

Leicestershire Police's Media Service-Level Statement

This document is a service-level statement (SLS) that sets out the service Leicestershire Police will provide to the media.

The media team are changing the way that they work in order to deliver more proactive work for the force and in order to do that we need to refine our processes and the enquiries that we deal with.

Part 1 explains how we provide this service, the manner in which we work and the ways journalists can gather information under our SLS.

Part 2 provides a quick reference about different types of enquiries under our SLS.

This document has been approved by the Chief Constable Simon Cole.

The provisional three month period for implementation will begin on 6th September 2021. An evaluation will take place and feedback will be considered.

This document will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Media Services Manager Helen Kennedy.

Part 1

This section explains how and when to submit media enquiries, how we work and the service we offer the media.

What is a media enquiry?

An enquiry from a trained, professional journalist who is working on behalf of a recognised media outlet. As a recognised media outlet, the organisation you work for will be regulated by a recognised code of ethics for print, online or broadcast media.

How do I submit a media enquiry?

Before submitting an enquiry, you should check Leicestershire Police's news channels by visiting the news section of our website www.leics.police.uk or our social media channels.

Please note that if the information you are enquiring about is already on our website, you will not receive a response, so it's worth checking this beforehand.

The following are our force-sponsored social media channels:

- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/leicspolice/
- **Twitter:** [@leicspolice](https://twitter.com/leicspolice)
- **Instagram:** [Leicestershire_police](https://www.instagram.com/Leicestershire_police)

In addition to these a number of our officers also choose to keep the public updated on topics that are of interest to the public or that reflect their life as an officer.

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Officers use social media to engage with the public positively. We will not respond to requests for information on routine incidents, we will only look into critical incidents.

Our main channels are regularly updated with items of media interest, so if we have anything to say about a police incident or a criminal case, it is likely to be on there already. If not, you can email the police newsdesk on Corporate.communications@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk

Will you respond to all media enquiries?

This SLS sets out what sort of enquiries we are able to respond to, what information your enquiry should contain and what our response is likely to consist of.

Please note that we receive hundreds of media enquiries per month, from local, regional and national media, and are not in a position to respond to enquiries which do not meet the terms of this SLS.

What will happen to my media enquiry?

Your media enquiry will be dealt with by the police newsdesk. This service is provided by the Corporate Communications Team, as one of a number of functions Corporate Communications manages. The newsdesk is open between the hours of 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

Where a response is required, we aim to provide a response within one working day, subject to officer availability/shift patterns. We will take genuine deadlines into consideration.

How do I submit a media enquiry outside these hours?

Outside these hours, if your media enquiry is urgent, you can contact the on call media relations officer. This can be done by accessing the following link:

www.leics.police.uk/oncall

The media officer will only deal with critical incidents. Following the initial enquiry they will publish information on the police website and/or social media channels. Journalists are advised to check these channels.

***The media officers are on call for the force and critical incidents only.**

Alternatively, you can email your enquiry to corporate.communications@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk and it will be picked up during the next working day. Please note that the newsdesk inbox is not monitored out of hours and that you should not expect a response by email outside office hours.

What information should I include in my enquiry?

The police systems Corporate Communications use to search for information are not predominantly set up for media enquiries. Incidents are listed by time and street. If

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you need to enquire about an incident that is not on our website, we will need to know:

- The town, city or village it happened in/near
- The road or street it occurred on
- An approximate time, to within one hour
- A rough description of the type of incident
- Where you obtained the information if this is possible to share. Providing an incident number is preferable – these are supplied to victims of crime and everyone who reports incidents. **Providing as much information as possible helps find an answer to your query quickly and efficiently.**

Please note that we cannot provide or search for information about police helicopter deployments without the information above, as the air support service uses different systems which we are not able to search.

I want more information. Will you provide it?

The media should work on the assumption that information published by Leicestershire Police newsdesk reflects all the information available to the media. If we haven't published it, we are not in a position to share that information. This includes photographs. We will therefore not respond to these enquiries.

We will not provide information in relation to routine social media posts by officers. Media officers will only give more details if the posts relate to a critical incident.

Queries

If you wish to report police involvement in public meetings, please be aware that newsdesk cannot clarify or expand on comments – reporting should be taken from the meeting itself or the supporting documentation.

How do I get updates about an incident or case?

Updates are provided proactively and regularly on our website and/or on our social media channels when there is a policing purpose in doing so. Please make sure you check our channels in the first instance.

During live incidents, our focus will be on providing regular updates on these channels. Responding to individual media enquiries slows this process down and diverts our resources. So please monitor our website and social media channels rather than approaching the newsdesk, particularly for updates – we are unlikely to be able to respond to individual enquiries during a live incident.

For incidents that have moved to an investigative stage, we will also endeavour to keep the media updated by using our website and other channels. This includes arrests, criminal charges, court appearances and other key developments. Please check our website regularly, as this is our primary channel for these updates.

If a reasonable amount of time has passed since the last update, newsdesk may be able to source an update for the media, which we may also publish on our website.

Updates about court appearances should be directed to the courts.

For updates about specific kinds of incidents, such as those involving fatalities, please see [part 2](#) of this document.

What systems do you have in place to ensure important information is shared with the media and public?

We have numerous systems in place that enable us to share information that supports a policing purpose. This information is regularly added to our website and social media channels. Much of this information is expanded on in [Part 2](#) of this document.

It includes:

- Regularly-updated information about significant police incidents, operations and investigations in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
- A 'local appeals' process where details of lower-level incidents and appeals are shared
- Justice outcomes, including court results
- Wanted and missing people appeals
- Information about serious/fatal collisions and major disruption to our road network
- Special policing activities and campaigns covering Leicestershire Police's various policing priority areas
- Corporate performance and governance systems, many of which are explained on our website

What is the SLS based on?

Our media service-level agreement is informed by a number of sources, including:

- College of Policing authorised professional practice (APP) for media relations
- Other codes of practice, including those that protect victims, personal data and operationally-sensitive information
- Leicestershire Police's strategic priorities
- British media law, including the Contempt of Court Act and Defamation Act

It is also based on the force-agreed objectives for how we prioritise our newsdesk service. Our Corporate Communications team is required to cover the spectrum of corporate communications responsibilities and may have to prioritise work in line with their objectives

We have to use our resources in a way that supports a policing purpose or builds public confidence in the police. We recognise the media's role in holding the police to account and that like us, the media works in the interest of the public, and on the basis of public interest.

How will the SLS be implemented?

We will discuss the SLS with news editors in the first instance and then implement a three month trial period. This document will then be reviewed and we shall also carry out some evaluation. The SLS will be published on the web and the link sent to all reporters so that they have an understanding of the service we provide.

After the three month trial, amendments will be made to the SLS and then it will be permanently implemented as a new way of working at Leicestershire Police.

Part 2

This section outlines how our service-level agreement is applied to media enquiries. It is presented in alphabetical order for quick reference.

Abduction/ Kidnapping

In cases of abduction or kidnapping where a life is genuinely thought to be at risk, the media may be asked to impose a news blackout. However this will only be considered as a last resort and where absolutely necessary. The media will be asked not to report the incident if it is likely to make the release of the hostage more difficult. Any request for a news blackout must be endorsed by a senior officer.

Advice given by officers

Officers may sometimes resolve an incident or complaint by giving 'words of advice' to a member of the public instead of taking formal action. In such cases, it may be possible to confirm this outcome depending on how the information is recorded. However, no elaboration can be provided on the details of that advice.

Air support/air ambulance

Please refer to [Police helicopter](#).

Amounts of cash stolen

Specific details of cash or securities stolen in raids on banks, building societies and post offices will not be confirmed. This is for security reasons. Quantities of cash will only be described as small/large, or simply 'a quantity of cash'. Details of lower-level incidents are shared via our local appeals process. Media enquiries about these lower-level incidents will not be responded to, as information is provided proactively where there is a policing purpose.

Arrests and charges

We publish information about arrests and charges on our website and other channels as part of the information we routinely share about an incident or investigation. If an arrest has been made or a person has been charged we will clearly state this in the relevant web copy. Journalists are advised to check these channels regularly.

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Please see Part 1: [How do I get updates about an incident or case?](#) and Part 2: [Naming a suspect/defendant due at court](#) for further information.

Arsons and fires

Media enquiries about fires should initially be directed to the relevant fire service. If the fire service confirms the incident is being investigated as a suspected arson, Leicestershire Police may publish details about the incident.

Details of lower-level incidents are shared via our local appeals process. Media enquiries about these lower-level incidents will not be responded to, as information is provided proactively where there is a policing purpose.

No information will be released about the cause of a fire until this has been established.

Asking for additional information

Please see [Part 1](#) (above)

Businesses

Businesses may be routinely identified as part of police investigations, for example as part of an appeal for witnesses. In some cases operational policing reasons may prevent businesses being identified – for example where it could impact upon an investigation. The need to protect private information may also prevent businesses being identified, e.g. in circumstances where identifying a business might indirectly identify a suspect. Leicestershire Police will publish this information proactively where it supports a policing purpose.

Cautioning

Leicestershire Police does not release the identity of anyone cautioned. If asked about a specific case, the force can confirm the fact that a person was cautioned.

Collisions and major traffic disruption

We are not able to respond to media enquiries about minor collisions. If there is a policing purpose, such as to appeal for witnesses or to notify motorists of major disruption, the police have systems in place to identify this and we will share this information proactively on our channels. Please check these channels, as enquiries about collisions will not be responded to unless they relate to incidents we have publicised.

Information relating to serious and fatal collisions will be published on our website.

Complaints against the police

Information may be provided in response to media enquiries about complaints against the police. However, it may not be appropriate to publicise full details of the incident, as this may unduly affect the outcome of an investigation.

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Condition checks

Leicestershire Police may carry out condition checks where there is a policing purpose. If this information is available, it will be published proactively online, by way of update or addition. The media therefore do not need to ask for this, and are advised instead to monitor our channels.

Leicestershire Police is not able to carry out condition checks at the request of the media. These enquiries need to be directed to the relevant hospital.

Deaths and bereaved families

Our newsdesk will release the identity of people who have died only where there is an operational policing purpose in doing so.

We may identify people who have died in **suspicious circumstances**, providing it supports a policing purpose. This will be done following completion of the proper identification procedures, and consultation with the deceased's next of kin. We will publish this information proactively, using our channels, and the media should monitor these rather than approaching newsdesk.

We do not routinely identify people who have died in **non-suspicious circumstances**. This includes suspected suicides, medical episodes and most collisions.

Identity queries should ordinarily be directed to the coroners' offices

Family tributes or photographs will be provided proactively in line with the wishes of a bereaved family.

Deaths in police custody

Following a death in police custody an initial statement will be prepared by newsdesk and authorised by an officer of ACC rank or higher. It will normally include:

- Confirmation that a death has occurred
- Details of the deceased, subject to next of kin having been informed
- Confirmation of the cause of death, subject to the agreement of the coroner, and
- Confirmation that the matter has been referred to the IOPC

Identifying people and businesses

Please see 'deaths and bereaved families', 'deaths in police custody', 'businesses', 'naming suspects/defendants due in court', 'wanted people' and 'victims and witnesses'

Incidents: Lower-level

Leicestershire Police uses a 'Local Appeals' process to support officers investigating lower-level crimes including theft and burglary, lower-level assaults or disturbances, anti-social behaviour and criminal damage. Despite being on the lower end of the criminal scale, it is important that these offences are thoroughly investigated and information is published if it supports a policing purpose. So during every investigation of this nature, an officer considers whether a local appeal is necessary to support a police investigation, prevent crime or reassure the public. This information is then provided proactively on our website.

Incidents: Higher-level

A higher-level incident may include (but is not limited to) a serious assault or sexual assault, murder or attempted murder, a siege, high-value theft, high-level drugs activity, high-value fraud and other matters that are typically dealt with as indictable offences. Leicestershire Police will usually provide details of incidents proactively on its channels, to support a policing purpose. This will typically include details of when an incident happened, where it happened, the type of incident, arrests and other actions taken, injuries if applicable and appeal information. The media are encouraged to check our channels before making enquiries.

Please see Part 1: [What information should I include in my enquiry?](#) for further information.

See also [Major incidents](#) (below).

Injuries

When releasing details of an incident involving injuries, Leicestershire Police will try to give an indication of the level of injury if this information is available. This will be done proactively so we would encourage the media to use our channels to get this information – if we haven't published this information, the media should work on the premise that it is not available from Leicestershire Police. Specific details about injuries, treatment received or hospitals attended will not be provided by police, and should be directed to the appropriate medical organisation.

Major incidents

'Major incident' is a specific categorisation of incident – not every big police incident is a major incident.

If a major incident is declared, Leicestershire Police will be collaborating with the other emergency services and the agency with primacy will be confirmed. We will work closely with the other agencies to co-ordinate our messages to provide key messages to the public.

If urgent messages need to be delivered to the public we will prioritise the use of social media channels. Please note that during major incidents, our communication channels are used to proactively share available information and this is our priority. The media should refrain from submitting individual enquiries, as we are unlikely to have the capacity to deal with them and all available information will be provided online.

Medical information: Refer to [Condition checks](#); refer to '*Incidents: Higher level*'.

Minor incidents: Refer to [Incidents: Lower-level](#).

Misconduct

The force follows the College of Policing's authorised professional practice which can be found at www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/engagementand-communication/media-relations

Leicestershire Police publishes information about public misconduct or special case hearings and all misconduct hearing outcomes on its website. Details of any upcoming misconduct hearings to be held in public, including details of how to attend, are published on the force's website.

Missing people

We share details with the media in some missing people cases, usually due to concerns about their welfare. Appeals are reserved for the most urgent cases. Due to the sensitivity of these cases, information provided will not be expanded upon. Updates will be provided to the media when there is specific new information that is relevant to the investigation or when the appeal is no longer active – the media should check our website for these updates rather than approaching newsdesk. Newsdesk will only respond to media enquiries about the missing people appeals it has published.

Media officers are linked in closely with the Missing Persons Team and check in regularly for updates.

Naming a suspect/defendant due at court

The force follows the College of Policing's authorised professional practice regarding naming suspects.

As such, Leicestershire Police will neither confirm nor deny names put to them and will not provide guidance.

Suspects may be named proactively by Leicestershire Police if they are wanted by police, and on arrest the name of the suspect will be reiterated to enable the media to identify and close the appeal. For more information about this process, please see 'wanted people'.

The name of a defendant who is due at court may be provided to the media to aid court reporting. This is for guidance only and is not intended for publication, as it could contravene current or future reporting restrictions.

Naming a victim or witness

Refer to [Victims](#)

Photographs – custody

Where available, custody images held by Leicestershire Police will be provided on sentence. It is the media's responsibility to check whether any reporting restrictions apply that prevent the defendant from being identified - These can only be released contemporaneously following a sentencing. Leicestershire Police require a defendant to have received a minimum of two years to release their picture.

In certain cases, we will explain the reason if we do not release, we have a comprehensive process in place to approve the release of photos which takes into account the needs of the victim, the family of the defendant and others who need to be considered. Leicestershire Police therefore may decline to release a custody photograph. This decision will be made by the officer leading the case or the Media Services Manager

To enable us to locate a custody image, please provide:

- Name of the defendant
- Date of birth or age of the defendant
- Address of the defendant
- What they were convicted of, including date of the offence
- What sentence they received
- The court at which they were sentenced

Photographs/video footage – investigations

Photographs or moving images relating to ongoing investigations will be provided proactively on our channels, if the officer leading the case determines this is appropriate, devoid of operational sensitives, does not compromise an investigation or justice outcome and has a policing purpose. A package will be provided proactively if available, so journalists are advised to check our channels. Media can approach to ask but we will make an appropriate assessment of videos

Photographs/video footage – evidence shown in court cases

The CPS has a protocol for releasing evidential images used in court which we also try to honour. If you require CCTV or footage contact the newsdesk and your request will be considered. This will include liaising with the CPS press office and the Investigating Officer before a decision is made. We will try to release footage where possible

Traffic disruption/road closures

Refer to [Collisions and traffic disruption](#)

Police helicopter

Air support for policing operations is provided by National Police Air Service (NPAS). If NPAS has directed you to Leicestershire Police regarding a media enquiry, we will require the following information to find details of an incident:

- The town, city or village it happened in/near
- The road or street it occurred on
- An approximate time, to within one hour
- A rough description of the type of incident

Assuming your enquiry falls within the terms of our SLS, we will provide the details available via our channels. Please note that we cannot begin to search for information about an incident without all the information above.

Social media posts by officers

If you would like more information about **something an officer or policing team has published on local force/team social media accounts**, please note the newsdesk will not be able to provide additional information and will not be in a position to respond to these enquiries.

Suicide

Refer to [Deaths and bereaved families](#)

Statistics/FOIs

Newsdesk does not hold the force's statistical information but may be able to assist in obtaining some forms of statistical data. However, this may take several days and is done as a courtesy to the media.

If information is not available in this way, journalists may wish to submit a Freedom of Information request. Visit www.leics.police.uk/foi-ai/af/accessing-information/ for more information. All FOI requests are also published here.

Tributes and photographs of deceased

Refer to [Deaths and bereaved families](#)

Updates

See [part 1](#) of this document

Victims and witnesses

Leicestershire Police follows codes of practice to protect victims, witnesses and their families. Surviving victims of, or witnesses to a crime will not be identified under any circumstances, even if this information was provided in court.

Wanted people

We use an appeal process to trace people who are wanted on bail or warrant in connection with a criminal matter. This information is supplied proactively, when there is a clear and legitimate policing purpose. Before we release a wanted person's details we have a comprehensive process in place to ensure that all checks have taken place.

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Updates will be provided to the media when an appeal is no longer active, so that the details and related images can be removed from media channels at the earliest opportunity for legal purposes.

As this communication process is carried out proactively by the police, reporters do not need to do spot-checks for updates but should carefully monitor the police channels.

=ends=

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