understand this process.

There is a wealth of evidence, including research on how cognitive bias (a person's pre-determined and unconscious thought process) affects decision-making, which tries to shed light on how mistakes might occur when people assess difficult situations, and how this can lead incident commanders to pursue a course of action that might hinder the successful management of a critical incident.

In addition, there is a fresh understanding about why some commanders might excessively delay, or even avoid making a decision; even when it is clear, both at the time and later, that a decision was needed.

Chief Officers will want to make themselves aware of the findings of this research and ensure that their critical incident commanders at operational, tactical and strategic levels have an appreciation of the factors involved in effective decision making. This learning can be incorporated in command training provision and opportunities for continuous professional development (particularly through exercise regimes) at minimal cost. An experienced commander who is aware of these factors can be alert to their emergence during the response to an incident (in themselves or in others) and can then take steps to limit their negative effects.

Finally, commanders who understand the relevance of the factors affecting decision making, will be able to account for the decisions they make more clearly, identifying what they have done to mitigate against common errors. This will reduce the fear that they will be subject to excessive accountability, which may prevent them from making a decision at all.

1.7 Critical Incident Types

The cases used in the review (see 1.5 Characteristics of a Critical Incident) could suggest that critical incidents are usually high profile, serious or related to homicide. It is important to remember that this is not always the case, eg missing persons or bullying (1.7.3 Internal Critical Incidents).

1.7.1 Anti-social Behaviour or Hate Crime

Cases, including the deaths of Fiona Pilkington and her daughter Francecca in October 2007, and that of David Askew in March 2010, highlight the fact that critical incidents are still occurring and more importantly, can have their origins in a wide variety of incidents. For example, these two cases are both linked to repeated and persistent anti-social behaviour (ASB).

In the Fiona Pilkington case, (IPCC report published 24th May 2011), there was a history of ASB against Fiona Pilkington, her daughter and their neighbours over a period of several years. The IPCC investigation looked at the effectiveness of the police response to the reports of ASB, and the impact that the police response had on the confidence of the victim, the family and the local community.

David Askew collapsed and died after an incident in which youths were allegedly causing a nuisance at his home in Hattersley. Greater Manchester Police had been in contact with Mr Askew and his relatives over a number of years in relation to repeated allegations of ASB. An IPCC investigation is currently being carried out (as at 18th February 2011).

Other incidents, which may not involve violence or threats of violence, can also develop into a critical incident if not managed appropriately.

During the Channel Four television show, Big Brother, Shilpa Shetty was subjected to racist comments from other housemates. The national and international media profile of this programme meant that Hertfordshire Constabulary were under intense pressure to act quickly and effectively, and a failure to react quickly enough exposed the force to criticism, and undermined public confidence that the police where taking such behaviour seriously.

1.7.2   Pre-planned Events

Sporting events or other public order operations (eg, the Hillsborough Disaster (15th April 1989); the G20 demonstrations (2009); Forest Gate Counter-Terrorist Operation (2006)) are also likely to develop one or more critical incidents if the effectiveness of the police response falls short of that required by the event, or doesn't take account of the needs of the community.

The potential for a pre-planned event, particularly where emotions are high, to develop into disorder or even violence cannot be underestimated. If this happens, as in the case of violent disorder during student protests against tuition fees in London's Milbank (November 2010) and Westminster (December 2010), the quality

of the police response will have a significant impact on the confidence of the victims, their families and the community. Events such as this may raise community concerns and undermine confidence in the ability of the police to prevent disorder.

It may be appropriate to incorporate critical incident management into the planning for some pre-planned events. This may be particularly relevant in a number of cases, for example, where:

- There may history of tension between the local community and visitors, eg, The Appleby Horse Fair in Cumbria.

- There is intelligence which suggests disorder may be likely, eg, English Defence League Marches during the summer of 2010.

The size of the event may also increase the likelihood that disorder, even in small pockets, may occur, for example, music festivals or the forthcoming London Olympics in 2012.

To treat events such as these as incidents which have the likelihood to escalate into one or more critical incidents, during planning will help to ensure that appropriate contingency resources are put in place. This will help to prevent disorder or violence, and will instil confidence in the police ability to manage such events.

1.7.3 Internal Critical Incidents

When thinking about groups that may be effected, it is easy to forget that our officers and staff form a community in their own right and a team may be considered a family (and at the same time contain, or be part of a number of separate and distinct communities, eg, special interest groups, Federation or union groups) and that certain incidents may have an impact on their confidence in their own organisation's (the police) response. These incidents are known as internal critical incidents, and can include bullying, discrimination, corruption or other inappropriate behaviour, as well as the death or serious injury of colleagues. Extensive organisational upheavals such as force re-structuring or a review into pay and conditions may also be considered critical incidents.

The victim may be a colleague or a member of the public; and the community may be part of the police family (officer or staff), a group or association internal or external to the police, or it may be the wider local community or part of it.

Irrespective of who the victim is, or who the community is, the police response to that critical incident should be the same.

The following case studies are recent examples of internal critical incidents which had a significant impact both internally and externally. It is important to remember that in addition to these high profile cases there are many cases which do not come to public attention, such as professional conduct or disciplinary matters, but which will also have a significant impact on police officers and staff in the course of their careers.

In July 2009 two police dogs were left in a car during a heat wave and died. This incident not only had an impact on those immediately affected within that organisation, but also the national police community who had a positive reputation for animal welfare issues, and the wider local community who had the previous year been involved in an appeal for puppies to be trained.

In January 2011 an undercover officer offered to give evidence on behalf of the defence during a prosecution case against environmental activists. Publicity around this case not only raised concerns that the officer had 'gone native', but also that the police were carrying out unnecessary undercover operations. The officer had infiltrated the group and had been an active member for seven years, involved in protests, such as, the G8 protest in Gleneagles in 2005. This case raised a number of questions internally, as well as externally, which have undermined public and ministerial confidence in police undercover activities, their deployment, purpose and effectiveness. It has also had a direct impact on officers and their families, who need to have confidence in the organisation to correctly deploy and manage such officers.

In January 2011, Stephen Mitchell was sentenced to life imprisonment after being found guilty of abuse of public office. Between 1999 and 2007, the former police officer from Northumbria had committed sexual offences against vulnerable women he had come into contact with during the course of his duties. This case not only undermined the confidence of victims, their family and the local community in the police service, it also undermined the confidence of officers and staff in the police recruitment processes (which missed the fact that Mitchell had a history of sexual offending). Officers and staff need to have confidence in the integrity of colleagues they work with. This case also generated widespread public concern because of the high profile media response the case received.

1.8   A Proactive Response

The Police Service has a duty to respond to every incident in the right way, first time, every time and at every level.

Early proactive intervention during incidents where there is a likelihood of escalation into a critical incident has been shown to help prevent a significant loss of confidence.

For example, the police response to the murder of Damilola Taylor in London in 2000, was identified by the subsequent MPS review (MPS, 2002) as an example of a proactive and preventive approach. Early recognition of this case as a critical incident led to several very senior officers overseeing the investigation from the outset. This timely intervention was commended by the review.

NB: 'Senior' does not always equate to length of service, and rank does not always equate to experience.

Another case, where early recognition of a critical incident helped the police to maintain community confidence, was Operation Sumac - the Ipswich prostitute murders in 2006.

Operation Sumac was declared as a critical incident following the disappearance of the second victim, because of the vulnerability of the victims. This led to a Gold Group being established to oversee and coordinate the investigation and community engagement activity. The purpose of the community engagement was to reassure other potentially vulnerable people, as well as the wider community. For further information see NPIA (2007) Strategic Debrief; Operation Sumac.

More recently the investigations into the deaths of Mary Fox in Bodmin in November 2009, and Aamir Siddiqui in Cardiff in April 2010 provide useful case studies for a proactive approach to critical incident management.

Case Study: Death of Mary Fox, Bodmin, Nov 2009.
On Thursday 5th November 2009, Mary Fox was the victim of a fatal house fire. Her 17 year old son, Ruam, escaped through a first floor window.

Although initial indications suggested an accident, the remains of a firework were found some hours later by forensic teams behind the front door of the house. Reports from neighbours also highlighted ASB around the estate during the evening of the fire.

A press report the following day made National, front page news and, based on interviews with local residents, wrongly portrayed Mary as suffering from learning difficulties. The investigation was also linked to the Pilkington case in Leicester where the victim had suffered from learning difficulties and had suffered abuse from local youths.

When a murder investigation was launched 12–16 hours after the fire had started it was identified as a Critical Incident. The investigation team needed to catch up quickly, re-build family and community confidence and trust, as well as correct the inaccurate press reports. To do this the SIO drew on previous experience, as well as using pre-existing networks and groups.

Case study, cont'd

In the first instance, the SIO met the family, and consulted multi-agency partners. This informed a live press conference held, Saturday morning on SKY News, to correct press in-accuracies and to reassure the family. This marked the beginning of a proactive media strategy and helped reassure the local community.

Bodmin is in rural east Cornwall, and the Berryfields Estate where the fire took place, is in an area of social and economic depravation. To reassure the community and encourage a positive response, the SIO integrated local neighbourhood teams (a recognised presence in the community) into the investigation team, particularly to assist in house to house, CCTV, neighbourhood and arrest team enquiries. Previous experience of parachuting specially trained tactical teams into rural areas had proved negative, increasing suspicion and undermining cooperation with locals.

In addition, the SIO tapped into pre-existing local networks (Key Individual Networks (KINs) which include, for example, local community, council, neighbourhood watch and church representatives) and a standing Critical Incident Working Group, whose IAG members are able to act as critical friends and assist the SIO in developing strategies and policy to address community needs and tensions. The KINS were used proactively to engage with the communities, assist with the media campaign and appeal locally for witnesses and information within the community.

Devon and Cornwall had invested significant time in establishing KIN networks in their local communities. The one in Bodmin was particularly strong, and provided the SIO with access to key community representatives, helping to build trust and confidence in the investigation and encourage cooperation.

Three local teenagers were arrested and charged with manslaughter. As the offenders were from the same estate as the victim and her family, the SIO undertook extensive community impact assessments in consultation with the KINs when considering whether to bail the offenders. The boys were found guilty of manslaughter in May 2010 and all received custodial sentences.

Case Study: The Murder of Aamir Siddiqi, April 2010

On Sunday April 11th 2010, two masked men forced their way into the family home of Aamir Siddiqi, in the Roath area of Cardiff. They fatally stabbed 17-year-old Aamir, and seriously injured his parents, aged 55 and 68, who tried to intervene.

The media interest in this crime was immediate at both local and national level. Not least because it took place on a sunny Sunday afternoon opposite one of the most popular and busy parks in the city; but also because Aamir was a well liked young man with a bright future ahead of him.

Aamir was of Indian heritage and a Muslim, from a respectable family, living in an affluent neighbourhood. He was a high achiever planning to do law at Cardiff University, and was passionate about sport.

When the murder investigation was launched it was immediately identified as a critical incident. Crowds from the park had gathered at the scene; there were early community concerns that this was an honour violence issue; and within the immediate Muslim community there was a feeling that this may be a case of mistaken identity involving members of the Sikh community.

To support the SIO, and to provide a local perspective, the local Operational Chief Inspector and the Head of Minorities Support Unit were involved in investigation management meetings from the start. This ensured that any cultural/community issues were flagged at the earliest opportunity. There was also a direct link between the SIO and the Police Community Lead.

Community intervention

Links with local community contacts were already well embedded within Cardiff and a lot of good relationships had been developed because of the neighbourhood policing model. When this incident happened the key contacts within the Muslim and Sikh communities were, therefore, already in place.

Tactics

- Early in the investigation, the BCU consulted community representatives from the immediate vicinity, together with a family representative, to determine the best way of 'talking' to the local community. As a consequence a poster and leaflet appeal was arranged using Urdu as the main language. The appeal, including posters and leaflet drops in local shops, businesses, community centres, mosques and Guadwara's was

Case study, cont'd

three fold – a request for information; to provide an update on the investigation; and to provide a reassurance message.

- As a sign of respect, the meeting also recommended contact with the local Mosques and Guadwaras to offer a police presence during Friday prayers. The majority of Mosques took up this offer and local neighbourhood officers were present outside the Mosques on the Friday following the murder, this provided reassurance to communities and an opportunity for attendees to pass on any information.

- Some of Aamir's friends arranged a tribute football match in his memory, with local celebrities from Cardiff City FC attending. The community was consulted on whether a police presence was required. As a result, a low key presence, with plain clothed, as well as uniformed staff, were present to receive any information.

- The media appeal from the police and Aamir's family was uploaded to YouTube as the community said this would be the easiest means of communication with the Asian community. They did not necessarily purchase local/national newspapers, and may miss the local TV news, but would be able to access YouTube. Part of the appeal was spoken in Urdu by a family member.

- A mobile police station was deployed to the vicinity of the incident, resourced with a Muslim Neighbourhood Beat Officer who was known and respected within the local community. This proved to be successful as members of the community would attend the mobile police station rather than contacting the appeal telephone number or local police station.

- Cardiff BCU already had a Community Cohesion Group of key individuals and contacts from diverse communities across Cardiff. Although meetings of this group are held regularly, an ad hoc meeting was held following Aamir's murder. The SIO attended and updated the group.

- Intelligence suggested that there were growing tensions between the Hindu and Muslim Youth, stemming from the rumours that the murder was a result of mistaken identity. A meeting was arranged for Youth Leaders from across the City to provide a forum to discuss strategies to dispel tensions.

- Due to the age of the victim and the shock Aamir's death had caused. An offer was made to local schools for Neighbourhood Staff to address pupils during school assemblies. The intention was to offer reassurance; quell rumours; diffuse tensions and

Case study, cont'd

appeal for information. Most Schools were grateful for this offer, in particular the school Aamir attended accepted the offer.

- Patrol Strategies were initiated at the time of the murder, and local officers continued these for some time after the incident took place.

Current position at time of publication

Two people have been charged with murder and are currently on remand awaiting trial. Other persons are actively being pursued in connection with the murder of Aamir Siddiqi.

1.9 A Phased Approach

Whenever an incident which has the likelihood to escalate into a critical incident is identified, it should be addressed promptly and efficiently. Reassuring and maintaining the confidence of the victim, their family and the community is fundamental to critical incident management, as is rebuilding it if it has been lost.

Figure 2 sets out a three phased approach to critical incident management .

Figure 2 Phases of Critical Incident Management
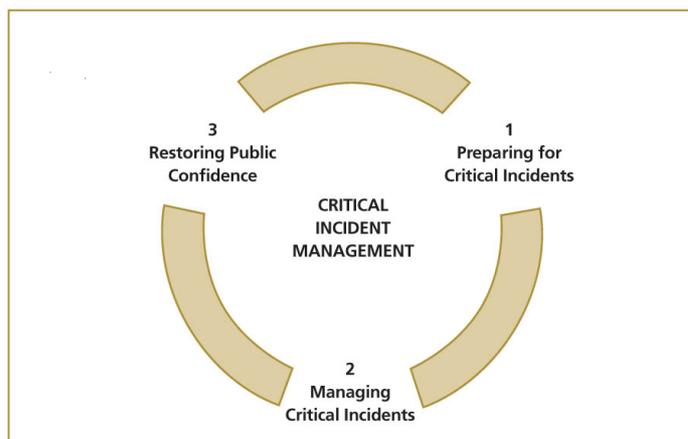
Phase One (Preparation) requires chief officers to consider current management structures to ensure that, where possible, staff are effectively trained and resources are available, and that the overall quality of the police response reflects a competent and accountable standard of incident management.

Phase Two (Management) considers how to identify critical incidents early. This includes management processes which ensure that those incidents which may escalate, or have already escalated, into critical incidents are notified to the most appropriate person, and that they are effectively managed.

Phase Three (Restoring best confidence) considers incidents that have had a significant impact on public confidence but were not identified when the incident was live; and how confidence may be rebuilt through community engagement, resolution or a public inquiry.

When managing an incident that may escalate into a critical incident, or is already a critical incident, this practice advice should be read in conjunction with other existing relevant practice advice and guidance.

There are some key elements which are fundamental to being able to provide this three phased approach. These are:
- Leadership;
- Policy and Processes;
- Operational Risk Management;
- Training;
- Partnership and Resources.

1.10 Leadership

Early intervention can prevent a minor problem escalating into one which could have a significant impact on the overall quality of the police response to an incident. Chief officers may wish to ensure emphasis is placed on effective supervision and support for officers, this will include chief officers having effective command and control of the situation themselves. Part of this support could include access to mentoring and information sharing. Irrespective of this, all officers should expect to have their decisions and actions reviewed as part of routine supervision and quality assurance.

Where issues or problems are identified during an incident, senior managers should, in the first instance, consider what immediate action and support is needed to address them and lessen their impact. It is important, however, to understand why those issues or problems arose and the lessons that can be learned for the future.

1.11 Policy and Processes

Ineffective and/or inconsistent implementation of force protocols, policies and procedures has been identified as one of the main reasons why critical incidents develop (See 1.5 Characteristics of a Critical Incident).

Policy and procedures are usually developed over time and incorporate current legislation and identified good practice. Their implementation will be the most efficient way of reducing the number of critical incidents each year.

This document is not intended to undermine or replace these documents. It is an additional resource to support officers dealing with critical incidents that require specific management in order to maintain or re-build confidence in the police service.

Chief officers may wish to consider implementing processes which will ensure that policies and procedures are applied consistently and competently at all times. Quality assurance processes should promote a positive approach to incident management generally. They should be seen as a means of providing support and should not be used to undermine confidence or develop a culture of blame. Active quality assurance can be used to identify good practice. This can be disseminated through briefings, training and policy to improve the quality of future police responses and the overall performance of the Police Service.

1.12 Operational Risk Management

Making well thought out, rational, effective and accountable decisions can be difficult. This is especially true in a fast moving or complex environment like policing, which is characterised by uncertainty, multiple views of a particular

problem, and numerous possible intervention points and possible solutions. Police officers are expected to make effective decisions in an environment full of risks. When things go wrong or pressure rises, the risk-averse approach tends to focus on reducing negative outcomes, preserving reputation and limiting liability, rather than improving decision making to achieve greater benefits.

In response to this climate the police service has developed a set of ten risk principles. The purpose of these principles is to:

- Encourage a culture that learns from risk rather than avoids it;
- Produce confident and professional decision making;
- Lead to improved service delivery and higher public satisfaction;
- Enhance the organisation's reputation;
- Educate the public and stakeholders and help manage their expectations;
- Help defend individuals and forces from unreasonable criticism, complaints, legal action and public inquiries.

For further information on the ten risk principles and on managing operational risk, see ACPO (forthcoming) Guidance on Managing Operational Risk.

1.12.3   Decision Making Models

National Decision Making Model

Making well-thought out, rational and effective decisions can be difficult in any circumstances. Even more so in the complex policing environment which is characterised by things such as uncertainty, ambiguity, multiple views of a particular problem, numerous possible intervention points, and multiple possible solutions. The willingness to make decisions in such conditions is a core professional requirement of all members of the Police Service (see 1.6 Decisions, Errors and Avoiding Decisions).

To help with the decision-making process, ACPO approved a National Decision Model (NDM) for the Police Service in January 2011.

The NDM involves:

- A central pentagon that emphasises the importance of the police mission, values, risk management and legal obligations to every stage of the decision making process.

- Five separate stages in the decision making process, each of which provides the user with a specific area for focus and consideration. For example, the stages involve
    - Gathering and assessing of information;
    - Assessment of threat and risk;
    - Consideration of policing powers and policies,
    - Weighing up appropriate responses; and
    - Taking action and reviewing the effect of that action.

Using the NDM is a means of turning uncertainty to the organisation's and the public's benefit by increasing the likelihood of favourable outcomes arising from decision-making and constraining the risk of harm. It will empower staff in decision making – making them more questioning of the situations confronting them and giving them greater confidence in exercising their professional judgement.

For learning products relating to the national decision model and which are available for forces, see: http://www.NPIA.co.uk

1.13 Training

Responding to an incident means providing a proactive response which is focused, motivated, well-managed and accountable. The response should also address the diverse needs of victims, witnesses and the wider community.

Chief officers may wish to ensure that their staff receive training, which is appropriate to their role and provides them with a clear understanding of the concepts and terminology of critical incident management. Thought should also be given to resilience at all levels, although this may be particularly important amongst the more senior ranks, where there are less officers and staff available. Ideally there should be a 'cradle to grave' approach. National courses have been designed for a wide variety of police officer and staff roles, from those working in neighbourhood teams to senior officers.

The NPIA National College of Police Leadership at Bramshill delivers a comprehensive programme of critical incident training courses which reflect current thinking and national good practice. These courses are suitable for a range of roles and ranks and in many cases they have been developed nationally for local delivery, to meet local needs. Courses include critical incident management for sergeants and inspectors, incorporating command structures, leadership, diversity, decision logs, the use of Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) and media considerations. These two courses while capable of standing alone are also mapped into the new Core Leadership Development Programme. They make use of immersive learning techniques including Hydra Minerva training suites.

For further information email leadershipbramshill@npia.pnn.police.uk or telephone: +44 (0) 1256 602300.

Police constables, police community support officers (PCSOs) and call handlers are on the front line and usually provide the initial response to an incident. These officers and staff would benefit from understanding of the concept and terminology of critical incidents in order to help proactively prevent them. This increased awareness will help officers and staff to realise:

- What they are dealing with;
- What might develop;
- What the impact of the incident and/or the police response might be;
- Whom they should tell if they believe the incident they are dealing with has the likelihood to escalate into a critical incident.

Although chief officers are responsible for providing staff with appropriate training, equally, staff also have a personal responsibility to ensure that they have been adequately trained for their role, and that they are aware of, and know how to access resources, support and supervision to provide a professional, effective and motivated police response. Where staff are faced with difficult or complex decisions, they need to be confident that they have access to support and information, and that they are 'not alone'.

Forces may wish to undertake 'table top' exercises to explore potential problems and to incorporate the lessons learned from previous incidents. Table top exercises, in a safe environment, based on various different scenarios, including less serious incidents, will allow forces to explore what may happen in a given situation.

Courses currently available from the NPIA include:
- Foundations for Senior Leaders (FSL),
  http://www.npia.police.uk/en/14721.htm
- Senior Leadership Development programme (SLP),
  http://www.npia.police.uk/en/6088.htm
- Leading powerful partnerships (LPP),
  http://www.npia.police.uk/en/14895.htmand
- Strategic Command Course (SCC), http://www.npia.police.uk/en/6090.htm
- Core Leadership Development Programme (CLDP), http://www.ncalt.com

In addition, training packages such the Critical Incident Command Level 1, and Level 2, are available for forces to deliver locally.

For further details of all critical incident training provided by the NPIA see:
http://www.npia.police.uk

Alternatively, the customer support team can be contacted by telephone: 01256 602300 or email: leadershipbramshill@npia.pnn.police.uk

1.14 Partnership and Resources

Successful policing depends on building positive relationships with the victim, their family and the community, as well as with partner agencies and organisations. It is too late to build relationships after a critical incident has happened.

Developing a proactive approach to victim support and community engagement will increase the public's trust and confidence in the Police Service and encourage open lines of communication.

The community is a key resource in tackling crime and the fear of crime. Building relationships is an ongoing process developed over time. The police need to recognise and understand the diverse needs and issues of their local community, and build positive relationships with recognised representatives.

See also 1.8 A Proactive Approach for case study examples of effective use of partners and internal resources.

1.14.3   Internal Staff Resources

To help build community relationships forces may wish to make use of the diversity available within their own forces. This would provide access to contacts and life skills possessed by individual staff members
including experience relating to:

- Lifestyle;
- Specialist community knowledge;
- Languages;
- Hobbies.

A database containing this type of information would allow SIOs and incident commanders to access specialist knowledge and experience, which may help them to build relationships before, during and after a critical incident.

1.14.4   Independent Advisory Groups and Community Cohesion

The use of IAGs, or Community Cohesion Groups is also a key asset when building community relationships. In some cases these groups can identify and advise on the best ways to access hard-to-reach or hard-to-hear community groups. For further information on independent advice, see 2.13.2 Community Liaison.

It is good practice to provide IAGs or Community Cohesion Groups with training on critical incident management and there is now bespoke training available for them through the NPIA National College of Police Leadership at Bramshill.

See also for case study examples of effective use of community networks and IAGs.

1.14.5 Independent Observers

Where there is potential for conflict to arise between opposing community interests, especially during predictable events, such as sporting fixtures, demonstrations or parades, it is good practice to use independent observers. Their observations on the planning and policing of such events can help to allay community concerns and foster positive relationships with all community groups.

1.14.6 Multi-agency Partnerships

Forces should also consider how they work with partner agencies to provide a coordinated response to critical incident management. Early engagement with partners will help to develop proactive relationships which will be enhanced by a common understanding of the challenges of critical incident management.

Multi-agency partners may wish to adopt a definition similar to that used by the police when referring to such incidents. For example:

> **Any incident where the effectiveness of [relevant Agency name]'s response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the [customer, client, pupil], their family and/or the community**

The NPIA Leading Powerful Partnerships programme will help partners to develop multi-agency thinking in critical incident management, and includes:

- The ability to think broadly;
- Strategic perspective;
- Strategic negotiating and influencing;
- Political awareness;
- Partnership working;
- Dealing with change and uncertainty.

For further information contact the customer support team, telephone: 01256 602300 or email: leadershipbramshill@npia.pnn.police.uk

1.15 Other Sources of Information

The following documents may also provide further information:

- ACPO (2005) Guidance on Major Incident Room Standard Administrative Procedures (MIRSAP);
- ACPO (2006) Guidance on the Police National Mobilisation Plan;
- ACPO (2006) The Murder Investigation Manual;
- ACPO (2005) Practice Advice on Core Investigative Doctrine;
- ACPO (2007) Major Crime Reviews (available in Journal of Homicide and Major Incident Investigation, Volume 4, Issue 1, Spring 2008);
- ACPO (2005) Guidance on the National Intelligence Model;
- ACPO (2010) Manual of Guidance on Keeping the Peace;
- ACPO (2010) Manual of Guidance on the Management, Command and Deployment of Armed Officers;
- ACPO (2006) Practice Advice on Professionalising the Business of Neighbourhood Policing;
- Neighbourhood Policing Programme (2006) Neighbourhood Policing; BCU Commander Guide;
- Mistry, D (2007) Community engagement: practical lessons from a pilot project.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Any incident has the likelihood to escalate into a critical incident, including those incidents which are within the capability of a BCU.

- Large-scale incidents may have their origins in a less serious incident which may have had a poor police response initially.

- Chief officers, through their senior officers and BCU commanders, may wish to establish effective management regimes and quality control processes to ensure a proportionate, consistent and high-quality response for all incidents first time, every time, at every level.

- Chief officers may wish to ensure clear leadership, efficient monitoring and quality assurance processes are implemented in their force.

- Effective and consistent implementation of force policies and procedures will help to reduce the number of critical incidents that happen each year.

- Chief officers may wish to ensure that their staff are appropriately trained for their role.

- Forces may wish to adopt a proactive approach to victim care and community engagement. It is too late to build community relationships after an incident has happened.

- It is considered good practice to use officers and staff with specialist knowledge and experience to help build links with the local community.

2

Managing Critical Incidents

Contents

2.1 Introduction

Critical incident management should start with early identification of any incident which has the likelihood to escalate, or has already escalated, into a critical incident, before it starts or while it is still ongoing. It is particularly important that this includes incidents that are within the capability of a BCU. If small critical incidents are not identified early, they could escalate into a large-scale incident which could have a long-term impact on community confidence.

Early action should be taken to rectify issues that may affect the quality of the police response, before they have a significant impact on public confidence.

The definition is ambiguous and could include any type of incident. If it were any narrower or any more specific, there would be a significant risk that critical incidents might be missed.

In light of the definition of a critical Incident, it is impossible to provide forces with a fail-safe tool or risk model for identifying an incident which may escalate, or has already escalated, into a critical incident. There are three reasons for this.

- Any incident can escalate, or has the likelihood to escalate into a critical incident. This includes crime and non-crime incidents or operations, which may be spontaneous or pre-planned.

- The quality of the police response can be undermined by one or more of a range of issues. This can be further compounded by poor quality assurance processes, poor victim care and/or poor community engagement.

- The impact that the incident will have on the victim, their family or the community, irrespective of the police response, cannot be predicted.

This last point is entirely subjective. It is likely, however, that the greater the impact an incident has on those most closely affected by it, the greater their expectations will be about the quality of the police response. There will also be an assumption that what is important to those affected will be equally important to the police.

2.2 The Impact of an Incident

Although it is possible to take steps to ensure a consistent and professional police response, it is not possible to predict the impact that an incident will have and why.

The impact that an incident will have on an individual will be influenced by:

- The circumstances of the incident;
- The emotional, mental or physical impact of the incident;
- General feelings of security and/or vulnerability.

A minor criminal act, for example, criminal damage, may be nothing more than a nuisance or inconvenience to some, but for others it will have much greater significance. This may be because the victim is particularly vulnerable or because this is the latest in a catalogue of similar incidents that the victim has suffered (eg, harassment, hate crimes or ASB), and they do not think enough is being done to stop it happening.

2.3 Trauma or Bereavement

A traumatic event or bereavement, particularly the sudden and unexpected death of a loved one, will affect the way in which a person may react to the police, and how they perceive the service they are receiving.

Grief reactions can be very varied and will depend on the individual, the circumstances of the event and their resilience to it. What may be considered an irrational response by some may feel perfectly rational to the individual, and it is important that these feelings are respected.

Reactions to grief may include feelings of:

Shock;	Searching;	Disbelief;
Anger;	Hate;	Bitterness;
Guilt;	Fear;	Ambivalence;
Isolation;	Frustration;	Despair;
Hopelessness;	Anxiety;	Loneliness;
Acceptance.		

In all cases it is vital that the individual is treated with dignity and respect and that their needs are taken into account.

It is also important to remember that a traumatic event or bereavement may not be related to the incident which the police are currently responding to. The individual's feelings and reaction, however, will be no less important when managing the current incident.

A traumatic event can also have a significant impact on an entire community (as in the case of the fatal shootings carried out by Derek Bird in Cumbria in June 2010). Members of a community may suffer similar psychological or emotional trauma as a result of their proximity to events, as those people who were directly affected. Their sense of safety and general feelings of vulnerability may be increased.

In the case of murder or manslaughter, officers are required to notify the Victim Support Homicide Service, see ACPO (2008) Family Liaison Guidance for further information.

The following leaflets are also available:
CJS (2009) Information for the Bereaved.
CJS (2009) Coping with Grief when Someone Close has been Killed.

The Family Liaison and Coordination of Support Services (FLACSS) have written a booklet for people who have suffered sudden or violent bereavement. It provides details of a number of organisations who may be able to offer advice or support to victims.

Note: FLACSS does not specifically recommend the organisations named in the booklet, as it is for victims themselves to decide which, if any organisation they may wish to contact. For further information see FLACSS (2008) Support at a Time of Loss.

2.4 Situation Awareness

It is possible to gauge general feelings of tension and vulnerability in the community, and to predict criticality factors which are likely to have an effect on how

the victim, their family or the community may react to an incident, irrespective of the quality of the police response.

Gauging the mood of communities and monitoring the impact that incidents and events have previously had on them will help to identify the type of incidents which, in the future may have a significantly higher likelihood of escalating into a critical incident if they are not dealt with effectively at the outset.

Situation awareness takes into account general feelings of vulnerability and insecurity, and also the economic, political and social factors which impact on the local community.

It can be developed through:

- Proactive community engagement;
- Environmental scanning;
- Collating and analysing community intelligence and information;
- Competent call handling and interrogation of computer recording systems.

Situation awareness linked to intelligence systems will provide information for business processes such as threat and risk assessments, NIM tasking and co-ordination, and officer briefing and debriefing.

2.5 Criticality Factors

It is not just a specific type of incident that can have a significant impact on the victim; there can also be particular factors in any type of incident which will increase its impact.

The matrix in Figure 3 is suggested as a tool to help practitioners identify incidents which have already, or may escalate into a critical incident.

This matrix is not prescriptive or exhaustive. Criticality factors will change over time and between forces. They will reflect local demographics such as ethnic mix, diversity, density of population and local geography. They should also take into account local

situation awareness, which will reflect the mood of the community, and the local economic, political and social climate at any given time.

Figure 3: Critical Thinking Matrix

Does your incident have any of the following features?			
Death	Media Interest	Failure to follow Standard Operating Procedures/Policy	Wider Community Issues
Serious Injury	Significant Damage	Local Interest	Regional Interest
National Interest	Vulnerable Victim	Prominent Victim	Repeat Victim
Repeat Location	Repeat Offender	Prominent Offender	Large numbers Of victims
Policing Error	Minority Community issues	Prominent Location	Police Misconduct
Failure within the criminal justice system	Victim from within the police service	Offender from within the police service	Political Interest

Likely significant impact on the:		
The victim	Their family	The community

Where a specific type of incident (eg, homicide) is identified, it should, in the first instance, be managed in line with the relevant policy or procedure and use the golden hour principles set out in ACPO (2005) Practice Advice on Core Investigative Doctrine.

If there is early recognition of a poor police response to an incident a prompt apology to those affected may prevent further escalation of a critical incident. For further advice see 3.1 Loss of Public Confidence.

2.6 Notification

A key element of critical incident management is to give senior officers early notification of incidents that have escalated, or are likely to escalate into a critical incident.

Criticality factors will help to do this.

> Note: It is the quality of the police response that will cause or prevent a critical incident. On this basis, all incidents should be subject to an effective regime of quality assurance. See 1.10 Policy and Processes.

All officers or members of police staff dealing with an incident (which will include call handlers and first attending officers) should continually ask themselves:

- What am I dealing with?
- What might it develop into?
- What impact might this incident have?
- Whom should I tell if I think this may escalate into a critical incident? See also 1.12 Training.

Where, in the officer or staff member's opinion, an incident is, or has the likelihood to escalate into a critical incident, it is essential that this is communicated immediately to an appropriately trained senior officer. This may be a duty inspector, the force control room manager or another line manager. Senior officers should not discourage officers or police staff from reporting these incidents because the next one may be a critical incident with significant implications for the force.

Notification should not prevent the reporting officer or member of police staff from continuing to provide an ongoing police response in line with the policy or procedure relevant to the incident.

Senior officers who are notified of an incident that is, or has the likelihood to escalate into a critical incident need to decide:

- Whether the report is valid;
- Whether the current deployment will deliver an effective police response;
- Whether the incident should be escalated to a chief officer and/or declared a critical incident.

The decision to then declare an incident as critical should be based on at least one objective reason why the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family or the community.

Chief officers should ensure that local force policy and procedures are developed and implemented for the prompt notification and assessment of incidents which are, or have the likelihood to escalate into critical incidents.

Note: Anyone can 'call' a critical incident to bring it to the attention of a senior officer, however, only a designated senior officer, eg, the duty Inspector can 'declare' an incident as critical. This, therefore, acts as a quality assurance mechanism to avoid inappropriate declarations.

2.7 Declaring a Critical Incident

The decision to declare a critical incident will need to be made when information is sparse, but there will be pressure to make the right decision quickly. To make the appropriate decision, declaring officers should ensure that they have access to all the information available at the time, which may include:

- Decision logs and case files;
- Briefings;
- Family liaison officers;

• Current situation awareness.

Each incident should be assessed on its own merits. Declaring a critical incident should be viewed as a means of supporting a competent and well-managed police response in line with standard policies and procedures.

National and local policies and procedures are intended to ensure a consistent and effective police response to a wide range of incidents. They incorporate key legislation and good practice, where this has been identified.

There may, however, be situations where deviating from the recognised policy or procedures is the right thing to do. In these cases officers should ensure that they clearly record their decisions and the rationale supporting them.

> Chief officers will want to ensure that critical incidents are only declared when it is necessary and appropriate to do so, and that the response is proportionate to the scale of the incident.

Where an incident is declared critical, the subsequent response should quickly identify the causes and a management plan should be implemented to restore the quality of the police response and re-build confidence. It is only through a prompt and well coordinated response that the police will be able to reassure the victim, their family and the community, and restore any lost confidence in the Police Service.

2.8 Command and Control

Chief officers will want to ensure that critical incidents are led through unambiguous command and control that clearly outlines the roles and accountability of the personnel involved.

To assist chief officers in determining the appropriate command response, the ACPO (2009) Guidance on Command and Control provides a nationally recognised framework for deployment of a Strategic (Gold), Tactical (Silver) and Operational (Bronze) command structure.

2.8.1 A Tiered Response

Using a tiered response allows the command structure to be scaled up or down in the light of changing circumstances. This is important where, for example, because of heightened community tensions, a minor crime or low level ASB incident could escalate into a large-scale policing response crossing BCU or force boundaries.

Tier 1 – BCU response

This will include critical incidents within the capability of one BCU and where actions and risk are limited to that area.

Tier 2 – Cross BCU Response

This will include critical incidents that impact on more than one BCU. It will also include series of linked incidents that have occurred in more than one BCU. There is limited potential for the actions and risk to spread further.

Tier 3 - Force Response

 This will include critical incidents with a force, cross-force or national dimension and where there is a significant threat to public confidence and the reputation of the forces involved. Management of the critical incident will require substantial activity by a significant proportion of the lead force's BCUs.

Note: It is acknowledge that in recent years many forces have changed their force structures and there may now be variance around how forces are organised, and what different force areas are called. Irrespective of this forces should look at individual incidents and assess whether they should be managed at a local, force or cross force level.

Chief officers may wish to adjust the suggested rank nominations at each level, depending on local force size and structure and the scale and complexity of the critical incident. Role is, however, more important than rank when making sure command of an incident is allocated to the most appropriate person.

For further information see also ACPO (2009) Guidance on Command and Control.

2.8.2 Professionalising the Investigation Programme (PIP) Level 4

When providing an effective police response to a high profile or complex incident, the Gold Commander may wish to deploy a Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP) Level 4 Investigator to provide support for the overall strategic management of the investigation.

A PIP 4 Investigator is competent in a decision-making role with the additional capability of providing advisory or review support as required by the investigation.

PIP Level 4 Role Profile

Whether to deploy a PIP Level 4 Investigator is a decision for individual Chief Officers taking into account the individual circumstances of the incident.

Deployment will, however, give the organisation additional resilience by providing:

- A suitably qualified and experienced individual to take the strategic investigative lead for a complex homicide, and/or other high profile investigation;
- Where appropriate, the provision of advice and support to the Gold Commander particularly in relation to the development of a professional and proportionate investigative response as part of a wider policing operation;
- The provision of advice, support and, where necessary, direction to the appointed Senior Investigating Officer; or,
- The capability to review a particular policing operation.

Where a PIP 4 Investigator is deployed, the Gold Commander should issue written Terms of Reference. These will clearly set out the remit of the PIP 4 investigator for this particular operation, and should be subject to periodic review as the wider policing operation develops.

2.8.3 Gold Groups

The principal function of the gold group should be strategic, ie, they provide impartial support, advice and analysis to help resolve the incident and help the gold commander set the gold strategy. They should not get involved in tactical or operational activities, although the gold strategy will inform action taken by the silver or bronze. The gold commander is ultimately responsible for any strategic decisions affecting the police response.

A gold group will also help to ensure coordination in multi-agency critical incidents, and can support links with the local community and other legitimately interested parties.

Care should be taken, however, to ensure that the views canvassed represent those of the individuals and groups affected by the critical incident. Gold Groups should include communities who may not appear to be directly affected but could be indirectly affected.

The specific function, membership and content of a gold group will vary for each critical incident. The gold commander will need to ensure that a sound framework for discussion is maintained during meetings, which are likely to be complex and highly-charged. Gold group meetings should be minuted and will be subject to disclosure under the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996, unless Public Interest Immunity (PII) applies.

For further information see also:
London Emergency Services Liaison Panel (LESLP) (2007) Major Incident Procedures Manual (7th Edition);
ACPO (2009) Guidance on Emergency Procedures;
ACPO (2010) Guidance on Policing Football;
ACPO (2010) Manual of Guidance on Keeping the Peace

2.8.4 Strategic Coordinating Group

Where the response to a critical incident requires the involvement of partner agencies, the gold commander may wish to consider establishing a Strategic

Coordinating Group (SCG). The primary purpose of a SCG will be to provide a coordinated approach to multi-agency strategic leadership of the response.

For further information see ACPO (2009) Guidance on Command and Control.

2.9 Critical Incident Tactical Advisors

Spontaneous Incidents

The MPS use critical incident advisers to assist with spontaneous crime-related critical incidents that are within the capability of a single BCU and are unlikely to require a large-scale deployment of officers or resources. Critical incident advisers are officers with previous experience of managing such incidents, and they can provide specialist advice and support to the officer in charge of the incident. They report to the BCU commander responsible for the location where the critical incident is taking place. Critical incident advisers may also provide a review function for the BCU commander to help them determine whether further escalation is required.

This is a developing area of work and forces wishing to develop a tactical advisor capacity for spontaneous incidents should contact the MPS Critical Incident Team for further information.

Pre-planned Operations

During the planning and deployment phases of a pre-planned operation, the gold commander may wish to consider having a critical incident tactical advisor available to provide advice to the gold group.

Commanders may also wish to develop a contingency plan in the event that a pre-planned operation, or a part of it, escalates into a spontaneous critical incident.

For further information see ACPO (2010) Manual of Guidance on Keeping the Peace and ACPO (2010) Guidance on Policing Football.

2.10 Critical Incident Assessment

The reason(s) why an incident has escalated into a critical incident will need to be assessed. This will help to identify what remedial action will be needed to recover the effectiveness of

the police response, and to rebuild the confidence of the victim, their family and the community.

This assessment will be based on all the immediately available information, such as decision logs, briefings from officers and, if appropriate, family liaison officers.

2.11 Management Plan

A focused and thorough review of the available information will help to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the police response, and determine a management plan for the future progress of the critical incident.

Not all incidents will require specific action to be taken to recover the effectiveness of the police response; it may simply be a case of ensuring that the ongoing response is managed and communicated competently. Where it is identified that action will need to be taken to improve the quality of the police response and/or to restore public confidence, chief officers may wish to develop a management plan to support this process.

The response to individual critical incidents will be as unique as the incident itself. Officers involved will need to continually ask themselves:

What is right in this case?

An important aspect of the review will be to consider whether management of the critical incident is currently allocated to the most appropriate officer.

> If a critical incident is identified, chief officers have a responsibility to formally consider the demands on the SIO, and who is best placed to meet those demands so that appropriate appointments are made.
>
> Sir Ronnie Flanagan's report into Operation Fincham

This observation applies equally to operational commanders for pre-planned non-crime events as it does for spontaneous events.

Allocation to the most appropriate officer is key to ensuring an effective police response. Every critical incident should be assessed and allocated according to the needs of the incident. Allocation should not be based solely on rank, seniority or availability of resources.

By using the acronym SAFER for investigative incidents, critical incident commanders will be able to quickly identify the action that is required to ensure and safeguard success in what could potentially be a complex and dynamic environment.

• Scenes of Crime - well-defined and well-managed;
• Actions - fast-tracked and intelligence-led, to arrest offender(s);
• Family - supported and supportive of investigation;
• Evidence - comprehensive and relentless search for witnesses and evidence;
• Records - Accurate and contemporaneous, clearly stating decisions and rationale.

Bill Griffiths BEM QPM

Metropolitan Police Service

2.12 Record Keeping

The primary purpose of a decision log is to help incident commanders resolve the incident. It does this by providing an accurate record of decisions and their rationale. During a fast moving critical incident, completing a policy log is often difficult; however, entries should always be made as soon as practicable.

The secondary purpose of a properly completed policy log is to allow the progress of the incident to be reviewed, by having past decisions placed in context.

Decision making and policy logs should not be about protecting organisational reputation. They should provide an open, honest and accurate account, and where necessary, determine whether, given the impact of the police response, an informal or formal apology may be appropriate.

2.13 Victim, Family and Community

One of the most important considerations throughout any investigation is the relationship between the family and the police. Families should be treated appropriately, professionally, with respect and in accordance with their diverse needs. The Office of Criminal Justice Reform (2005) The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime provides that all victims of crime have a statutory right to expect a minimum standard of care, irrespective of whether their allegations are substantiated.

The importance of positive relationships and effective communication with victims, families and wider communities cannot be overstated. The benefits are likely to include:

- Open and honest dialogue between the police, and victims, families and communities;
- Increased understanding of family and community needs;
- Confidence in the police response;
- Improved community intelligence;
- Increased investigative opportunities;
- Improved policing outcomes.

It may not be appropriate in every case to deploy family liaison officers (FLOs) to the victim and/or their family, but in all cases the basic principles of victim care should be followed.

Officers should also be aware of the potential impact that traumatic events or bereavement can have on the victim, their family or the wider community. This may make it difficult to build and maintain positive relationships, especially in cases where a dedicated family liaison officer would not normally be deployed.

 In these cases it is important that officers take time to understand the needs of the individual and consider alternative ways of building relationships. This may be through intermediaries, family or community representatives, see 2.13.1 Family Liaison.

See also 2.2 The Impact of an Incident and 2.3 Trauma and Bereavement.

For further information see:

Office for Criminal Justice Reform (2005) Code of Practice for Victims of Crime

CJS (2008) The Witness Charter

http://frontline.cjsonline.gov.uk/guidance/victim-and-witnesses/

2.13.1 Family Liaison

Where a victim has died as a result of criminal conduct or suspected criminal conduct, a FLO should be assigned to any relatives that the police consider may need this support. It may also be appropriate to assign FLOs to incidents involving missing persons, hate crime or any other incident identified as a critical incident.

Critical incident commanders should involve FLOs early in the response to a critical incident. The ACPO (2008) Family Liaison Officer Guidance provides guidance to forces on the provision of family liaison. It ensures that any deployment has clear terms of reference, and that FLOs are appropriately tasked and regularly briefed and debriefed.

Officers appointed to family liaison roles may find themselves in difficult or complex situations, but they have a duty to develop and maintain positive relationships and open lines of communication with families. The main objectives for family liaison should include:

* Providing a documented two-way channel for communication between the family and the police;
* Gathering evidence and information from the family in a sensitive manner that contributes to and preserves the integrity of the police investigation;
* Providing timely information and practical support to the family;
* Contributing to a coordinated response that addresses the needs of families, involving Victim Support Services and other appropriate support agencies as required;
* Ensuring appropriate support for staff who are involved in delivering effective family liaison.

Family Representatives

Some families or victims will not want to deal directly with the police and will appoint a solicitor or other intermediary to represent their interests. They are entitled to take this stance and the police should respect their wishes. Every effort should be made to build and maintain a positive working relationship with the family representative. The police should:

- Try and anticipate, but not make assumptions about the needs of the family or their representative (eg, for information regarding the incident);
- Respond promptly, through pre-agreed communication methods, to all requests received from the family and their representative;
- React quickly to changes in the nature and context of the incident and communicate these to the family and their representative in clear and unambiguous language or terms;
- Recognise that the needs of the family and their representative may vary over time or in changing circumstances (for example, case reviews, memorial services, anniversaries).

Where an incident develops a significant public or media profile, strategies should be implemented to safeguard the welfare of the family. These should be reviewed regularly to take account of any emerging issues.

A complete log of contacts, meetings and conversations should always be kept by the FLO and FLO coordinator.

Families have a right to challenge the way in which an investigation is dealt with and the Police Service should always try to address any such concerns in an open, honest and constructive way.

Family Meetings

Family meetings are likely to be used as an integral element of the family liaison strategy. They may include:

- Family members (with family being given its widest interpretation);
- The family solicitor;
- Other family advocates or representatives;
- The SIO and appropriate members of the investigative team;
- The BCU commander and/or an ACPO representative.

The following points should be considered when arranging a family meeting:

- They should be planned in advance;

- They should be held at a venue agreed by the family;

- They should be open and accountable with the minutes recorded and circulated to named individuals;

- They may form part of a series of regular meetings;

- They should be followed by a debrief of police personnel and appropriate analysis;

- Where police action has been called into question, participants should consider a positive action plan and contingencies to address the concerns raised.

For further information see:

ACPO (2008) Family Liaison Officer Guidance;

Office for Criminal Justice Reform (2005) The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

2.13.2   Community Liaison

Involving the community in the management of a critical incident can help to reduce the impact of any problems and provide a bridge between the police, and the victim and the wider community.

Independent Involvement

The principle of independent involvement is fundamental to:

- Developing sensitive and effective policing;

- Challenging assumptions and mindsets;

- Demonstrating openness and accountability;

- Providing an independent, community, non-police perspective;

- Building confidence and trust with families and communities.

Where the involvement of independent persons is sought, the following issues should be considered:

- Written terms of reference;

- Selection;

- Training;

- Resourcing and payment;

- Briefing and debriefing;
- Disclosure;
- Welfare;
- Review and closure.

When considering the principle of independent involvement, there is an important distinction to be drawn between 'Independent Advice' and 'Mediation'.

The following points have been identified as being of particular importance when developing and using independent advisers and advisory groups:

- The process of developing independent involvement may at times be uncomfortable, but it has overwhelming benefit in the achievement of positive outcomes.
- Independent involvement begins at the point of initiation - and does not simply mean the validation of existing police actions.
- Independent involvement means consultation, collaboration and coordination at every stage of activity.
- Independent involvement should also have an element of post-event review.
- Independent persons must not be used as
  - Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS);
  - Investigators;
  - Interpreters;
  - Family Liaison Officers.
- Independent involvement is not a 'tick in the box' performance indicator.
- The provision of initial written briefings for independent persons is likely to be of benefit.
- The maintenance of written records, signed by all parties, is likely to enhance positive relations.

Independent Advice

Independent advisers are able to engage in a range of policing activities, either on a case-specific basis or as a member of a recognised IAG. The use of IAGs, especially in

gold groups, is becoming widely recognised by the Police Service as a successful means of accessing the local community.

This is particularly helpful in developing and maintaining contact with hard-to-reach or hard-to-hear groups.

The following key principles should, however, be noted:

- Advisers should remain entirely independent of the Police Service;
- The purpose of engaging an adviser is to critically appraise organisational policies, practice and procedures;
- Advisers can make a significant contribution in relation to both strategic and tactical considerations;
- Advisers are free to make observations both within the Police Service and to the wider community;
- Advisers are not liable for the outcome of police decision making;
- Advisers are not answerable to the police;
- The police are not responsible for advisers' actions;
- The police are not obliged to follow the advice given (although appropriate explanations should be provided where recommendations are not followed);
- Independent advisers may wish to consider keeping advice logs, which are similar to decision logs;
- The police should record all advice they are given as well as their response to it.

Forces should, where possible, set up dialogue and consultation with every interest group in the community as part of the business of policing. IAGs are complementary to this process and should not be a replacement for it. Their role may, in fact, include advising on how best to consult. A range of formally constituted advisory groups already exists and includes:

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Advisory Groups;
- Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Groups;
- Youth Groups;
- Disability Advisory Groups.

Chief officers may wish to consider establishing a community contact database which has ready access to a wide range of individuals within local communities. SIOs should always consider seeking the support of locally-based advisers during a critical incident, where possible.

These individuals are more likely to be representative of, and have close ties with, a particular community. 'Parachuting' an individual in from outside can sometimes cause resentment.

To be truly effective, independent advisers should maintain:

- Their independence;
- The ability to criticise;
- Their credibility;
- The ability to communicate effectively with communities.

For further information on the role and function of independent advisers and IAGs, see 1.13.2 Independent Advisory Groups and 2.8.2 Gold Groups.

See also:

ACPO (2008) Guidance on Independent Advisory Groups;

ACPO (n.d.) Community Disorder, A Tactical Police Guide;

ACPO (2005) Hate Crime: Delivering a Quality Service.

Mediation

A non-police mediator or advocate is a person who carries out a negotiating, enabling or bridge-building role (eg, with a family or community group) in support of the management or investigation of a crime, incident or event.

Mediation involves participation. Mediators are part of a process; they are not independent of it.

This has two principal effects:

- Mediators become agents of the police and have liabilities and responsibilities that they did not have before;

• Any observations or advice they give can no longer be regarded as coming from an independent perspective.

The decision to engage a mediator, and the rationale for doing so, should be fully documented.

Mediators will need briefing on:
- The terms of reference for their role;
- Their legal obligations as an agent of the police;
- The need to complete and retain records of contacts with other parties;
- The rules of disclosure;
- The risks of evidence contamination in connection with significant family witnesses;
- The constraints of sub judice;
- The need to maintain regular contact with the police to provide updates on the mediation process;
- Fair trial issues and the adverse consequences of coaching allegations;
- The need for an appropriate exit strategy.

Mediators should not be engaged without a full risk assessment.

Public Meetings

It may be necessary to hold a public meeting either during or after a critical incident. This will be to:
- Address public concerns about a incident;
- Appeal for witnesses;
- Develop community intelligence - particularly with regard to community concerns and tensions;
- Provide information regarding police intentions and actions.

Meetings should be carefully planned in line with the overall investigative and media strategies, and after close consultation with:
- Family members and representatives;
- Community representatives;

- Independent advisers;
- Gold group members.

2.14 Community Impact Assessments

The purpose of a good Community Impact Assessment (CIA) is to identify issues that may have an affect on a community's confidence in the ability of the police to respond effectively to their needs. This will enhance the management of the response to the incident by the police.

An effective community impact assessment may also provide:

- Enhanced investigative assessment;
- Identify vulnerable individuals and groups;
- Assessment of community confidence in police response;
- Development of community intelligence;
- An understanding of all aspects of the incident being dealt with.

Chief officers should ensure that CIA's are carried out efficiently and instil in officers the need for an accurate interpretation of the effect the incident has had on the community.

The following should be borne in mind when asking for a CIA:

- What do I want to know?
- Who will we ask?
- What will this information be used for?
- Who will oversee the work?
- Completion within realistic timescales?
- Do I really need one?

A poorly completed CIA will hinder, rather than help the management of an incident. CIA's are about speaking and listening to the local community and understanding their issues. If the process is to be effective then a valid assessment will probably take it least forty-eight hours to complete if it is to have any true community information. If the request is for a shorter turn around time then

often the process will have limited information, relying on open source and police data and will be of little value.

CIA's can help in assessing the quality of the police response and whether it is proportionate, given the circumstances of the incident.

Given of the universal nature of critical incidents there may be instances where a CIA is not appropriate, eg, internal critical incidents. In such cases it is not acceptable to request a CIA to simply comply with a check list.

Assessments should be regularly reviewed and recorded, to take into account emerging issues. These may involve cross-border considerations (eg, where an incident takes place in one BCU and the family lives in another).

Although prompt action can recover a poor police response, community issues and concerns can often demand the involvement of the police and other agencies over a extended period of time. The CIA will, therefore, help inform forces about long-term plans to rebuild community confidence and learn lessons for the future.

For further information see:

ACPO (2006) Murder Investigation Manual;

ACPO (1999) Guidelines for the Completion of Impact Assessment Document by Senior Investigating Officers in Homicide and Other Major Investigations;

ACPO (n.d.) Community Disorder, A Tactical Police Guide.

2.15 Media and Communications

During a critical incident the officer in charge is responsible for the initial formulation of a media strategy in partnership with the force media department. The strategy should be based on openness and transparency, keeping in mind the particular needs of the investigation or operation. The gold commander's role, in most cases, will be one of quality assurance. Where a critical incident is declared, it may be necessary for the chief officer to take responsibility for the media response or to be the 'face' of the force.

It is vital for the Police Service to understand the relationship and interaction between the following:

- The experience of the families and communities;
- Media interpretation, analysis and subsequent reporting;
- The consequent impact on an investigation or other incident.

When developing a media strategy for a critical incident, the following principles should be considered:

- The media must not be used to negotiate with the family;
- The media strategy will need to be consistent with all other strategies;
- The type and tone of language used in media statements should be tactful and take account of past experience;
- There needs to be clarity about timing and content of any acknowledgement regarding previous mistakes or gaps in the police response;
- A range of investigative tools can be used, eg, Crimestoppers, Crimewatch, reward offers, appeals for mobile phone images;
- The strategy should recognise the fundamental role of the family and their representatives in liaising with the media;
- Consideration should be given to shared media statements with the family and their representatives - a united approach helps to build community trust and undermine the confidence of perpetrators;
- The strategy should also consider the perspectives of others involved in the response to the incident, eg, advisory groups, police authorities or other emergency services;
- Key messages should be decided on to ensure clarity of objectives and consistency in future releases;
- Consideration should be given to the type of media to target;
- Force websites can be used to inform and advise the local community;
- Advice should be sought on the effectiveness of types of messages for particular communities.

It is equally important during a complex or high profile incident to keep internal staff up to date with progress and key messages. Staff may be directly affected, or live in communities affected by the incident.

An Internal communications strategy will help to provide reassurance to staff and dispel myths. It will also help to avoid mixed messages to the media and the local community, via friends and family of staff.

An internal communication strategy may include:

- Daily intelligence briefings for operational team briefings;
- Weekly e-mail briefings from a senior officer to all staff;
- Verbal briefings to teams;
- All staff e-mail briefings from the Chief Constable.

During Operation Sumac all of the above methods were used and helped to ensure a consistent message, and a sense of empowerment and inclusiveness (see 1.8 A Proactive Approach).

For further information see:

ACPO Communications Advisory Group (2010) Guidance;

ACPO (2007) Major Crime Reviews (available in The Journal of Homicide and Major Incident Investigation, Volume 4, Issue 1, Spring 2008);

ACPO (2006) Murder Investigation Manual.

NPIA (2007) Strategic Debrief; Operation Sumac.

The National College of Police Leadership at Bramshill offers courses on Media Skills and Producing an Effective Media Strategy. For further information see: http://www.npia.police.uk

2.16 Monitoring

A critical incident may affect some families for life. Chief officers should, therefore, consider offering effective and appropriate support to all families for as long as it is appropriate to do so. This should include key events such as case reviews, memorial services and anniversaries.

A force may have more than one critical incident running at any given time. Some may run for several days or months. From the outset of any critical incident response, it is important to recognise the distinction between:

- Short-term investigative, inquiry or incident issues; and
- Medium to long-term community issues.

There is a clear link between investigative or incident priorities and community policing imperatives. Access to community intelligence (and evidence) in the short term is inextricably linked to the development of community confidence in the police in the medium and long-term.

The ability of an enquiry team to access witness evidence, for example, will depend, in no small measure, on the confidence of witnesses to come forward.

Chief officers should implement a system to log and monitor critical incidents. This will ensure that each critical incident continues to be managed and progressed in a timely and efficient manner.

A suggested monitoring process may include the following.

- The development of a register which will be centrally maintained by the BCU or force.
- The addition of regular agenda items to BCU or force SMT meetings to oversee and monitor progress. (These meetings can be used to facilitate the provision of further reviews, community impact assessments or resources, if required.)
- A formal closure procedure.

Incident Closure and Exit Strategies

It may be difficult to state exactly when a critical incident is over, but, in order to ensure that the police response remains proportionate, it should be scaled down as soon as circumstances allow.

It may be possible to conclude or scale down an incident when it has been assessed that the risk of significant loss of confidence has been averted, or, where appropriate, a management plan is in place to prevent further loss and restore confidence. Consideration can be given to

scoring the risk (loss of confidence) using the risk scoring principles, eg, impact versus likelihood.

Where there has been a traumatic event or significant media interest over an extended period of time, or where police activity and visibility have been abnormal for the locality, there may be an information vacuum when the police leave. It may also have caused an increased fear of crime or sense of vulnerability, or an increase in underlying community tensions. It will definitely raise questions about what has happened, why, and who might be affected.

When developing an exit strategy it is, therefore, important to understand what normality for the effected community looks like, and develop an action plan which will help the community return to normality. It should include a communication strategy which will seek to reassure, and provide answers. This is particularly important where there is a clear operational reason for concluding the police response to a critical incident, but there may not have been an arrest or other form of closure for the victim and/or their family.

The decision about when to conclude or scale down an critical incident, and the reasons for doing so, should always be recorded and explained fully to the victim, their family or the community.

2.17 Post-critical Incident Evaluation

Following the conclusion of a critical incident, whether it is crime or non-crime related, there should be a process of post-critical incident evaluation and learning. The focus of such an evaluation should be on positive learning outcomes and identifying good practice to be incorporated into national and local policy and guidance.

Traditionally evaluation has taken the form of a debrief (see 2.16 Incident Debriefs). In normal circumstances debriefs will be internally facing, focused on the police response from the police perspective.
There is, however, merit in taking a broader view and include evaluation from the perspective of the victim, family and community.

The use of qualitative and quantitative public confidence surveys and analysis may help a force to understand the impact an incident has had on the local community, including:

- What worked;
- Where the police could have done better.

A quality community impact assessment could also be used to inform this process. See 2.13.2 Community Liaison

2.17.1   Critical Incident Debriefs

Forces may also wish to consider a formal debrief process for police officers and staff involved in a critical incident, as well as any non-police groups or individuals involved in the police response to an incident. This will provide an opportunity for identifying good practice and lessons learned, which can be included in future training, planning and risk management. It will also help to address any potential welfare issues, and support referrals to appropriate staff associations or occupational health representatives for further support and advice.

A range of debrief options are available including operational debriefs, immersive learning and structured debriefs.

For information and advice on conducting debriefs following a critical incident, contact: NPIA Specialist Operation Centre on 0845 000 5463.

See also:

ACPO (2006) Guidance on the National Briefing Model;

ACPO (2011) Manual of Guidance on Keeping the Peace;

ACPO (2001) Guidelines on the Management of Stress in the Workplace.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

• Critical incident management should start with early identification. A minor incident can escalate into a large-scale critical incident if not properly managed in the early stages.

• Local force policies and procedures should provide clear and unambiguous reporting and assessment systems for critical incidents at BCU and force level.

• Chief officers may wish to ensure that critical incidents are only declared when it is necessary to do so, and that the response is proportionate to the scale of the incident.

• Critical incident management should take into account the needs of the victim, their family and the local community.

• All critical incidents should be subject to ongoing review and monitoring to ensure they are being progressed and managed in an efficient and timely manner.

• Chief officers should be prepared to allocate long-term resources to rebuilding public confidence after a critical incident to help a community return to normality.

3

Restoring Public Confidence

Contents

3.1 Loss of Public Confidence

Public confidence in the police can be influenced by a range of issues. This could be, for example, because the police response to an incident was inadequate and this has had a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community.

During a critical incident there should be an opportunity to identify why confidence has been lost, and to implement a management plan to recover the situation. Once the incident has been closed, the opportunity is diminished. Action should, therefore, be taken quickly to identify why confidence has been lost and how it can be restored.

Unless quality assurance processes are in place prior to the closure of a incident, for example, an effective and consistent post-incident review, there may be no indication that public confidence has been damaged until the matter is brought to the attention of the force by the victim or other interested party. This may be days or even weeks after the end of the incident itself.

An example of this might be where a victim has suffered a sustained campaign of harassment, which has been reported to the police on several occasions, but the victim has not received the quality of service they expected. As a result, they have lost confidence in the ability of the police to provide a quality service in the future.

When a further incident is reported, the victim then complains about the previous responses they have received, even though these were several days or weeks ago. Irrespective of the quality of the police response to the latest incident, it is too late to change the perceived poor response to the earlier ones. The main objectives now will be to provide a quality service for the current incident, to reassure the victim and restore best confidence.

Where a loss of public confidence already exists, the Police Service will want to find out why this has happened and provide a full explanation. If the police are found to be at fault, they need to learn from the experience and, importantly, apologise to the victim, their family and/or the community.

If it is immediately clear that the police response was inadequate, it may be appropriate, at the earliest opportunity, to make an apology on behalf of the force and a commitment to identify and address the issues that caused the loss of confidence. This may help to reduce the impact of the original police response and demonstrates a proactive attitude to restoring public confidence.

A loss of public confidence in the police can be notified to a force in a number of ways. This includes:

- Letters from victims, their families, community leaders or third parties acting on behalf of the victim or their families;
- Verbal communication to frontline officers and staff expressing general concerns;
- Articles appearing in the media or documentaries on television or radio;
- Campaigns or protests by groups representing (with or without consent) the victim, their family or the community.

Failure to respond competently and diplomatically to these reports will compound the situation and can lead to another critical incident.

Irrespective of the way in which a loss of public confidence is notified to the police, chief officers (through their senior officers and BCU commanders) should ensure that these reports are accurately recorded and promptly notified to the most appropriate person. The majority of police forces will already have protocols in place to manage these reports competently.

3.2 Key Principles

Where a loss of public confidence has occurred, the initial objective will be to restore confidence in the ability of the police to provide an effective and quality police response.

In addition, the chief officers will need to consider the longer-term impact that a loss of public confidence will have on community engagement. It may be appropriate to consider whether additional resources for neighbourhood policing are necessary, and to involve IAGs in rebuilding relationships with community groups.

To help achieve the best possible outcome for all parties concerned there are a number of key principles that chief officers should consider when trying to restore public confidence.

3.2.1 Understanding the Issue

Understanding the problem can help determine how to restore public confidence. As with any incident, every effort should be made to avoid early assumptions or stereotyping. The view of the person or group raising the concern or complaint is based on their own perception of what happened; it is important that they feel their views are being taken seriously. Their concerns will need to be managed in a proactive, open, honest and realistic manner.

3.2.2 Reviews

A review is particularly useful when a concern is raised about a past incident. A review, however, may take place several weeks or months after the closure of the incident and recollection may be difficult. An assessment of the circumstances will then be primarily based on records of actions and decisions during an incident.

A review will evaluate the police response to the incident and determine whether:

- It conformed to nationally approved standards;
- It was thorough;
- It was conducted with integrity and objectivity;
- Investigative or other opportunities were overlooked;
- Good and bad practice was identified.

See also: 2.15 Post Incident Evaluation and 2.16 Incident Debriefs.

In some cases, a review of the original police response will show that everything that could have been done, was done.

For further information on reviews see:

ACPO (2007) Major Crime Reviews (available in The Journal of Homicide and Major Incident Investigation, Volume 4, Issue 1, Spring 2008);

ACPO (2006) Murder Investigation Manual, pp75, The Role of Chief Officers in Major Crime Investigations.

3.2.3 Independent Police Complaints Commission

More serious issues, including specific allegations of serious misconduct and those where a member of the public has been injured or killed while in contact with the police, may need to be referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) for formal investigation.

Referrals should be made in line with current protocols and agreements between the IPCC and the police.

For further information see:

IPCC (2010) Statutory Guidance to the Police Service and Police Authorities on the Handling of Complaints;
http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/

3.2.4 Victim Care

If the person raising the concern is a victim or a family member of someone who has been killed or injured, they may be particularly vulnerable. In these cases, it may be appropriate to provide some level of victim care through a named contact or a FLO while their concerns are being addressed. See also 2.13 Victim, Family and Community.

3.2.5 Community Engagement

The involvement of community representatives and IAGs may help victims, their families and the community to understand why the police response was not effective or, where it was found to have been effective, why communication broke down. They may also be able to facilitate community meetings or mediate between the police and those raising the concern. This approach may assist in obtaining the best possible resolution and in rebuilding positive relationships. For further information see 3.2.5 Community Engagement.

3.2.6 Multi-agency Complaints or Reviews

In some cases, the police will have worked in partnership with other agencies during an incident. Those agencies may also be involved in trying to identify why public confidence has been lost. When working with other agencies in these circumstances, the issues may centre on accountability and information sharing.

Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) have been developed with most partner agencies to facilitate the free flow of information in these situations. Any liaison should, however, be carried out through a single point of contact (SPOC); and, where meetings take place, the officers involved should have the authority to act on behalf of their force.

Where more than one agency is involved, it is prudent to establish who will have primacy during any review and which agency will be responsible for liaising with the individual(s) raising the concern or complaint.

For further information see the MoU between the Police Service and the relevant partner agency, if one has been developed. Where a MoU has not previously been agreed, a chief officer will need to negotiate terms of reference.

Restoring public confidence involves dealing with the issues raised and being seen to deal with them in an equitable and transparent manner by including the people most closely affected. The Police Service needs to learn from its mistakes and take positive steps to prevent them from happening again.

3.3 Public Inquiries

Public inquiries do not take place without warning. There will be a history of dissatisfaction which could have extended over several years. The matter will probably have generated wide public interest with comprehensive, and often critical, press coverage. During the intervening years the police may have been required to respond to a range of requests including:

- Complaints from the victim, their family and the community;

- Letters from MPs;
- Questions asked in Parliament.

In spite of this, interested parties may still feel that the only way to resolve outstanding questions and issues is by a full independent inquiry open to public scrutiny. A public inquiry can only be called by a government minister; such a decision will not be taken lightly. A minister will only call a public inquiry where:

Particular events have caused, or are capable of causing, public concern or there is public concern that particular events may have occurred.

The Inquiries Act 2005

Where an inquiry is called, it is usually several years after the incident which led to it. This time delay will place additional pressure on the force concerned because police officers or other members of police staff involved in the original incident may no longer work for the force; they may have retired or even died. Irrespective of this, the force concerned is still accountable for the decisions and actions of those officers present at the time.

The chief officer tasked with managing the force response to a public inquiry may not have been in post or even in force at the time of the incident. They will want, therefore, to approach the process and the management of the incident with an open mind. They should not blindly defend the decisions of their predecessors without first reviewing those decisions and how the incident was managed as a whole.

3.4 Preparation and Planning

Public inquiries are rare and so the development of good practice is difficult in this area. The MPS Directorate of Legal Services produced guidance entitled Responding to Public Inquiries, A Generic Guide. It incorporates experience gained from a number of high-profile public inquiries held in the Metropolitan Police Service area. It was drafted to assist both lawyers and police officers who may find themselves tasked with representing the Police Service at a public inquiry. The guide provides a suggested framework to help achieve a consistent, professional, corporate response.

The basic principles for dealing with public inquiries are the same as those for restoring public confidence, but the following additional principles from the guidance are also applicable.

3.4.1 Independence

The chief officer assigned to manage the public inquiry process should not have been directly or indirectly involved in the original incident. Involvement in the incident may influence their approach to the inquiry process.

3.4.2 Cooperation

The local police authority will have a significant interest in the proceedings and outcome of a public inquiry. In some circumstances, where there is agreement, it may be possible to consider joint legal counsel for the inquiry process. In all cases there should be close liaison and communication between the chief officer representing the force and the police authority. This will ensure a consistent and coordinated response.

3.4.3 Knowledge

The force response should be informed, consistent and coordinated. Chief officers should assign a dedicated inquiry team to review and, where necessary, investigate the police response to the original incident. This team should include officers with experience relevant to the incident but who, ideally, were not directly involved. They should be committed to managing the process through to the conclusion of the inquiry.

3.4.4 Victim and Witness Support

As part of the police response to the inquiry process, it may be necessary to provide additional victim care to the victim of the incident and their family. It will also be necessary to provide support to witnesses and to those police officers and police staff called as witnesses to the inquiry because of their involvement in the incident.

3.4.5 Media Response

The incident which triggered the public inquiry will already have a high media profile. To ensure that a coordinated and consistent message is conveyed to the media, it is essential to have a clear media strategy agreed between the lead chief officer, the legal services department and the police inquiry team.

3.4.6 Additional Information

Further advice and information on managing the public inquiry process is available in the MPS guidance; Responding to Public Inquiries, A Generic Guide. A copy of this is available on the POLKA; see https://polka.pnn.police.uk/en/System/Not-member/?returnUrl=https://polka.pnn.police.uk/

The guidance is a continually developing document and will be revised and amended should additional good practice be identified during future public inquiries.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

• Where public confidence has been lost after an incident is closed, steps should be taken to identify why confidence has been lost and an action plan implemented to restore best confidence.

• Action plans should engage and involve partner agencies and IAGs.

• Where appropriate, an early apology on behalf of the force and/or a commitment to address the causes may help to reduce the negative impact on public confidence, and show a proactive attitude on behalf of the police.

• Chief officers may wish to ensure that local force policies and procedures are implemented so that all critical incident reports are recorded accurately and monitored effectively.

• Public inquiries do not take place without warning. When an inquiry is called, chief officers may wish to ensure that forces respond to the inquiry process in a positive, proactive and candid manner.

Appendix 1
Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ASB	Anti-social Behaviour
BCU	Basic Command Unit
CHIS	Covert Human Intelligence Source
CMM	Conflict Management Model
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HOLMES	Home Office Large Major Enquiry System
IAG	Independent Advisory Group
IPCC	Independent Police Complaints Commission
LESLP	London Emergency Services Liaison Panel
MIRSAP	Major Incident Room Standardised Administrative Procedures
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
NCALT	National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies
NCPE	National Centre for Policing Excellence
NDM	National Decision Model
NPIA	National Policing Improvement Agency
OPSI	Office of Public Sector Information
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
POLKA	Police Online Knowledge Area
SIO	Senior Investigating Officer
SMT	Senior Management Team

SPOC   Single Point of Contact

Appendix 2
References and Further Reading

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Appendix 3
Statement of Risk Principles

The objective of these principles is to create and facilitate the conditions where risk-based decision making can flourish, ie, to allow officers to identify and assess risks, and make balanced and proportionate decisions in response to them.

PRINCIPLE 1: The willingness to make decisions in conditions of uncertainty (ie, risk taking) is a core professional requirement of all members of the Police Service.

PRINCIPLE 2: Maintaining or achieving the safety, security and wellbeing of individuals and communities is a primary consideration in risk decision making.

PRINCIPLE 3: Risk taking involves judgement and balance, with decision makers required to consider the value and likelihood of the possible benefits of a particular decision against the seriousness and likelihood of the possible harms.

PRINCIPLE 4: The risk of harm can never be totally prevented. Risk decisions should, therefore, be judged by the quality of the decision making, not by the outcome.

PRINCIPLE 5: When reviewing risk decisions, the fact that they are influenced by many factors beyond an individual decision maker's control (such as emergencies, dilemmas or lack of immediate resources) should be taken into account.

PRINCIPLE 6: The standard expected and required of members of the Police Service is that their risk decisions should be consistent with those a body of officers of similar rank, specialism and experience would have taken in the same circumstances.

PRINCIPLE 7: Whether to document a decision is a risk decision in itself which should, to a large extent, be left to professional judgement. The decision whether or not to make a record, however, and the extent of that record, should be made after considering the likelihood of harm occurring and its seriousness.

PRINCIPLE 8: To reduce risk aversion and improve decision making, policing needs a culture that learns from successes as well as failures. Good risk taking should be identified, celebrated and shared.

PRINCIPLE 9: Since good risk taking depends upon quality information, the Police Service will work with partner agencies to share relevant information about those who pose risk or those who are vulnerable to the risk of harm.

PRINCIPLE 10: Members of the Police Service who make decisions consistent with these principles should receive the encouragement, approval and support of their organisation.