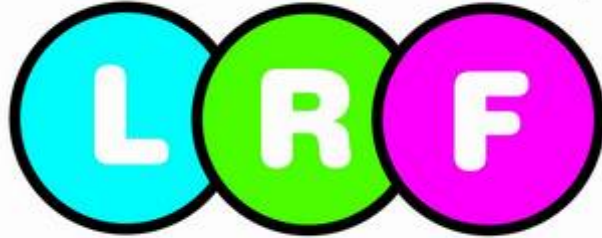


Devon • Cornwall • Isles of Scilly



Local Resilience Forum

LRF MEDIA PLAN



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Title of document LRF Media Plan

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Review Date:

Revision History

Revision Date	Version No	Summary of change	Changes made by	Authorised by	Date

Distribution

Name	Department	Organisation

This Plan is owned by the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LRF, maintained, and updated by the LRF Warning & Informing Subgroup. All users are asked to advise the Secretariat of any changes in circumstances that may materially affect the plan in any way.

Details of changes should be sent to:

Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum Secretariat

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DEVON AND CORNWALL LOCAL RESILIENCE FORUM MAJOR INCIDENT MEDIA FRAMEWORK

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the framework is to:
- Provide a framework to allow partner agencies to work together in the event of a major incident or emergency.
 - Ensure that messages are consistent across the agencies
 - Ensure that communication channels are established quickly so that all agencies know what each other are saying
 - Ensure that contact details are established between agencies and the media to allow information to be disseminated quickly

2. Background

2.1 *This media framework compliments the Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly LRF Combined Agency Emergency Response Protocol published in 2008.*

2.2 The CAERP (section 2.1) gives the following definition of a *Major Incident*:

2.3 Any emergency that requires the implementation of special arrangements by one or more of the Emergency Services, The NHS or the Local Authority for:

- The rescue and transport of a large number of casualties
- The involvement either directly or indirectly of large numbers of people
- The handling of a large number of enquiries likely to be generated both from the public and the news media usually to the Police
- The large scale deployment of the combined resources of the Emergency Services
- The mobilisation and organisation of the Emergency Services and supporting organisations, e.g. Local Authority, to cater for the threat of death, serious injury or homelessness to a large number of people

2.4 The CAERP also states (section 6.17):

2.5 *Media*

A Major Incident or Disaster will attract the attention of the press, radio and television media. The response is likely to be immediate from local reporters and, dependent on the scale and nature of the incident may result in national and international attention. The search for information and briefings will be instantaneous. Failure to consider the media response at an early stage may have serious implications for the management of the whole incident.

- 2.6 During this initial period when the build-up of responding agencies is taking place, it is imperative that an element of control is exercised, as a means of assisting the media. The Media Briefing Point will be adequate in the short term but must be replaced, particularly for a protracted Major Incident, by a more suitable facility, which will be known as the Media Centre. The decision to establish a Media Centre should be a joint one involving the Emergency Services Incident Officers and Local Authority Media Liaison Officers to include the Police Media Spokesperson.
- 2.7 *Informing and Advising the Public (Immediate and long term post event)*
- 2.8 Information given to the media should be based on the following elements:
- Providing relevant and timely information about the nature of the unfolding event for those likely to be caught up in an evacuation
 - Immediate actions being taken by responders to minimise the risk to human or animal health and welfare, the environment or property
 - Actions the public themselves can take to minimise the impact of the emergency and prepare for any evacuation or shelter.
 - How further information can be obtained, and
 - End of emergency and return to normal arrangements

3. Protocol for agencies liaising with the media

- 3.1 When a Major Incident has been declared, Gold Command will be established and will decide the media and communication strategy for the incident or emergency. The group of senior officers will consider whether to establish a Forward Media Briefing Point and, usually at a later time, a Media Centre.
- 3.2 In the majority of incidents the police will take initial command. However, in certain circumstances it may be more appropriate for another Category 1 or 2 responder service to lead, e.g. fire service in a major fire, HM Coastguard in a maritime rescue incident or the county council or other agency in the case of a pollution incident.
- 3.3 The Head of Communications for the police will usually be located in Gold, usually called the Gold Media (Police/Health etc) Advisor, and will liaise with Media Liaison Officers at other locations.

4. Forward Media Briefing Point

- 4.1 Located at or adjacent to the scene designated for exclusive use by accredited media representatives and through which official press releases will be issued. The purpose of the Media Briefing Point is to provide a facility for media to receive bulletins and hold interviews as soon as possible and in as close proximity to the main area of operations as is safe.

- 4.2 Gold Command will decide on the lead agency responsible for dealing with the media and providing a spokesperson. In most cases this will be the police. Further information about the agreed lead responder for specific types of incidents and emergencies is contained in the LRF Lead Co-ordinators Matrix.
- 4.3 The Lead Media Liaison Officer (MLO) will be supported by designated Media Liaison Officers from other relevant agencies involved. As a group, they will be responsible for the initial release of information from the scene of the incident reflecting co-ordinating group policy.
- 4.4 The police will control access to the major incident site. Media relations during the response phase of the incident will be led by the police or other lead agency working in consultation with other relevant agencies to provide timely, regular, consistent and confirmed information to journalists. The primary communications aim will be to deal in facts and to avoid speculation.
- 4.5 The proactive contacting of media who are not aware of the incident will be considered to ensure that the correct information is being given to the public. The media and communication strategy will be explained to the media at an early stage, including when and where they will be given further information.

5. Holding statement

- 5.1 In most cases, it will be appropriate to issue a holding statement giving basic factual information to the media as soon as possible. This will have been agreed by Gold Command and will not be added to by MLOs although they may read the statement out for the broadcast media. When composing the holding statement, consideration should be given to the affect the information may have on the public and emphasis given on not creating unnecessary alarm.
- 5.2 Until the Gold Commander has had time to assess the incident, initially statements to the media from all agencies should be confined to the confirmed statement of facts as far as they are known at the time. It will be the responsibility of the Gold Commander in consultation with Communications Gold representatives to ensure that the correct information is passed to the media relations cell for dissemination, and that any statements drafted by the media cell are authorised for release as a matter of urgency.

6. Spokesperson

- 6.1 A designated spokesperson from the lead agency responsible for dealing with the media will be appointed by Gold Command who shall attend the Media Briefing Point in the early stages of the incident. The spokesperson will be a senior appointee chosen by the overall incident

commander to be responsible for the release of information on behalf of the police. The spokesperson will provide information that has been cleared by Gold Command to the media when appropriate, supported by the MLOs.

6.2 Consideration will be given to compiling pre-prepared statements for specific incidents and emergencies to enable a timely response to the media within the first hour of a major incident being declared.

6.3 *Media access (taken from CAERP document, section 6.17)*

The following criteria should be considered when deciding on media access:

- The operational efficiency of all services must not be impeded
- Preservation of the scene must not be compromised
- The need for privacy of casualties, family and friends must be respected
- Access to certain areas may need to be controlled and supervised
- The area must be safe for the media personnel
- Where possible, a staging area from which the media can obtain pictures overlooking the site should be identified.

7. Media Briefing Centre

7.1 The Media Briefing Centre (MBC) is a central contact point for media enquiries, providing communications and conference facilities and staffed by MLOs from all relevant organisations. In most cases the briefing centre will be established adjacent to the location of Gold Command. The host agency for Gold will also be responsible for setting up the MBC. In the case of a large disaster, or a protracted incident where resilience is an issue, consideration should be given to obtaining reinforcement from mutual aid, COI or other agencies. The Media Briefing Centre will then become the main source of information to and contact with the Media and for briefing MLOs from partner agencies.

7.2 Existing methods of passing information to the media can be utilised by the MBC. They may include voicebank facilities, websites of the agencies involved and email. Access to a sufficient number of telephone lines for the MLOs working from the MBC would be considered a minimum requirement. All news releases should be numbered and timed to avoid any confusion as to what information has been released and when.

7.3 The MBC will coordinate:

- Facilities at the media briefing point (primarily information)
- Setting up and co-ordinating facilities and an observation point close to the situation if appropriate
- Management of a media facility
- Appropriate media monitoring

- Arranging press conferences
- Liaison between media reps from other agencies

8. Guidance from the Cabinet Office's Expectation and Indicators of Good Practice Set

- 8.1 The essential elements of media planning are:
- Liaising with other Category 1 and 2 responders and organisations not captured by the Act and media/public liaison teams
 - Identifying potential sites for media centres in the area
 - Providing media training for potential spokespeople
 - Providing suitable communications equipment for press office staff to work away from the office
 - Making arrangements for mutual aid
 - Providing for liaison with the appropriate COI regional office (WAG Press Office in Wales); and
 - In the event of an emergency, establishing a media liaison point at or near the scene and a media Liaison centre close to the strategic coordinating group / overall commander and liaising with other responder bodies and GNN regarding VIP and ministerial visits to the scene of an emergency.

9. Media Liaison Officers working at the MBC

- 9.1 Media Liaison Officers of other organisations deployed to the media facility should, on arrival establish contact with the lead media officer for the incident.
- 9.2 In order to minimise the risk of issuing conflicting or misleading information to the media, and bearing in mind the necessity for the swift release of accurate information and the fact that press officers will be co-located, all agencies should:
- Inform and consult the media cell lead before giving verbal statements to the media
 - Restrict their comments to matters concerning the response of the agency that they represent
 - Contact anyone within their own organisations who may themselves be contacted by the media, or who may wish to make statements, and brief them on the requirement for co-ordination with the media cell lead before doing so

10. Media Briefings/Press Conferences

- 10.1 The aim will be always to hold media briefings/press conferences as early as possible after an incident occurs and thereafter on a regular basis as required. It is desirable where possible to use the same media spokespeople for media briefings/press conferences, although the line up of participating agencies may change. Formal press conferences can be held at the media facility but they can also be held

at neutral locations in the event of a multi location incident or where this would cause issues around incident command and control and can involve representatives from other agencies to present a multi agency approach to dealing with the incident in order to inform the public and maintain public confidence in the multi agency response.

- 10.2 It is likely that the 'talking head' for the police will be a uniformed officer of the rank of Superintendent or above who is not actively commanding the incident at either Gold or Silver. Other lead agencies need to consider which senior staff they might identify to represent their organisation at a press conference who would not be acting as Gold or Silver command during incidents.

11. Background Briefings

- 11.1 In order to ensure clear and accurate reporting, it is essential that the media have a clear understanding of the background to the incident. To this end early consideration should be given to the benefits of providing background information (for example around health issues) to the media at an early stage in any emergency.

- 11.2 Consideration should also be given to including multi-agency experts in press conference panels so that their expertise can provide reassurance to the public.

12. Stand down

- 12.1 Gold Command will decide when arrangements for the co-ordination for responding to the media (including the issue of media statements) are no longer required. As the emphasis in a developing situation shifts to the recovery phase, the overall lead will pass from the emergency services to the relevant local authority.