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PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

# Family Liaison Officer Guidance 2008

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### **FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER GUIDANCE**

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# FOREWORD

Family liaison is, without a doubt, one of the most demanding roles performed by the Police Service. It is also one of the most important because it is one of the most significant relationships that we develop with the families of victims, at one of the most difficult times in their lives. Many challenging times lie ahead as the role of the Family Liaison Officer as an investigator is increasingly scrutinised and challenged. Higher expectations are now being demanded and the accountability of this role has never been so great.

There is though, nothing new in liaising with the family of someone who has died in tragic circumstances. It is something that we have always done. What has changed over the last ten years or so, is that family liaison has developed from an intuitive craft skill into a professional practice. Driven by an ethical imperative arising from the need to provide a consistently good quality of service, family liaison has moved on from something that a few committed investigators did on an ad hoc basis to a discipline whose practice is firmly based in nationally agreed standards.

It is important to remember that family liaison is primarily an investigative role that must be conducted sensitively in a manner that respects the dignity and needs of a bereaved family. Properly selected and well-managed Family Liaison Officers are essential to the effective investigation of homicide, road death and mass fatalities.

They can also add value to the investigation of other critical incidents where family liaison could enhance the effectiveness of an investigation (eg, hate crime) and in circumstances where it might help to prevent an incident becoming critical in the first instance.

The new guidance set out in this document revises the **ACPO (2003) Family Liaison Strategy Manual**. It has been developed to build on new practice and procedures that have been implemented over the course of the last five years. This document is intended to inform and advise on current working practices, including selection and training, as we strive to deliver a continually improving quality of service to families who find themselves in difficult circumstances.

As the ACPO lead for Family Liaison, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in this work for their ceaseless commitment, dedication and professionalism, and I have great pleasure in commending this document to you all.



Simon Foy  
Commander  
SCD1 Homicide and Serious Crime Command  
Metropolitan Police



# INTRODUCTION

Family liaison is one of the most important considerations throughout the investigation of a death. Families are an integral part of an investigation. They must be treated appropriately, professionally, with respect and according to their diverse needs. This principle must be reflected at all levels of the Police Service and due consideration given to any police action which may impact on a family, from the media statements made by a chief constable, to the telephone operator who responds to a query from a family member.

Where there is a police investigation into the death of a human being, the police have a positive duty to communicate effectively and inclusively with the bereaved family. On most occasions this can be achieved by deploying a Family Liaison Officer (FLO).

The significant resource represented by family liaison can be used across a broad spectrum of policing. The guidance set out in this document should be considered in circumstances in which there has been:

- An unexplained or violent death, particularly in respect of:
  - homicide;
  - road death;
  - mass fatality; and
- Any other ‘critical incident’ where family liaison might enhance the effectiveness of the police response, for example, a missing person enquiry or an allegation of hate crime.

A critical incident is defined by ACPO 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.

This document provides family liaison guidance in respect of the investigation and management of critical incidents, and also details how family liaison can prevent incidents from becoming critical in the first place.

The aims of family liaison are:

- To analyse the needs, concerns and expectations of the ‘family’ in order to identify all the relevant and realistic action that should be taken in the context of their human rights and the obligations that are set out in this document.
- To work with the family in order to comply with their right to receive all relevant information connected with the enquiry, subject to the needs of the investigation, while gathering material from them that assists the investigation in a way that is proportionate to their fundamental right to privacy and family life.



The main objectives arising from these aims are:

- To gather material from the family in a manner which contributes to the investigation and preserves its integrity;
- To provide information to, and facilitate care and support for, the family, who are themselves victims, in a sensitive and compassionate manner in accordance with the needs of the investigation;
- To secure the confidence and trust of the family, thereby enhancing their contribution to the investigation.

The trauma associated with a sudden unexpected tragedy places the family of the victim under immense personal pressures at a time when the needs of the investigation will make heavy demands for detailed information. Sensitivity, compassion and respect for the family's needs and requirements must underpin the approach to gathering material.

The officer having first contact with the family has a crucial role and may not be a trained FLO. The needs and requirements of the family must be identified from this stage onwards.

The initial priority must be to establish communication with the family as soon as practicable in order to furnish them with any information that they require, in accordance with the needs of the investigation.

The four main roles that have been identified for the effective development and implementation of a family liaison strategy are as follows:

- Family Liaison Coordinator;
- Family Liaison Adviser;
- Senior Investigating Officer/Senior Identification Manager;
- Family Liaison Officer.

The National Family Liaison Adviser from the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) is available to provide strategic and operational advice to forces where necessary.

This document describes each of these roles in the investigative process. It then outlines the specific practices that apply to family liaison in mass disaster.

# Section 1

## THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY LIAISON COORDINATOR

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As a matter of good practice, forces should consider appointing an officer of supervisory rank to act as a coordinator for Family Liaison Officers (FLOs).

Coordinators must have received training to prepare them for their role. The coordinator is responsible for the strategic and tactical support to FLOs and SIOs, and the following administrative and support functions.

## 1.1 STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL SUPPORT

- Act as a support point for SIO/SIMs concerning the:
  - deployment of FLOs and the functions of family liaison;
  - skills of a particular FLO in terms of culture, lifestyle diversity, knowledge or experience base.
- Assist SIO/SIMs who require advice and assistance in complex cases where there are multiple deployments of FLOs, and in coordinating the material that comes from them.
- Act as a support point for FLOs.
- Provide advice to FLOs.
- Maintain a register of contact details of appropriate organisations, lay people and professional consultants to assist FLOs.
- Act as a channel for welfare, occupational health and support.
- Act as an independent channel for FLO debriefing to identify and disseminate good practice.
- Liaise regionally to share and gather good practice for implementation within own force area.
- Provide a networking point for FLOs requiring advice from other FLOs who have experience in dealing with particular scenarios.
- Promote and facilitate mutual FLO peer group support.
- Monitor workloads and manage deployments and current availability of FLOs. This could include:
  - when FLOs have been deployed;
  - who has been deployed;
  - what investigation/operation they have been deployed on;
  - what issues they have and what resources they need;
  - what processes need to be undertaken as part of the exit strategy.
- Monitor mandatory attendance at the welfare or occupational health department.

## 1.2 ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

- The administrative supervision of the local FLO policy.
- The maintenance of a register of all FLOs, providing:
  - details of their lifestyle diversity;
  - ethnic and cultural origins;
  - FLO experience (types of incident where deployed) and brief synopsis of specific FLO skills used and enhanced (eg, split families, working with representatives of the family, suspect within the family);
  - details of other skills or qualifications held by the officer (eg, trained to investigate sexual offences, language and communication skills);
  - current availability status of a FLO.

The Family Liaison Coordinator (FLC) should meet all the FLOs formally at least twice a year; notwithstanding this, the coordinator or the officers themselves may arrange for the FLOs to get together on an informal basis in order to share experiences. The coordinator's meetings will give an opportunity to impart good practice, new legislation and give any additional training input that is appropriate.

In view of the ever increasing demand for family liaison, forces should consider appointing at least one full-time FLC or Adviser.



# Section 2

## MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

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## 2.1 MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

While it is important that a senior manager is identified by each force as having overall responsibility for the support and administrative functions referred to in **1.2 Administrative Functions**, the way that they are managed on a day-to-day basis should depend on the size and structure of family liaison in the force and the number of homicides, road deaths and critical incidents that the force has to deal with. Two general possibilities are:

- A single individual can be responsible for, and manage, all these functions on a full-time basis;
- An individual may have overall responsibility for these functions but delegate responsibility for their day-to-day management to others. In these circumstances, the administrative and support functions may be either combined on a geographic basis or managed by different individuals.

In addition to this, a Family Liaison Adviser (FLA) might undertake some of these support functions on an individual, case-by-case basis.

The family liaison coordination functions, as described in **1 The Role of the Family Liaison Coordinator**, must be fulfilled. The manner in which they are fulfilled is a matter for local practice. Whichever structure is adopted staff should be trained to prepare them for their role.

# Section 3

## THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY LIAISON ADVISER

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### 3.1 THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY LIAISON ADVISER

The post of FLA is an optional one that might be used in circumstances where the structures set up in any given force are such that the FLC is not in a position to provide operational advice and support to SIOs/SIMs on an everyday basis. This role is primarily one of assisting the SIO/SIM during the initial or other particularly challenging stages of the enquiry in order to maximise the flow of material from the family.

In particular, a FLA could be responsible for:

- Coordinating the initial risk assessment;
- Advising the SIO/SIM about how many FLOs to deploy;
- Advising the SIO/SIM about which FLOs to deploy;
- Assisting the SIO/SIM to draw up their family liaison strategy in complex cases;
- Briefing FLOs and FLO teams;
- Advising FLOs about any good practice associated with the type of investigation taking place;
- Debriefing FLOs following their initial contact with the family and coordinating the early risk assessment arising from such initial contact;
- Advising the SIO/SIM about any issues that arise from debriefing the FLOs that are likely to have an adverse impact on family liaison;
- Advising in mass fatalities;
- Gold Group support;
- Liaison with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Missions and Embassies.

The nature of some of these functions means that the FLA is a specialist role and that anyone fulfilling it must have experience in family liaison delivery.

FLAs undergo the same training as FLCs.

# Section 4

## THE ROLE OF THE SENIOR INVESTIGATING OFFICER/SENIOR IDENTIFICATION MANAGER

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## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The development, implementation and maintenance of a family liaison strategy is one of the main considerations that the SIO/SIM must address throughout the course of an investigation.

In determining the family liaison strategy it is essential that the SIO/SIM considers the needs of both the family and the FLO. The strategy must take into account a number of important factors:

- Identifying the family;
- Strategic objectives;
- Risk assessment;
- Selection and deployment;
- Supporting and supervising the FLO;
- Communication with the family;
- The family and the media;
- Exit strategy.

There are additional considerations where FLOs are deployed into suspects' or defendants' families (see [4.15 Suspect Within the Family](#) and [4.16 Defendants' Families](#)).

In complex cases advice should be sought from the local FLC or FLA for the force. If additional advice is required, the National Family Liaison Adviser can be contacted through the Specialist Operations Centre at Wyboston, telephone: 0845 000 5463.

## 4.2 IDENTIFYING THE FAMILY

The term family should include partners, parents, siblings, children, guardians and others who have had a direct and close relationship with the victim. The SIO/SIM must always take into account the possible dynamics of a family's structure to ensure that an appropriate level of support is offered. This is particularly important in situations where the family is extended, split in some way or involves the victim's possible association with a particular cultural or lifestyle diversity, eg, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) community or a religious choice.

In identifying the family and prior to meeting them, the SIO/SIM should establish as much information about them as possible. This includes determining any possible cultural or lifestyle considerations, religious beliefs or possible communication requirements in respect of language or disability. Any information and intelligence should be gathered to ascertain if anything is known about the victim or the family which may have a bearing on the conduct of the investigation and the development of the family liaison strategy.

## 4.3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

It is essential that the objectives for a family liaison strategy are specific because they form the basis for tasking the FLO. Once these objectives have been achieved, an exit strategy can be implemented.

The objectives for a family liaison strategy can include the following:

- Gathering material from the family;
- Obtaining full victimology, lifestyle and behavioural information and any other relevant details as directed by the SIO/SIM;
- Providing the family with as full and up-to-date information as possible about the incident and its investigation;
- Ensuring the investigation is not compromised by the injudicious disclosure of information;
- Police and family media strategy.

#### 4.4 RISK ASSESSMENT

All police forces have a statutory obligation to protect the health and safety of FLOs and the people that they work with. For this reason forces should ensure that:

- FLOs are volunteers with operational experience and knowledge of the potential risks associated with policing;
- An appropriate selection procedure exists within their force that is designed to evaluate the suitability of each officer for the role;
- Officers selected as FLOs receive the recommended training prior to their deployment in order to enhance the essential knowledge and awareness required for the role;
- While performing the role, officers have access to occupational health and have clear lines of communication with their line manager, the SIO or deputy, and receive regular briefings and debriefings;
- Supervisors are able to monitor the work of the officers, ensuring that tasks set fall within the overall aim and objectives of the deployment and that the role is performed within the parameters of clear and concise written strategy;
- A risk assessment is undertaken prior to the deployment of FLOs and continuously reviewed in accordance with these recommendations.

Family liaison risk assessments are a careful and systematic examination of the work activities of those undertaking family liaison duties. The responsibility for ensuring that risk assessments are conducted rests with SIOs. They have a duty of care to officers performing a liaison role, and to others likely to be affected by it.

The significant findings of the risk assessment should be recorded in writing. The risk assessment should be reviewed on a regular basis. Such reviews should also be recorded in writing.

To comply with this requirement, risk assessments for family liaison consist of two forms (see [Appendix 1](#)). They have been marked 'restricted', although this classification applies only after the forms have been completed. A copy of the forms is also available as a separate file on the CD on which this manual has been published.

**Form 1** takes the format of a storage folder in which **Form 2**, concerning the assessment(s), should be kept.

**Form 1** relates to the address to be visited and the details of those occupants to whom liaison applies.

**Form 2** assesses the potential of risk, including:

- The circumstances that could give rise to harm;
- The possibility of harm occurring;
- The severity of the harm;
- Who could be harmed;
- What measures could be implemented to prevent or reduce the possibility of harm.

**Form 2** risk assessments should be made by applying a common-sense approach to analysing the potential for physical risk or any other risk considered by the assessor.

Additional **Form 2** risk assessments should be made when the existing risk assessment is considered to be no longer valid. A risk assessment should be considered no longer valid when the circumstances of the liaison change in respect of:

- People;
- Action/Activity;
- Location;
- Environment.

### **People**

Full details of all the occupants of an address where liaison is required may not be available until the liaison has started. Any potential increase in risk as new details come to light should be considered. Such details would include fresh information about a known family member as well as information concerning previously unknown family members. These details must be obtained in a sensitive and professional manner while compiling the family tree. This ensures that no family member is overlooked and provides the SIO with a clear picture of the family structure.

Regardless of these family details, it is difficult to evaluate how people will react during the early stages of the grieving process; their reaction could depend on previous experiences or their view of the treatment they have received. This is true whether it is a victim or suspect's family, although bias and stereotyping must be avoided. In addition to this, the potential for risk might increase in the event of others in the community adversely judging the family of a suspect.

### **Action/Activity**

The objectives set as part of the family liaison strategy should be reviewed continuously as the enquiry progresses. A variation in the tasks performed by FLOs may be required. These changes in task will not necessarily cause experienced investigators problems, being well within their knowledge and skills, but any significant change in the family or communities' perception of the role might increase the potential for risk.

### **Location**

Prior to the deployment of FLOs, the address may be the only known fact that can be evaluated for the purposes of the initial risk assessment. A thorough search of databases should be conducted in a bid to establish as much information as possible about the premises and occupants. The risk assessment should also take account of any community tension that exists in that location and any changes in tension revealed during the course of the ongoing assessment.

Any changes in the location may have a bearing on the potential for risk or level of harm to the officers or others. If such a change occurs, the SIO should examine the reason for the change and the need for liaison at that location.

### Environment

It is essential that the address be viewed as a workplace when visits by FLOs are likely to be frequent or they are to spend a considerable amount of time within the premises. It is, therefore, crucial that the environment is not detrimental to their health.

While any officer may record the identification of a potential risk, the control measures referred to on **Form 2** are a part of the decision-making process. As such they must be completed by a supervisor or manager who has received appropriate training in assessing risks. Reasons for the decisions taken must be recorded and signed by the supervisor or manager making that decision.

The SIO should sign the form and decide if the risk that is identified should be further disseminated to others, including those external agencies who may themselves be involved in providing care, support or counselling to the family. A risk to police officers does not necessarily mean that others will be at risk. In cases where it is thought that others might be at risk, advice should be sought regarding any disclosure of information, in order to comply with the Data Protection Act and human rights legislation

While the content of the risk assessment forms and their guidelines might appear to focus on FLOs, they apply to all officers engaged in the liaison process, including the SIO.

In unusual circumstances or in such cases where there are additional risks thought to be outside the normal parameters of family liaison, consideration should be given to using existing force risk assessment procedures, or to compiling additional reports that should, upon completion, be stored within the **Form 1** folder.

## 4.5 SELECTION AND DEPLOYMENT

FLOs must always be deployed in pairs. One of the FLOs should take the lead role with the family while the other should remain fully up-to-date on the progress of the liaison. While it is not necessary for both FLOs to be present every time the family is visited, both should attend where corroboration might be needed (eg, when gathering lifestyle information) or where the risk assessment suggests that having two officers present on each occasion might be advisable.

The deployment of FLOs in pairs has benefits for the family and the investigation as the liaison function can continue at times when the lead FLO is unavailable for reasons such as sickness, leave or court commitments. It also has the benefit of providing greater support in respect of developing a strategy and managing stress. Both FLOs should be trained to national standards (any variation to this criterion must be recorded in the policy file and accompanied by an appropriate risk assessment).

FLOs should be deployed at the earliest possible moment after a risk assessment has been conducted.

It is essential that FLOs are primarily, if not exclusively, dedicated to the task. To perform their function effectively they must be an integral part of the enquiry team, and included in all briefings and debriefings. Forces which have dedicated homicide and road collision investigation teams should endeavour to have the resources to source deployments from within the team.

The role of the FLO is complex. A FLO has to balance the needs of the family with the requirement to gather material and preserve the integrity of the investigation. There are many cases where the lifestyle, family, friends and associates of the victim may hold the key to identifying witnesses, suspects or other vital information. The family liaison role is, therefore, pivotal to the success of the investigation.

In all cases involving suspected homicide, mass fatality, road traffic collision fatality or hate crime, the SIO/SIM must endeavour to appoint FLOs who are competent in the role or who are undertaking the FLO development programme.

When considering which FLOs to deploy, the SIO/SIM should take account of the individual FLO's ability to perform the function effectively, at that time. The following matters should be taken into account when selecting a FLO:

- Whether they have suffered a recent bereavement of a close relative or partner or other major life trauma;
- Current workload;
- Frequency of recent deployment in that role;
- Previous experience in the role;
- Availability
  - annual leave, court or similar commitments;
- Previous contact and relationship with the victim's family (this should be avoided to reduce the impact of the role on the professional objectivity of the officer and the exit strategy);
- Previous compliance with the mandatory requirement to attend welfare or occupational health debriefs;
- Whether the FLO lives or usually works near the family's residence (the likelihood of chance encounters with the family outside the confines of the officer's role as a FLO during the course of other duties or while off-duty should be minimised);
- The needs of the family.

In cases where a split family is identified, or there are complex dynamics affecting the family group, the SIO/SIM should consider the deployment of additional FLOs as appropriate. In cases where more than one FLO is deployed, care must be taken to ensure the accurate coordination of the information flow to the family. In cases of multiple deployments consideration should be given to deploying a FLC.

On occasions, gender may be a critical factor both for cultural or other reasons.

Where the victim is from a minority group, particular lifestyle diversity or hard-to-reach or hard-to-hear group, consideration should always be given to having independent advice to assist with effective communication.

The choice of FLO may be affected by the incident circumstances, for example:

- Its scale, in nature and complexity.
- The community impact assessment completed for the incident.
- The media interest that it is likely to attract.

- Risk assessment, eg, where the family's experience of the police, whether direct or indirect, has led to a mistrust of the organisation's capabilities or intentions, which manifests itself in a hostile or non-cooperative stance by the family. There may also be other circumstances that have resulted in the adoption of a hostile or non-cooperative stance by the family to the police (eg, anger in reaction to a sudden violent bereavement, an adverse reaction to the need to question family members in relation to the circumstances of the death, the revelation to family members of aspects of the deceased's personal life that were previously not known).
- Where there is the direct involvement of a solicitor or community organisation acting on behalf of, or as a conduit of communication for, the family in such a manner that direct contact with the family is limited.
- Community tensions are considered to be running high as a result of the incident.
- There is a hate crime element within the homicide.
- An officer with specialist skills or qualities may be required (having received the appropriate additional training). For example, the murder of a child, suspect believed within the family, split or extended family, minority ethnic victim, gay, lesbian or bisexual victim, non-English speaking family, vulnerable or intimidated witnesses within the meaning of sections 16 and 17, Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act, 1999.
- The SIO deems it appropriate to deploy a FLO to an incident that falls outside core family liaison business, ie, in circumstances other than homicide, road death, mass fatality. Special care should be taken in these circumstances to make sure that the officer has had sufficient training to undertake the role, and a full risk assessment is carried out prior to deployment. Where the deployment of FLOs takes place outside the scope of this guidance, the SIO/SIM is expected to detail the decision-making process within their policy file.

These factors have a direct bearing on the appropriate selection and management of FLOs in terms of the skills, experience and number deployed. They should also form part of the risk assessment process.

#### 4.6 BRIEFING THE FLO

The SIO/SIM must ensure that the FLO is briefed on appointment. A briefing could include the following points:

- What is known about the circumstances of the alleged offence;
- What information is already in the public domain;
- What is already known about the family (background and composition);
- Risk assessment;
- Objectives for the deployment;
- Tasking, including fast-track actions;
- Witness categorisation (vulnerable, intimidated, significant);
- Reporting chain (SIO/Deputy SIO/FLC);
- Resources available to the FLO (such as mobile telephones, vehicles);
- Expectations such as attendance at office meetings, or the provision of an update if unavailable, timely submission of paperwork to the Major Incident Room (MIR).



## 4.7 INTERVIEWS WITH SIGNIFICANT WITNESSES

FLOs routinely take statements to establish identification and antecedence issues. They should, however, only be tasked to conduct an interview with a significant witness (including those also designated as vulnerable or intimidated witnesses) who is a member of the family, after careful consideration of the following factors:

- Whether or not the FLO has the skills to conduct such an interview;
- The extent to which the FLO's position with the family is likely to be compromised by the need to challenge the witness's account;
- Whether the FLO's knowledge of the circumstances of the case is such that it might inadvertently contaminate the interview process;
- Whether it is reasonable and realistic to expect the FLO to remain sufficiently objective in view of the particular circumstances of the case.

Where a FLO is tasked to conduct a significant witness interview, it is important that he or she is debriefed afterwards. Their ongoing deployment in the role with the family must also be reviewed.

Any decision to task a FLO to conduct a significant witness interview (including an interview with a vulnerable or intimidated witness), the rationale for it and the decision made after he or she has been debriefed should be recorded in the SIO's policy file.

## 4.8 SUPPORTING AND SUPERVISING THE FLO

The SIO/SIM has a duty of care and an obligation to support and constantly monitor the health and welfare of FLOs. SIO/SIMs should, in particular, be aware of the dangers of undue stress levels being endured by FLOs as they are exposed to the raw emotions and needs of the bereaved. They must not be left feeling abandoned or isolated.

To meet this obligation the SIO/SIM must consider the following when developing and implementing a family liaison strategy:

- The roles and lines of responsibility for the management of the FLOs should be clearly set out.
- There must be direct communication between the SIO/SIM and FLO in connection with their role and issues concerning the family.
- That FLOs are an integral part of the investigation team and are expected to be present at, and take part in, all regular team briefings and debriefings.
- That the FLO attends mandatory debriefings with the department responsible for force welfare or occupational health, or with someone nominated by the department responsible for force welfare or occupational health. Advice should be sought from such departments to determine the specific intervals when attendance would be required, based on the circumstances of the case. Failure to attend these mandatory debriefings without reasonable cause may negate the officer's future deployment as a FLO; non-attendance should be investigated.

- SIO/SIMs should ensure that FLOs are only deployed in the role on one active enquiry at a time (eg, pre-trial or other cases necessitating frequent contact between the FLO and the family). SIOs should confirm that FLOs have exited from families involved in other cases prior to their deployment in a new investigation. Any variation to this would require a specific risk assessment to be carried out.

The SIO/SIM must ensure that FLO logs are regularly supervised to ensure the effective management and conduct of the deployment. This, where practicable, should be done prior to their submission to the MIR.

The SIO/SIM must be prepared to continuously review the deployment of a FLO. In so doing, the SIO/SIM should consider:

- The suitability of the officer for retention in the role;
- Whether additional FLOs should be deployed;
- The needs of the family;
- Any changes in family circumstances;
- Any changes in the FLO's circumstances;
- Any changes in the investigation.

Considerable investment is made to train and develop a FLO. It should, therefore, be emphasised that the SIO/SIM has a responsibility for ensuring that a FLO is not deployed for any longer than is necessary to meet the immediate needs of the family and the investigation. When such needs have been met, an exit strategy should be implemented for the FLO or FLO team. At this time another contact officer (for example, a local officer) might be introduced to the family to act as a conduit for communication between them and the enquiry team. The responsibility of the SIO/SIM in supervising the implementation of the exit strategy cannot be overstated; the FLO must not be left to do this alone.

#### 4.9 COMMUNICATION WITH THE FAMILY

The SIO/SIM should meet the family as soon as practicable and in accordance with the family's wishes. This introductory meeting must be a main priority during the initial stage of the investigation. It is essential for the SIO/SIM to make this contact, thereby establishing personal links with the family and ensuring that their needs are being met. This meeting is crucially important.

The location for the meeting should be arranged and agreed with the family. If the meeting is delayed, the SIO/SIM should record this, together with the reasons why, in the policy file.

It is good practice during this first meeting for the SIO/SIM to give a letter of condolence to the family. This letter should, as far as possible, be personalised and include the following elements:

- Names and contact details of the SIO/SIM and FLO and the times during which they are available to be contacted;
- Location and telephone number of the MIR or Roads Policing Unit;
- A brief explanation of the roles of the SIO/SIM and FLO;
- What the family can expect from the police, ie, a commitment to fully investigate;
- An indication of the willingness to learn from the family through feedback;
- An offer to organise a visit to the scene and/or other key sites.

This is particularly important as family members are usually in a state of shock and do not recall all that is said to them at the time. The letter gives the opportunity for the family to have a direct line of contact with the SIO/SIM. They should be encouraged to express any concerns that may arise regarding the conduct of the investigation or the quality of the family liaison.

Where language barriers exist, there should be provision to translate the letter from the SIO/SIM and all subsequent letters and documents.

The quality of the communication with the family is graded by the FLO on a numerical scale from one to three on an ongoing basis as follows:

1. The police/family relationship is stable with no ongoing or anticipated problems.
2. The police/family relationship is or is anticipated to give cause for concern.
3. The police/family relationship is consistently unstable or non-existent and may require the involvement of an intermediary and/or crisis intervention.

It is important to note that the grading relates to the quality of the communication between the FLO and the family; it is **not** a risk assessment. The grading should be recorded by the FLO in the FLO log. The SIO should take such action as may be necessary if the quality of the communication between the FLO and the family deteriorates.

To ensure that trust is established with a family, it is vital that any commitment or assurance given is documented, carried out and its result passed on to the family. Similarly, if the assurance or commitment cannot be met, this must also be documented and a timely explanation given to the family. Care must be taken and unrealistic promises should not be made to the family.

The SIO/SIM should offer to visit the family at regular intervals. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the FLO should be informed of the visits and they may accompany the SIO. Particular consideration should be given to SIO contact at times of significant events or anniversaries, for example:

- Release of suspects for further enquires or without charge;
- Charge;
- The funeral;
- The release of defendant on bail;
- Committal;
- Conviction or acquittal;
- Coroner's court hearings;
- An appeal;
- Referral to the Criminal Cases Review Commission;
- Tariff review;
- Renewed media attention.

By maintaining regular contact with the family, the SIO/SIM will be able to determine for themselves the relationship with the family. The SIO/SIM can then address any concerns or needs the family may have by actively encouraging them to comment on any family liaison or investigative issues. The SIO/SIM will, therefore, have the opportunity to receive feedback from the families, which allows lessons learned and good and bad practice to be disseminated.

#### 4.10 INDIRECT COMMUNICATION

Cases may arise when, from the outset or at an early stage in the investigation, direct dialogue with the family and the police cannot be established or it breaks down. SIO/SIMs must look to families to be part of an effective investigation as it is much harder to support, protect and work with a family at arm's length. Without direct dialogue with the family, intelligence flow may be restricted, thereby weakening the investigation.

The onus is on the SIO/SIM to take all possible steps to overcome any barriers or difficulties. If these cannot be overcome directly, or constructive progress made towards this goal, the SIO/SIM should look to other members of the Police Service who may be able to assist, eg, officers responsible for community liaison or within Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

#### 4.11 INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUPS

In cases where the police family liaison has been ineffective, strained or has broken down, or in circumstances where the SIO/SIM feels it would be beneficial to the investigation, they should consider forming an advisory group. The purpose of such a group would be to advise and guide the SIO/SIM in re-establishing effective dialogue with the family and rebuilding trust and confidence in the police investigation.

All potential members of the group should be able to make an effective contribution and, if possible, gain the trust of both the family and community.

The group's members should reflect the local community and could include Racial Equality Council members, religious leaders, minority and community interest group representatives or family members in previous cases.

SIO/SIMs should ensure that terms of reference, operating protocols and confidentiality agreements are documented when such a group is formed.

The family and/or their representative should be consulted about the formation of such a group and asked to nominate representatives in whom they have confidence and trust.

The SIO/SIM should host regular minuted meetings with the group and debrief them on the progress of the investigation. SIO/SIMs should record, and take into account, recommendations of the group that add value to the investigation and can help to restore effective family liaison.

#### 4.12 WORKING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FAMILY

When there is no direct dialogue with the family, the family should be encouraged to appoint a representative to act on their behalf (this may be a solicitor). The wishes of the family must always be respected in this regard. The family may find it more comfortable and less traumatising to communicate through a representative. Solicitors may have legitimate concerns that their client families are frightened of, or upset by, the police, or that they may be concerned about the progress of the investigation. The SIO/SIM should make every effort to allay those concerns.

The SIO/SIM must ensure that any telephone call with a representative is subsequently supported by a fax message or letter to provide a formal record of communication. The presence of the representative must not deter the SIO/SIM from striving for timely and effective communication with the family, from offering the continued support of the police and from continuing to progress the investigation.

SIO/SIMs must always maintain a positive and professional approach while they are working with representatives of the family. They should also pursue every avenue to foster good relationships with the family. It is imperative that SIO/SIMs guard against allowing the lack of direct contact with families to cloud their perceptions and should instead focus on providing them with support and sustaining an effective investigation.

#### 4.13 THE FAMILY AND THE MEDIA

Major enquiries inevitably generate enormous media attention. The SIO/SIM will have to balance the need to exploit any investigative advantage from family exposure to the media, with the need to protect the family from unwarranted media intrusion.

The SIO/SIM should actively discourage the family from issuing statements to the media that are independent of the investigation and could have an adverse effect on the investigative process. To prevent this, the family need to have confidence in the FLO and the enquiry. The SIO/SIM, force press officer, FLC and FLO need to develop and agree the police and family media strategy, which should include any wishes or concerns that the family may have. This is particularly important when media appeals involve publishing a photograph or video and specific information regarding the victim or family.

In some cases, however, the family may wish to deal with the media directly. In these circumstances the SIO should endeavour to agree a plan with the family that does not adversely impact on the investigation. Where it is not possible to pursue such a strategy, the SIO/SIM should advise the family of the possible outcomes of independent media contact and devise a contingency plan to minimise the possibility of it resulting in unhelpful consequences to the investigation.

Whether the family deal with the media through the police or directly, they should be reminded that any material arising from such contact, including video recordings, photographs or written accounts, remain the property of the media and these could be used again at a later date without reference to the family.

At times of significant events such as post charge, conviction or acquittal, the SIO/SIM should review the police and family media strategies with the family. This is particularly important upon charge of suspects when the family may need to be reminded that information is sub judice and must not be discussed otherwise there may be allegations of an unfair trial.

If the SIO/SIM identifies that media attention concerning the victim, incident and/or investigation, which is not generated by the police, is likely to be published or transmitted, they are responsible for ensuring that this fact is communicated to the family.

#### 4.14 EXIT STRATEGY

SIO/SIMs should ensure that FLOs remain focused on achieving the strategic objectives set for them. An exit strategy should be implemented when these objectives have been achieved.

In cases where the objectives are such that it is necessary to maintain contact with a family over a long period of time, consideration should be given to replacing the original FLOs.

Exit strategies must be well timed, and caring and considerate when implemented. A visit from the SIO/SIM and the FLO to explain the procedure from that point is likely to be appropriate.

#### 4.15 SUSPECT WITHIN THE FAMILY

When there may be a suspect in the family group, a risk assessment must be carried out prior to deploying a FLO (see [Appendix 1](#)). The following issues should be taken into consideration:

- FLOs are overt investigators;
- Enhanced monitoring of the work and interaction with the family including FLOs' welfare and safety;
- The level of information disclosure to the FLOs and, in turn, the family;
- How any intelligence that arises from the FLOs' contact with the family is to be managed;
- In view of the potential for intelligence and evidence gathering, the need for the FLO to be clear concerning his or her interaction with the family in respect of the requirements of
  - the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, 1984 (PACE)
  - disclosure
  - human rights
  - the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
  - the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended);
- The importance of fully documenting all contact and interactions with the family;
- The deployment of a new pair of FLOs when a suspect is arrested;
- Investigative and/or evidential impact of deployment.

The FLC/FLA's advice should be sought in developing a strategy concerning such deployments.

A FLO must never be used in any other role that could undermine the family's confidence in them. Care must be taken to ensure that the FLO does not stray into the area of Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) under RIPA, whether qualified to do so or not, when dealing with families.

#### 4.16 DEFENDANTS' FAMILIES

In appropriate cases SIO/SIMs may consider deploying a contact officer to a defendant's family, or asking another appropriate person to represent the family in order to act as a conduit of communication between the family and the investigation team.

In cases where the victim and the suspect come from the same family, consideration can be given to deploying FLOs if investigative opportunities are identified and are compatible with the FLO role.

## 4.17 RECORD KEEPING

The development and implementation of a family liaison strategy is a dynamic process that must be reviewed at regular intervals and in consultation with the FLO.

The family liaison strategy must be referred to in the SIO/SIM's policy file. This should include:

- The objectives of the family liaison strategy;
- The selection of FLOs and the criteria used to select them;
- Decisions and reasons affecting the level of release of information to the family;
- Decisions concerning the involvement of other support services including the Victim Support Scheme (VSS) and community interest groups at the local level;
- Decisions concerning the involvement of, and working with, representatives of the family, eg, the involvement of a solicitor;
- The involvement of an Independent Advisory Group in appropriate cases;
- Arrangements for supporting each FLO and welfare strategy;
- Exit strategy for each FLO.

Where there are surviving victims in a major enquiry, consideration should be given to the deployment of FLOs to support them.

# Section 5

## THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER

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## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary role of the FLO is that of an investigator to assist the SIO/SIM to achieve their aims and objectives. This will include the day-to-day management of the interaction with the family in the investigation and close liaison with the SIO/SIM to ensure families are treated appropriately, professionally and with respect for their needs. It may involve working in a range of different situations in demanding and often stressful conditions over sustained periods of time.

Those performing the role of FLO must always act with the highest degree of professionalism and integrity and carry out their duties with sensitivity. Careful consideration should, therefore, be given to the suitability of the officers to be trained to work with the family. Good practice to be considered includes occupational health screening prior to selection for the FLO Development Programme. Officers should be volunteers and have a clear and reasoned motive reflecting genuine commitment for wishing to train and operate as a FLO.

Officers must not, under any circumstances, attempt to assume the responsibility of personally counselling a victim's family, whether qualified to do so or not. This does not, however, preclude a FLO from being a compassionate investigator. In fact, one of the most important skills a FLO can possess is the ability to listen and this will be greatly appreciated by the family.

Officers who are employed as FLOs should be conversant with the guidance for SIOs and FLCs in the *ACPO (2006) Murder Investigation Manual*, *ACPO (2007) Road Death Investigation Manual*, *ACPO (2002) Emergency Procedures Manual* and the *ACPO (2005) Hate Crime Delivering a Quality Service: Good Practice and Tactical Guidance*. These documents will assist FLOs to carry out their role effectively.

In cases where a FLO needs advice or support, initial contact should be made with the force FLC or FLA. Additional advice is available from the National Family Liaison Adviser. The National Family Liaison Adviser can be contacted through the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) Specialist Operations Centre, telephone: 0845 000 5463.

### Selection Criteria

Two distinct selection processes govern employment in the role. The first relates to the overall selection criteria for training; the second relates to deployment as a FLO in a particular case.

## 5.2 SELECTION CRITERIA FOR TRAINING AS A FLO

Candidates should have the following personal qualities:

- Good communication and listening skills;
- Be confident and self-assured;
- The ability to manage their stress;
- The ability to work with minimal supervision;
- Be flexible and non-judgmental;
- Be able to accurately record information.

In addition to these qualities, the personal circumstances of officers have to be considered in the selection process if they have suffered a significant loss in the past eighteen-month period, or have recently undergone a major life trauma such as divorce or serious illness of a close relative or partner. Officers who apply to become a FLO should be consulted about these factors in the decision-making process. Their potential impact should be weighed up on a case-by-case basis rather than automatically excluding from selection for training any officer who has experienced them.

The investigative skills required to take on the role of a FLO vary according to the nature of their deployment and whether they are new to role or established.

#### **New to Role**

- Crime and mass disaster FLOs must be competent at PIP Level 2.
- For specialist roads policing, FLOs must be competent at PIP Level 1.

FLOs who are new to the role should undergo the training and development programme specified in the *NPIA (2008) National Curriculum for the Family Liaison Officer Development Programme*.

#### **Established FLOs**

- Established FLOs for crime investigation and mass disaster must either be already competent to Level 2 of the Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP) or be working towards it with a view to attaining Level 2 status.
- Established FLOs for road death investigations must be competent to Level 1 of PIP.

Evidence of the ongoing competence of a FLO should be included in the officer's annual PDR records.

### **5.3 SELECTION CRITERIA FOR DEPLOYMENT**

Even though an officer has been trained and is fully competent as a FLO, circumstances may dictate that their deployment or retention in the role with a particular family is inappropriate.

The criteria used by SIOs/SIMs to select FLOs for a particular investigation is described in the Role of the Senior Investigating Officer/Senior Identification Manager.

It is the FLO's responsibility to inform the SIO/SIM of any factors that they are aware of that make their deployment or continued retention in the role inappropriate, eg, a change in their personal circumstances, views expressed by the family, conflicts within the family.

### **5.4 ACTION ON APPOINTMENT**

On appointment the FLO should discuss with the SIO/SIM an appropriate strategy for working with the victim's family. The level of involvement by the FLO and specific tasks allocated during the investigation will be governed by this strategy. It is, therefore, essential that the FLO establishes the parameters of their role within the enquiry and is clear about the objectives they are seeking to meet as set out in the SIO/SIM's strategy.

The FLO is responsible for passing appropriate information about the enquiry to the family. This is with the agreement of the SIO in order to avoid compromising the enquiry. As an investigator, the FLO will usually be responsible for taking statements from the family relating to identification of the body and lifestyle, victimology and behavioural characteristics of the victim.

The FLO must make arrangements to meet the family as soon as possible.

Before meeting the family the FLO will:

- Receive a briefing from the SIO/IO or FLC;
- Be made aware of any risk assessment issues.

In all cases the FLO must:

- Familiarise themselves with any available information and intelligence which could impact on the liaison role, eg, impact assessment document, community tension indicators, previous police involvement with the victim and/or family members;
- Establish the extent and nature of contact with the police since the time of the incident/death;
- Establish what information has been passed to the family, to whom and by whom;
- Establish what information concerning the incident is already in the public domain;
- Update, for the purposes of review, the risk assessment following initial contact with the family.

## 5.5 VICTIMOLOGY

In the aftermath of any homicide one of the highest priority actions is to gather victimology or lifestyle information about the victim.

This is generally done by tasking the FLOs at an early stage (fast-track actions) and should come back to the MIR in the form of statements and messages. These should be cross-referenced to the FLO log. A copy of the log should also be submitted to the MIR.

This information is gathered from those that have been identified as being close to the victim. Usually this is the family of the deceased, but on occasion enquiries can reveal that those closest to the victim were friends and associates that have to be identified through sensitive but thorough investigation.

The advantage of having this lifestyle information is that in the early stages it can open up possible lines of enquiry by identifying such things as routines, places frequented and associates that might not be immediately apparent to the investigation.

Identifying why someone has become a victim of a serious crime can be a vague and subjective exercise. Lifestyle information is, therefore, often at its most useful when it can be compared against the movements and routine of an identified suspect.

All victimology has the potential to provide the investigation with a number of lines of enquiry but is important to prioritise the crucial elements early in the investigation.

The FLO conducting victimology should obtain a recent photograph of the victim, which shows how they looked before the incident, and complete a full Personal Description Form that includes details of jewellery worn and a description of how their hair was worn at the time.

In addition the FLO should establish:

- A breakdown of the victim's daily routine in the weeks leading up to the attack.
- Any variations to that routine which may be of interest.
- Precursor events no matter how unimportant or unrelated the victim may have thought them to be (eg, unusual phone calls, altercations at the bus stop).
- Names and details of associates and their relationship with the victim.
- Whether a Personal Descriptive Form should be completed on these associates.
- Hobbies and activities (eg, if the victim jogs, goes to the gym or is a member of any clubs).
- Methods of transport (eg, which routes the victim takes and how often, what public transport the victim takes and how often, any vehicle regularly driven by the victim, where and when any vehicle owned or regularly used by the victim was acquired, where any vehicle owned or used by the victim is serviced, where any vehicle owned or used by the victim is parked).
- Social activities (eg, pubs, clubs, wine bars, coffee shops or restaurants visited by the victim, how often the victim visits them and with whom).
- Whether the victim was young, disadvantaged or elderly, or vulnerable in any other way.
- Whether there is an explanation for the victim's presence at the scene.

All of the above should be submitted to the MIR in compliance with MIRSAP guidelines and HOLMES conventions.

If in any doubt, advice should be sought from the SIO/FLC as to how material should be submitted.

## 5.6 RECORD KEEPING

At the beginning of an enquiry the FLO must commence a FLO log in which to keep all records of contact with family or next of kin, representatives of the family and other parties connected to the family. The log should be maintained by the FLO and supervised at regular intervals by the SIO/SIM. It should also be registered on HOLMES. Where HOLMES is not in use, FLO logs must be included in the manual processes set up in their department to deal with this issue.

Record keeping is essential to the role of family liaison. It provides the facility for the SIO/SIM to manage the liaison effectively. It ensures that there is an accurate, accountable and transparent record of any future review process. The integrity of this record is essential and, ideally, should be maintained in a securely bound document with numbered pages.

The log must be maintained in line with force instructions relating to 'original notes'. It should be carefully completed, working on the presumption that it will be subject to disclosure under the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996. It is important to retain any other means of recording the contacts, such as notebooks, for evidential integrity and disclosure purposes.

Where the FLO becomes aware of any sensitive issues that might need to be brought to the attention of the enquiry, these should be recorded as 'officer's information' and cross-referenced to the FLO log. Applications for Public Interest Immunity (PII) regarding the disclosure of such sensitive information can then be considered at a later point, as and when appropriate.

The log should contain the following information:

- Details of all non-sensitive strategic and tactical decisions agreed with the SIO/SIM affecting the family liaison strategy;
- Date and time of all contacts made including the times of any meetings;
- Method of contact, eg, telephone and venue where applicable, eg, at home address;
- The purpose of contact and any information exchanged;
- Details of any complaint made by the family and action taken to apprise the SIO/SIM;
- Details of any request made by the family which was not acceded to, and action taken to apprise the SIO/SIM;
- Details of who initiated the contact, eg, police, family, others;
- Details of non-family members present at meetings (care and discretion should be employed in establishing these details if they are not volunteered or already known);
- All attempts to contact the family or their representatives without success;
- All attempts to contact the family which were refused or declined and any reasons given;
- Date and time of submission of the entry to the enquiry system (where applicable).

## 5.7 WORKING AND COMMUNICATING WITH THE FAMILY

The first contact with the family is vital when laying the foundations for a successful relationship. At no time must a family be deliberately misled. Contact must be honest and open as far as possible. Families must be treated appropriately and professionally, with respect and consideration for their needs.

FLOs must be aware that some of their actions and those of the police generally may be misunderstood and, in some cases, perceived as being patronising by the family. FLOs must minimise these possibilities by ensuring that actions and decisions are explained fully and considerately, ensuring that adequate time is taken to do so.

One of the primary concerns of family members will be the need for information. The trauma of bereavement can be compounded by the frustration of not knowing the surrounding facts. The victim's family must be provided with timely information, so far as the investigation permits. The FLO should have direct communication with the SIO/SIM in connection with their role and issues concerning the family. The FLO must take part in regular briefings and debriefings with the SIO/SIM and investigation team. Any information released to the family must first be authorised by the SIO/SIM.

Depending on the size of the family, FLOs may find themselves dealing with just one individual through to many members of a family. In every case a family will vary in structure and size, and the degree of the family's involvement during an investigation cannot be predicted. Many family members (including the extended family) may wish to become actively involved during an investigation; others may not. The main point of regular contact for the FLO would normally be the deceased's partner or closest family member, as long as they are in agreement with this. This is, however, a matter for the family to decide although they may require some guidance in making this decision.

Regardless of who is selected to carry out this role, they may provide valuable assistance and, when necessary, organise meetings to relay information to the other family members. This may prove beneficial for all concerned and avoid any unnecessary conflict or confusion arising. In addition to this, the FLO should help the family to identify someone, either from the family or outside the family (eg, a family friend), to represent them to the media.

In some cases language may be a barrier and communication may require the services of a suitably qualified interpreter. Where such a need arises, great care must be taken to ensure that all information is clearly relayed and understood. Furthermore, caution should be exercised when interpreters are engaged in the investigative process, to ensure that gender, personal background or beliefs do not conflict with those of the family.

During the initial contact with the family, and certainly during the early stages of the enquiry, the FLO must draw the family's attention to, and confirm their understanding of, the conduct of a police investigation and the role of the FLO.

The FLO will have a number of issues that should be addressed with the family in the early stages:

- Providing immediate, appropriate information to the family concerning the death of the victim and explaining to the family what happens in relation to the body, eg, the post-mortem(s) and coroners' processes. The family should be informed of their right to have a representative present at the post-mortem.
- The gathering of any initial material from the family, so that it can be passed directly to the MIR and SIO/SIM for urgent attention.
- Should a family or individual express concern for their personal safety or have been subject to threats or intimidation, they may request police protection or assistance. In all such cases the FLO must act quickly and effectively, informing the SIO/SIM without delay.
- Giving or facilitating initial practical support for members of the family.
- As far as is possible, protect the family from unwarranted media intrusions.
- Facilitating the family's wishes to visit the scene. There is a need to balance evidence gathering with the emotional needs of the family.
- Facilitating access to medical services for the family (eg, family members suffering the effects of trauma).
- In particular cases it may be appropriate to explore the involvement of statutory or voluntary local support organisations, including local community groups, with the family.

In cases of homicide, the FLO must be fully conversant with the contents of the Home Office pack 'Information for Families of Homicide Victims', which covers the following topics:

- The work of the coroner;
- A summary of the criminal justice system in England and Wales;
- What to do after a death in England or Wales;
- Organisations able to offer help and advice;
- Coping when someone close has been killed;
- Going to court;
- Witnesses in court;
- The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme.

In cases of road death, the FLO must be fully conversant with the contents of the BrakeCare pack 'Advice for Bereaved Families and Friends Following a Death on the Road'. This pack covers the following:

- What happens now?
- Criminal prosecution.
- Claiming money.
- Useful contacts.

It may also be appropriate to include, in whichever pack is given to the family, a list of the contact names and telephone numbers of the FLO, the SIO/SIM and their deputies, and the times at which they may be contacted.

Generally these packs contain information that may be needed by family members at various stages during the investigation. Some of this information deals with issues that are very difficult for family members to face. After bereavement by homicide, mass fatality or fatal road traffic collision, feelings of shock and loss of control are acute.

FLOs should have ready access to supplies of these packs. The pack should be provided to one or more family members at an early a stage so that the bereaved may establish some control over their access to the information. The family may not use some sections of the pack for some time. The FLO's own knowledge of the criminal justice system and coroners' processes should be used, as appropriate, to suggest to a family member that they may look at the pack, or part of it, on their own, with another family member, with the FLO, or with Victim Support, as issues arise for them. In addition to this, the FLO should consider explaining the role of the prosecution team (the Crown Prosecution Service and prosecuting counsel) at an appropriate time. The obligation of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to explain any decisions made (in accordance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime) should also be explained and, where appropriate, a meeting between them and the family arranged.

The FLO should grade the quality of the communication between them and the family on an ongoing basis using the numerical scale set out in the FLO log. This scale runs from 1 to 3 as follows:

1. The police/family relationship is stable with no ongoing or anticipated problems.
2. The police/family relationship is or is anticipated to give cause for concern.

3. The police/family relationship is consistently unstable or non-existent and may require the involvement of an intermediary and/or crisis intervention.

It is important to remember that this grading relates to the quality of the communication between the FLO and the family; it is **not** a risk assessment. The grading should be recorded on the contact sheet in the FLO log. The FLO must keep the SIO apprised throughout, particularly if the quality of the communication with the family deteriorates.

## 5.8 VIEWING, IDENTIFICATION AND RELEASE OF THE BODY

The FLO should liaise with the coroner's officers regarding the viewing, identification and release of the body. The advice and guidance of coroner's officers should be sought in all cases.

The formal identification procedure and viewing of the body are separate processes. The identification process is the statutory responsibility of coroners. FLOs should only pass on information about these processes after appropriate consultation with the coroner's officer.

Formal visual identification of a body may not always be possible because of the injuries sustained or decomposition of the remains. Coroners will decide on the processes to employ to establish the identity of the deceased, especially if they are to be invasive, mutilative or use DNA. An inquest will be opened at the direction of the coroner when there is sufficient information available for the identification of the deceased. If the SIO/SIM believes that the identification is insufficient for the needs of the police, the matter must be taken up with the coroner before any reference to the family. When other forms of identification are to be undertaken (for example, fingerprints, dental charting or DNA profiling), the process and reasons for it must be explained, in an open and honest manner, by the FLO. In cases where the coroner feels that it is necessary to use an invasive technique (for example, removal of limbs or body parts) it is essential that the FLO gives the family an explanation for this.

Where DNA profiling and the taking of samples are appropriate, the FLO should approach an appropriate person (preferably the mother of the victim) in confidence and ask if there is anything that the police should know about lineage before obtaining blood samples for DNA purposes.

When formal, visual identification is not required, family members may still wish to see the deceased.

After consultation with the SIO/SIM, the FLO should ask the family whom they wish to nominate to identify the body. Provided that no conflict occurs in this decision, the wishes of the family should be followed. Prior to the viewing of the body, the SIO/SIM's authority must be sought in case there are any investigative issues, such as forensic considerations, which may restrict the extent of viewing.

Appointments to view must be made through the coroner's officer.

The FLO must not make assumptions on behalf of the family or pass comment on whether it is advisable to view the body or not. Sensitive and responsive management of viewing can be critical to the family grieving process and could be of long-term benefit.



It is advisable for the FLO to view the body at an early stage and they should do so again before any family member views it. To assist families in deciding whether or not to view the body, the FLO should obtain as much information as possible about its state. The information established should be passed on to the family sensitively and should include:

- The condition of the body, including any odour, colour, temperature and a detailed description of the nature and extent of any injuries. This is relevant in cases where there is no disfigurement as much as in cases where there is some. Where viewing takes place after the post-mortem, the FLO should, in advance and in consultation with the coroner's officer, explain to the family the necessity and consequences of this procedure.
- A detailed description of the layout of the parts of the mortuary that the family members will have access to and the facilities available. FLOs should bear in mind that when people pay their last respects they often want to touch or kiss the body, need to perform particular cultural rites and/or to view the body again later. Guidance should be sought from the coroner's officer about whether this is possible or appropriate.
- Where available, a photograph of the deceased may be used to assist family members to decide whether they wish to view, or to prepare them to view, the deceased.
- Subject to the needs of the investigation, the family should also be provided with any other information that they wish to know.

The FLO should also liaise with the coroner's officer to ensure that the body is in a presentable state and, where possible, blood and other debris has been wiped away from the face and other exposed parts.

In some circumstances, for example, where family members wish to view the body again, or in split family situations, the FLO might have to accompany different members of the family to view on separate occasions. FLOs should remember that the body may have deteriorated in the intervening period and should view the body again before the family in order to fully prepare them.

Where more than one family member has died, the FLO should discuss the viewing arrangements with the family. In some cases ensuring the bodies are located close together may reduce the impact of separate viewings on the family.

The FLO should be prepared to spend time with the family at the viewings. This is one of the most traumatic times for the family as this may be the last time they see their loved ones and some will find it difficult to let go.

Wherever possible, family requests concerning the nature of the viewing, contact with the body or performing cultural rites should be met. In cases where investigative priorities prevent requests being accommodated, the reasons must be recorded and fully explained to the family. In other cases where difficulties arise, the coroner's officer should be consulted in order to allay any family concerns. Any difficulties that cannot be resolved should be brought to the attention of the SIO/SIM, who, if appropriate, should consider making representations to the coroner.

After the post-mortem the FLO should establish which tissues and/or organs have been retained for further pathological examination and the reasons for their retention. FLOs need to be prepared to discuss these issues with the family, after consultation with the SIO/SIM and the coroner's officer.

The family should be told that an inquest will be opened. In consultation with the coroner's officer, they should also be told that the inquest will be adjourned for some time after the formal evidence of identification and brief circumstances have been taken, and that they need not attend the opening unless they wish to do so. The FLO should inform the family that they do not need to register the death because the coroner is responsible for that action. The coroner will do this by providing a form that either indicates the results of the inquest or states that the inquest has been adjourned. The family should then be able to obtain death certificates from the registrar. Where there is a prolonged enquiry, the coroner can issue an interim certificate that will show the cause of death (where it is known) if the family wishes. This interim certificate can be used to apply for probate (although some insurance companies will not accept it). The coroner's officer should be consulted in individual cases because these procedures can vary between coroner's courts and registrar's districts.

The FLO should liaise with the SIO/SIM and coroner's officer concerning the release of the body, and keep the family aware of developments. The FLO may need to explain to them that in some circumstances the body will undergo subsequent post-mortems and may not be released for some weeks (in accordance with the provisions of Home Office Circular 70/1999). Coroners will usually only release the body to the next of kin. It may be necessary to obtain a letter of authority from the next of kin to enable the body to be released to another person in cases of chosen kin.

## 5.9 DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION TO THE FAMILY

It may not be possible to disclose all information to a family, especially where the suspect(s) is not immediately traced, or is potentially within the family group. In extreme cases, if certain information is disclosed, it could jeopardise the police investigation and/or subsequent prosecution. This is particularly relevant when suspects have been arrested and charged because sub judge rules will be in effect.

Family members are potentially significant witnesses and there is a need, from the outset, to exercise extreme care in the information that is shared with them as at any later trial allegations could be made that the information shared by the FLO contaminated the family members' evidence. It is, therefore, important that the FLO records what is said in the FLO log and seeks the guidance of the SIO/SIM.

The FLO must fully explain the possible effects of information disclosure to the family, particularly how information is sub judge once a suspect has been charged.

## 5.10 IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES

Code D 2.2 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 states that no officer involved with the investigation of the case against the suspect may take part in these procedures. This includes warning witnesses to attend an identification procedure and conveying witnesses to an identification parade. The FLO must not, therefore, warn or accompany any family member to any identification parade as this may jeopardise the conduct of the parade. This should be fully explained to the family.

Identification parades in which victims' families are involved may be a significantly traumatic occasion and the first time that they have come into contact with the suspected perpetrators. The FLO must discuss with SIO/SIM the possibility of deploying another FLO who is independent of the investigation to guide and support the family members through this process.

The FLO who is not a member of the enquiry team should take time to explain the generic process of the identification parade to prepare family members for this experience.

## 5.11 RETURN OF PROPERTY

Issues concerning wills and probate should be borne in mind prior to returning property to the family. Force solicitor's branches should be consulted in any case where there is a possibility that property may be subject to a dispute between family members.

The following issues should be considered prior to returning property to the family:

- What property does the family wish to be returned?
- How do they want the property returned, eg, cleaned in boxes?
- Need there be a long delay in any return of property?

Property to be restored should be inspected to ensure that:

- Any police or court exhibit tags have been removed;
- Any clothing has been cleaned and pressed when requested to do so;
- Any jewellery or other personal effects have been cleaned and properly presented when requested.

The family's views must always be established before any property is cleaned. The FLO should liaise closely with the exhibits officer on all matters pertaining to exhibits. It is essential the property is returned rather than collected as this may cause upset and trauma.

Health and safety issues must always be taken into account whenever property is searched and/or cleaned.

Specialist companies may be used to provide logistical support in respect of the matters referred to in this section, particularly in instances of mass fatalities.

## 5.12 MEDIA

In reporting events concerning a sudden, unexplained or violent death, the media's representation of the victim, their persistence and scale of reporting can depend on many factors and speculation surrounding the victim. These might include the victim's age, gender, race (as defined in the Race Relations Act 1976, section 3), religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, allegations about their lifestyle, notoriety and the circumstances surrounding their death. All of these factors may be surmised and inaccurately reported. Similar factors concerning the alleged perpetrators might be reported and weighed up against the victim and also be speculative and inaccurate. The persistence of the media to obtain a story or information may involve repeated calls on family homes and canvassing of friends, acquaintances and neighbours.

Such factors may exacerbate the trauma of family members, who should be prepared for such media interest. FLOs should advise families when such activity is likely.

FLOs should ensure that they are aware of media reporting of the case by liaising closely, on a daily basis, with the appointed press officer. They should then be prepared for any questions that might be raised by families.

FLOs are reminded that the media includes local and national press, radio, TV, the internet and the newsletters of local community organisations.

It is likely that the press will want a photograph of the victim. The FLO should consult the family and, with their agreement, obtain an approved, recent photograph, which is a good likeness (if possible), for potential publication. Photographs may only be given to representatives of the press following consultation with the SIO/SIM and appointed press officer, on condition that the press do not approach the family directly.

In delivering the SIO/SIM's media strategy, the FLO should:

- Establish the family's views on participation in the police media strategy and any associated appeals;
- In appropriate cases identified by the SIO/SIM, explore the prospect of formulating a family media strategy;
- Constantly apprise the SIO/SIM of media activity around the family;
- Inform the family of the police media strategy, and pass copies of all police press statements to the family before publication.

The FLO must not issue any statements to the media unless specifically requested to do so by the SIO/SIM who should liaise with the appointed press officer.

### 5.13 SUPPORTING AGENCIES

Police officers are not in a position to provide full practical support and guidance when working with victims' families. The FLO may find that the family requires support and assistance with a variety of issues, eg, trauma of the bereavement, funeral arrangements, financial or legal advice, health or social services (including referral to a GP), in accordance with their needs.

There are a number of agencies and networks that can provide assistance at both the national and local level. The nature of the support that families require will vary considerably, depending on their individual needs; they should, therefore, be fully involved in the decision-making process.

Details of the kind of services offered by organisations such as Victim Support, Support After Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM) and BrakeCare may be found in [Appendix 6](#). Some useful telephone numbers of organisations and agencies who might be able to assist people who have been bereaved are included in [Appendix 7](#).

### 5.14 INDIRECT COMMUNICATION

In cases where direct dialogue with the family has been ineffective, strained or has broken down, the SIO/SIM may consider involving local advocates to facilitate communication and to form an Independent Advisory Group (see SIO/SIM guidance). In such cases the FLO may be used as a resource for the group and be present at meetings they hold with the SIO/SIM. FLOs may have to brief the group on the conduct and content of their liaison with the family and, at the direction of the SIO/SIM, act upon the group's recommendations. In some cases the FLO may be expected to work alongside the local advocates in the liaison process. The motive for involvement of the group is to build the family's trust and confidence in the police investigation, with the objective of restoring effective direct police communication with the family. The group should be afforded every assistance and support as directed by the SIO/SIM.

In some instances communication might take place through representatives of the family. In many cases they will be solicitors or members of community interest groups. It is extremely important that direct dialogue exists between the family and the police to ensure that the family is being supported appropriately and there is a direct flow of information. The FLO must work constructively and positively with any representative of the family to ensure that the family are supported and are receiving correct and timely information concerning the progress of the investigation. FLOs must work towards the goal of restoring direct communication with the family. It is important that the FLO adheres to the direction of the SIO/SIM by recording all communication with family representative in the FLO log.

### 5.15 EXIT STRATEGIES

FLOs must remain focused on their primary role as an investigator throughout the investigation. Where the FLO has developed a good relationship with the family, there is potential for the family to become over reliant on the FLO and the FLO becoming over reliant on the family. The implications of this could have a long-term detrimental effect on both the family and the FLO. Exit strategies must be well timed, caring and considerate when implemented. A personal visit by the FLO, accompanied by the SIO/SIM, to explain the procedure would be appropriate.

A successful interaction with a family will mean that the FLO's objectives have been achieved. In cases where it is necessary to maintain contact with a family over a long period of time, consideration should be given to replacing the original FLO. See **5.17 FLO Welfare**.

A FLO or another nominated officer should be available for the family where they have particular concerns about the investigation, but any welfare issues must be passed on to a suitable welfare agency or support organisation for them to assist.

### 5.16 POST-CONVICTION CONTACT

The family should be made aware that within two months of sentence the Probation Service will make contact with the family. Where possible, a FLO should be present at the first contact. The purpose of making contact is set out in detail in section 35 Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 and may be summarised as follows:

- To provide information to the family about the custodial process;
- To obtain information from the family about any concerns they may have or wish to be taken into account when the conditions (but not the date) of release are being considered.

There is an obligation on the Probation Service to contact the family at key stages, eg, when release on licence is being contemplated.

## 5.17 FLO WELFARE

Working with a family is often demanding and stressful and can affect the FLO's welfare. The SIO/SIM should, therefore, regularly consider implementing the exit strategy and either deploying a replacement FLO or using another member of police staff (for example, a local officer). FLOs are under an obligation to inform the SIO/SIM and FLC of any concerns they have in continuing in a specific case, or in any future role as a FLO.

It is important to the ongoing welfare of FLOs that they attend debriefing sessions with their force welfare or occupational health unit. Such visits are mandatory. These sessions take place at intervals determined by the SIO/SIM, in consultation with the appropriate unit and depend on the particular case in which the FLO is deployed. If a FLO does not attend such debriefs without good reason, they should be precluded from performing this role on future occasions.



# Section 6

## THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL FAMILY LIAISON ADVISER

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## 6.1 THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL FAMILY LIAISON ADVISER

The National Family Liaison Adviser is seconded to the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA). The role relates to the provision of strategic and operational advice and the coordination of training in relation to family liaison, including:

- The provision of strategic advice to forces in respect of implementing the guidance set out in this manual;
- The provision of operational advice to SIO/SIMs when requested (via the FLC for the force);
- The coordination of the training provision nationally for FLOs, FLCs, FLAs, SIOs and SIMs;
- The ongoing development and maintenance of national family liaison policy and guidance through the relevant portfolio holders for the ACPO Crime, Road Death and General Policing Business Areas.

The National Family Liaison Adviser may be contacted through the Specialist Operations Centre at Wyboston, telephone: 0845 000 5463.

# Section 7

## FAMILY LIAISON IN MASS FATALITY INCIDENTS

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## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the most important considerations in the aftermath of a disaster is the relationship between bereaved families and the police. The term disaster in this context should be taken as any incident involving a large number of casualties and where a Disaster Victim Identification Coordinator has been appointed.

This guidance offers generic advice on family liaison in the immediate aftermath of a mass fatality, which is intended to make sure that families are treated appropriately, with respect and according to their diverse needs. It does not distinguish between types of incidents that may require a DVI approach.

The hours and days following a disaster are intense and often confusing for all concerned. None more so than the families of the missing, who are desperately in need of information.

After a family has reported their loved one missing, it is good practice to appoint a FLO to the family.

The benefits of this dedicated point of contact are:

- To have a specific point of contact (SPOC) between the SIM/SIO and family;
- To provide a two-way flow of information and intelligence;
- To ensure the gathering of ante-mortem information without delay;
- To have fast and accurate completion of Interpol DVI forms;
- To gather any physical material that could aid identification, in an appropriate manner which would stand up to forensic scrutiny at home and abroad;
- To ensure that all relevant statements are taken from the family with regards to lifestyle and history;
- To ensure that at all times the family are furnished with timely and accurate information about the investigation and recovery operation;
- That FLOs will attempt to safely navigate the family through the workings of the criminal justice and coronial systems, regardless of where the event takes place, in order to prevent unnecessary additional trauma;
- That all requests by families to view their loved ones are arranged by the FLO where practicable;
- To facilitate visits to the scene(s);
- To facilitate the response of appropriate support services.

All dealings with the family should be recorded in the FLO log, copies of which should be retained by the investigation team. This will ensure that there is no duplication of requests made to the family, which could affect the family's confidence in the procedure.

If there is to be a police media strategy, the families should be consulted about it as it will generate interest in them. Advice to families from police media representatives would be beneficial in this area.

## 7.2 INTERPOL DVI FAMILY LIAISON STRATEGY

### 7.2.1 STRATEGIC AIM

To ensure the most effective investigation possible into the death of an individual in a mass fatality incident, by the immediate implementation of a family liaison strategy. This strategy will include the deployment of a trained police investigator to every family believed to have lost a relative in the incident.

### 7.2.2 KEY ELEMENTS

#### **Victim Identification**

This will facilitate the rapid and accurate identification of disaster victims and human remains by timely collection and collation of ante-mortem information.

#### **Investigation**

This will provide an investigative framework which will facilitate the two-way documented flow of information between the DVI Commander and the family, and the identification of critical intelligence which will support the overall investigation. This will include all relevant information to the family about the judicial process.

#### **Community Reassurance**

A joint media strategy will be agreed with the family to encourage witnesses to come forward, and give the public and community reassurance in the investigative process.

#### **Support from Other Agencies**

This will ensure that families have access to information that will enable them to make informed decisions about the support and assistance that can be obtained from other appropriate organisations.

#### **What is a Family?**

The identification of those who make up an individual's family is extremely important to the delivery of the family liaison function.

In law enforcement terms it is important to recognise the potentially wide variations of the family, which can be influenced by culture, lifestyle and preference. In the context of this document, the term family should include:

- Partners;
- Parents;
- Siblings;
- Children;
- Guardians;
- Others who have had a direct and close relationship with the victim.

Particular care should be taken to establish the wishes of the family at all times. Families with diverse lifestyles should be treated with sensitivity and understanding.

Assumptions about the identification of a family should never be made and the DVI Commander should try, at all times, to respond to the wishes of surviving family member(s).

### 7.2.3 THE MAIN ROLES IDENTIFIED FOR THE EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF A FAMILY LIAISON STRATEGY

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#### **DVI Commander**

The DVI Commander is responsible for the overall strategy relating to recovery, identification and repatriation. Family liaison falls within this strategy and as such requires a distinct strategy of its own, which will serve to complement and enhance the overall effort.

The strategy should seek to address staffing levels, clear chains of command and an agreed disclosure policy so that only approved information is given to families.

The key objectives of the family liaison strategy should be:

- Providing the family with as full and up-to-date information as possible about the incident and its investigation;
- Obtaining full family background and other relevant details as directed by the DVI Commander.

The level of disclosure to families should be as high as possible as at this time they will be in desperate need for information; it is important that the police can identify themselves as the primary and most reliable source.

Families will appreciate this and it will help to maintain their confidence in the police operation.

The DVI Commander should appoint an FLC(s) to manage the FLOs.

#### **Family Liaison Coordinator**

DVI Commanders should consider appointing a supervisor to coordinate the work of the FLOs.

The role of the FLC will be to:

- Facilitate the delivery of the family liaison strategy by acting as a tactical adviser to the FLOs;
- Act as a channel for welfare support;
- Liaise nationally and internationally to share and gather good practice;
- Monitor the workloads of FLOs in order to avoid burnout;
- Ensure that there is no duplication of effort, which would impact on resources and families;
- Ensure that any necessary equipment, such as vehicles and telephones, are made available to FLOs;
- Liaise with other appropriate agencies in order to assist the exit of police FLOs at the relevant time with an efficient handover;
- Act as a quality assurance point for FLO work, thereby ensuring that the DVI Commander receives timely and accurate updates from the family contact;
- Ensure that all relevant paperwork from the FLOs is completed and submitted in a timely and efficient manner;
- Support and advise the DVI Commander on issues relating to the delivery of family liaison.

### Family Liaison Officer

The role of the FLO involves the day-to-day management of the relationship with the family in the investigation, and close liaison with the coordinator and the DVI Commander to ensure that families are treated appropriately, professionally and in accordance with their diverse needs.

It may involve working in a range of different situations in very demanding and stressful conditions over sustained periods of time.

It is essential that the FLOs are selected from volunteers who have the appropriate skills and qualities to undertake the role.

All FLOs should already be trained to a standard of DVI awareness that would allow them to have a full understanding of the ongoing operation. This is extremely important, as they will need to explain the processes to a bereaved family.

They should also be able to explain the roles of the other key practitioners.

The primary role of the FLO is that of an investigator. In performing that role, the FLO should be mindful of the boundaries that exist between offering professional and practical support as opposed to offering personal and emotional support.

These are areas where the family should seek the support of other appropriate agencies. The FLO may be able to assist in the identification of such agencies.

Providing an advice pack at the outset would be advantageous to the FLO as it would answer many of the questions the family may need answered over a period of time.

The coordinator should be able to assist in this process by doing much of this research in the background while allowing the FLO to get on with the important task of gathering ante-mortem information.

## 7.2.4 OPERATING PROTOCOLS

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### Selection of Officers to Act as FLOs

It is essential that the FLOs are primarily, if not exclusively, dedicated to the task. To perform the function effectively they must be an integral part of the DVI Team.

Consideration should be given to the deployment of a deputy FLO. Such a deployment has benefits for the victim's family and the investigation in that it provides for greater resilience in the liaison function at times when the principal FLO is unavailable because of, for example, sickness, leave, court commitments.

In considering the deployment of a FLO, the DVI Commander should take account of the FLO's ability to perform the role effectively at that time.

The following circumstances will have a bearing on the selection process:

- Whether they have suffered a recent bereavement of a close relative or partner or other major life trauma;
- Frequency of recent deployment in the FLO role;
- Existing workload;
- Availability, eg leave, court commitments;
- Previous experience in the role.

On occasions, gender may be a critical factor for a number of reasons including culture.

Where the victim's family are from a minority group or particular lifestyle diversity, consideration should be given to the deployment of a FLO with particular knowledge and experience of that community.

In the event of a terrorist incident or other similarly motivated attack where one or more minority communities have been affected, advice should be sought from community advocates when writing a family liaison strategy so that it reflects the needs of those communities at that time.

### **Training Required**

At the end of any course designed for training FLOs, the students should be able to:

- Identify the main responsibilities of the FLO in relation to the overall police response;
- Outline the responsibilities of the FLO in relation to the management of anti-mortem information;
- Outline the command structure in a DVI Incident;
- Explain the relationship between the family liaison strategy and the overall strategy as set out by the DVI Commander;
- Identify the main responsibilities of the FLC in DVI incidents;
- Outline the potential issues in relation to ethnicity, culture and lifestyle diversity when dealing with a bereaved family, eg, death rites and funerals;
- Outline the processes that are usually involved with grieving and the effect that an enquiry may have on this;
- Outline the role of the coroner or other judicial inquest within the context of any particular incident;
- Explain the methods that may be used to identify a victim after a disaster;
- Outline issues relating to releasing bodies and post-mortems;
- Explain the importance of collecting forensic samples correctly;
- Identify the issues that should be considered in relation to the return of property;
- Outline the importance of accurate record keeping in their dealings with a family;
- Outline the effect that media coverage could have on a bereaved family;
- Formulate a strategy that will enable them to exit from the family at the appropriate time;
- Recognise the circumstances when specialist intervention may be required;
- Identify tactical options for dealing with unexpected developments;
- Identify the assistance that might be given by the relevant support agencies that are available to a family during and after an enquiry.

### **Risk Assessment**

As with any deployment, the family liaison function needs to be included on its own in any generic risk assessment.

This should be reviewed on a regular basis with particular attention being paid to when the circumstances of the liaison change in respect of:

- **People**

Has the family group changed in structure? Have other family members started to act as spokesperson for the family? There is always potential for media intrusion inside a family. Care must be taken to make sure that information is given only to the right people.

- **Action/Activity**

During the deployment the activities of the FLO with the family may change. This can be due to new information, media intrusion or just developments in the investigation. It should be ensured at all times that any new activities not previously undertaken by the FLO are subject to the same risk assessment.

- **Location**

If the family liaison function is to take place at a location that has not previously been risk assessed, this should be conducted immediately.

Every effort should be made to establish as much information as possible about any premises and its occupants. The risk assessment should take into account any community tension that may exist in that location.

- **Environment**

The address where the liaison is taking place may be viewed for at least part of the liaison function as the workplace of the FLO. It is, therefore, crucial that the environment is not detrimental to their health. This would obviously be affected if anyone at the address was suffering from a contagious disease or if the home contained any hazardous substances. On a more subtle level, however, this could also include any changes to dynamics within the family and between the police and the family, which could make working within the family home a more risky environment.

Much of this assessment work can be carried out by the FLO themselves as they go about their business, but it is the duty of the FLC and the DVI Commander to ensure that they are regularly reviewed as part of the overall management and supervision function.

**Note:** The 'risk' referred to here not only applies to the individual FLO. It also applies to any risk that has been identified by the family liaison function that could cause potential harm to the confidence of the family and the broader community in the overall police response.

### **Communication with the Family**

It is extremely important that the appointed FLO(s) become the primary point of contact with the family.

The needs of the investigation have to be balanced against the needs of the bereaved. Previous experience has shown that one of the most difficult things that families have had to endure after a disaster has been the constant requests for information from them from many different sources. There may be a limit to which the police can resolve this with other agencies. The police can, however, minimise the duplication of requests from other agencies to families by channelling them through the FLO. Such requests should, ideally, be marked accordingly to their priority. The FLC may be able to assist by prioritising these requests.

There may be times throughout the investigation when the families request a meeting with the DVI Commander. In the event of mass fatalities, the DVI Commander may be unable to see families individually. It may, therefore, be advantageous for the DVI Commander to bring the families together for periodic briefings. These can be arranged by the FLOs in order to meet the needs of all parties.



### **Record Keeping**

All communication with the family whether by telephone or in person must be recorded in a way that can be reproduced later for supervision and examination.

A FLO should create a log of communications with the family which can show, at a glance, how the police and family relationship has progressed.

Any requests made by the family or concerns that have been raised should be recorded and brought to the attention of the FLC as soon as possible.

If, for any reason, the police cannot resolve the families' concerns then a full explanation should be given to the family as to why; this must be subsequently recorded in the FLO's log.

Copies of the FLO log should be handed to the FLC so that they can be submitted to the investigation and that any other actions arising from that interaction can be raised. A separate FLO log must be completed for each family. These should be retained by the FLO during the investigation and handed in at the end.

### **Family and the Media**

The media will always have a major part to play in the aftermath of a mass fatality incident. Twenty-four-hour media coverage now means that images from the scene of a disaster are available within minutes of it happening.

The DVI Commander will have to balance the need to use the media to generate information and intelligence with the need to protect the family from unwarranted media intrusion. Any police media strategy must, therefore, be discussed in advance with the family. This will include the release of photographs which may have been given to the police by the family.

Video records showing family members should also be shown to the family first and the evidential value of releasing them to the media explained to the family.

A dedicated media officer may be able to perform these duties, thereby allowing the DVI Commander to concentrate on other matters. The media officer could also assist the FLO with briefings to the family about developing issues likely to appear in the press.

The FLO, on behalf of the DVI Commander, should discourage the family from having an independent media strategy, and explain the need for a jointly agreed strategy.

The FLO must keep the DVI Commander aware of any issues arising within the family that could cause adverse media attention.

### **Family Assistance Centres**

After a large-scale disaster, where families end up making their own way to the area, setting up a central resource centre should be considered. This would assist the police and families by having a focal point where relatives could receive information and assistance. In the short term, this could also help to maximise the family liaison effort by having FLO resources available to capture all the ante-mortem information as well as forensic samples in the immediate aftermath.

A central resource centre would need the involvement of other agencies. However, it allows families to make informed choices based on their immediate needs.

Trips to the scene can be organised in such a way that they do not interfere with any rescue or recovery work that is going on. This also reduces the risk of relatives just turning up unaccompanied at the scene, which can be harrowing and disruptive to DVI Teams working there.

Suitable premises would need to be identified that are not too near the scene but which have sufficient transport links. A more in-depth plan of such a resource can be made available if required.

### **Exit Strategies**

The primary role of the police FLO is that of an investigator. It is, therefore, necessary for all the key practitioners in the delivery of a family liaison strategy to recognise when that role is finished.

The FLC and the DVI Commander should be easily able to identify when the exit strategy should be implemented. If not supervised appropriately, the FLO can sometimes become overly involved with a bereaved family. For this reason, the role of the FLO needs to be fully explained to the family at the outset.

The FLO should keep the family updated so that they are aware of when that contact will eventually end.

The FLC must check regularly that the exit strategy is being implemented. Failure to do this may encourage the family to become over dependant on the police when their actual needs can now be met better by other, non-police, agencies.

It is also important that the FLO is allowed, for their own benefit, to step away from the family at the end of the investigation. A well-managed, well-supervised FLO team should not necessarily suffer any ill effects from conducting their role. However, it is essential that they are debriefed in the same way as other practitioners performing key roles.

Debriefing is mandatory at the end of an incident as it helps to maintain officers' welfare, and can be used to draw out operational issues that may need to be reviewed prior to any subsequent deployment. It also helps to ensure that good practice is shared within the organisation.

### **7.2.5 SUMMARY**

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The provision of police family liaison following a disaster is essential in managing an efficient, two-way flow of information.

It allows for:

- More effective media handling;
- Faster and more reliable identification and repatriation;
- Better inter-agency cooperation, which benefits families;
- Family, community, media confidence in the work of the police.



# APPENDIX 1

## RISK ASSESSMENT

### FORMS

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**FORM 1**

**FAMILY LIAISON RISK ASSESSMENT**

Victim(s) Details
SIO
Deputy

Full address for potential visit					
State if victim or suspect's family					
Household members for whom liaison has been identified as a requirement			Date of Birth	Mobile or Telephone Nos if available	Date Details Established
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
Household Member	FLO deployed for initial visit			Station/Contact Number	
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
Database Searches Conducted (insert date)					
Household Member	PNC	Force	LIO	Domestic Violence	Others (specify)
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					

Complete additional Form 1 when required

**FILE CONTENT**

	<b>Date Form 2 Created</b>	<b>Signature</b>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
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24		

## RISK ASSESSMENT FORMS – NOTES FOR GUIDANCE

There are two risk assessment forms:

**Form 1** is a storage folder and indicates a specific address and details of household members for whom liaison may apply. The actual risk assessments relevant to that address are completed on **Form 2** and stored within the **Form 1** folder.

A separate **Form 1** folder is used for each address where liaison is required.

Each **Form 1** will be given a document reference number by the MIR.

**Form 2** is completed for each specific risk assessment relevant to the address indicated on **Form 1**.

### TIMING

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All efforts must be made to establish and record relevant information immediately after a decision to deploy officers has been taken. Further required information is added later, together with the date it became known.

In any event, an assessment of risk must be carried out prior to the deployment of FLOs and the details of the assessment recorded on **Form 2**.

Further **Form 2** risk assessments should be completed after the initial visit to the address.

Additional forms should subsequently be completed as necessary, eg, when officers are deployed to liaise with a suspect's family after charge and there is local ill feeling towards the family.

In many instances the details of the risk will be completed by the FLOs themselves, but the assessment must be made by the SIO, Deputy SIO or trained assessor.

Once completed, the risk assessments are stored in the appropriate **Form 1** and logged on the rear page of that folder.

### ADDITIONAL RISK ASSESSMENTS

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Additional **Form 2** assessments must be completed when significant changes in the circumstances surrounding the liaison occur. These are shown on the **Form 2** under the following headings.

### PEOPLE

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When the persons known to be present during a personal visit to the address differ from those shown on the **Form 1** (such as might be the case when members of the extended family or friends visit), when the media or press are present or when the personal circumstances of the persons assessed have changed (eg, an adverse change in behaviour characteristics which indicate potential risks or in a case of a family member having been arrested and then released).



### ACTION/ACTIVITY

If officers have been given additional tasks that differ significantly from their previous liaison role (eg, participation in a search of premises or seizure of property).

### LOCATION

Where the potential risk increases at the address shown on **Form 1** (eg, increased risk is recorded on the Community Impact Assessment Document) or when liaison occurs at any location other than the address shown in the **Form 1** (eg, hospitals, funeral service or court proceedings).

### ENVIRONMENT

**Form 2** can be used in conjunction with any existing research profile used by some police forces to analyse potential risk where the environment that the officers are working in changes (eg, neglect of the home or risk to the officer's health because of contagious or infectious disease).

**FORM 2**

Potential Risk / Hazard / No Apparent Risk		To whom: Officer / Family / Other	Name of Liaison Officer
People; Action / Activity; Location; Environment <i>Circle appropriate one</i>			
Why			
Control Measure	Reasons		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove</li> <li>• Avoid</li> <li>• Reduce</li> <li>• Accept</li> </ul> <i>Circle as appropriate</i>			
Name and Signature of Assessor	Date	Name and Signature of SIO for Completion	Date
Other agencies notified:			

Complete additional forms for each contact or for each identified new risk



# APPENDIX 2

## INDEPENDENT POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION GUIDANCE ON FAMILY LIAISON IN POLICE COMPLAINT INVESTIGATIONS

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

It is recognised that Family Liaison is a significant role for the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) to undertake as it goes to the heart of our Independence. The IPCC also recognises that whilst the need to remain independent from the police is crucial, we should do so without losing the skills and level of expertise already accrued by the Police Service in this area of investigation. As a starting point our staff will be referred to as Family Liaison Manager (FLM) and the term Family Liaison Officer (FLO), in relation to IPCC staff will not be used.

Deaths following police contact (or injuries sustained which are life changing) should be treated as potential critical incidents until proven otherwise, with due regard being given to existing guidance i.e. the Critical Incident Manual, the Family Liaison Manual, the Road Deaths Manual, ACPO Guide to the Police Use of Firearms and other relevant material. This response should ensure consistency of early actions and form the basis for strategic planning.

The Police Reform Act 2002, Sch. 3, Paras 4(1) and 13(1), outlines circumstances in which cases should be referred to the IPCC. It is then the responsibility of the IPCC to assess the situation and determine the preferred mode of investigation to ensure the appropriate direction and control of the subsequent investigation. The responsibilities and powers of the IPCC are set out in Part 2 of the Police Reform Act 2002 (PR Act 2002). These statutory powers allow the IPCC to supervise, manage or independently investigate complaints and conduct matters referred to it or called in by it.

There are four possible modes of investigation:

### **Independent Investigation (PR Act 2002, Sch.3, Part 3 Para.19)**

Independent investigations will be conducted by the IPCC into incidents that cause the greatest level of public concern, have the greatest potential to impact on communities or have serious implications for the reputation of the Police Service. It will be for the IPCC Commissioner/Regional Director to decide when such investigations are necessary. The IPCC direction and control of such investigations will be made clear at all times. In any independent investigation the Senior Investigator (SI) and key members, if not all, of the investigation team will be IPCC staff.

### **Managed Investigation (PR Act 2002, Sch.3, Part 3 Para.18)**

An IPCC Managed investigation will be conducted when a complaint or alleged recordable conduct matter is of such significance and/or probable public concern that its investigation merits being under the direction and control of the IPCC, but does not merit a fully independent investigation. An IPCC Commissioner will provide direction and control of that investigation, via IPCC staff managing the investigation, provision of terms of reference and approval of the appointment of the proposed SIO. This ensures regular review of, and informs changes to, mode of investigation, terms of reference and investigative strategies. The approval of the outcome of any managed investigation will be a matter for the designated Commissioner.

### **Supervised Investigation (PR Act 2002, Sch.3, Part 3 Para.17)**

Supervised investigations will be conducted when an incident is of such significance and/or probable public concern that supervision of the investigation by the IPCC is necessary. The SIO will again be subject to approval by the relevant commissioner, who will impose such reasonable requirements as to the conduct of the investigation as appears necessary.

However, direction and control in a supervised investigation rests with the police force not the IPCC. Terms of reference including the investigative strategy will be agreed between the SIO and the IPCC commissioner.

#### **Local Investigation (PR Act 2002, Sch.3, Part 3 Para. 16)**

The IPCC may decide that the home force can locally investigate a complaint or conduct a matter, without compromising issues of credibility, public confidence or transparency.

## **2 GUIDANCE RELATING TO IPCC AND POLICE FAMILY LIAISON HANDOVER PROCEDURES**

The use of Independent Police Complaints Commission Family Liaison should, therefore, be considered in circumstances where there has been death following police contact and in cases not involving fatality, where the involvement of family liaison may enhance the effectiveness of the Independent Police Complaints Commission response.

Following a death after police contact, the police will always deploy a Family Liaison Officer to the family/next of kin of the deceased.

On occasions the police may deploy an FLO in respect of a crime investigation and at the same time the IPCC may deploy a Family Liaison Manager (FLM) to the same family in respect of a parallel IPCC investigation.

The purpose of this document is to give guidance to police FLO's, police Senior Investigating Officers (SIO) IPCC Family Liaison Managers (FLM) and IPCC Senior Investigators (SI) to help manage FLO and FLM working. The role of the IPCC FLM is fundamentally the same as the police FLO; the different terminology simply reflects the fact that IPCC investigators are not officers.

Once the decision is taken to deploy an FLO/FLM a structured strategy must be recorded in the appropriate logs. This is to ensure the FLO/FLM fully understand the role which they are being asked to perform.

### **2.1 INITIAL DEPLOYMENT**

It is of the utmost importance that the delivery of the death message to the next of Kin is not delayed. This will invariably mean the prompt deployment of a police officer, probably an FLO, (depending on force policy) to the family to deliver that message.

If the officer delivering the message is not an FLO, the police will deploy a trained FLO to the family as soon as possible after the message is delivered.

It is accepted that the police may wish to delay notification to the family due to on-going operational requirements or for reasons of personal safety. In such cases the police SIO should discuss the reasons with the IPCC SI and agree a way forward.

In the normal course of events a police FLO will be deployed to a family before any IPCC involvement. It is not good practice to wait for the deployment of an IPCC FLM before the death message is delivered. Firstly, the status of the investigation (ie, Independent, managed, supervised, or local) cannot be assumed and secondly, the IPCC do not have the resources to guarantee being able to deliver the message with the speed required and any delay may cause avoidable distress to the family, which could lead to unnecessary complaints.

There may be rare occasions when the family of the deceased is not identified until after it is known that the IPCC will independently conduct the investigation. In such cases, providing further delay will not be caused in delivering the death message, consideration should be given to deploying an IPCC FLM from the outset.

## 2.2 IPCC INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS

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Where it is known that an investigation is to be independently investigated by the IPCC and the police have deployed an FLO, a structured hand over to the IPCC FLM must take place as soon as practicable. This is regardless of the agreed time and day for the handover of the remainder of the investigation. It is the responsibility of the IPCC SI dealing with a situation that warrants the deployment of an FLM, to instigate the deployment as soon as possible and provide strategic direction.

## 2.3 HANDOVER

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The actual handover from the police FLOs to the IPCC FLMs should involve a face to face meeting between the FLOs and FLMs together with their coordinators if possible. There may be occasions when a hand over has to be carried out over the telephone but these should be very rare occasions and only take place with very good reason when all other alternatives have been exhausted.

The IPCC FLM or FLC should explain to the FLO the reason for the deployment of an IPCC FLM in place of the FLO so that the rationale is understood. This is to avoid any perception that the replacement is for personal reasons.

During the meeting the following should be passed by the police FLO to the IPCC FLMs:

- Details of the family identified;
- Known contact numbers;
- Details and contact number for the family single point of contact if relevant;
- Information already given to the family;
- Details of any evidence or information obtained from the family;
- Issues/complaints raised by the family;
- Media publicity interest;
- Any logistical matters, such as property held by the police, accommodation/travel problems;
- Any identified medical issues;
- Details of any body tissue removed after a special post mortem;
- Details of leaflets handed out and support facilitated;
- A copy of the police Risk Assessment including relevant supporting information relating to previous convictions and intelligence;
- The police SIO's FLO strategy;
- Copies of the police FLO log.

It is important that the FLOs and FLMs manage the introduction of the IPCC FLMs to the family. It is also imperative that a structured exit strategy is in place to facilitate the exit of the Police FLOs from the family. This must be recorded in the relevant log. To achieve a smooth transition it is strongly recommended that the FLOs and FLMs meet the family together for the introductions to take place. It is accepted that there may be occasions where this is totally inappropriate. For example the family may wish to have no contact with the police. This decision will be respected and details recorded in the relevant log.

There may be rare occasions when the deployment of IPCC FLMs will not be possible. This situation may arise due to operational commitments which restrict the availability of suitably trained and experienced FLMs; for example a major Road Traffic Incident resulting in multiple fatalities and consequently multiple deployments. A further consideration is risk assessment, the result of which may prevent the deployment of IPCC FLMs; however, it remains the responsibility of the IPCC SI, to formulate a family liaison strategy. Should the police FLO remain deployed during an independent investigation, the guidance model for IPCC Managed Investigations, using police FLOs (see below) should be followed, with the FLO working directly to the IPCC SI and being a member of the investigation team. In the case of multiple deployments an IPCC FLC/FLM may be deployed to coordinate the family liaison.

## 2.4 IPCC MANAGED INVESTIGATIONS – POLICE FLO

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Where the investigation is carried out by the police and managed by the IPCC the police FLO will generally remain deployed to the family and will remain the conduit between the police SIO and the family.

In managed cases it is the role of the IPCC to keep the family up to date with the progress of the investigation. To ensure the police FLO remains fully effective it is important that the FLO is given the same information by the IPCC as is passed to the family. Therefore where the update is carried out by letter a draft should be shown to the police FLO who will be in a position to advise on any identified sensitivities prior to the letter being supplied to the family.

If it is the intention of the IPCC SI to update the family in person, the police FLO should be told in advance and given the opportunity to be present at the meeting or if the family is updated by telephone the FLO should be given advance notice of the contents of the call. This will help ensure the police FLO remains fully effective in the role and will provide the FLO with the opportunity to advise on any identified sensitivities.

## 2.5 MANAGED CASES – IPCC FLM

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Occasionally there may be managed cases where the deployment of a police FLO is not appropriate in which case the IPCC manager and police SIO may determine that the deployment of an IPCC FLM is the most appropriate course of action.

This would normally be because relationships between the family and the police in general have broken down due to the circumstances of the death. The IPCC manager should ensure the rationale for the replacement of the police FLO is explained to the FLO concerned.

Any handover should be dealt with as for an independent investigation after which the FLM will be accountable to the IPCC manager in the case. The IPCC manager should ensure the police SIO is fully informed of the IPCC FLM involvement with the family, information obtained and issues identified. It follows that any police contact with the family would be through the IPCC FLM.

Although in a managed investigation evidence is gathered by the police, in these circumstances any evidence from the family will be obtained by the IPCC FLM or facilitated by the IPCC FLM in cases where specialist police skills are utilised.



## 2.6 SUPERVISED CASES

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Where the investigation is carried out by the police and supervised by the IPCC, the police FLO will generally remain deployed to the family and will remain the conduit between the police SIO and the family.

If the relationship breaks down between the family and the FLO consideration should be given to the deployment of an IPCC FLM.

Any handover should be dealt with in the same manner as a handover for an independent or managed investigation. The FLM will be accountable to appropriate IPCC Family Liaison Coordinator (FLC) who will ensure the police SIO is fully informed of the IPCC involvement with the family, information obtained and issues identified. Any police contact with the family would be through the IPCC FLM.

## 2.7 PARALLEL INVESTIGATIONS

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Generally speaking an IPCC investigation will not take place at the same time as an associated 'crime' investigation. However this is not always the case and on occasions a police FLO and IPCC FLM could be deployed to the same family in respect of two parallel investigations. When this situation arises it is important the FLO and FLM have clear guidance on the extent of their respective roles.

A practical example of where this may occur is the police shooting of a suspect during the commission of a crime for which others have been charged or in a case of murder, where the family of the deceased allege the police did not historically act to prevent the murder. In such circumstances the police and IPCC may deploy their respective FLO/FLM to the same family for different reasons.

Where parallel investigations take place careful consideration will have been given to the terms of reference which sets out the extent of the IPCC investigation.

In relation to the deployment of the FLO/FLM the following needs to be considered by the police crime SIO and IPCC SI:

- Is there a need to deploy one FLO and FLM or can either an FLO or FLM act as a conduit for both the police SIO and IPCC SI?
- If both an FLO and FLM are deployed the main points of contact for each officer/investigator needs to be determined. As with any case this will depend on the dynamics of the family. The contact may be the same person for both organisations and depending upon the nature of the IPCC investigation another member of the family.
- If both an FLO and FLM are deployed the police SIO and IPCC SI need to develop and record a clear understanding between the two agencies of who has primary responsibility for the Control, Co-ordination, Direction, Welfare and Safety of the Family Liaison Officer/Manager deployed in any particular investigation.

- If both an FLO and FLM are deployed thought needs to be given to the extent of the information to be passed by either organisation to the family. For the IPCC this will generally be in line with the terms of reference for the independent investigation. As with any investigation if details of evidence are to be passed to a family the 'harm test' must be applied. For this reason the police SIO and IPCC SI need to determine a process for informing each other of the information they wish their respective FLO/FLM to pass to the family. This is to ensure the 'harm test' criteria can be accurately assessed and reduce the risk of conflicting messages. Generally speaking information passed to families in parallel investigations will be limited to matters of process and not detail of evidence, preventing the risk of premature or inappropriate disclosure of information relevant to criminal proceedings.
- A similar process needs to be applied in respect of information the IPCC or police intend to release to the media. It will be for the FLO/FLM to check proposed releases before hand with the family.
- Part of the role of the FLO/FLM is to obtain evidence. The nature of the evidence being sought by the police FLO or FLM should be made clear to them by the SIO/SI.
- The FLO/FLM will need to make each other aware of the support being facilitated to families to avoid duplication of effort.

## 2.8 INTELLIGENCE

A deployed IPCC FLM may gain intelligence which identifies a potential risk to a person or some other serious criminal act.

Where an FLM gains intelligence identifying a potential risk of harm or death to any individual, the intelligence must be brought to the attention of the Senior Investigator in the case as a matter of urgency. The intelligence must also be passed to the appropriate police contact (verbally in the first instance) without delay so that action to protect the individual(s) concerned can be instigated in accordance with force policies arising from the case of *Osman v UK* (2000) 29 EHRR 245. A duty of care is placed upon us all to protect life.

All intelligence must be discussed with the relevant Senior Investigator and entered on a 5x5x5 intelligence sheet which is to be submitted to the intelligence unit for dissemination. This process must not delay the passing of urgent intelligence to the police.

## 3 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this guidance is to help develop an understanding of the family liaison role in relation to the various types of investigations involving the IPCC. It is also intended to help ensure a smooth transition when the liaison role passes from the police to the IPCC and provide guidance when there is a combination of IPCC and police resources involved in the liaison. This guidance is not intended to compromise the independence of the IPCC in independent investigations or the direction and control of managed investigations.



# APPENDIX 3

## DEATHS ABROAD

### Foreign and Commonwealth Office Guidance on British Nationals Murdered or Missing in Suspicious Circumstances Abroad

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## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE (FCO)

It is beneficial and good practice to deploy FLOs to assist the FCO in cases where British nationals have been victims of serious crimes or major incidents abroad.

These include cases of murder, manslaughter, serious sexual offences, fatal road collisions, terrorist incidents, natural disasters and where people have gone missing in suspicious circumstances.

An effective partnership between the FCO and the police is based upon a mutual understanding of each other's role with a genuine emphasis on teamwork.

These guidelines should be used when considering the deployment of a police FLO following the death of a British National overseas. Their role is to engage with the family in the UK when there is an investigative or identification requirement.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Consular Services has the principal responsibility for the communication and liaison with a UK family following the death of a UK citizen abroad.

The Police Service may be called upon by the FCO to support FCO consular staff through the appointment of a locally-based FLO. The decision on whether or not to deploy a FLO rests with the chief officer of the individual constabulary or force to whom the request is made.

## FAMILY LIAISON OFFICERS

FLOs and FLCs are serving police officers that are appointed to liaise with families who have lost a loved one through sudden, violent or unexplained death. Their primary role is that of an investigator and they are an integral part of any police investigation.

When a decision has been made to deploy a FLO, the FLC or FLA within the force area should be contacted. They should be included in any discussions about the FLO's deployment strategy, risk assessments and exit strategy.

### The FLO's Role

This is to:

- Gather evidence, information and intelligence in a sensitive manner, which assists with an investigation or identification;
- Provide the family with a communication channel to the Senior Investigating Officer, (SIO) in charge and the investigation team;
- Guide families through the complicated criminal justice procedures, providing timely information and practical support concerning the investigation and associated procedures;
- Give help and advice when families may need to talk to or deal with other organisations, such as the Crown Prosecution Service, local authorities and HM Coroner;
- Make sure that families have information about specialist support agencies, for example, Victim Support, Cruse and SAMM Aboard so they can make decisions as to what help and advice they may require.

## DEFINITION OF FAMILY

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This includes chosen as well as biological parents, partners, significant others, siblings, children, guardians and others who have a direct and close relationship with the victim.

During an investigation families will be seen as an essential element in the investigation; the FLO will provide as much timely information as possible.

The aim is to treat families appropriately, professionally, with respect and in accordance with their diverse needs.

## DEATH ABROAD

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FLOs may be appointed by the Police Service to assist the families of those murdered or missing in suspicious circumstances overseas.

The FLO will normally be requested by the investigating country and/or the FCO to liaise with the family and the police who are investigating the incident. This is to prevent any misunderstanding of the legislative differences which are unique to the crime scene. This should be arranged and agreed with FCO Consuls or Protection Desk Officers.

FLOs are not appointed automatically when a death occurs overseas. There must be an investigative role for them to undertake, whether it be for Her Majesty's Coroner or in support of the SIO or SIM.

Early contact with the family by a FLO has proved to be of great benefit to both the family and the investigation team, no matter how the fatality occurred. While the family may appear to be cooperating with an investigation, breaking point for them is often reached when DNA and forensic samples are sought. A FLO who has already developed a relationship with the family will be able to approach this request in a sensitive and humanitarian manner. This should help to maintain the partnership between the family and the police while keeping the FCO case worker updated with information when it is obtained.

## CRITERIA FOR DEPLOYMENT OF FLO

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FLOs will not be deployed in **all** cases where a British National has died abroad. They will, generally, be deployed only if there is an investigative role for them. The following circumstances are examples of when FLOs could be deployed in an investigative role in an investigation into a death abroad:

- Identification of the victim is an issue and there is a need for forensic samples, eg, DNA samples, dental records, fingerprints from the family;
- The foreign police service is specifically asking for enquiries to be conducted in the UK;
- The victim's body is returned to England or Wales and the local coroner requests FLO assistance in conducting an inquest.

The coroner may also order a post-mortem, even if one was performed abroad. It is always worthwhile in these cases to speak to the coroner (through the Coroner's Office) at a very early stage.

The Coroner in Northern Ireland and the Procurators Fiscal in Scotland have no responsibility to investigate the deaths of persons returning to their jurisdictions.

Despite the willingness of a UK police force to assist, primacy for the investigation will always rest with the host country.

## FCO CONSULAR DIRECTORATE

It is important that FLOs, SIOs and FLCs have some understanding of the Consular Directorate (CD) and its role and responsibilities within the FCO.

The FCO in London and Embassies and High Commissions abroad consist of many different departments. It is the Consular Directorate part of the FCO, through its consuls and vice-consuls, that deals with British Nationals in distress abroad.

When an incident occurs abroad, the Consular Directorate in London, resourced by desk officers (DOs) working with that specific country's casework team, initially responds to the incident.

The DOs liaise with the consular officer dealing with the incident abroad. A FLO will work alongside a DO when dealing with cases of British Nationals killed abroad.

## CONSULAR OFFICERS ABROAD

On notification of a death abroad the consular officers will:

- Liaise with local authorities, police and the judiciary to confirm identification and establish known facts;
- Obtain copies of police reports for a UK coroner and the family;
- Keep the family updated on any police or judicial investigation;
- Provide a list of English-speaking lawyers, doctors and interpreters to the families;
- Assist the family if they visit the country;
- Advise the family on repatriation, cultural issues, police and judicial systems;
- Liaise with the desk officer in London;
- Advise the family (if they are present in the country) of the location of the death.

Consular offices abroad do not:

- Investigate crimes or carry out criminal research;
- Interfere in criminal investigations or the judicial process;
- Provide legal or medical advice;
- Pay for repatriation, legal, medical, interpreter fees or travel to the country;
- Offer an opinion on the quality of an ongoing investigation by local law enforcement.

Local police and judicial authorities do not discuss ongoing investigations with the family. In these circumstances families are advised by 'posts' to engage the services of a local lawyer to represent their interests before the police or courts.

## DESK OFFICERS

When a death is first notified, the DO will arrange for the local force to notify the next of kin as soon as possible. This does not necessarily have to be done by a FLO and in some cases trying to obtain one will delay the notification.

The initial telephone briefing of the circumstances and information to the FLO will be followed by written confirmation, either by fax or email. Should there be more than one death in the same incident and the families of the victims are from different parts of the country, it will be the decision of ACPO as to which police force will lead on the investigation.

The DO and their line manager will decide, in consultation with the police adviser to the FCO, whether to request the deployment of a FLO. If it is decided that a FLO will be deployed, the police adviser to the FCO will contact the force FLC or on-call senior CID manager. The FLC must, in turn, inform force senior management. The decision to deploy, however, is a matter for the UK force to consider.

### FLO ROLE IN OVERSEAS INVESTIGATIONS

If requested by Interpol, FLOs can assist overseas police forces by interviewing witnesses and families who are resident in the UK. This includes victimology and taking background statements. When such action has been requested, FLOs through their FLCs, must inform the relevant country desk at the FCO or the police adviser at the FCO that a request to conduct such investigations has been received by telephoning: 0207 008 1500.

### FLO TRAVEL ABROAD

In normal circumstances FLOs will not be deployed abroad. Their role is to support the family in the UK. Individual chief officers may, however, at their own discretion and cost, consider the deployment of FLOs abroad on a case-by-case basis. In such instances, chief officers are encouraged to discuss such a deployment with the ACPO lead on FLO before deployment. **FLOs must never be deployed abroad without ACPO authority.**

Whenever a FLO is deployed abroad, a face-to-face meeting with the force Occupational Health (OH) department should be carried out. On return from abroad contact should be made with OH again, where necessary.

It may be appropriate for the authorising ACPO officer or their representative to determine a maximum period of deployment abroad for the FLO for which a number of factors should be taken into account:

- The type of incident and its complexity;
- Health and safety issues;
- Risk assessment;
- OH report;
- Experience of the FLO;
- Workload (including the number of ongoing deployments);
- Support available for the FLO.

This list is not exhaustive.

In circumstances where it is deemed necessary to deploy a FLO abroad in support of a UK investigation, the advice and support of the FCO consular division should be sought in advance. The police adviser to the FCO should also be consulted before deployment.

Where the deployment is to assist a foreign power with an investigation, a request under section 26 Police Act must be submitted to the Home Secretary and police authority for approval to travel before deployment. Failure to obtain such authority may mean that an officer is not insured.



It is important for consuls abroad and protection officers to work closely with any FLO appointed to the family of a crime victim overseas. FLOs are able to perform a valuable service, which complements and enhances the work of the consular staff.

## FLOS DEPLOYMENT ABROAD

FLOs can be deployed to assist with:

- Manslaughter and corporate manslaughter cases;
- Missing persons;
- Missing persons under suspicious circumstances;
- Serious sexual assault;
- Fatal road collisions;
- Major disasters;
- Natural disasters;
- Any enquiry where identification is necessary on behalf of HM Coroner.

There must always be a real operational need for the FLO to travel abroad. FLOs must never be deployed abroad to perform the role of chaperone.

## DEPLOYMENT

If the decision to deploy is made, the FLO should:

- Inform Interpol London so that they are aware of the deployment, even if arrangements for the deployment were not made through them;
- Discuss the objectives, strategy and schedules with the DO, including the assistance consular officials abroad may be able to provide;
- Discuss a media strategy with the press departments of both the FCO and the relevant police force;
- Once overseas, meet the local 'post' to discuss the relevant issues and agree on roles and responsibilities;
- Consider a meeting between the post, family and FLOs in order to ensure that everybody understands their objectives and responsibilities, as well as the boundaries and limitations inherent to that country;
- Keep the post updated with progress on a daily basis.

As a UK police officer, a FLO has no power or authority to question witnesses or officials. The host country's continued permission is needed to remain there.

Up-to-date advice should be sought from the FCO on all occasions prior to travelling. (The reception a UK police officer receives abroad may vary significantly depending on the country being visited).

Interpol London is an invaluable source of information and can be contacted twenty-four hours a day, telephone: 0207 238 8115.

## REPATRIATION

Where a body is repatriated to England or Wales and identification is necessary, FLOs should obtain all the relevant information from the family such as DNA and other forensic samples, original medical and dental records and fingerprints. It is essential that the packaging of any exhibits is completed and dealt with in a manner that preserves their continuity and evidential integrity.

If a deceased victim is being repatriated to England or Wales, the local coroner may ask the police force involved for assistance when conducting an inquest. They will require the local police to make enquiries as to how that person died and they may also order a post-mortem even if one was carried out abroad.

FLOs can assist the coroner in these circumstances and it will be necessary to liaise with the coroner's officer as soon as possible to establish the exact information that the coroner requires. They will also be able to explain to the family about procedures regarding inquests, organ retention and the release of their loved one's body for cremation or burial.

### **Section 8 Coroners Act 1988**

In summary, section 8 of the Coroners Act says that where a coroner is informed that the body of a deceased person is within their district, and there is reasonable cause to suspect that the person died a violent or unnatural death, the coroner should hold an inquest as soon as is practical, regardless of whether the cause of death arose within their district or not.

### **Home Office Circular 79/1983**

Gives guidelines into deaths abroad and advises coroners to approach the Consular Division of the FCO when seeking assistance from overseas countries. The current instructions state that all requests for information or reports from overseas countries should be channelled through the International Legal Matters Unit Consular Division of the FCO.

### **Partnership Working with the FCO**

In all cases where a FLO has been deployed through the FCO, they should be invited to a strategy meeting at the FCO wherever possible, or at the very least invited to participate in a case conference call. This will assist in role clarification of the caseworker and the FLO, allows rapport to be built and a better understanding of each other's role. The FLO can then pass on the name of the appointed caseworker to the family. In the early stages of the investigation it is especially important that the FLO becomes the single point of contact (SPOC) with the family. This will prevent possible duplication and conflicting messages. However, should the family wish to have direct contact with the FCO, this should not be discouraged.

The FLO should offer the family the opportunity to attend the FCO for a case conference which should take place as soon as possible. This meeting will highlight the family needs and avoid unrealistic expectations of the FCO. In addition, it is a good opportunity to explain the police strategy and for the family to meet the caseworker, who can outline the FCO's commitment to their case.

Caseworkers may also be in a position to reassure families, especially in cases where rumours are circulating abroad. The meeting will also give the FCO the opportunity to increase trust and confidence in their ability to represent the family's interests abroad. Before speaking to the family, the caseworker should fully apprise themselves of the circumstances of the case. They should also try to anticipate any questions from the family and endeavour to obtain answers for them before the meeting.

Plenty of time should be allowed for the meeting with the family. If the family have travelled some distance, light refreshments should be made available to them. Before caseworkers speak directly to the family, they should contact the FLO to establish family dynamics and identify who is the most appropriate family member to act as the SPOC with the FCO.

When the caseworker gives information to the FLO over the telephone, and vice-versa, the information should be confirmed by email to ensure that the correct information is relayed and documented for future reference.

FLOs will usually have direct contact with both the police force concerned and posts abroad and, in such cases, the caseworker should be kept fully updated of the ongoing events.

## DEATH NOTIFICATION

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Caseworkers within the FCO should remember that when they request a police force to deliver a death notification on behalf of the FCO to the next of kin of someone who has died abroad, it is unlikely to be delivered by a FLO. It is normal practice that when delivering a death notification to a bereaved family, the most appropriate officer on duty at the time is tasked with this. Invariably, however, this officer's role will conclude at that juncture, whereas the development of a FLO will be on longer-term basis.

Dealing with families who have suffered bereavement is a difficult and challenging role for any police officer to perform. It is for this reason that a FLO should be appointed to the family as soon as practicable in order to support them and the investigation.

## POLICE ACTION

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The SIO and FLC must decide on the most appropriate officer to appoint. This should be an officer who is mature, professional, has wide-ranging policing skills and who is able to:

- Answer, in general terms, the many questions that the families may have.
- Manage possible frustrations within the family over an investigation which will be different from those conducted in the UK. (There may be a lack of detailed information and many other issues emanating from an investigation taking place many miles from the UK, and possibly being carried out under very different police and judicial systems.)

The FLO should work closely with the coroner's officer. The coroner's officer is responsible for providing advice on coronial issues.

The SIO or FLC should manage the FLO's work and ensure that any investigative product, such as DNA samples, other exhibits, statements and reports are quality controlled before being forwarded to the appropriate authority.

The SIO or FLC also needs to decide on a robust exit strategy with the FLO. Investigations into deaths abroad and subsequent judicial proceedings can last several years. If the FLO's role is reduced to passing on information it may not be an effective use of their skills and could be continued by the FCO DO instead.

The FLO should:

- Obtain a briefing from the DO, although on some occasions initial information from abroad may not be extensive.
- Meet the family to obtain any details they may have of the case and to gain an understanding of their needs and family dynamics.
- Liaise with the local coroner's officer if the deceased is being repatriated to England or Wales.

- Consider arranging an early meeting at the FCO with the DO, SIO and FLC to discuss a joint strategy for the deployment, including how information is to be passed to the family. To avoid duplication and mixed messages, most communication should be through the FLO. However, the DO will need to call periodically to confirm to the family the FCO's responsibility and commitment to the case. Before they do so, they are advised to call the FLO for an update on family dynamics. They should also update the FLO after their call to the family. The meeting should be documented. If it is not practicable to hold this meeting, the police and DO should discuss this strategy in a telephone call. The police adviser to the Consular Directorate is also available for advice and can be contacted by telephone: 0207 008 0944.
- Ensure that the FCO provides all relevant information that will help in their decision making, eg, cultural issues in the country, police and judicial systems, likelihood of obtaining cooperation from the local authorities, advice on repatriation, what consuls can and cannot do. This type of information will give FLOs, the SIO and FLCs a greater understanding of the likely issues that could help in managing a family's expectations.
- Consider asking the family whether they would like a meeting with the DO so that all parties understand each other's needs, roles, responsibilities and boundaries. The relationship between the family, FCO and police should then start on a solid foundation.

FLOs must avoid giving unrealistic expectations to the family as frustrations are caused by a lack of understanding of different investigative and judicial systems. Many other countries do not require the same level of evidence that is required in the UK.

In some countries the judiciary lead on an investigation and not the police. This can sometimes be confusing but in all instances the local system should be respected.

Few other countries have any understanding of the concept of family liaison. This should be remembered when requesting information from an overseas force. Experience has shown that there is a tendency for the foreign force to think they are being criticised and that the UK force wants to intrude in the investigation or to assist them when they do not want any assistance.

**Remember:**

FLOS should not make promises that they are unable to fulfil as this will undermine the trust and confidence of the family.

Family liaison and consular exit strategies must be developed and be unique to each case.

Working closely with the family ensures that everyone benefits.

Further advice can be obtained from the Police Adviser, Consular Directorate, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, telephone: 0207 008 0944.



# APPENDIX 4

## ACPO HOMICIDE WORKING GROUP GUIDELINES ON THE INVESTIGATION OF THE SUDDEN AND UNEXPLAINED DEATH OF AN INFANT (SUDI)

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## Introduction

- 1.1 Despite the huge reduction in infant deaths seen in recent years, several hundred children will die before they reach the age of one every year in England and Wales. The majority of these deaths occur as a result of natural causes, such as disease, physical defects or accident. A small proportion of deaths are, however, caused deliberately by violence, by maliciously administered substances or by the careless use of drugs. Investigating officers must be aware that as the number of genuine unexplained deaths decreases, so the proportion of all infant deaths, which could be attributed to homicide, is likely to increase; education campaigns will not stop people killing children.
- 1.2 Every child who dies deserves the right to have their sudden and unexplained death fully investigated so that homicide can be excluded and a cause of death identified. One of the implications of Article 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998 is that public authorities have a responsibility to investigate the cause of a suspicious or unlawful death. This will help to support the grieving parents and relatives of the child. It will also enable medical services to understand the cause of death and, if necessary, to formulate interventions to prevent future child deaths. The police have a key role in the investigation of infant and child deaths, and their prime responsibility is to the child, as well as to siblings and any future children who may be born into the family concerned.
- 1.3 Sometimes a child is found unexpectedly ill at home and dies soon afterwards in hospital. Such cases should be investigated using these guidelines.
- 1.4 A determined cause of death cannot always be established. Pathologists or coroners tend to classify such cases as 'sudden unexpected death in infancy' (SUDI) or undetermined. All this means is that the cause of death has not been established. Coroners also use a narrative verdict to supplement this, hence a thorough investigation is required.
- 1.5 There are a number of guiding principles that must underpin the work of all relevant professionals dealing with a sudden, unexplained child death. When dealing with SUDI, all agencies need to follow five common principles, especially when having contact with family members:
  - Sensitivity, open mindedness and a balanced approach;
  - An inter-agency response;
  - Sharing of information;
  - Appropriate response to the circumstances;
  - Preservation of evidence.

**Note:** All items on this list are of equal importance.

In applying these principles and the Human Rights Act 1998, individuals and agencies should ensure that their actions are legal, necessary, relevant and proportionate.

- 1.6 As a result of a series of miscarriages of justice, most notably the Angela Cannings, Sally Clark and Trupti Patel cases, Baroness Helena Kennedy QC chaired a working group to look at sudden unexpected death in infancy with the intention of articulating best practice in the investigation of infant deaths and to introduce a multi-agency protocol. There is little doubt that a multi-agency approach is the best way forward to investigate infant deaths, as recommended by Baroness Kennedy. Forces should, therefore, develop protocols to ensure that all investigations adopt this approach.
- 1.7 Chapter 7 of the government publication *Department for Education and Skills (2006) Working Together to Safeguard Children* sets out the child death review processes for Local Safeguarding Children Boards. This has been compulsory since 1 April 2008. It is recommended that all SIOs who investigate infant deaths familiarise themselves with Chapter 7.

### **Who Should Attend a Sudden Infant Death?**

- 1.8 If the police are the first professionals to attend the scene then urgent medical assistance should be requested as the first priority. Police attendance should be kept to the minimum. Several police officers arriving at the house can be distressing for the family of the deceased, especially if they are uniformed officers in marked police cars.
- 1.9 Infant deaths must be allocated to an accredited SIO, who must retain overall responsibility for the investigation. A detective officer of at least inspector rank should be tasked to attend the scene immediately. They should take charge of the investigation in all cases of sudden unexplained infant deaths whether or not there are any obvious suspicious circumstances. This applies if the deceased child is still at the scene or if the child's body has been removed to hospital. It is further recommended that this detective has child protection experience.
- 1.10 Effective cooperation and liaison between police and paediatricians is very important. The detection of child abuse is part of the standard training of paediatricians, equipping them to carry out an external examination and to arrange the relevant investigations such as a skeletal survey and tests for abnormal bruising. In some areas paediatricians are willing to attend the scene and help the investigating officer establish the likely cause of death. The Kennedy report highlights best practice as carrying out joint police and SUDI paediatrician home visits. All forces should adopt this recommendation. Early examination of the body, collating relevant information from medical records, preparing reports for pathologists and convening a meeting among all medical professionals involved with the family will assist the investigation. Some paediatricians may offer to take the history from the carers of the deceased child. Taking the history, however, is a good opportunity for the police investigator(s) to assess the carers' account as well as their demeanour and attitude at time of death. On balance, therefore, it is recommended that the police speak to the carers in the first instance, although it is likely that a paediatrician will also want to take the child's medical history at some stage.



- 1.11 The coroner's officer must be notified as soon as possible. As well as the usual functions they perform, their experience in dealing with sudden deaths and bereaved families will be invaluable in explaining to the parent or carer what will happen to their child's body and why. They will also be able to liaise directly with the coroner. The investigating officer and the coroner's officer should continue to liaise closely throughout the investigation.
- 1.12 The senior detective attending will be responsible for deciding whether to request the attendance of a scenes of crime officer (SOCO). If items are to be removed or photographs or a video are to be taken, their attendance will be essential.
- 1.13 It is considered appropriate for a FLO to be deployed in every case to assist the investigating officer. The role of the FLO is detailed in the [ACPO \(2006\) Murder Investigation Manual](#). The FLO should also be trained in child protection. Their role includes obtaining a full history of the child as well as details of existing siblings and carers.
- 1.14 The following checklist is in no way exhaustive, but it may assist the investigating officer in ascertaining whether or not the death has any suspicious circumstances.

#### **Factors which May Increase Suspicion**

- 1.15 Some of these factors may be present when death occurs naturally. Conversely, the absence of these factors does not mean the death was due to natural causes. The purpose of this list is to act as a guide for investigators, but it should not prevent a thorough analysis of all the circumstances surrounding the death.
- 1.16 Possible factors which may increase suspicion:
- There have been previous unusual illness episodes or recent admissions to hospital;
  - There is crusted blood on the face of the type associated with smothering and physical abuse rather than the 'pinkish' mucus associated with resuscitation;
  - There are unusual bruises;
  - There are foreign bodies in the upper airway;
  - The child is older than twelve months;
  - The parents or carers have given an inconsistent account of the events surrounding the child's death;
  - The child has come from a family in which a previous child has died unexpectedly, however, it is still quite possible for second deaths to occur naturally;
  - The child has come from a family or household with a history of drug abuse, alcohol abuse or domestic violence;
  - The child is, or has previously been, on the Child Protection Register.

#### **Factors Common in Most Infant Deaths**

- 1.17 Factors which are commonly found in most infant deaths:
- Froth emerging from the mouth and nose. This froth results from the expulsion of air and mucus from the lungs after death. Sometimes the froth may be blood-stained – this does not mean that the death was unnatural.
  - Small quantities of gastric contents around the mouth. This does not mean that death was caused by inhalation of vomit. There can be slight regurgitation immediately after death.

- Purple discoloration of the parts of the face and body that were lying downwards. This is not bruising, but is caused by the draining of blood in the skin after death. For the same reason the parts that were lying upwards may be very pale.
- Covering of the child's head by the bedclothes. This has often been a feature of cot death in the past, and probably contributes to death through accidental asphyxia or overheating.
- Wet clothing or bedding (this is usually caused by excessive sweating before death).
- If the child looks as though he or she has been roughly handled, remember that this may be the result of attempts at resuscitation.

### Initial Action by Senior Detective Attending

- 1.18 First, make a visual check of the child and its surroundings, noting any factors as described above. It must be established whether the body has been moved and the current position of the child should be recorded. All other relevant matters should also be recorded.
- 1.19 Explain the investigation to the parents, the role of the police and the purpose of a post-mortem (this may determine the cause of death or help in giving reasons for death). If the child is under two years old, ensure that either the coroner's officer or FLO refer grieving relatives to the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (a support agency for the bereaved family).
- 1.20 As soon as possible, ensure a full history is taken from the carers. They should be treated as significant witnesses and interviews with them video recorded. These decisions need to be recorded in the SIO policy file. Consideration should be given to interviewing the carers separately to avoid the possibility of each contaminating the other's version of events. The relevant history will depend upon the age of the child but, where applicable, should at least include:
- Who saw the child last?
  - What condition was the child in?
  - Was the child breast fed?
  - When the child was last fed, with what, and by whom? (Locate and preserve any bottles and any other feeding equipment.)
  - Who put the child to bed and how?
  - Who found the child to be dead?
  - How did the child look when found (eg, blue, pink, stiff)?
  - Who else was in the house at the time of discovery?
  - Who was there or with the child in the preceding twenty-four hours?
  - Where was the child sleeping in relation to the parents or carers and in what?
  - Who was in the child's room or bed?

- What was the sleeping position of the child?
- A detailed account of child's behaviour forty-eight to seventy-two hours prior to death, ie, the health of the child the day before.
- Do the parents, other members of the household or carers smoke? If so, was the child in a smoke free environment or not?
- How much clothing or wrapping was used on the child and what was the room temperature where the child was found?
- Was bedding over or under the child?
- Was bedding tucked in?
- Was an electric blanket used?
- Was there heating in the house?
- Was there heating in the child's room?
- What type of heating?
- Have there been any previous child deaths in that or the extended family? If so, give full details.
- Has either of the carers been involved in earlier relationships where they have had children? If so, obtain full details of any significant events in the lives of those children.
- Who is the child's GP?
- Has the child had any illness since birth or been seen by a doctor for a health problem?
- Has the child received injections? If so, for what and when?
- Has the child attended a clinic or been medically examined? If so, where and when?
- Has the child been admitted, or taken, to a hospital or clinic? If so, which hospital or clinic, when and why?
- Were the child's parents or carers furnished with a booklet detailing medical checks, examinations and dates (the parent-held child health record is often known as the 'red book')? If so, where is it?
- Full details of parents' or carers' contact addresses and telephone numbers (parents or carers should be provided with the SIO's contact details).
- What guidance have the parents received with regard to sudden unexplained infant death from the medical profession prior to, or since, the birth of the child?
- Was an infant intercom in place?
- Was the child born prematurely and what was his or her weight at birth?
- What type of delivery?

- Did the child require special treatment after birth?
- Was the child discharged from hospital with the mother? If not, did he or she require special treatment?

1.21 Someone who has knowingly killed a child is likely to lie to cover up their actions so any conflicting accounts should raise suspicion. It must be remembered, however, that any bereaved person is likely to be in a state of shock and possibly confused. Repeated questioning of the parent or carer by different police officers should be avoided at this stage if at all possible. Officers should, however, always consider the behavioural response of the parents and take particular note of inappropriate or unusual responses to child death, eg, remoteness, insensitivity to circumstances, indifference to the death, disposal of articles.

**Ensure that the Following Is Done In All Cases:**

- Check police records for all family members including PNC, force intelligence system, crime recording system, incident logs, command and control records and domestic violence logs.
- Contact the Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU) to check their database; SIOs should consider involving CAIU officers on any investigation.
- Liaise with the relevant Social Services (CARE) department to ensure their records are checked, including the child protection register (and previous registrations if possible), and involve them in a strategy discussion if appropriate.
- Obtain all details of family members, such as siblings and any foster children, including any history of illness and other relevant information.
- It is good practice to see other children in the family, both as potential sources of information and as an indicator of standards of care given by the parents. It is also important to check on the welfare of siblings and whether any child protection procedures need to take place in relation to them.

1.22 The preservation of the scene and the level of investigation will be relevant and appropriate to presenting factors. Consideration should be given to:

- Commencing a scene log;
- Preserving the scene (including recording the room temperature);
- Arranging for photographs and video of the scene and other rooms (this is highly recommended);
- Seizing items such as the child's used bottles, cups, food and medication which may have been administered;
- Seizing bedding and clothing, but only if there are signs of forensic value such as blood, vomit or other residues. (The child's nappy and clothing should remain on the child, but arrangements should be made for them to be seized at the hospital.)

This is **not** an exhaustive list of actions; it should be treated as a guide only. These actions will not be necessary in every case.

### Further and Subsequent Action by the Police

- 1.23 If it is considered necessary to remove items from the house, do so with consideration for the parents. Explain that it may help to find out the cause of their child's death. Before returning the items, the parents must be asked if they actually want them back.
- 1.24 If articles have been kept for a period of time, try to ensure they are presentable and that any official labels or wrappings are removed before returning them. Return any items as soon as possible after the coroner's verdict or the conclusion of the investigation. The term investigation will include any possible trial or appeal process.
- 1.25 Consideration must be given to evidencing any factors of neglect which may be apparent, such as the temperature of the scene, condition of accommodation, general hygiene and the availability of food and drink.
- 1.26 Details of death must be notified to the coroner. It may be appropriate for an officer who has already built a rapport with the parent or carer to obtain details on the appropriate form. A copy should be sent to the CAIU in order to update child protection records.
- 1.27 Often the first notification to the police occurs when the child is already at the hospital. In such cases consideration should be given to designating scenes, both at the hospital and at the location where the child was first discovered to be unwell.
- 1.28 Medical staff usually interview parents before the police arrive at the hospital in an effort to establish the circumstances surrounding the child's collapse. This account should be sought by investigators as it may prove useful should a different version be provided later.
- 1.29 If the police are aware of the case before the child has been taken to a hospital, then the child's body must be accompanied to the hospital for the purpose of continuity of identification. It is recommended that the body should be taken to a hospital casualty department rather than to a mortuary. This enables any chance of resuscitation and makes it easier to get an early expert physical examination by a paediatrician. The physical examination should be carried out appropriately and sensitively. The body will normally be transported by ambulance but it may be appropriate to use the services of an undertaker.
- 1.30 A physical external examination recorded by way of photographs should be undertaken by medical staff and police at the earliest possible stage in order to record any suspicious or unidentifiable marks.
- 1.31 It is entirely natural for a parent or carer to want to hold or touch the dead child. Providing this is done with a professional (such as a police officer, nurse or social worker) present, it should be allowed in most cases as it is highly unlikely that forensic evidence will be lost. If, however, the death has by this time been considered suspicious, the SIO should, where possible, be consulted before a parent or carer is allowed to hold the child.
- 1.32 If the parents or carers wish to accompany their child to the mortuary, this should normally be accommodated provided they are accompanied by a police FLO, child protection or coroner's officer as appropriate.

- 1.33 Hospital staff often wish to supply bereaved parents with a lock of hair, or foot or handprints. Police should only refuse this if there is good reason to believe it would jeopardise the investigation; it is highly unlikely that this would be the case.
- 1.34 If there is any lack of agreement between medical staff and the police about the handling of the body then the coroner's officer must be informed at once so that the coroner can decide on the appropriate course of action.
- 1.35 In all cases the police should request that a post-mortem is carried out by a paediatric pathologist or a pathologist with some paediatric expertise. A full skeletal survey should be requested and this should be carried out and interpreted by a paediatric radiologist or radiologist with paediatric expertise to ensure the best possible result. It is important that the skeletal survey includes the whole body. The investigating officer must give a full briefing to the pathologist(s). This includes showing them the video and photographs of the scene, and sharing all of the information gathered thus far.
- 1.36 Whether or not the post-mortem reveals physical signs of injury, it is important that extensive toxicological tests are carried out.
- 1.37 In any case where the death is suspicious, a forensic post-mortem must take place. If the Home Office pathologist does not have paediatric experience, they must work alongside a paediatric pathologist or pathologist with paediatric experience to maximise the opportunity for the recovery and interpretation of evidence.
- 1.38 It is good practice for the SIO to call upon the Specialist Operations Centre at the National Policing Improvement Agency who can provide an up-to-date list of experts as well as knowledge of the latest investigative techniques.

### **Non-Accidental Head Injuries**

- 1.39 Some children die, or are seriously injured, as a result of being violently shaken. Unfortunately such incidences are not rare, but from an investigative point of view, it is relatively easy to ascertain that the death should be considered suspicious. Expert paediatric assessment should quickly reveal the presence of retinal and subdural haemorrhages, bruising or other head injuries.
- 1.40 It takes an immense amount of force to cause head injuries severe enough to kill a child, and although feelings of sympathy for the parents or carers may well manifest themselves, it is essential that a detailed and professional homicide investigation is commenced as soon as police become aware of the case. An SIO should, therefore, take control from the outset and the guidance contained in **ACPO (2006) *Murder Investigation Manual*** should be applied in the same way as if the victim was an adult.
- 1.41 These are, invariably, difficult investigations that need to involve highly specialised techniques for evidence gathering in addition to the advice previously given in respect of all infant deaths.

1.42 As a guide, some of the specialised techniques which should be employed include:

- Full skeletal survey, from head to finger and toe tips, properly interpreted by a paediatric radiologist;
- Ultraviolet photography;
- Thorough ophthalmological examination including specialised retinal photography;
- If the child is on life support, MRI and CT scans, ensuring that the machine is set up for brain matter;
- Full post-mortem ophthalmological examination, carried out in a specialised laboratory;
- Full post-mortem examination of the brain, carried out in a specialised laboratory;
- The services of a forensic analyst to provide a detailed timeline of all significant events in the child's life.

**Note:** This is not an exhaustive list. As techniques change and improve regularly, advice should be sought from experts in every case.

1.43 A great deal of the evidence used in any prosecution will be from medical and scientific experts. SIOs must, however, guard against assuming that paediatricians and other medical personnel will automatically carry out the appropriate tests. Their expertise is in healing sick children not in gathering evidence for a homicide investigation. Investigating police officers must maintain a clear dialogue with medical professionals, and ensure each party understands exactly what is needed and why it is needed.

1.44 Where there is **serious disagreement** between prosecution and defence experts, the prosecution should not be continued unless there is other evidence. In his judgement in *R v Angela Cannings* [2004] EWCA Crim 01 Lord Justice Judge stated:

In cases like the present, if the outcome of the trial depends exclusively or almost exclusively on a serious disagreement between distinguished and reputable experts, it will often be unwise, and therefore unsafe, to proceed.  
(paragraph 178)

Pre-trial meetings between experts were subsequently recommended in Baroness Kennedy's 2004 report into sudden unexplained death in infancy where she says:

It is our recommendation that in cases that essentially turn on expert testimony, the judge should order that the experts meet and clarify areas of conflict and report back to the court. This will help to clarify the issues of contest and enable the court to evaluate whether the case should be proceeding. Following the Court of Appeal judgement in *R v Cannings* 2003, if there are two views and both are equally valid, it would be unwise to proceed with a trial against an accused, as the outcome may well be unjust.  
(page 8)

## Conclusion

1.45 The investigation of infant deaths is considered to be of such a specialised nature that it warrants a separate file on the CD that accompanies *ACPO (2006) Murder Investigation Manual*. However, in every case where the death is felt to be suspicious, the same thought processes, rigour, expertise and professionalism, which are routinely applied to adult homicides, must also be employed. Children are citizens who have the same rights as any other people to the protection offered by the criminal law as well as the expert services of the police.

The use of multi-agency protocols like the Avon model, which is endorsed by the Baroness Kennedy working group, are to be regarded as good practice in the investigation of infant deaths.

## Further Reference Material

ACPO (2005) *Guidance in Investigating Child Abuse and Safeguarding Children* (section 4.5 Lines of Enquiry in Cases of Sudden and Unexpected Death of an Infant). London: ACPO.

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC (2004) *Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy: A Multi-Agency Protocol for Care and Investigation*. London: Royal College of Pathologists and Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

HM Government (2006) *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* [Internet]. London: TSO.

Available from [http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/\\_files/AE53C8F9D7AEB1B23E403514A6C1B17D.pdf](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/AE53C8F9D7AEB1B23E403514A6C1B17D.pdf)





# APPENDIX 5

## VICTIM FOCUS SCHEME (VICTIM ADVOCATE SCHEME)

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## INTRODUCTION

The government set out its proposals to give the bereaved families of murder and manslaughter victims a greater voice in the criminal justice system in a white paper entitled *Home Office (2005) Hearing the Relatives of Murder and Manslaughter Victims*. The Victim Focus Scheme (VFS) was subsequently introduced on 1 October 2007.

The VFS depends on the involvement of the FLO, who will be responsible for facilitating the VFS on behalf of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The VFS is divided into three distinct parts:

1. The provision of a CPS leaflet and consent to the Scheme.
2. An enhanced CPS response through a meeting with the family.
3. The completion of a Victim Personal Statement (VPS).

## QUALIFYING CRITERIA

The perpetrator must be **charged** with one of the following 'qualifying offences' before a family member can be included in the scheme:

- Murder;
- Manslaughter;
- Familial homicide;
- Causing death by dangerous driving;
- Causing death by careless driving while unfit through drink or drugs;
- Corporate manslaughter;
- Causing death by careless driving where committed to the crown court for trial;
- Causing death while unlawfully on a road where committed to the crown court for trial.

In addition to the above qualifying offences the following criteria must also apply:

- The offence must have been committed in England and Wales;
- The offence must have been charged after 1 October 2007;
- A FLO must have been deployed to the family.

## POST-CHARGE TIMELINE

### PROVISION OF CPS LEAFLET

The Scheme is initiated post-charge (or after committal for trial in the case of causing death by careless driving or causing death while unlawfully on a road) by the FLO who will meet the family and provide them with a CPS leaflet outlining the Victim Focus Scheme. The FLO will explain the contents of the leaflet, including an explanation of the CPS role. The family should indicate at this stage their intention to participate on the VFS and meet the CPS prosecutor. The FLO will then ask the appropriate family member to sign their consent on the VF1 form which is attached to the CPS leaflet. The VF1 will then be forwarded to the appropriate CPS prosecutor through the SIO to the dedicated CPS lawyer.

**Note:** If a FLO has not been appointed, or the family refuses to communicate with the FLO or the FLO has been withdrawn the Victim Focus Scheme will not apply.

## CPS MEETING

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On receipt of the VF1 the CPS reviewing lawyer will write to the family and through the FLO will arrange a meeting to explain the role of the CPS and the legal basis of the charges on which the prosecution is proceeding. The reviewing lawyer will also outline the court process and progress of the case.

The CPS will look to the FLO to arrange the meeting which will normally be held at CPS premises. The exact timing of the meeting will vary from case to case. Ideally, it will take place after the case papers have been forwarded to the CPS and before the Plea and Case Management Hearing (PCMH). The CPS prosecutor should have had an opportunity to review the full file so that they fully understand the case before the meeting takes place.

During this meeting the CPS representative will explain to the family how they can complete a Victim Personal Statement (VPS), which indicates to the judge the extent of the impact of the crime on the bereaved family member. The prosecutor should also deal with any questions that the family may have in relation to the criminal justice system (CJS). The purpose of the meeting is not to discuss the detail of the evidence in the case and this should be made clear to the family in advance of the meeting.

Notwithstanding the need to be familiar with the facts of the case, undue delay should be avoided as one of the purposes of the meeting is to deal with any potential concerns that the family may have about the CJS. One of the main objectives at this meeting is to ensure that trust and confidence is maintained with the family and to give reassurance that the CPS prosecutor is dealing with their case in a competent and professional manner.

Multiple Victim Personal Statements (VPS) should be avoided where possible. Normal practice is for one family member to adopt formally a composite VPS that refers to the impact on other family members. In split families, however, separate VPS should be encouraged and separate meetings held with the CPS prosecutor.

In all cases the FLO will carry out research into the appropriate family member before the meeting with the CPS. The CPS prosecutor will look to the FLO to provide useful information in relation to the attitude of the family, whether there has been a funeral and other questions that could be anticipated. The FLO should also indicate to the CPS prosecutor as to whether the attendance of an interpreter is required. In these circumstances the CPS will need to arrange for both the attendance and payment of the interpreter. The FLO, or other nominated police officer, must be present throughout the meeting in order to provide the family with continuity and to answer questions that the reviewing lawyer is not in a position to answer.

In normal circumstances it will only be necessary for the nominated family member to attend the meeting with the prosecutor. There will be occasions, however, when more than the nominated family member asks to be present at the meeting. In these circumstances a full risk assessment must be carried out by the FLO to assess the potential risk. It should be noted that the CPS guidance set out on the internet states that:

The number of family members attending a meeting should normally not exceed four, although the exact number will depend on the circumstances of the individual case. (paragraph 34)

A copy of this CPS guidance is available at:

[http://www.cps.gov.uk/victims\\_witnesses/focus\\_scheme.html](http://www.cps.gov.uk/victims_witnesses/focus_scheme.html)

The names of the proposed attendees should be obtained, and the nature of their relationship to the victim should be established in advance of the meeting. There is always a risk that a proposed attendee may be a witness in the case; this need not preclude their attendance but it may limit what can be said.

In multiple homicide cases such as terrorist attacks or rail crashes, the same principles hold true. The prosecutor should work with the SIO and the SIM and the FLCs to resolve the practical challenges of holding meetings with large numbers of families.

In normal circumstances, the CPS meetings should be held at a local CPS office or police station in England and Wales. Meetings at the family home should be avoided but are not excluded where other arrangements have proved to be impracticable (eg, through disability). In these circumstances, FLOs must be satisfied that the premises have been properly risk assessed. CPS lawyers will look to the FLO to provide a safe environment for the meeting. Meetings held outside England and Wales must be authorised by the chief crown prosecutor and the appropriate senior police officer.

A FLO, or other appropriate police officer, must be present throughout the CPS meeting.

### VICTIM PERSONAL STATEMENT

The content of a VPS indicates to the judge the extent of the impact of the crime on the bereaved family member (eg, emotionally, psychologically and financially). In normal circumstances, the VPS will be taken by the FLO assigned to the family. The completion of the VPS must take place after the CPS meeting with the family and prior to the PCMH.

In completing the VPS the FLO should ensure that the statement:

- Protects the family from unwarranted media intrusions, as far as possible;
- Focuses on the impact of the events on the family and, if appropriate, its members;
- Does not contain any evidential material which should properly be put before the court in another form;
- Does not refer to any matters or issues that would render the statement inadmissible, or could be construed as falling outside the purpose of the VF scheme (for example, statements on matters of public policy, or statements of a political nature).

The VPS may be completed by the FLO at the family member's home address but only after a full risk assessment has taken place. In cases where there is an identified or perceived risk, then it may be more suitable to complete the VPS at a local police station. In all cases the VPS must be signed and dated in the normal way and submitted through the SIO to the CPS prosecutor as soon as possible.

## POST CONVICTION

Where the defendant has been convicted, the CPS prosecutor (usually the trial advocate) will meet the family. It is anticipated that this meeting will normally take place at court and immediately after conviction, though this need not always be the case. The purpose of the meeting will be to confirm the content of the VPS. Where amendment to the statement is required, the FLO or other police officer at court will be asked to take a supplementary VPS, which will be served on the court and the defence prior to sentencing.

The prosecutor will confirm the method of presentation to the court (ie, handed in to the judge or read out by the trial advocate) and answer any questions that family members may have at this stage in the process.

The court will receive the finalised VPS before any mitigation commences.



# APPENDIX 6

## SUPPORT AGENCIES

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**BrakeCare**

BrakeCare is a division of Brake, a national, not-for-profit organisation working to prevent deaths and injuries on roads. BrakeCare produces an information pack – Advice for Bereaved Families and Friends Following a Death on the Road. This is given to families by police officers when they are informed of the death of a loved one. The information contained in the pack ranges from advice about how to cope with grief, to what happens during police investigations. The BrakeCare pack is distributed to all police forces so that they can be handed out when police officers are delivering the bad news. BrakeCare also offers advice over the telephone to people affected by a road death, and can refer people to professional therapists if needed.

BrakeCare can be contacted by telephone: 01484 559909 **(FOR POLICE OFFICER USE ONLY)**

**SAMM**

The FLO should be able to advise the bereaved family if there is a Support After Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM) group in their area. SAMM is a self-help group whose members generously give their time to support others. FLOs should not expect SAMM to be burdened with compensation claims, benefit queries, housing problems, explanations of the court system, employment problems or the myriad of practical and legal problems that casework with bereaved families involves because such issues require considerable administrative support. There is an explanatory leaflet about SAMM in the Home Office 'Information for Families of Homicide Victims' pack.

**Victim Support**

Victim Support is the national independent charity for people affected by crime. It provides a free and confidential service, whether or not a crime has been reported and regardless of when it happened. Trained staff and volunteers at affiliated local charities offer information, emotional support and practical help to victims, witnesses, their families and friends. Victim Support also provides the Witness Service, which is based in every criminal court in England and Wales. This service offers assistance to victims and witnesses before, during and after a trial. A Victim Support leaflet is included in the Home Office 'Information for Families of Homicide Victims' pack. The service is delivered mainly by volunteers, who are supervised by local Victim Support managers. All volunteers receive basic training, but those who support people bereaved by homicide have gone through an additional selection procedure and received additional training. They are experienced in working with people who have suffered traumatic bereavement. All Victim Support services are governed by a set of national standards and their compliance with these standards is monitored.

FLOs must familiarise themselves with the role of Victim Support in their region together with current referral guidelines. A positive way of achieving this is to incorporate Victim Support information in FLO training. In every case the involvement of Victim Support should be referred to the SIO/SIM. Care is needed concerning the referral if family members have not been eliminated from involvement in the crime because there may be a possibility that such a referral may frustrate the progress of the enquiry. In all cases, however, the needs of the family must be recognised and considered in line with the necessity to support investigative functions.

The consent of the family must be obtained prior to a referral to Victim Support. Many bereaved relatives initially reject the involvement of any support agencies in the immediate aftermath of the killing because of the difficulty in making decisions about what help they may need. For this reason, where families do not consent to the involvement of Victim Support, the offer should be repeated at a suitable later date.

The FLO is responsible for informing the family of the existence of Victim Support at the earliest appropriate moment and for letting the SIO/SIM know the family's wishes. It is important that the FLO is able to describe with reasonable accuracy what Victim Support offers, ie, emotional support, practical help and information about the criminal justice process; not counselling or financial support. The manager of the local Victim Support Scheme should be informed about the family's wishes as soon as practicable. The SIO/SIM and FLO need to establish with the Victim Support manager what the liaison arrangements for each particular case will be. This should be done with the aim of ensuring that the family support needs are met (including the needs of individual family members as these may vary).

Introducing the bereaved family early on to Victim Support will make it easier for the police and Victim Support to work in partnership to provide appropriate information and support to family members. It will also make it easier to achieve a smooth transfer to the services offered by Victim Support when the FLO withdraws from the family. Victim Support coordinators are well informed about other local agencies available to help victims of crime. In most areas Victim Support has good liaison with other support agencies, for example, SAMM, and they will help families to obtain the type of support that is most relevant to their needs.

The trained volunteer nominated by the Victim Support manager should meet the SIO/SIM and the FLO to be briefed about the case.

Victim Supportline (telephone: 0845 303 0900) provides a central contact point at local call rates. It is available seven days a week and in the evening, although it does not provide a twenty-four-hour service. It can be used by:

- Family members who want immediate telephone support;
- Family members who wish to be referred to their local Victim Support schemes or Witness Service, or who want information about other specialist service providers;
- Officers seeking information about Victim Support or the Witness Service, including contact for family members in another part of the country.

Where referral to Victim Support has been declined, the Victim Support manager should be informed. The FLO should sensitively offer referral again as the investigation progresses and the needs of the family change.

It is good practice, where possible, for the initial meeting between a family and a Victim Support volunteer to take place with the FLO present to establish good inter-agency working.

Ongoing liaison must be established between the FLO and Victim Support volunteer to ensure that the information that is given to the family is consistent, avoiding any confusion, misinformation or embarrassment.

### **The Witness Service**

The Witness Service is managed by Victim Support and is available in all criminal courts in England and Wales. In many cases this is the family's or witnesses' first experience of a courtroom and many do not understand the legal procedure and protocols: the Witness Service may assist in alleviating some of the fears associated with attending court or giving oral evidence. Support through this procedure and an explanation of the rules of giving evidence is essential to avoid the experience being traumatic or re-victimising. The Witness Service is available to defence and prosecution witnesses, but not to defendants.

The Witness Service can arrange for a family to visit the court prior to any hearing to show them the layout and discuss the procedures. They will also arrange for a room for the family to wait in at the crown court and can arrange, through the court manager (chief clerk), to reserve up to four seats in court for the family of the deceased. It should be noted that there is also an obligation to extend similar facilities to a defendant's family.

It is good practice for the FLO to have close contact with the family at the time of the trial. If, however, a family member is a witness, the defence may make an application to exclude any contact between the witness and the FLO until they have given their evidence. This should not preclude other officers from being with the family during the trial, nor does it prevent them being supported before or after court by Victim Support. The FLO should warn the family of this possibility and discuss a contingency plan with the SIO/SIM. Witness Service staff and volunteers are accepted by the courts as an independent service, having no involvement with each particular case, and their support does not involve discussing evidence.

Further information may be obtained on the internet at <http://www.victimsupport.org.uk> or by calling Victim Supportline, telephone: 0845 30 30 900. Calls are charged at local rate and it is open 9 am – 9 pm weekdays and 9 am – 7 pm weekends. Family members can also write to:

Victim Support National Centre  
Cranmer House  
39 Brixton Road  
London  
SW9 6DZ.

People often experience high levels of stress during a trial and there is a possibility that the bereaved family will experience extreme anxiety. The potential conflict between the prosecution and defence during the case and details of some of the evidence that may be given (eg, by the pathologist or photographic evidence) will impact on the family. The FLO has a duty to advise the family about court etiquette and the potentially distressing nature of specific evidence that may be given. Where members of the family are significant witnesses, such issues should be raised sensitively while focusing on the need to negate possible defence allegations of coaching.

### **Additional Support**

If families are reluctant or unwilling to accept offers of help from organisations such as Victim Support, SAMM and BrakeCare, FLOs should be proactive in seeking out and establishing alternative support for families. There are other statutory and voluntary organisations, community interest and religious groups that will be able to offer practical support, help and, in some cases, counselling services. FLOs should share this information with the families and assist the family to make contact with such organisations if they so desire. The FLO should encourage feedback from the family to establish the adequacy of the support provided by other organisations.

In cases where the victim is from a minority ethnic community, from a diverse lifestyle background or a hard-to-reach or hard-to-hear group, it is particularly important that the FLO makes proactive use of local community contacts to guide, advise and support family liaison as appropriate. Victim Support may also be able to advise. The FLC should also be consulted about the appropriate points of contact for additional support which may be appropriate in particular cases. The SIO/SIM must be consulted before information about the investigation is shared with the families.

# APPENDIX 7

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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Bereavement Services .....	106
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## BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

The Compassionate Friends (support/friendship for bereaved by the bereaved).	0845 123 2304
Cruse Bereavement Care (bereavement support and advice).	0844 477 9400
Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service (support to Jewish and non Jewish community).	0208 457 9710
MAMAA (Mothers Against Murder and Aggression).	Mobile telephone numbers as shown on the internet <a href="http://www.mamaa.org">http://www.mamaa.org</a>
A Different Journey (support young families that are bereaved of a partner at a young age).	0292 081 0800
Lesbian and Gay Bereavement Project (advice, support and counselling for the gay community).	0207 403 5969
London Bereavement Network (information and support).	Now a website. Contact via Cruse Bereavement Care at: <a href="http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk">http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk</a>
SAMM (Support After Murder and Manslaughter).	0207 735 3838
Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (support and advice).	0844 561 6855

## CHILDREN

Childhood Bereavement Project (information about services for bereaved children nationwide).	0289 055 3978
Cruse Bereavement Care (bereavement support and advice for young people).	0870 167 1677
Bereaved Parents Network (support to those who have suffered a bereavement of a child of any age).	0292 081 0800
Child Death Helpline (a helpline for those affected by the death of a child).	0800 282 986
Child Victims of Crime. Registered charity supported by the British Police Rugby Section (publishes a self help guide for parents/guardians, consider applications to fund counselling, holidays and equipment). Referrals must be made by a police officer.	01785 227325
Winston's Wish (support for bereaved children and young people up to the age of 18).	0845 203 0405 (Mon-Fri 9-5pm)
The Compassionate Friends (support/friendship for bereaved parents and their families by those similarly bereaved).	0845 123 2304
Families of Murdered Children (self-help support group).	01698 336646
Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (counselling for bereaved parents and 24-hour staffed helpline).	0207 233 2090
The Traumatic Stress Clinic.	0207 530 3666

## ROAD DEATHS

BrakeCare (helps emergency and counselling services to support people affected by road death and injury).	0845 603 8570
SCARD (Support and Care After Road Death and Injury).	0845 123 5542 (9-9pm daily)
Campaign Against Drinking and Driving (support and assistance for those bereaved through road fatality).	0845 123 5542 (9-9pm daily)
Road Peace (national charity for road crash victims).	0845 450 0355 (9-9pm daily)

## OTHER SERVICES

The Witness Service.	020 7192 2423
Criminal Injury Compensation Authority. Bereavement Register.	0800 358 3601 0870 600 7222
ASSIST Trauma Care (therapists who provide support following a traumatic bereavement).	0178 856 0800
Samaritans (24-hour emotional support for those in crisis).	08457 909090
Trauma Aftercare Trust (post-traumatic stress syndrome referral, assessment and treatment).	01242 890306 01942 893188
Victim Support.	0845 303 0900





