

## **Briefing for Police and Crime Commissioner**

Topic: Media and Communications Function of the PCVC Office

**Author:** Lucy Constantine, Senior Media Officer

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### **Purpose of briefing**

To provide a briefing on all areas of media and communications activity within the Office of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner. This includes dealing with the media, the publications, platforms that are utilised and proposals for going forwards.

### **Background**

#### **Current media strategy**

The PCVC has a key role to play with the media, across all their responsibilities.

Local media outlets we work with: Northern Echo, Teesdale Mercury, Durham Advertiser, Newcastle Chronicle and Sunderland Echo, Darlington & Stockton Times, ITV (Tyne Tees), BBC (Tees, Look North), Made in Tyne and Wear TV, TFM radio, Metro radio, Bishop FM.

We try to steer all media enquiries via our media email inbox to manage and control requests for quotes or interviews. However, in the past some outlets have contacted the PCVC directly, we would prefer to direct all media requests through a single channel.

We have arrangements in place with several local publications for 'monthly column space'. This enables us to issue opinion pieces on topics concerning the local residents at regular intervals. This includes the Teesdale Mercury, Durham Advertiser, and the One Darlington magazine, issued by Darlington Borough Council.

We issue our press/media releases to both local and national press contacts, we add them to the PCVC website and feature them as content across the PCVC social media platforms.

Much of the media activity we generate is proactive, planning content and issuing press releases. The PCVC also responds to national police related issues which involve the role of the PCC or their national APCC portfolio, they may be asked for quotes etc.

#### **Media monitoring**

We track all media coverage relating to the PCVC daily. A daily press round up is sent every morning to the whole team highlighting any stories of interest. We also send a weekly press coverage report on a Friday detailing any coverage we have had that week that mentions the PCVC or the OPCVC.

#### **PCVC Magazine**

The previous PCVC had an office magazine with a mailing list. We currently publish a newsletter bi-monthly and distribute this to local communities and partners updating them on our activities over the last few months.

#### **PCVC Social Media**

We use Office branded social media profiles on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Current social media standings (as of 16.03.21) :

- 5635 followers on Facebook - 2<sup>nd</sup> highest of all PCC's
- 7625 followers on Twitter - 6<sup>th</sup> highest of all PCC's
- 574 followers on Instagram - 8<sup>th</sup> highest of all PCC's
- 122 followers on LinkedIn

The accounts are used to inform the public of the work of the office, give out safety information and advice, along with responding to comments in relation to the role of the PCVC.

### PCVC Website

We recently launched a new website which went live on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The new website is more user-friendly and easier to navigate, reflecting the office growth and development in digital communications.

### **Lessons learnt**

Its best to be on the forefront with emerging media stories and release or statement prior to enquires.

Down the line interviews have been successful and could become more common practice due to the transition to Microsoft Teams and ease of use of setting up video interviews that will be pre-recorded.

We have a good relationship with the force media team, and we have strengthened communication through weekly media catch ups.

### **Current issues**

We've noted some room for improvement, we can improve our communications digitally and increase engagement with the public.

Due to the pandemic we have ceased face-to-face interviews with over the phone or teams video interviews becoming the norm. We would like to increase face-to-face activity when we can safely do so through press days, 1-1 TV media interviews, photo opportunities etc.

The addition of more varied video content on our social platforms would be welcome, along with the use of more of the features and tools incorporated into the platforms. These channels can be grown to reach greater audiences, with more varied content with direct quotes from the PCVC.

The media monitoring platform (Vuelio) can be further developed to include the ability to issue press releases from the system and link all media enquiries back to that release.

The quantity and quality of media releases can be improved by always ensuring that a video accompanies them on social media, and that an appropriate sound bite recording is issued.

### **Decisions needed**

The signing of the Oath could be done immediately after appointment at the election count, however, can be undertaken as separate event with the media present.

There are some key decisions which the PCVC will need to take to determine their relationship with the media, they include:

- How much involvement does the new PCVC want in media activity?
- Does the new PCVC wish to continue with the same branding or would they prefer a redesign of the logos/ colour schemes?
- How does the new PCVC wish to sign the Oath of Office? At the election count or as a separate event?
- Would the new PCVC wish to keep the columns in the local press outlets?
- What additions to the social media platforms would the new PCVC like to see?
- Would the new PCVC like to have their own PCVC Magazine?
- What changes would the new PCVC like to see on the website?

### **Partnership involvement**

We work proactively creating press releases around work with various partners, in particular funding the office has provided to charities and local organisations. We do also get approached by local partners to do a joint release on themes which often requires a quote from the PCVC. We continuously look for opportunities to amplify partner content for example re-sharing/commenting on good news stories from partners.

### **Police involvement**

#### *Police Media Team*

The ODPCVC media team has a good working relationship with the force media team. We keep the force team aware of the media activity the PCVC has going on in a weekly meeting. Most police media requests go directly to the force rather than us, which is the right thing to do as they deal with operational policing. We often collaborate and issue joint statements, media releases and joint campaigns. The PCVC is also able to provide quotes for Force statements where appropriate.

In the case of a critical level incident the PCVC may be asked to comment or be involved in the press briefings, in a similar way to the PCC of Wiltshire did when they had the Novichok incidents in 2018.

### **People to meet**

- Head of Media (Durham Constabulary)
- Northern Echo Editor
- Editor of Teesdale Mercury

Meetings with other contacts within the media will be arranged through interviews between media outlets and the office.