FOREWORD

Liaison with the family of someone who has died in traumatic circumstances is one of the most demanding of all tasks performed by police officers. The huge responsibility that we have towards the family of a victim cannot be understated. The principle that families should be considered as partners in an investigation and must be treated appropriately, professionally, with respect and according to their diverse needs should be reflected at all levels of the police service.

Family liaison is an important resource that can be used in a wide variety of policing contexts. In acknowledging this, 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; and
  - Mass disaster.
- Other cases that do not involve a fatality where family liaison might enhance the effectiveness of the police response, for example, hate crime.

In addition to providing family liaison guidance in respect of the investigation and management of critical incidents such as these, the potential that family liaison has for preventing incidents becoming critical in the first place should also be recognised. As a result, the scope of the guidance set out in this document is intended to be very broad indeed. Once engaged, it should be remembered that family liaison must be sustainable and effective, whatever the circumstances in which it is used.

January 2003

Alan Goldsmith  
Deputy Chief Constable  
Head of ACPO Management of Emergencies

Richard Brunstrom  
Chief Constable  
Head of ACPO Road Policing Business

Jon Stoddart  
Assistant Chief Constable  
Chair of ACPO Homicide Working Group
Beyond the usual rules that govern copyright, there are no grounds to prohibit the publication of this document.

Partner agencies and members of the public can obtain copies of this document by writing to:

Crime Committee Secretariat
Association of Chief Police Officers
25, Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EX

Challenges, complaints or representations concerning this document should also be made in writing to the Crime Committee Secretariat at the above address.

This document is reviewed annually, to take account of changes in legislation, case law, Home Office Circulars and ACPO Guidance, by the Association of Chief Police Officers in conjunction with the National Crime and Operations Faculty, a division of CENTREX (formerly National Police Training) located at Bramshill in Hampshire.
HUMAN RIGHTS

Consideration has been given to the compatibility of this policy and related procedures with the Human Rights Act; with particular reference to the legal basis of its precepts; the legitimacy of its aims; the justification and proportionality of the actions intended by it; that it is the least intrusive and damaging option necessary to achieve the aims; and that it defines the need to document the relevant decision making processes and outcomes of action.

Human rights issues should be considered throughout the decision-making processes that are referred to in this document.

Such consideration should include the reasons to support any potential interference with human rights. These rights and potential reasons for interference with them include:

Article 2: Right to Life
Police have a positive duty to uphold this right. However, deprivation of life shall not be regarded as inflicted in contravention of this article when it results from the use of force that is no more than absolutely necessary:

a) In defence of any person from unlawful violence;
b) In order to effect a lawful arrest or to prevent the escape of a person lawfully detained;
c) In action lawfully taken for the purpose of quelling a riot or insurrection.

Article 3: Prohibition of Torture
Torture and most forms of inhuman treatment/ punishment cannot be justified.

Without meaning to imply that inhuman/degrading treatment is always permissible if it is a necessary consequence of the exercise of statutory powers, Keir Starmer (European Human Rights Law, 1999) suggests that degrading treatment might be justified in some clearly defined circumstances. For example stop/search of a person in a public place may be seen as being degrading treatment, (capable of humiliating and debasing the person), but it may be necessary to exercise a statutory stop/search power in clearly suspicious circumstances, (acting upon reasonable cause).

Starmer goes on to argue that a distinction has to be made between what is lawfully permitted and is of an acceptable standard, and that which falls below an acceptable standard.

Article 5: Right to Liberty and Security
No one shall be deprived of his liberty save in a number of cases set out in the convention and in accordance with a procedure prescribed by law - such cases include:

c) The lawful arrest or detention of a person effected for the purpose of bringing him before the competent legal authority on reasonable suspicion of having committed an offence or when it is reasonably considered necessary to prevent his committing an offence or fleeing after having done so.
d) The detention of a minor by lawful order for the purpose of educational supervision or his lawful detention for the purpose of bringing him before the competent legal authority.

This right is particularly relevant to family liaison in circumstances in which a person suspected of having been responsible for a death is part of the family.

Article 6: Right to a Fair Trial
Everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law. Judgement shall be pronounced publicly but the press and public may be excluded from all or part of the trial in the interests of:

- Public order or national security.
- The protection of the private life of the parties, or
- To the extent strictly necessary in the opinion of the court in special circumstances where publicity would prejudice the interests of justice.
The implications of this are that the family might be excluded from all or part of the proceedings and this will need to be borne in mind when liaising with them prior to a trial or other court hearing taking place.

**Article 8: Right to Respect for Private and Family Life**

There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except as such as in accordance with the law, and is necessary in a democratic society in pursuit of legitimate aims, notably, in the interests of:

- National security
- Public safety or the economic well-being of the country
- Prevention of disorder or crime
- Protection of health
- Protection of the rights and freedom of others.

**Article 9: Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion**

This right is only subject to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society:

- In the interests of public safety
- For the protection of public order, health or morals or
- For the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

In the context of family liaison, it may be important to bear this right and its limitations in mind when considering requests from the family to treat the body in accordance with their religious death rites.

**Article 1 of the First Protocol: Protection of Property**

No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law.

In the course of their decision making, all officers involved in family liaison should consider relevant Human Rights issues, including:

- Whether any person’s Human Right’s are likely to be engaged by the proposed action.
- Whether the investigation and any course of action that is to be taken are justifiable and whether that such justification could stand up to scrutiny.
- What the legal basis is for the investigation and any course of action that is proposed within it. Such a legal basis can come from primary legislation, secondary legislation or case law (for example, the Theft Act, 1968 and the Offences Against the Person Act, 1861, Data Protection Act, 1998, Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act, 1996, Police and Criminal Evidence Act, 1984 and Health and Safety/Duty of Care).
- Whether the investigation pursues a legitimate aim (e.g. prevention of crime, public safety, protection of the rights of others).
- Whether the proposed course of action is proportional. A balance must be struck between the importance of the aim of the investigation and any adverse effect on the individual and/or the community. Investigators need to take account of the likely impact on the victim, suspected offender and the community when they consider whether the investigation or any course of action is proportionate to the aim (for example, the gathering of information from the family must be proportional to their right to privacy).
- Whether the proposed course of action is the least intrusive practical way of achieving an end. Prior to any decision that could have intrusive consequences, any other less intrusive options that might have achieved the same aim must be carefully considered.
- Whether the proposed action is necessary rather than simply being desirable.

Such decision making processes must be comprehensively and retrievably documented.

In the application of this policy the Police Service/Force/Constabulary will not discriminate against any persons regardless of sex, race, colour, language, religion, political, or other opinion, national or social origin, association with national minority, property, birth, or other status as defined under Article 14, European Convention Human Rights.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication, Access, Complaints and Review</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAMILY LIAISON - INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Investigating Officer (SIO)/Senior Identification Manager (SIM)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Liaison Officer Co-ordinator</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Liaison Advisor</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Family Liaison Officer (FLO)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Family Liaison Advisor</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SELECTION OF FAMILY LIAISON OFFICERS</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection for Training</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training of Family Liaison Officers</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROLE OF THE SENIOR INVESTIGATING OFFICER (SIO)/SENIOR IDENTIFICATION MANAGER (SIM)</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying the Family</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Assessment</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection and Deployment</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting and Supervising the FLO</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic &amp; Tactical Management</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigations Supervised by the Police Complaints Authority (PCA)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect within the Family</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defendants’ Families</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with the Family</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Family and the Media</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Communication</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Advisory Groups</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Representatives of the Family</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths Abroad</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROLE OF THE FLO CO-ORDINATOR</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Functions</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Functions</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths Abroad</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Systems</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training of FLO Co-ordinators</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROLE OF THE FAMILY LIAISON ADVISOR</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROLE OF THE FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER (FLO)</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Criteria</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action on Appointment</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record Keeping</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working and Communicating with the Family</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing, Identification and Release of the Body</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure of Information to the Family</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification Parades</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return of Property</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medial</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Agencies</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Communication</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit Strategies</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Conviction Contact</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLO Welfare</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths Abroad</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROLE OF THE NATIONAL FAMILY LIAISON CO-ORDINATOR</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUGGESTED FURTHER READING</strong></td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS

APPENDIX A ...................................................................................................................53

Family Liaison Risk Assessment Forms ........................................................................53
  Form 1 ..................................................................................................................................53
  Details ...............................................................................................................................54
  File Content ....................................................................................................................55
  Risk Assessment Form Notes of Guidance ......................................................................56
  Details (continuation form) ..............................................................................................57
  Form 2 ..................................................................................................................................59

APPENDIX B ...................................................................................................................61

Family Liaison in Cases of British Subjects Murdered or Missing in Suspicious
  Circumstances Abroad ........................................................................................................61
  Introduction .......................................................................................................................61
  Criteria for Deployment of FLO .......................................................................................61
  Role of Agencies ................................................................................................................62
    Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) ........................................................................62
    ICPO (Interpol) ..............................................................................................................63
    UK Force deploying FLO ..............................................................................................63
  Notification .......................................................................................................................63
  Gathering Evidence/Intelligence ......................................................................................64
  Family Liaison Officer’s Responsibilities .........................................................................64
  Family Liaison Co-ordinator’s Responsibilities ..................................................................65

APPENDIX C ...................................................................................................................67

Support Agencies .............................................................................................................67
  BrakeCare .........................................................................................................................67
  SAMM ...............................................................................................................................67
  Victim Support .................................................................................................................67
  Witness Support ...............................................................................................................68
  Additional Support .........................................................................................................69

APPENDIX D ...................................................................................................................71

Useful Telephone Numbers ..............................................................................................71
FAMILY LIAISON - INTRODUCTION

One of the most important considerations throughout the investigation of a death is providing support to the family of the deceased. Families should be considered as partners in an investigation and 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.

Family liaison is a significant resource that can be used across a broad spectrum of policing. In acknowledging this, the guidance set out in this document should be considered in circumstances in which there has been:

1. An unexplained or violent death, particularly in respect of:
   - Homicide
   - Road death and
   - Mass disaster.
2. Other cases that do not involve a fatality where family liaison might enhance the effectiveness of the police response, for example, hate crime.

This document also recognises potential of family liaison for preventing some incidents from becoming critical in the first place, as well as providing guidance in respect of family liaison in relation to the investigation and management of critical incidents such as these. Whatever the circumstances in which it is used, once engaged, family liaison must be sustainable and effective.

Where police have primacy for the investigation, the primary responsibility for family liaison rests with them. In any other circumstances, there should be a clear understanding of who has primary responsibility for family liaison and this should be carefully documented.

In discharging their responsibility for family liaison, the aims of the police service are:

1. To analyse the needs, concerns and expectations of the ‘family’ in order to identify relevant and realistic action that should be taken, in the context of their human rights and the obligations set out in this document.
2. 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 seeking conclusively to gather all information and evidence from them which assists the investigation, in a way that is proportional to their fundamental right to privacy and family life.
The main objectives arising from these aims are:

i) 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.

ii) To gather evidence and information from the family in a manner which contributes to the investigation and preserves its integrity.

iii) To secure the confidence and trust of the family thereby enhancing their contribution to the investigation.

The trauma associated with a sudden unexpected tragedy will place 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. 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 officer first having contact with the family has a crucial role and may not be a trained Family Liaison Officer. Nevertheless, the needs and requirements of the family must be identified from this stage onwards. In supporting the family throughout the investigation - sensitivity, compassion and respect for the family’s needs and requirements must underpin the approach to gathering evidence and information.

There are four main roles that have been identified for the effective performance of a Family Liaison Strategy:

**SENIOR INVESTIGATING OFFICER (SIO)/SENIOR IDENTIFICATION MANAGER (SIM)**

The role of the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO), or Senior Identification Manager (SIM) in instances of mass disaster, relates to the formulation and development of a Family Liaison Strategy. In formulating this strategy, the SIO/SIM must aim to achieve a partnership approach with the family in the context of the investigation. The selection, deployment, support and supervision of the FLO(s) is a crucial to this role.

(See section - ‘ROLE OF THE SENIOR INVESTIGATING OFFICER (SIO)/SENIOR IDENTIFICATION MANAGER (SIM)’)

**FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER CO-ORDINATOR**

Forces should consider appointing a senior manager to co-ordinate Family Liaison Officers. The co-ordinator is responsible for a number of administrative functions, including the maintenance of a register of FLOs, and a number of functions aimed at supporting SIOs/SIMs and FLOs.

(See section - ‘ROLE OF THE FLO CO-ORDINATOR’)
FAMILY LIAISON ADVISOR

The post of Family Liaison Advisor is an optional one that might be utilised in circumstances where the structures set up in any given force are such that the Co-ordinator is not in a position to provide advice and support to SIO/SIMs in individual cases on an everyday basis. This role is primarily one of supporting the SIO/SIM during the initial or other particularly challenging stages of the enquiry. In essence, it is intended that the Family Liaison Advisor serve some of the support functions associated with the Family Liaison Co-ordinator’s role in complex or problematic cases where the Force Co-ordinator is not in a position to provide such intensive support.

(See section - ‘ROLE OF THE FAMILY LIAISON ADVISOR’)

THE FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER (FLO)

The role of the FLO involves the day to day management of the partnership with the family in the investigation and close liaison with the SIO/SIM to ensure families are treated appropriately, professionally and with respect to their needs. It may involve working in a variety of situations in very demanding and stressful conditions over sustained periods of time.

(See section - ‘ROLE OF THE FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER (FLO)’)

NATIONAL FAMILY LIAISON ADVISOR

At a national level, advice may be sought from a National Family Liaison Advisor. This advice is available in relation to the strategic implementation and operational application of the guidance set out in this manual and the training implications arising from it. A National Family Liaison Advisor may be contacted through the Help Desk of the National Crime and Operations Faculty at Bramshill on 01256 602443.

(See section - ‘ROLE OF THE NATIONAL FAMILY LIAISON CO-ORDINATOR’)

SELECTION OF FAMILY LIAISON OFFICERS

Selection for Training

Those performing the role of FLO must always act with the highest degree of professionalism and must carry out their duties with great sensitivity. Careful consideration should, therefore, be given about the suitability of the officers to be trained to work with the family. Officers should be volunteers having a clear and reasoned motive reflecting genuine commitment for wishing to train and operate as a Family Liaison Officer.

Ideally, officers should have the following qualities and skills that make them suitable for such training:

EXPERIENCE

- Have proven investigative skills in their particular discipline.
- Be trained in investigative interviewing in accordance with the PEACE model (Preparation and Planning, Engage and Explain, Account and Challenge, Closure, Evaluation – as described in ‘A Practical Guide to Investigative Interviewing’ published by the National Crime Faculty, 2000).
- Be experienced in dealing with exhibits.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Be able to display good interpersonal skills.
- Possess good communication and listening skills.
- Be confident and self-assured.
- Be able to manage their stress.
- Have the ability to work alone with minimal supervision.
- Be flexible and non-judgmental.
- Be able to accurately record information from the family.

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand the principles of stress management.
- Possess a good knowledge and understanding of professional support services.
- Possess a good knowledge and understanding of the communities within which they work.
- Understand the legal and procedural issues associated with their particular discipline.
- Understand how Major Incident Rooms work.
- Understand how Casualty Bureaux works (in instances of mass disaster).
- Understand Interpol Disaster Victim Identification Arrangements (in instances of mass disaster).
In addition to these qualities, care and consideration is required in selection in circumstances where officers have suffered a significant loss in the past 18 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 an FLO should be consulted in the decision making process around these factors and their potential impact should be weighed up on a case-by-case basis rather than automatically excluding any officer who has experienced them from selection for training.

**Training of Family Liaison Officers**

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

- Identify the main responsibilities and explain the role of an FLO in relation to their core discipline.
- Outline the responsibilities of the FLO in relation to the management of intelligence.
- Outline the command structure in mass disaster enquiries.
- Outline the role and identify the main responsibilities of the SIO in homicide and fatal road traffic collision investigations and the SIM in mass disaster enquiries.
- Outline the role of the SIO/SIM’s policy in major enquiries.
- Identify the main responsibilities of the FLO Co-ordinator and Family Liaison Advisor in major enquiries.
- Identify the action that should be taken on appointment as an FLO.
- Identify the matters that should be included in a Family Liaison Officer’s Log.
- Outline the issues to be considered in relation to the identification of the family; including ethnicity, culture and lifestyle diversity.
- Outline the issues in respect of ethnicity, culture and lifestyle diversity that should be considered when working with the family.
- Outline the immediate issues to be addressed on first contact with the family.
- Summarise the law in respect of homicide and road traffic collisions where fatalities are involved.
- Identify the issues that require consideration before, during and after a search of the family home.
- Summarise the requirements in respect of disclosure that are likely to impact on the role of an FLO.
- Summarise the law and procedures in respect of witness intimidation/harassment.
- Outline the role of the Coroner and the procedures in respect of inquests.
- Outline the procedures in respect of the identification of, access to and the release of the body, organ donation, and tissue/organ retention for more detailed medical examination and second post-mortems.
- Identify the issues that should be considered in relation to the return of property.
• Outline the criminal justice system for the purposes of giving information to a bereaved family.

• Outline the processes that are usually involved in grieving.

• Describe how bereavement through sudden violent death and the legal and criminal justice processes that follow it may influence the grieving process.

• Describe the main cultural and ethnic differences in death rites (for the purposes of sensitising the FLO to the issue - it should always be remembered that the family will know more about death rites than the FLO in particular cases).

• Outline the process surrounding media involvement in a major enquiry.

• Identify the assistance that might be given by the relevant support agencies that are available to a family during and after a major enquiry.

• Recognise the circumstances in which specialist intervention may be required.

• Outline the responsibilities of an FLO in cases involving representatives of the family and an Independent Advisory Group.

• Formulate a strategy that will enable them to exit from the role of FLO.

• Recognise the potential impact of emotional trauma on their performance.

• Formulate methods for dealing with those aspects of the role likely to be of high stress to an FLO.

• Recognise the effect that arrest and charge/ prosecution/ or a decision to take No Further Action has on the family.
ROLE OF THE SENIOR INVESTIGATING OFFICER (SIO)/SENIOR IDENTIFICATION MANAGER (SIM)

The Family Liaison Strategy is one of the most important considerations that the SIO/SIM will have to address throughout the investigation.

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

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.
- Selection and appointment.
- Supporting and supervising the FLO.
- Strategic and tactical management.
- Suspect within the family.
- Communication with the family.
- Family and the media.
- Indirect communication.
- Involvement of an Independent Advisory Group.
- Working with representatives of the family.
- Any additional issues in connection with deaths abroad (see Appendix B).
- Exit strategies.

In complex cases, advice can be sought from the National Family Liaison Advisor, via the Family Liaison Co-ordinator for the force and through the Help Desk of the National Crime and Operations Faculty at Bramshill on 01256 602443.

**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. SIO/SIMs 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, e.g. gay, lesbian or a religious sect.

In identifying and prior to meeting the family, the SIO/SIM should establish as much information concerning the family as possible. This will include determining any possible
cultural or lifestyle considerations, religious beliefs or possible communication requirements in terms 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.

**Risk Assessment**

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 supervisors and managers who have a duty of care in respect of officers performing a liaison role and towards other persons who could be affected by this activity.

All police forces have a statutory obligation for health and safety to those officers and other persons and to assist this process should ensure that:

1. Family Liaison Officers are volunteers with operational experience that enables them to have knowledge of potential risks associated with modern policing.
2. There exists within the force an appropriate selection procedure that is designed to evaluate the suitability of each officer for the role.
3. Officers selected receive the recommended training prior to deployment in order to enhance knowledge and awareness regarded as essential for family liaison officers.
4. Whilst performing the role, officers have access to support and counselling and have clear lines of communication with the line manager, SIO or deputy, receiving regular briefings and debriefings.
5. Supervisors are able to monitor the work of the officers ensuring that tasks set fall within the overall aim and objectives of the liaison and that the role is performed within the parameters of clear and concise written guidelines.
6. That a risk assessment is undertaken prior to the deployment of family liaison officers and continuously reviewed in accordance with these recommendations.

In addition, there is a requirement to record in writing the significant findings of the risk assessment and to review the assessment when there is reason to suspect that it is no longer valid.

In compliance of this requirement, risk assessments for family liaison have been introduced and comprise of two forms (as shown in Appendix A). These forms have been marked ‘restricted’ although this classification is only applicable after the forms have been completed. The first (Form 1) takes the format of a storage folder in which the second (Form 2), which concerns the assessment(s), should be kept.
A copy of this form is also reproduced as a separate file on the CD on which this manual has been published. Both forms are intended to be printed double-sided, the first form on A3 and the second on A4 size paper.

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

Form 2 assesses the potential of risk, including:

1. The circumstances that could give rise to harm;
2. The possibility of harm occurring;
3. The severity of the harm;
4. Who could be harmed;
5. 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.

Further 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:

a) People;
b) Action/Activity;
c) Location; or
d) Environment.

People

Full details of the occupants of an address with whom liaison has been identified might not be available until the liaison progresses and 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 whilst compiling the Family Tree. This ensures 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 and 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 should 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 and might require a variation in the tasks performed by FLOs. As experienced investigators, these tasks will not necessarily cause them problems and could be well within their knowledge and skills, but any significant change in the family or other’s perception of the role might increase the potential for risk.

Location

Prior to deployment of family liaison officers, 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 that is recorded in the Impact Assessment Document.

Any changes in the location may have a bearing on the potential for risk or level of harm to the officers or others. In the event of such a change occurring, 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 liaison by FLOs is likely to be frequent or it is likely that they will 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 and as such must be completed by a supervisor or manager who has previously 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 the content of any disclosure of information in order to comply with the Data Protection Act and Human Rights legislation. Any such disclosure of information should take place by telephone or face-to-face contact as soon as possible and be confirmed in writing at the earliest opportunity.

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 utilising existing force risk assessment procedures or to compiling additional reports that should, upon completion be stored within the Form 1 folder.
Selection and Deployment

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.

The role of the FLO is both sensitive and complex, balancing the needs of the family with a requirement to gather evidence and to 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 pivotal to the success of the investigation.

In all cases involving suspected homicide, mass disaster, road traffic collision fatality or hate crime, the SIO/SIM must endeavour to appoint FLOs who have received training in the role to the ACPO standard.

Consideration must be given to the deployment of a deputy FLO. Such a deployment has benefits for the family and the investigation in that it provides for greater resilience in the liaison function at times when the principal FLO is unavailable due to sickness, leave, court commitments etc. It is also of benefit to the FLO in terms of providing greater support at the technical level of developing a strategy and the emotional level of stress management. The principal FLO must always have been trained to the national standards set out in the training section above. The deputy FLO should also have been trained to these national standards. In exceptional circumstances, where no trained officer is available, an officer who has a general awareness of the issues involved in family liaison and who is awaiting training, after having been identified as having the potential to perform the role, might be utilised as a deputy FLO to work alongside the principal FLO.

In considering the deployment of FLOs the SIO/SIM should take account of the individual FLO’s ability to perform the function, at that time, effectively. The following circumstances will have a bearing on the selection process:

- A recent bereavement of a close relative or partner or other major life trauma.
- Workload.
- Frequency of recent deployment in the role.
- Previous experience in the role.
- Availability - annual leave, court or similar commitments.
- Previous contact and relationship with the 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/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 an FLO during the course of other duties or while off-duty should be minimised).
- Family needs and circumstances.
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 separate FLOs as appropriate. In cases where more than one FLO is deployed care must be taken to ensure the accurate co-ordination of information flow to the family.

On occasions, gender may be a critical factor both for cultural reasons and empathetic considerations.

Where the victim is from a minority group or particular lifestyle diversity, consideration should be given to the deployment of an FLO with specific knowledge and experience of that community. Such consideration should be balanced against the impact that any previous relationship between the officer and the family might have on the professional objectivity of the officer and the exit strategy.

The SIO/SIM should also carefully consider the deployment of an officer who reflects the cultural or lifestyle background of the family members. The attachment of such an officer to a family without prior consultation can sometime be detrimental to the police/family relationship, being viewed as tokenism. Deployment in such circumstances should only be made following discussion with family members and should be endorsed as appropriate by the SIO/SIM as the result of a carefully reasoned and recorded decision.

The choice of FLO may be affected by the incident circumstances in terms of:

- Its scale.
- Its nature.
- Impact assessment completed for the incident.
- The media interest that it is likely to attract (it might be helpful for the FLO to have had media training in some high profile cases).
- Officer safety. For example, in circumstances where the family’s experience of the police, whether direct or indirect, has led to a mistrust of the organisations capabilities or intentions, which manifests itself in a hostile or non co-operative stance by the family. In this situation, it should be borne in mind that other circumstances may have also given rise to the adoption of a hostile/non co-operative stance by the family to the police (e.g. 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, which 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 due to the incident.
- There is an element of racist or homophobic motivation connected with a homicide.
- There are circumstances that may require the use of an officer with specialist skills or qualities (e.g. the murder of a child, suspect believed within the family, split or extended family, minority ethnic victim, gay/lesbian victim, non-English speaking family,
vulnerable or intimidated witnesses within the meaning of Sections 16 and 17, Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act, 1999).

These factors will have a direct bearing on the appropriate selection and management of FLOs in terms of the skills, experience and number deployed.

**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 maintained by FLOs as they are exposed to the raw emotions and needs of the bereaved. They must not be left feeling abandoned or isolated.

In discharging this obligation the SIO/SIM should take into account the following issues:

- The roles and lines of responsibility for the management of the FLO(s) 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. In many cases, it will be important that the FLO has support from the department responsible for force welfare or occupational health during their time with the family, especially during the exit procedure. Failure to attend these mandatory debriefings without reasonable cause should negate the officer’s future deployment as an FLO.
- SIO/SIMs should ensure that FLOs are only deployed in the role on one active enquiry at a time (e.g. pre-trial or other cases necessitating frequent contact between FLO and family). SIOs should confirm that FLOs have exited from families involved in other cases prior to their deployment in a new investigation for this reason.

The SIO/SIM should ensure that FLO logs are regularly supervised to ensure the effective management and conduct of the liaison. In addition to this, SIO/SIMs should ensure that the necessary ante-mortem data is entered on the relevant forms from Interpol, where appropriate.

SIO/SIMs must be prepared to continuously review the deployment of an FLO. In doing this, 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.

The service will have made a considerable investment in the training and development of an FLO. It should, therefore, be emphasised that the SIO/SIM has a responsibility for ensuring that an FLO is not deployed any longer than is necessary to meet the immediate needs of the family and the investigation. When such needs have been met, consideration should be given to implementing an exit strategy for the FLO, or FLO team, at which 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.

**Strategic & Tactical Management**

In formulating the Family Liaison Strategy the SIO/SIM must aim to achieve a partnership approach with the family within the investigation.

The Strategy should be defined and developed taking into consideration the needs of the family, the lines of enquiry and the available intelligence. This is a dynamic process that must be reviewed at regular intervals and in consultation with the FLO.

The Strategy must be recorded in the SIO/SIM’s policy file and should include:

• The Family Liaison Strategy objectives. Classically they should include:
  a) Providing the family with as full and up to date information as possible about the incident and its investigation;
  b) Obtaining full family background and other relevant details as directed by the SIO/SIM;
  c) Ensuring the investigation is not compromised by the injudicious disclosure of information;
  d) Gathering antecedent and identification evidence and exhibits from the family (given the potential for compromising the FLO’s relationship with the family and to minimise the chances of a challenge to the integrity of the evidence recorded, FLOs should only be asked to interview significant or vulnerable witnesses in very exceptional circumstances).

• The selection of FLOs and criteria employed to select them.
• Decisions and reasons affecting the level of release of information to the family.
• Any requests made by the family that have not been acceded to and the reason for this action.
• Any complaints made by the family and the SIO/SIM’s action to progress and resolve the matters raised.
ROLE OF THE SENIOR INVESTIGATING OFFICER (SIO)/SENIOR IDENTIFICATION MANAGER (SIM)

- Decisions concerning involvement of support services including referral to the Victim Support Scheme (VSS), which provides an independent and confidential support service, and community interest groups at the local level. Full details of Victim Support and other support agencies are provided at Appendix C.
- Decisions concerning the involvement and working with representatives of the family, e.g. the involvement of a solicitor.
- The involvement of an Independent Advisory Group in appropriate cases.
- Family media strategy.
- Arrangements for supporting the FLO and welfare strategy.
- Any decisions regarding the deployment of an FLO to a suspect’s family.
- Exit strategy for the FLO.

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

Investigations Supervised by the Police Complaints Authority (PCA)

It is imperative that a consistent level of Family Liaison support is afforded to families in cases where there is an internal or external investigation.

Families should be consulted by the SIO about their wishes in this area and every effort should be made to accommodate their requests. If their requests cannot be met, the family should be given a full explanation of the reasons for this and they should be documented in the policy file.

If an outside force is appointed to investigate the incident the continued deployment of the FLO from the home force might be inappropriate. In such situations, the PCA might ask that an FLO from the investigating force be deployed. Any hand over between FLOs should be carefully managed in order that the changeover does not have a detrimental effect on the relationship with the family.

Consideration should also be given in such circumstances of offering the outgoing FLO a debrief so that they are reintegrated back into their usual role in a sensitive manner.

In circumstances where the geographical distance between the family and the investigating force make efficient family liaison impracticable, consideration should be given to appointing an FLO from an outside force bordering the force area where the family are located. In these instances it is important that the FLO is kept fully appraised by the SIO of developments in the enquiry and is treated as an integrated member of the investigative team.

Further information for incident managers can be sought from the PCA Manual of Guidance.
Suspect within the Family

When a suspect is potentially within the family group great care must be taken in deploying an FLO and a risk assessment taken to support the decision making process. The following issues should be taken into consideration:

- Enhanced monitoring of the work and interaction with the family including the FLO’s welfare and safety.
- The level of information disclosure to the FLO and in turn the family.
- The process by which any intelligence that arises from FLO 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:
  ◊ Disclosure.
  ◊ Human Rights.
  ◊ The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000; and
  ◊ The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
- The importance of fully documenting all contact and interactions with the family.
- The deployment of a more experienced or senior FLO.
- The deployment of a new FLO when a suspect is arrested.
- The deployment of a deputy FLO for corroboration issues in addition to supporting the principal FLO.
- Not using the FLO in any search or arrest in the family group.
- Investigative/evidential impact of deployment.

The Family Liaison Advisor or Co-ordinator’s advice should be sought in developing a strategy concerning such deployments.

Defendants’ Families

In appropriate cases, SIO/SIMs should consider deploying an FLO with 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. Such a consideration may be particularly important where the victim and the suspect come from the same family.

The family of a defendant might be considered to be victims. However great care must be taken in the deployment as described above. If such a facility is offered to the defendant’s family, whether accepted or not, the decision and reasons for it should be recorded in the policy file.
The defendant’s family should be referred to ‘Aftermath’ for support. ‘Aftermath’ is a registered charity providing support for the families of serious offenders (contact address: PO Box 414, Sheffield, S4 7RT. Telephone number 0114 275 8520).

**Communication with the Family**

The SIO/SIM should meet the family as soon as practicable. 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. The crucial importance of this meeting cannot be over emphasised.

The location for the meeting should be arranged and agreed with the family. If there is a delay in the SIO/SIM meeting the family this, together with the reasons, should be recorded in the policy file.

It is considered to be 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 Major Incident Room/Casualty Bureau/Roads Policing Unit.
- A brief explanation of the roles of the SIO/SIM and FLO. This should include information about the objectives of family liaison.
- What the family can expect from the police i.e. a commitment to fully investigate.
- An indication of the willingness to learn from the family through feedback.
- An invitation to visit the Major Incident Room in a homicide enquiry in order to demonstrate transparency in the process of investigation (if such an invitation is accepted, care should be taken to conceal material such as photographs of the deceased and the scene from the family).
- An invitation to visit the scene (unless this is inappropriate).

This is particularly important as family members are often 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 for the translation of the letter from the SIO/SIM and all subsequent letters and documents.

In ensuring the building of trust with a family it is vital that any commitment or assurance given is documented, carried out and its result passed on to the family. Likewise if the
assurance or commitment is not brought to fruition 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.

Family members should not be given an expectation of confidentiality as the nature of the police officers role precludes this from being possible.

The SIO/SIM should visit the family at regular intervals. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the FLO should be informed of the visit and consideration should be given to conducting this visit with the FLO. Particular consideration should be given to visiting at times of significant events/anniversaries for example:

- Release of suspects for further enquires or without charge.
- Charge.
- Funeral.
- Release of defendant on bail.
- Committal.
- Conviction/acquittal.
- Coroners’ Court hearings.
- Appeal.
- Referral to Criminal Cases Review Commission.
- Tariff review.
- Renewed media attention.

Where a visit is planned at the time of significant events/anniversaries and Victim Support are involved, consideration should be given to asking the FLO to liaise with them.

By maintaining regular contact with the family the SIO/SIM will be able to determine for themselves the relationship with the family and address any concerns or needs they may have, by actively encouraging them to comment on any family liaison or investigative issues.

In maintaining regular contact SIO/SIMs will have the opportunity, at the appropriate time, to receive feedback from families to allow for strategic dissemination of lessons learnt in terms of both good and bad practice.

**The Family and the Media**

Media interest in major enquiries is inevitably high. 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 impact on the investigative process. To
achieve this it is important for the family to be involved in a partnership approach with the SIO/SIM, together with the force press officer and FLO to develop and agree the police media strategy. 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. The SIO/SIM should actively pursue, where possible, the development and agreement of a family media strategy. 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 an adverse impact on 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 that it could be used again at a later date without reference to the family’s wishes.

At times of significant events such as post charge, conviction/acquittal the SIO/SIM should revisit 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 of the jeopardy concerning sub-judice and issues of a fair trial.

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

**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 breaks down. SIO/SIMs must look to families to be part of an effective investigation, it is much harder to support, protect and work with a family at arm’s length. Anything short of direct dialogue with the family has the potential to impair intelligence flow, hence weaken the investigation and further undermine confidence.

The onus is therefore 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, e.g. officers responsible for community liaison or local beat officers.

**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, the SIO/SIM should consider the participation of members of the community to form an advisory group. The purpose of forming such a group would be to review, advise and guide the SIO/SIM in re-establishing effective dialogue with the family in order to build trust and
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 facilitate the restoration of effective family liaison.

The importance of such a group in appropriate cases cannot be overestimated. It presents the SIO/SIM with an opportunity, through openness, transparency and co-operation, to build the trust and confidence of both the family and the local community in the police commitment to the investigation.

**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 will often 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 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 facsimile 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. It is important to recognise the reality of trust deficits between some families and the police and to pursue every avenue to foster good relationships. It is imperative that SIO/SIMs guard against allowing the lack of direct contact with families to cloud their perceptions and should focus on providing them with support and sustaining an effective investigation.
Deaths Abroad

Family liaison in cases of British subjects murdered or missing in suspicious circumstances abroad is the subject of Appendix B to this document.
ROLE OF THE FLO CO-ORDINATOR

As a matter of good practice, forces should consider appointing a senior manager to act as a co-ordinator for Family Liaison Officers. Co-ordinators should have received training to prepare them for their role. The co-ordinator is responsible for the administrative and support functions set out below.

**Administrative Functions**

- The administrative supervision of the scheme.
- The maintenance of a register of all FLOs, providing:
  a) Details of their lifestyle diversity.
  b) Ethnic/cultural origins.
  c) FLO experience (types of incident where deployed) and brief synopsis of specific FLO skills utilised and enhanced (e.g. split families, working with representatives of the family, suspect within the family).
  d) Details of other skills or qualifications held by the officer (e.g. trained to investigate sexual offences, language/communication skills).
  e) Current availability status of FLO.

**Support Functions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To act as a support point for SIO/SIMs:</th>
<th>To act as a support point for FLOs:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who may require advice concerning the:</td>
<td>In terms of advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ Deployment of FLOs and the functions of family liaison; and</td>
<td>By maintaining a register of contact details of appropriate organisations/lay people/professional consultants to assist them in their role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ Skills of a particular FLO in terms of culture/lifestyle diversity, knowledge or experience base.</td>
<td>By acting as a channel for welfare/occupational health/defusing support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who may require advice and assistance in complex cases with multiple deployments of FLOs and in co-ordinating the information that comes from them.</td>
<td>By acting as an independent channel for FLO de-briefing to draw out good practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By liaising nationally to share and gather good practice for implementation within own force area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By providing a networking point for FLOs requiring advice from other FLOs who have experience in dealing with particular scenarios.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By promoting/facilitating mutual FLO peer group support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By monitoring workloads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By monitoring mandatory attendance at the welfare/occupational health department.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The FLO Co-ordinator should meet formally with all the FLOs not less than twice a year; notwithstanding this, the co-ordinator or the officers themselves may arrange for the FLOs to get together on an informal adhoc basis in order to share experiences. The co-ordinators’ meetings will give an opportunity to impact good practice, new legislation and give any additional training input that is appropriate.

Further advice can be sought from the National Family Liaison Advisor through the Help Desk of the National Crime and Operations Faculty at Bramshill on 01256 602443.

** Deaths Abroad **

The Co-ordinator’s responsibilities in cases of British subjects murdered or missing in suspicious circumstances abroad is the subject of Appendix B to this document.

** Management Systems **

It is accepted that these functions and responsibilities involve a great deal of work. While it is important that a senior manager is identified by each force as having overall responsibility for these functions, the way in which they are managed on a day to day basis should depend on the size, structure and homicide and road death rate of the force in question. Two general possibilities are set out below:

1. A single individual might be responsible for and manage all these functions either on a full or part-time basis;

2. An individual might 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 might be either delegated together on a geographic basis or managed by different individuals.

The kind of structure supporting such a hierarchical division of responsibility might either:

- Consist of a Family Liaison Co-ordinator and a number of deputy co-ordinators deployed on a local basis;
- Consist of a Family Liaison Manager overseeing the work of a number of Family Liaison Co-ordinators;
- Consist of a senior manager with portfolio responsibility for family liaison overseeing a central reference point for a number of locally based Family Liaison Co-ordinators; or
- Reflect the kind of hierarchical structures used in other spheres of policing such as those associated with the handling of covert human intelligence sources. In these circumstances, the senior manager with overall responsibility for family liaison might perform a role akin to that of a registrar. Such a senior manager would then
have a supervisory relationship to a number of co-ordinators similar to that of the registrar - controller relationship. Each co-ordinator would then have a supervisory relationship to a number of FLOs similar to that of the controller - handler relationship.

In addition to this, a Family Liaison Advisor (next section) might fulfil some of these support functions on an individual case basis.

All those operating within whatever structure is adopted should be trained to prepare them for their role.

What is of importance is that the Family Liaison Co-ordination functions, as set out above, are fulfilled. The manner in which they are fulfilled is very much a matter for local practice.

**Training of FLO Co-ordinators**

At the end of any course designed for the training of Family Liaison Co-ordinators the students should be able to:

- Describe the roles of the -
  - Senior Investigating Officer (SIO)
  - Senior Identification Manager (SIM)
  - Family Liaison Officer Co-ordinator
  - Family Liaison Advisor and
  - FLO
  as defined in these guidelines;

- Identify suitable support for families having to cope with media interest and press conferences;

- Describe how Casualty Bureau operates at times of major disaster;

- Outline the key lessons learnt from recent major disasters;

- Describe the Interpol Disaster Victim Identification Arrangements (in instances of mass disaster);

- State all the available methods for identifying human remains;

- Outline the advice that might be given to FLOs about Victimology and lifestyle analysis;

- State the impact of the Human Rights Act on FLO work;

- Describe the impact of current legislation to FLO actions;

- Identify the principles involved in diffusing/debriefing FLOs;

- Describe the advantages of therapeutic debriefings;

- Specify the occupational health facilities that are available to FLOs;
• Identify strategies, tactics and best practice when working with representatives of the family;
• Describe the principles that are involved in conducting a risk assessment;
• Identify the principle components of a family liaison strategy;
• Describe the factors that might influence selection for the training, deployment and continuing deployment of an FLO.
ROLE OF THE FAMILY LIAISON ADVISOR

The post of Family Liaison Advisor is an optional one that might be utilised in circumstances where the structures set up in any given force are such that the FLO Co-ordinator is unlikely to be in a position to provide advice and support to SIO/SIMs in individual cases on an everyday basis.

The role of the Family Liaison Advisor is primarily one of supporting the SIO/SIM during the initial stages of the enquiry. In essence, it is intended that the Family Liaison Advisor serve some of the support functions associated with the Family Liaison Co-ordinator’s role in complex or problematic cases where the co-ordinator is not in a position to provide such intensive support.

In particular, a Family Liaison Advisor could be responsible for:

- Co-ordinating 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;
- Briefing FLOs and FLO teams;
- Advising FLOs about any good practice issues relevant to liaising with a family associated with the type of investigation taking place;
- Debriefing FLOs following their initial contact with the family and co-ordinating the early risk assessment arising from such initial contact;
- Advising the SIO/SIM about any issues likely to have an adverse impact on family liaison that arise from debriefing the FLOs.

The nature of some of these functions suggests that the role of the Family Liaison Advisor is a supervisory one that might be fulfilled either by an officer of the rank of sergeant or inspector.

Given that many of the functions of the Family Liaison Advisor are similar to the support functions outlined above for the Family Liaison Co-ordinator, it is suggested that Family Liaison Advisors are trained to the same aims and objectives to those suggested for Family Liaison Co-ordinators.
ROLE OF THE FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER (FLO)

The role of the FLO involves the day to day management of the partnership with the family in the investigation and close liaison with the SIO/SIM to ensure families are treated appropriately, professionally and with respect to their needs. It may involve working in a variety of situations in very demanding and stressful conditions over sustained periods of time.

It is essential that Family Liaison Officers are selected from volunteers who have the appropriate qualities and skills. All FLOs should be trained to ACPO standard before being deployed in cases of suspected homicide, hate crime, mass disaster or road death.

It will assist officers who are employed in the role to more effectively discharge their responsibilities by making themselves conversant with the guidelines concerning SIOs and FLO co-ordinators contained within this ACPO Murder Investigation/Road Deaths/Emergency Procedures Manuals and the ACPO Guide to Identifying and Combating Hate Crime.

The primary function of an FLO is that of an investigator. In performing this role the officer will offer, give and facilitate support with consideration being given to the needs of the family.

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 an FLO from offering sympathy and/or moral support. In fact, one of the most important skills an FLO can possess is the ability to listen. This is a simple skill that is often overlooked or taken for granted, but will be greatly appreciated by the family.

Personal Criteria

It is important to understand that two distinct selection processes govern employment in the role. The first of these relates to the overall selection criteria for training in the role, as set out earlier in this document. The second relates to deployment as an FLO in a particular case. Even though an individual has been trained and is fully competent, circumstances may dictate that an individual’s deployment or retention in the role with a particular family is inappropriate.

There is an onus on the FLO to inform the SIO/SIM of any factors that they are aware of, that make their deployment or continued retention inappropriate, e.g. change in officer’s personal circumstances, views expressed by the family, conflicts within the family.

Action on Appointment

On appointment the FLO should discuss the strategy for working with the victim’s family with the SIO/SIM. 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 during the enquiry. The FLO should be clear about the objectives they are seeking to meet as suggested in the SIO/SIM’s guidelines.

The FLO is responsible for the passing of appropriate information regarding the enquiry to the family with the agreement of the SIO (in order to avoid compromising the enquiry). As an investigator, the FLO will usually be responsible for taking of statements from the family relating to identification of the body and antecedents of the victim. In addition, FLOs will generally be responsible for the formulation of a family tree and the gathering of all relevant information/intelligence emanating from the family. Given the potential for compromising the position of the FLO with the family and to minimise the chances of a challenge to the integrity of the evidence recorded, FLOs should only be asked to interview significant or vulnerable witnesses in very exceptional circumstances.

In instances of mass disaster, the FLO is also responsible for entering the ante-mortem data on the forms from Interpol, where this is appropriate.

The FLO must meet the family as soon as possible. Before meeting the family the FLO should:

- Familiarise themselves with the enquiry (this may be done through a briefing, particularly in instances of mass disaster).
- Familiarise themselves with what information has been established concerning the family, including any known family composition or group dynamics, cultural or lifestyle considerations, religious beliefs or possible communication requirements in terms of language or disability.
- Familiarise themselves with any available information and intelligence which could impact on the liaison role e.g. 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.
- Conduct a risk assessment of the environment following initial contact with the family.

**Record Keeping**

At the beginning of an enquiry the FLO must commence a Family Liaison Officer’s Log in which to keep all records of contact with family/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 and 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 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, which relate to ‘original notes’ and care should be employed in its completion, working on a presumption that disclosure by virtue of the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act, 1996, will take place. It is important to retain any other means of recording the contacts such as loose pieces of paper or notebooks for evidential integrity and disclosure purposes.

Where the FLO suspects a member of the family of being involved in the offence or there are other sensitive issues that need to be brought to the attention of the enquiry this should be done by way of an officers information and cross referenced to the FLO log. Applications for Public Interest Immunity regarding the disclosure of such sensitive information can then be considered at a later point as 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 and venue where applicable e.g. by telephone, at home address.
- Detail the purpose of contact and any information exchanged.
- Details of any complaint made by the family and action taken to appraise the SIO/SIM.
- Details of any request made by the family not acceded to and action taken to appraise the SIO/SIM.
- Details of who initiated the contact, e.g. 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).

**Working and Communicating with the Family**

The conduct of the first contact with the family is vital in laying the foundations for a successful partnership. At no time must a family be deliberately misled; contact must be honest and as far as possible open. Officers must remember that the families are also victims, as well as the deceased. It is of paramount importance that families are treated appropriately, professionally, with respect and with consideration given to their needs. Officers must never make assumptions as to the particular needs and expectations of a family but should respond to that which is communicated by them.

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 the timely sharing of all possible information so far as the integrity of 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 an individual or whole families. In each case, a family will vary in structure and size and the degree of involvement during an investigation cannot be forecast. Many family members (including members of the extended family) may wish to become actively involved during an investigation. This, however, may not always be possible or practicable, especially where large groups of people are involved. Consideration must be given to the closest relatives and/or partners providing a source of regular contact, should they feel able to do so. Although this is a matter for the family to decide, they may require some guidance. 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 remaining family and relatives. This may prove beneficial for all concerned and may 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 (i.e. a family friend), to represent them to the media.

In some cases language barriers may exist and communication may require the services of a suitably qualified interpreter. Where such a need arises great care must be taken that all information is clearly relayed and understanding sought. Furthermore, caution should be exercised when interpreters are engaged in the investigative process, to ensure that gender, personal background or belief are not conflicting with the families.

During the initial contact with the family and in any event 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 now in respect of the body e.g. the post mortem(s) and coroners’ processes. The family should be informed of their right to have a representative present at the post mortem.
- Establishing from family members any immediate evidence, information or rumours, which they may be aware of, so that it can be passed directly to the Major Incident Room and SIO/SIM for urgent attention.
Role of the Family Liaison Officer (FLO)

- 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 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 where it is divorced from the family home. There is a need to balance evidence gathering with the emotional needs of the family.
- Arranging access to medical services for the family (e.g. family members suffering the effects of trauma) if they wish.
- In particular cases it may be appropriate to explore with the family, at an early stage, the involvement of statutory or voluntary local support organisations, including local community interest groups.

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.
- The Criminal Justice System in England and Wales - a summary.
- 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.
- Witness in court.
- The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme.

The Victim’s Charter states that the details of the family in a homicide case will be given by the police to Victim Support if the family consents but the family can contact Victim Support direct. It will be appropriate to explore with the family, at an early stage, the involvement of and referral to Victim Support or any other local support organisation, including local community groups.

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 headings:

◇ What happens now?
◇ Criminal prosecution
◇ Claiming money
◇ Useful contacts.
It may also be appropriate to include a list of the contact names and telephone numbers of the FLO, SIO/SIM and their deputies and the times at which they may be contacted in whichever pack is used for easy reference by the family.

It is clear from the list above that the pack contains information, which may be needed by family members at various stages during the investigation. Some of this information deals with issues, which are very difficult for family members to face. After bereavement by homicide, mass disaster or fatal road traffic collision, feelings of shock and loss of control are acute.

FLOs should have ready access to supplies of the packs. The pack should be provided to one or more family members at as early a stage as possible in order for bereaved people to 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 (CPS and Prosecuting Counsel) at an appropriate time. In accordance with the Victim’s Charter, the CPS will, on request, meet the family of someone killed as a result of a crime, to explain their decision on prosecution.

**Viewing, Identification and Release of the Body**

FLOs have a crucial role to play in the identification process. Lord Justice Clarke has stressed the importance of this role in relation to transport disasters.

Close liaison with the coroners’ officers concerning the issues of viewing, identification and body release must be undertaken by the FLO as they have primary responsibility in this regard. The advice and guidance of coroners’ officers should always be sought concerning these.

It must be recognised that the formal identification procedure and viewing of the body are separate processes. The identification process is the statutory responsibility of coroners and 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 due to the injuries sustained or decomposition of the remains. Coroners will decide what processes will be employed to establish the identity of the deceased, especially if they are invasive, mutilative or use DNA etc. 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 whenever possible. In cases where an invasive technique is deemed necessary by
the coroner (for example, removal of limbs/body parts) an explanation and reasons for it are critical.

Where DNA profiling and the taking of samples are appropriate, the FLO should approach an appropriate person (preferably the mother of the victim, where available) 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 appropriate, this must not be confused with the needs of family members to see the body.

The FLO after consultation with the SIO/SIM should ask the family who 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 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 the body 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 may be critical to the family grieving and might prove to be of long-term benefit.

An early viewing of the body by the FLO is advisable and should be repeated before viewing by any family member. As much information as possible should be obtained to assist family members in deciding whether they wish to view. The information established and sensitively given should include:

- The condition of the body, including any odour, the colour of the body, the temperature of the body 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 go in to and the facilities that are in them. 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 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 if it is likely to assist family members to decide whether they wish to view the body 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 wiped away from the face and other exposed parts of the body.

In some circumstances, for example, where family members wish to see the body again or in split family situations where the FLO might have to accompany other members of the family to view the body, 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 with the family the viewing arrangements. In some cases ensuring the bodies are located close together may reduce the impact of two viewings on the family.

The wishes/needs of the family should determine the length of the viewing and every assistance should be afforded to facilitate the grieving process. If possible, family members should be left alone with the body if they wish.

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 facilitated, the reasons must be fully explained to the family. In other cases where difficulties arise the corners officer should be consulted about why the family’s requests are not being met. Such difficulties should be brought to the attention of the SIO/SIM who should consider making representations to the coroner if appropriate.

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, if more detail is requested.

The family should be told that an inquest will be opened. In consultation with the coroner’s officer, they should also be told that after formal evidence of identification and brief circumstances have been taken, the inquest will be adjourned for some time and they need not attend the opening unless they wish to. 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 it. 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 Coroners Office 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.

**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-judice rules will be in effect. Family members can be 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 there is a danger that allegations could be made that the information shared by the FLO contaminated the family members evidence. In all such cases it is important that the FLO makes a record of what is said to and by him or her in the FLO log and seeks the guidance of the SIO/SIM.

It is important that the FLO explains fully the possible effects of information disclosure to the family particularly the transition that occurs following the charge of suspect(s) (sub-judice).

**Identification Parades**

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. It is important therefore that the FLO does not warn or accompany any family member to any identification parade as this may jeopardise the conduct of the parade. These ‘PACE’ reasons for the FLO’s temporary withdrawal or implementation of exit strategy and deployment of new FLOs 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.

It is important that the FLO, who is not a member of the enquiry team, takes time to explain the generic process of the identification parade to prepare family members for this experience.
**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.

When considering the return of property to the family, the following should be borne in mind:

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

Property should be restored by the FLO. It should be inspected to ensure that:

- All police and 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 must always be consulted before any cleaning etc. to establish their views. The FLO should liaise closely with the exhibit's officer on all matters pertaining to exhibits. It is essential the property is returned rather than relatives asked to collect it from a location that 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 issues set out in this section in any circumstances, particularly instances of mass disaster.

**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, sexuality, ethnicity, 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 families who should be prepared for media interest. FLOs should advise families when it may be likely that such factors or a combination of them, could have an impact.
FLOs should ensure they appraise themselves of media reporting of the case on a daily basis, through close liaison with the appointed press officer, to ensure that they are prepared for potential questions that might be raised by families.

FLOs are reminded that the media takes a number of formats, including local press, radio and, potentially, the newsletters of local community organisations.

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

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.
- Appraise the SIO/SIM of media activity around the family.
- Appraise the family of police media strategy, and pass copies of all police press statements to family.

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

**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, e.g. 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 varies considerably, depending on their individual needs and they should be fully involved in the decision-making process.

Details of the kind of services offered by Victim Support, SAMM (Support After Murder and Manslaughter) and BrakeCare may be found in Appendix C. Some useful telephone numbers of organisations and agencies who might be able to assist people who have been bereaved are included in Appendix D.
**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 lay people 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 lay advisors 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 (see SIO guidelines). In many of these cases they will be solicitors or members of community interest groups. It is extremely important that direct dialogue exists between the family and police to ensure that the family is being supported appropriately and there is a direct conduit of information flow. The FLO must work constructively and positively with any representative of the family to ensure that the family are supported and are receiving correct information concerning the progress of the investigation. FLOs must work towards the goal of restoring direct communication with the family. It is important that any communication with representatives of the family is recorded in the Family Liaison Officer’s Log and the FLO works to the direction of SIO/SIM in connection with them.

**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 becoming over reliant on the FLO and the FLO becoming over reliant on the family. The implications of this could have a long-term effect on both the family and the FLO. Exit strategies must be well timed and executed, possibly by a personal visit from the FLO and SIO/SIM indicating the procedure from that point on. Any such exit strategy must be caring and considerate.

While this does not mean that the police will abandon the family, regard should be given to the fact that a time will come when the FLO’s objectives have been achieved. In cases where it is necessary to maintain regular contact with a family over an extended period of time, consideration should be given to deploying and exiting a number of FLOs in succession or to exiting the FLO and using another member of police staff (for example, a local officer) or somebody from the community to serve as a conduit for information between the investigation and the family. While consideration to implementing an exit strategy should be an ongoing process, it is recommended that it formally take place at intervals not exceeding three months in duration. However, It should be emphasised that whether or not an exit strategy is actually implemented is an operational decision for the SIO/SIM to be made according to the circumstances at the time.
Close liaison with other support agencies should be maintained to ensure that the family continue to receive counselling and other support appropriate to their needs and wishes.

The original 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 to a suitable welfare agency/support organisation for them to assist.

**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 the FLO should be present at the first contact. The purpose of making contact is two fold:

1. To provide information to the family about the custodial process.
2. 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 e.g. when release on licence is being contemplated.

**FLO Welfare**

Working with a family is often demanding and stressful and the FLO’s welfare is paramount. The SIO/SIM should, therefore, regularly consider implementing the exit strategy and either deploying another FLO or utilising another member of police staff (for example, a local officer) or somebody from the community to serve as a conduit for information between the investigation and the family.

FLOs are under an obligation to inform the SIO/SIM and FLO Co-ordinator of any concerns they have in continuing to perform in a specific case or in any future role as 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 at intervals determined by the SIO/SIM in consultation with the appropriate unit and dependant on the particular case in which the FLO is deployed. If an FLO does not attend such debriefs without good reason they should be precluded from performing the role on future occasions.

**Deaths Abroad**

The FLO’s responsibilities in cases of British subjects murdered or missing in suspicious circumstances abroad is the subject of Appendix B to this document.
ROLE OF THE NATIONAL FAMILY LIAISON CO-ORDINATOR

Two National Family Liaison Advisors are seconded to the National Crime and Operations Faculty at Bramshill. Their role relates to the provision of strategic and operational advice and the co-ordination 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 Family Liaison Co-ordinator for the force);
- The co-ordination of the training provision nationally for FLOs, Family Liaison Coordinators, Family Liaison Advisors, 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.

A National Family Liaison Advisor may be contacted through the Help Desk of the National Crime and Operations Faculty at Bramshill on 01256 602443.
SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

Home Office Policing and Reducing Crime Unit Reports on:

- The Use of the Media in Serious Crime Investigation
- Witness Intimidation
- Family Liaison Issues

(These are available from the Home Office Policing and Reducing Crime Unit, Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, Olive House, Petty France, London, SW1H 9HD).
Family Liaison Risk Assessment Forms

Form 1

Family Liaison Risk Assessments

Victim(s) Details:

SIO

Deputy

Other Document Number

D ..........
Details

Full Address  for potential visit

State if Victim or Suspect's family:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Members</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Telephone or Mobile No's if available</th>
<th>Date details established</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Member</th>
<th>FLO Deployed for Initial Visit</th>
<th>Station / Contact Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Member</th>
<th>PNC</th>
<th>Force</th>
<th>LIO</th>
<th>Domestic Violence</th>
<th>Others (specify)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Complete Details continuation forms if required*

Restricted
**File Content**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Form 2 created</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*To be completed each time Form 2 is attached*
**Risk Assessment Form Notes of Guidance**

There are two Risk Assessment forms for use when ‘Family’ Liaison is a requirement. The forms: -

**FORM 1** fulfils the function of a storage folder and indicates a specific address and details of household members to whom liaison may apply. The actual Risk Assessments relevant to that address are completed on Forms 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 M.I.R.

**FORM 2** is completed for each specific Risk Assessment relevant to the address indicated on Form 1.

**TIMINGS**

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 deployment of the ‘family’ liaison officer(s) and the details of the assessment recorded on Risk Assessment Form 2.

This initial assessment must include any perceived risk to others and must be recorded on Form 2 (using additional forms as required), e.g. when officers are deployed to liaise with a suspect’s family after charge and there is local ill feeling towards the family?

Further Form 2 Risk Assessments should be completed after the initial visit to the address and although the assessment must be made by the SIO/Deputy SIO or trained assessor, it is accepted that in many instances the details of identification and the risk on the form will be completed by the ‘Family’ Liaison Officers themselves.

Once completed, the Risk Assessments are stored in the appropriate Form 1 and logged on the rear page of that folder.

**ADDITIONAL RISK ASSESSMENTS**

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

**PEOPLE**

When the persons known to be present during a personal visit to the address differ from those shown on the Form 1 or when the media/press are present or when the personal circumstances of the persons assessed have changed (e.g. ‘family’ group meetings, 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**

When the officers have been detailed additional tasks, which differ significantly from the previous liaison activities (e.g. Participation in a search of premises or seizure of property).

**LOCATION**

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

**ENVIRONMENT**

In circumstances where the environment in which the Officers are working changes (e.g. neglect of the home or risk to the officers health due to presence of contagious or infectious disease).

N.B. This Form 2 can be used in conjunction with any existing research profile used by some police forces to analyse potential risk.
**Details (continuation form)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Address for potential visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State if Victim or Suspect's family:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Members with whom requirement for Liaison has been identified</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Telephone or Mobile No’s if available</th>
<th>Date details established</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Member</th>
<th>FLO Deployed for Initial Visit</th>
<th>Station / Contact Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database Searches Conducted (insert date)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complete further Details continuation forms, if required

Restricted
## Form 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Risk / Hazard / No Apparent Risk</th>
<th>To Whom: Officer / Family / Other</th>
<th>Name of Liaison Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>Action/Activity</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle appropriate one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Why

### Control Measures

- ◊ Remove
- ◊ Avoid
- ◊ Reduce
- ◊ Accept

Circle as appropriate

### Reasons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name &amp; Signature of Assessor</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>SIO</th>
<th>Name &amp; Signature for Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please print Name & No

**Other Agencies notified:**
APPENDIX B

Family Liaison in Cases of British Subjects Murdered or Missing in Suspicious Circumstances Abroad

Introduction

The guidance set out in this appendix is not intended to undermine any existing international agreements or local responsibilities.

The family of a British national murdered or missing in suspicious circumstances abroad is entitled to the same level of professional family liaison service as if their relative had been murdered or gone missing in the UK. Providing a high quality family liaison service may be made more challenging by issues such as language, culture, distance and differing judicial systems.

It is very important that all dealings with the foreign police force dealing with the incident are conducted in a sensitive and diplomatic manner. Every care must be taken to ensure that their professionalism is not questioned nor an impression of arrogance given on the part of the UK force involved. It needs to be emphasised that the role of the FLO in these cases is to assist the foreign police force by facilitating their relationship with the family and assisting with enquiries and evidence gathering in the UK.

This guidance sets out the roles of the various UK agencies involved, the specific roles of the FLO and FLO Co-ordinator and the procedure to ensure that the best service to the family and foreign police force is provided.

Criteria for Deployment of FLO

The following criteria apply when considering the deployment of an FLO in an incident involving a British national abroad:

1. All homicides.
2. All deaths which are being investigated by the foreign police force as a suspected homicide.
3. Missing Persons where there is a sufficient level of justifiable concern. Not all persons missing abroad would merit the appointment of an FLO. There needs to be some credible suspicion that the person has been subject to crime i.e. murder or kidnap, or that they fit the ‘vulnerable’ criteria as defined in the H/O Circular (12/94) regarding missing persons (see below). The key question may be - would the circumstances merit the appointment of an SIO if the person had gone missing in the UK?
4. 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 is the definition of a ‘Critical Incident’ and is suggested as working
criteria to allow consideration of an incident not covered by 1 - 3 above. Assessment against these criteria will often be challenging and to a large extent, subjective. The impact of an incident abroad on a United Kingdom community will be an issue demanding very careful judgement.

Vulnerable Missing Persons - HO Circular 12/94

- All persons under the age of 18 years
- Persons 18 years and over, who have epilepsy, diabetes or amnesia, or have suicidal tendencies, or some other special feature which makes it desirable to have them on record without delay
- Persons aged 65 years or older
- Informal mental patients reported by next of kin, relatives or neighbours
- Persons whose disappearance gives rise for suspecting some harm may befall them
- Persons normally resident in the UK who are believed to have travelled abroad and are believed to be vulnerable
- Persons normally resident abroad, who are reported to have disappeared within the UK.

Role of Agencies

FOREIGN & COMMONWEALTH OFFICE (FCO)

The FCO has a specific remit for cases involving British nationals abroad, which is exercised through staff on the UK and abroad.

FCO Protection Officers, Consular Division, London

1. Arrange for next of kin to be informed in case of death. This is done via the local police force.
2. Contact relatives and friends to let them know what happened and to pass on information contained in Death Overseas and Victims of Crime Abroad leaflets, both of which give details of support organisations.
3. Provide information on how to have a body repatriated to the UK and give details of international and local undertakers.
4. Liaise with the Consulate abroad.
5. Keep in touch with the family.
Consular Officers in posts overseas

1. Provide details of lawyers, undertakers, doctors and interpreters.
2. Contact local authorities on behalf of the deceased’s relatives, e.g. request accident or police reports.
3. Provide information on local practice and customs.
4. Help the next of kin make arrangements with burial or repatriation arrangements.
5. Provide British death certificate if required.

**ICPO (INTERPOL)**

The primary function of the International Criminal Police Organisation (ICPO) is to support all organisations, authorities and services whose mission is the prevention and detection of international crime. The UK National Central Bureau (NCB) is part of NCIS and has the legal authority to provide UK agencies with evidential material from around the world, in addition to facilitating requests for evidence to be obtained in the UK. It also has an obligation to satisfy international requests for the exchange of information. The NCB is available for advice and support 24 hours a day.

In the context of the murder of a British national abroad, or where they are missing in suspicious circumstances, the NCB may be asked by the foreign police force to arrange delivery of the initial notification to the family in the UK, or to deal with requests for further information and evidence.

**UK FORCE DEPLOYING FLO**

The role of the FLO in cases involving the murder of a British national abroad, or where they are missing in suspicious circumstances, is the same as if the incident occurred in the UK. There are extra dimensions to the role which are detailed later.

The decision as to whether to deploy an FLO will always fall to the force where the next of kin reside, or forces in the case of a split family. Forces who decide not to accede to a request from the FCO to deploy an FLO should keep appropriate records of their decision making, in order to justify their decision at a later date should this prove necessary.

**Notification**

The request to notify the next of kin will either come from the FCO or the NCB (Interpol), if they have been asked to arrange notification direct by the foreign police force. In these cases, the point of contact should be the FLO Co-ordinator for the force, or the on-call Senior Investigating Officer.

Notifying the next of kin must not be delayed while deployment of a FLO is considered.
The initial telephone briefing of the circumstances and information will be followed, as soon possible, by written confirmation, either by fax or e-mail.

**Gathering Evidence/Intelligence**

There is no difficulty in evidence obtained by an FLO being forwarded to the foreign police force involved. If the foreign police force wishes to send their investigators to the UK they will need to facilitate this through NCB (Interpol) or the UK Central Agency.

Any force hosting a foreign police force investigator in the UK should ensure the correct procedure has been followed.

The gathering and forwarding of intelligence, as distinct from evidence, is subject of specific rules. Forwarding intelligence requires the authority of an Inspector or Superintendent, depending on the country involved. The forwarding of the intelligence may have serious Human Rights implications for the subject and forces should explore these implications before authorising its release.

**Family Liaison Officer’s Responsibilities**

These are as detailed in this manual, but with the following additional responsibilities:

1. Establishing a sound and open working relationship with the FCO Protection Officers and, if appropriate, the British Consulate in the foreign country. This may assist in communicating with the foreign SIO and understanding their judicial system.

2. Establishing a working relationship with the foreign SIO. It is important that any communication between the investigating team and the family be done through the FLO. This will minimise the possibility of misunderstandings arising.

3. If appropriate, establishing a working relationship with the London Embassy of the country involved.

4. Collecting evidence and exhibits on behalf of the foreign police force or law enforcement agencies, where necessary liasing with the NCB (Interpol) and/or the UK Central Authority.

5. Formulating a media strategy with the family. These cases are likely to attract considerable media interest and FLO should seek advice from their Co-ordinator and their media department.

6. Establishing which Coroner will be responsible for holding an inquest when and if the body is returned to the UK. This will usually be the Coroner responsible for the area to which the body is returned. Once this is established the following will need to be discussed with the Coroner or Coroner’s Officer.
   a) Whether a post-mortem will be held in the UK
   b) Continuity of the body’s return the UK
c) Arrangements for the return of the body to the UK. The FCO can advise on international undertakers.

7. In consultation with the foreign SIO and British Consul consider, and if necessary facilitate, family members’ visits to the scene or court appearances.

8. Completing comprehensive family liaison logs.

**Family Liaison Co-ordinator’s Responsibilities**

These are as detailed in this manual, but also include the following:

1. Ensuring the FLO is afforded the necessary time and resources to fulfil his/her role in a professional way.

2. Supporting fully the FLO in meeting his/her responsibilities as set out above.

3. Quality assuring any statements and exhibits taken on behalf of the foreign police force.

4. Maintaining comprehensive records of all communications and policy decisions.

5. In cases where FLO’s are deployed in more than one force area, ensuring that effective liaison is established and maintained between the FLO’s and Co-ordinators involved.
Support Agencies

BrakeCare

BrakeCare is a division Brake, a national, not-for-profit organisation working to stop deaths and injuries on roads. BrakeCare produces an information pack, *Advice for Bereaved Families and Friends Following a Death on the Road*, which is given to families when they are informed of the death of a loved one by police officers. 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 to people affected by a road death over the telephone and can refer people to professional therapists if needed.

BrakeCare can be contacted on 01484 559909

SAMM

The FLO should be able to advise the 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, explaining the court system, employment problems or, in general, 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 pack.

Victim Support

Victim Support is an independent charity, set up to provide emotional support and practical help to people affected by crime. A Victim Support leaflet is included in the Home Office Homicide pack. The service is managed by Victim Support Co-ordinators, with most of the face-to-face contact with victims of crime being carried out by volunteers. All volunteers receive basic training according to a Code of Practice. Volunteers undertaking the support of those bereaved by homicide have gone through an additional selection procedure and received additional training for this purpose. They are experienced in working with people who have suffered traumatic bereavement.

FLOs must familiarise themselves with the role of Victim Support in their region together with current referral guidelines. 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 the referral may frustrate the progress of the enquiry. However, in all cases the needs of the family must be recognised and considered in line with the necessity to support investigative functions.
The agreement of the family for the involvement of Victim Support is essential prior to a referral being made.

It is the responsibility of the FLO to inform the family of the existence of Victim Support at the earliest appropriate moment and inform the SIO/SIM of their wishes. The co-ordinator of the Victim Support Scheme concerned should be informed as soon as practicable. The SIO/SIM and FLO need to establish with the Victim Support Co-ordinator 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).

An early introduction 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. Early introduction also makes it easier to achieve a good transfer to the services offered by Victim Support when the FLO withdraws from the family. Victim Support Co-ordinators are well informed about other local agencies available to help victims of crime.

The trained volunteer nominated by the Victim Support Co-ordinator should meet with the SIO/SIM and the FLO and will be briefed about the case.

Victim Supportline (0845 3030900) provides a central contact point at local call rates. This can be used by:

- Family members who want immediate telephone support.
- Family members who wish to be referred to their local schemes or Witness Service.
- 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 Co-ordinator should be informed. However, the FLO should be sensitive to the possibility that referral may be offered again as the investigation progresses and the needs of the family change.

It is good practice, where possible, for the initial introduction to or 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 or embarrassment.

**Witness Support**

The Witness Service, run by Victim Support and available in all crown and magistrates courts, should be used by the FLO and may assist in alleviating some of the fears associated with witnesses giving oral evidence. In many cases this is the witnesses first experience of a courtroom and many do not understand the legal procedure and protocols. Guidance
through this procedure and an explanation of the rules of giving evidence is considered to be good practice. The Witness Service is available to defence and prosecution witnesses.

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 a room at the crown court for the family to wait in 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, including escort/transport to and from the court. It should, however, be borne in mind that if 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. 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 Victim Support’s website at www.victimsupport.org.uk or by calling ‘Victim Supportline’ (Victim Support’s national telephone helpline) on 0845 30 30 900. Calls are charged at local rate and it is open 9am - 9pm weekdays and 9am - 7pm weekends. In addition to this, family members can write to:

Victim Support
PO Box 11431
London SW9 6ZH”

Stress during the trial is high and there is a possibility that the family will experience extreme anxiety. The potential conflict between the prosecution and defence during the case and some of the specific evidence that may be given (e.g. by the pathologist, photographs) 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 and the need to negate possible defence allegations of ‘coaching’ should be borne in mind.

**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 pro-active in seeking out and establishing alternative avenues of 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 the family so desire. The FLO should encourage feedback from the family to establish the adequacy of the support provided by other organisations and assist the family in making contacts with alternative avenues of support, if appropriate.
In cases where the victim is from a minority ethnic community or from a diverse lifestyle background, it is particularly important that the FLO makes pro-active use of local community contacts to guide, advise and support family liaison where appropriate. Victim Support may also be able to advise. The FLO Co-ordinator should be consulted regarding the appropriate points of contact concerning the avenues of additional support which are appropriate in particular cases. The SIO/SIM must be consulted before information is shared with the families.
# APPENDIX D

## Useful Telephone Numbers

### Bereavement Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Compassionate Friends (support/friendship for bereaved by the bereaved)</td>
<td>0117 953 9639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruse Bereavement Care (bereavement support and advice)</td>
<td>0870 167 1677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service (support to Jewish and non Jewish community)</td>
<td>0208 349 0839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian and Gay Bereavement Project (advice, support and counselling for the gay community)</td>
<td>0208 455 8894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Bereavement Network (information and support)</td>
<td>0207 700 8134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMM (Support After Murder and Manslaughter)</td>
<td>0207 735 3838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (support and advice)</td>
<td>0207 733 6637</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Bereavement Project (information about services for bereaved children nationwide)</td>
<td>0115 911 8070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Death Helpline (a helpline for those affected by the death of a child)</td>
<td>0800 282986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Victims of Crime. Registered charity supported by the British Police Rugby Section (publish a self-help guide for parents/guardians, consider applications to fund counselling, holidays and equipment). Referrals must be made by a police officer</td>
<td>01785 227325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Compassionate Friends (support/friendship for bereaved parents and their families by those similarly bereaved)</td>
<td>0117 953 9639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families of Murdered Children (self-help support group)</td>
<td>01698 336646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (counselling for bereaved parents and 24 hour staffed helpline)</td>
<td>0207 233 2090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Traumatic Stress Clinic</td>
<td>0207 530 3666</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Road Deaths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BrakeCare (helps emergency and counselling services to support people affected by road death and injury)</td>
<td>0148 455 9909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Against Drinking and Driving (support and assistance for those bereaved through road fatality)</td>
<td>0191 265 7147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Peace (national charity for road crash victims)</td>
<td>0208 964 1021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Other Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aftermath (assistance to families of people suspected of homicide)</td>
<td>0114 275 8520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Injury Compensation Authority</td>
<td>0207 842 6800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Action</td>
<td>0207 254 7111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samaritans (24 hour emotional support for those in crisis)</td>
<td>0845 909090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma Aftercare Trust (Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome referral,</td>
<td>01242 890306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessment and treatment)</td>
<td>01942 893188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim Support</td>
<td>0845 30 30 9000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>