

# Northamptonshire Police



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## Issuing Press Releases

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Department Responsible	Corporate Communications		
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Senior Owner	C0635 Richard Edmondson		
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Type	Policy	Last Reviewed	June 2021

## **1. Introduction**

The Corporate Communications Department offers a specialist resource for professional advice and support on communications and media engagement. The team is able to offer advice, support, background context or key messages to assist officers and staff engaging with the media.

One of the core functions of Corporate Communications is preparing press releases celebrating the work of the Force, successful court outcomes as well as corporate information.

It is essential that due care and attention is paid to the information shared publically by Corporate Communications, to ensure it is fair, accurate, and contemporaneous and there is a genuine policing purpose for its release.

Press releases are published on the Northamptonshire Police website and directly to the public on our social media platforms

Northamptonshire Police adheres to the College of Policing [Media Relations APP](#) when issuing press releases, as well as relevant media law, including the Contempt of Court Act 1981, the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and the Defamation Act 2013.

## **2. Legislative Compliance**

This document has been drafted to comply with the principals of the Human Rights Act. Proportionality has been identified as the key to Human Rights compliance, this means striking a fair balance between the rights of the individuals and those of the rest of the community. There must be a reasonable relationship between the aim to be achieved and the means used.

Equality and Diversity issues have also been considered to ensure compliance with current Equality Legislation and policies.

In addition, Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Health Safety issues have been considered. Adherence to this policy or procedure will therefore ensure compliance with all legislation and internal policies.

## **3. Policy Statement**

### **Naming individuals**

In line with the CoP Media Relations APP, Northamptonshire Police does not name individuals who have been arrested in connection with an offence, save in exceptional circumstances where there is a legitimate policing purpose to do so.

Individuals will be named once they are charged with an offence. The information to be released at the point of charge will include:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Address
- Details of charges
- Date and location of court appearance

Identities of people dealt with by cautions, speeding fines and other fixed penalties/out-of-court disposals will not be released or confirmed.

### **Preparing a press release**

Corporate Communications will follow the below processes when researching and writing a press release:

- Work with the OIC to:
  - Establish the facts of the case, including:
    - Details of the person convicted - name, age, address
    - Offences convicted of
    - Sentence handed down
    - Circumstances presented in court
  - Are there any vulnerabilities?
    - Including victim, offender and witnesses
    - Is the victim in support of the press release? The OIC is required to check with the victims in sexual assault/domestic cases
    - Check that relevant support is in place
    - Are there any reason as to why the offender's address shouldn't be published? Home address of victim etc
- Ensure release adheres to both the College of Policing Media Relations App and relevant media law
- OICs must check PNC to ensure the person convicted isn't due to stand trial in another force area – publication of our press release will be delayed until all active court proceedings are concluded
- OICs must check PNC and Niche to establish if the offender is a victim in another case and ensure links are made with officers in the other case ahead of publication to ensure any welfare needs are considered
- Make contact with the Professional Standards Department in cases where they are conducting an investigation
- Share press release with OIC once complete for sign off/feedback
- Colleague proof reads press release ahead of publication

## Issuing pictures

Corporate Communications will release custody pictures and images from crime scenes alongside media releases, when appropriate to do so.

Custody images will be issued in those cases where an offender has been sentenced to 12 months in prison, and in cases of sexual assault and domestic abuse, with the permission of the victim or their guardian.

Pictures and video footage used as evidence in a trial can be released publically in line with a joint [protocol](#) between the NPCC and CPS.

However, consultation between the police and CPS as well as victims, witnesses or victims' relatives may be required if the footage is of a sensitive nature. A decision can be taken not to release material if it's not appropriate to be placed in the public domain.

Corporate Communications will release custody images of offenders, upon request from the media, when provided with the below information:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Address
- Offence convicted of
- When the individual has been sentenced to more than 12 months in custody
- With permission of the victims of sexual assaults and domestic abuse (via the OIC)

We will only publish/release these pictures when it's contemporaneous to the conclusion of court proceedings.

When pictures are issued to the media, Corporate Communications will use the copyright disclaimer below:

*This document/photograph is being released to you for the purposes of reporting this particular case/incident and you should then destroy it.*

*Its use thereafter is not sanctioned by Northamptonshire Police without direct authority of the Chief Constable, who retains copyright.*

*You are reminded of your obligations under the Contempt of Court Act 1981 should this document/photograph be used again in any unrelated proceedings.*

*Acceptance of this document/photograph confirms that Northamptonshire Police will be indemnified in the event of any proceedings arising from unauthorised use by yourselves.*

Body worn video footage can be released following the conclusion of court proceedings, in line with guidance above and the Force's **Releasing Body Worn Video Policy** (available in the Policy Library).

Press releases about court cases will be automatically deleted from the Force's website after 12 months.

#### 4. Monitoring and review

The senior owner will review the content of this guidance annually to ensure that this is relevant and up to date. The author has agreed that this document will be reviewed within 12 months of the effective date.

#### 5. Appendices

[College of Policing Media Relations APP](#)  
[Publicity and the Criminal Justice System](#)

#### 6.

##### Document Control History

DATE	VERSION	INDIVIDUAL	CHANGES MADE
11/6/21	1	██████████	New Policy