



FOR COMMENT			
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Date Created	4 May 2015	Telephone	██████████

Critical incident communications strategy – Operation Birnie

1. Purpose

To outline a communications strategy that supports the objectives of the Gold strategy following the death of Sheku Bayou in Kirkcaldy on Sunday 3 May. This document will be regularly assessed and refreshed to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the Gold strategy.

2. Background

On Sunday 3 May 2015, Sheku Bayou, who resides in Kirkcaldy but originates from Sierra Leone, was pronounced dead following an incident with a number of Fife division police officers which had resulted in injury to a female police officer. The incident was witnessed and reported by a number of members of the public with some accounts of the incident highlighted on social media. It is also understood that the CS spray alternative PAVA was used in the incident following the national roll-out in April. The last known witness to have had contact with the deceased ██████████ ██████████.

My Bayou was a father of two young children and also had a family connection to Adi Johnson, an independent advisor to Police Scotland who works at ██████████. There is no evidence to suggest the incident was related to the current terrorism threat.

While it is understood members of the family are of Muslim faith, further work is required to establish the extent of any links the individual may have had. In line with Police Scotland's values, this strategy must give consideration to the diversity and cultural needs of Mr Bayou's immediate and extended family and the wider community.

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Following Mr Bayou's death, a critical incident was declared by Fife Divisional Commander Chief Superintendent Garry McEwan and a Gold Strategy set and a short media statement issued in agreement with the COPFS and PIRC. The Gold strategy includes the following strategic objectives.

- To ensure Police Scotland provides an effective and professional response to this incident at all stages
- Provide support, reassurance and timely information to the family, other persons involved in the incident and Police Scotland staff
- Provide reassurance to the community and public acknowledging the impact this incident may have had

3. Aim

The aim of this communications strategy is to support the objectives of the Gold strategy in providing public and partner reassurance at a local and national level throughout the life of the investigation and on conclusion.

4. Objectives

- To protect and enhance the reputation of Police Scotland, by providing a timely and effective professional communications response to the teams involved
- To support public confidence by providing reassurance through public statements that support effective community and stakeholder engagement through the appropriate communications channels
- To support the timely provision of any public statements that complement community engagement, particularly with the family
- To provide internal communications for Police Scotland that supports the wellbeing of officers and staff
- To ensure clear engagement with PIRC and COPFS partners for communications responses and to ensure key partners are also updated as required

5. Key audiences and Stakeholders

Key audiences:

Affected family and extended family of the deceased and any representatives
Local communities
Local advisory groups
Local elected members (local authority - including relevant local scrutiny committees, MSPs and MPs)
Local media
Local faith groups
Local community representatives
Staff associations

Stakeholders:

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Scottish Government
Scottish Police Authority
COPFS
PIRC
NISAG
Equality and Diversity Staff Associations
National race and faith campaigners

6. Key messages (TBC)

- Fife Divisional Commander Chief Superintendent Garry McEwan said: “This is a tragic set of circumstances and my condolences go out to the man’s family.”
- The investigation of deaths in Scotland is the responsibility of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, who have instructed the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner to lead on this inquiry
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7. Tactics

Given the ongoing investigation, all media queries regarding detail surrounding the incident will be dealt with by PIRC however there will be public comment on social media channels which has the potential to generate significant interest. It will be important that any substantive incorrect information reported by the media that has the potential to impact on the corporate reputation of Police Scotland should be corrected where possible. Social media channels, local media engagement and face to face communication through existing networks with local community and partner organisations should be used to reinforce messages regarding community engagement and reassurance.

Internal communications at a local level should be face to face, with the opportunity to reinforce offers of wellbeing support, security and safety advice and advice and guidance on public comment on social media channels. The impact of external or public comment will be monitored to ensure that timely internal communications are provided where necessary. Consideration should also be given to internal communication through the national intranet, noting the incident, repeating public statements and reinforcing wellbeing messages.

8. Risks

There are a number of risks identified that will be regularly reviewed to assess their impact on our communications approach.

- The role of the extended family and any subsequent representatives will have a key impact on external comment and as our media comment is currently limited, effective engagement with the family and their interested representatives will be key

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- All communications should, in line with Police Scotland's ethics and values, have cognisance of the diversity and cultural needs of the immediate and extended family and the wider community
- The absence of the public provision of clear and accurate information on the incident will restrict truly effective engagement as information is limited by the PIRC investigation
- Early comment on social media channels has already referred to 'police brutality' and there are many worldwide examples of the impact this has had on community/police relations. There will be a role for PIRC in providing reassurance around the investigation and through continued measured visibility of local engagement and reassurance.
- There may also be impacts on hate crime and regular monitoring of communications channels through [REDACTED] for measuring public sentiment and gathering intelligence on future activity which may impact on community relations will be key
- While there is no evidence to suggest the incident was terrorism related, it may cause concern either amongst other police officers and staff or amongst communities
- A short briefing note will also be prepared on PAVA and its use.
- Effective engagement with partners at a national level will also be key to ensuring confidence in Police Scotland as a trusted public service

9. Conclusion

You are invited to comment on the draft strategy.

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5 May 2015