



Altogether Better Policing

DURHAM CONSTABULARY POLICY

Durham Constabulary Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme	
Name of Policy	Critical Incident Management Policy
Registry Reference No.	DCP 163
Policy Owner	Head of Crime & Justice Command
Date approved at FMG	9 April 2013
Life Span	3 years
Version	v1
Protective Marking	Not protectively marked
Publication Scheme Y/N	Yes
All Durham Constabulary policies are drafted in accordance with Human Rights and Equality Legislation	

Version Control

Version	Date	Reason for Change	Produced / Amended by
1.0	09/04/13	Initial document	Review in 3 years. Agreed by the Critical Incident Command Forum in July 2012.

1.0 **Name of Policy**

Critical Incident Management Policy

2.0 **Purpose and Scope**

Durham Constabulary is committed to providing a fully effective and professional response to all Critical Incidents. In doing so, we will protect and reassure the public and our own Staff and ensure that the legitimate rights of all communities are safeguarded.

Defining a Critical Incident

“Any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community”

Effectiveness – this is a measure of the professionalism, competence and integrity evident in the Police response to an incident.

Significant impact – should be interpreted to each incident but critically relates to the impact on the individual, family and community.

Confidence – should be interpreted as a reference to long term policing of the victims, family and community.

This definition recognises the fundamental significance of community trust and confidence in the Police ability to respond to critical incidents. The definition needs to be sufficiently broad in order to ensure that potential ‘Critical Incidents’ are not overlooked. It is essential that such incidents are identified at an early stage so that an effective police response can be implemented.

Examples of Critical Incidents may include a racist or serial murder, terrorist attack, child abduction, death in custody, a crime against a particular community or a direct threat to life. However, ANY incident such as a missing person enquiry, a minor traffic incident or a stop/search encounter may have the potential to become critical because of the impact it has on the victim’s family or community.

It is important to understand every major crime incident will be a critical incident however not every Critical Incident is necessarily a major crime and staffing levels will always be commensurate with the type of incident. As such Critical Incidents are not solely confined to crime incidents and include civil disaster and other incidents, internal or external, in line with the definition.

Objectives

- a) To ensure that all Officers and Staff understand their role in identifying and dealing with a Critical Incident
- b) To ensure that family and community groups are properly engaged in the response to a Critical Incident
- c) To ensure that Community Impact Assessments are completed in all appropriate cases
- d) To establish best practice in the handling of Critical Incidents
- e) To ensure the welfare of staff engaged in dealing with Critical Incidents
- f) To learn lessons following any service shortfall during a Critical Incident

3.0 Motivation or Driving Forces

The Police Service in the UK has a tradition of policing with the consent of the communities it serves. This tradition recognises that policing is most successful when it is based on the active and voluntary participation of all members of the community. Such participation means that communities tend to be more committed to tackling social problems. It also helps to build a safe, just and tolerant society, thereby increasing feelings of security and reducing fear of crime.

The Police Service must build and maintain the trust and confidence of citizens by delivering an effective police response to all incidents if it is to gain the participation of the communities it serves.

Where crimes occur and they are believed to be the result of police failure to act or discrimination against particular communities, the whole basis of policing with the consent of the community is undermined. In addition, where the failings are because of police incompetence or indifference, trust and confidence within the wider community will be lost.

This situation can be illustrated by the Stephen Lawrence case. Investigative errors and the way in which the police responded to the family's concerns about the conduct of the investigation were found to have arisen as a consequence of institutional racism.

To address this, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) developed guidance to assist police officers dealing with similar cases, which they termed Critical Incidents. ***(Managing and Preventing Critical Incidents, Version VII,)*** This guidance defined a critical incident as:

Any incident where the **effectiveness** of the police response is likely to have a **significant impact** on the **confidence** of the victim, their family and/or the community.

ACPO has now adopted this definition of a critical incident. It is easy to remember and, more importantly, should make sense to the first responders whom the Police Service depend on to identify criticality factors.

4.0 The Legal Basis and Legitimate Aims

The legal basis for the exercise of powers and duties outlined in this Policy are;

- Police Acts
- Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Common Law
- Public Order Act 1986

The aims of this policy are to provide clear corporate guidelines to;

- a) Ensure a consistent and correct approach to the identification, management and audit of Critical Incidents
- b) Provide a comprehensive and professional response to such incidents
- c) Prevent incidents becoming critical by taking appropriate intervention measures early
- d) Improve public confidence and satisfaction in the way we deal with such incidents
- e) Ensure our service is provided in a way that is non-discriminatory, proportionate, fair, accountable and auditable

Human Rights Act 1998 & Equality Act 2010

The Human Rights Act 1998 will be considered at all stages of the process, taking into account the need to protect the rights and freedoms of the members of the community at large as well as those involved in incidents which give rise to potential community tension.

In the application of this Policy document, Durham Constabulary will be mindful of the needs and requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and will seek to ensure that there is no disproportionate impact on any group in response to a critical incident.

Where any activity of Durham Constabulary impinges upon a legal right, it will do so only when lawful, justified and proportionate

5.0 Policy Statement

All Police Officers and Police Staff, including our Community Partners must be aware of and are required to comply with, all relevant policy and associated procedures. The Policy applies to internal and external Critical Incidents. The ability to recognise a Critical Incident is a requirement of all Staff within the Organisation, to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place at the earliest opportunity to limit the impact upon the community, individual victims or their family. The Policy will apply in particular to those Staff who in the course of their duties have some involvement in dealing with Critical Incidents. This will include Communications Staff, Operational Staff and Supervisors, Command members and Chief Officers. This list is by no means exhaustive. Externally it provides a

clear message to the diverse communities of Co. Durham and Darlington that we will respond to such incidents with absolute professionalism and integrity.

Critical Incident Management

Good Critical Incident Management can be summed up as getting a 'grip' on;

- The identification of a Critical Incident
- Actively managing the 'Golden Hour'
- Adopting the Critical Incident Management Principles and referral to the appropriate Command Level

The role of the first Line Supervisor in the management of Critical Incidents is crucial. It is therefore essential that Front Line Supervisors are aware of the 'ingredients' that can change an 'ordinary' incident into a Critical Incident.

6.0 Brief Description of the Attached Appendices

All procedures, tactics and guidance relating to this policy are included on the Procedures, Tactics and Guidance document which accompanies this policy and is protectively marked as RESTRICTED.

7.0 Monitoring and Review

The information in this section will determine a date when the policy will be formally reviewed by the Policy owner who should consider:

- Each of the compliance/relevance tests (see appendices)
- Its effectiveness in the business area concerned
- Any changes to legislation or common law
- Challenges to the policy
- Most policies will be current for a three year period

Community Impact Assessments and finalisation reports will be collated for all Critical Incidents. A Critical Incident Panel will then debrief the incidents to develop best practice.

Welfare of Staff engaged with Critical Incidents will be addressed through adherence to debriefing procedures laid down by Durham Constabulary. This will be monitored by statistics obtained from the Force Occupational Health Unit.

N.B. Notification of Critical Incident to Operational Planning, HQ
Critical incidents within Durham Constabulary are usually declared by either Communications, Command SMT, Professional Standards and Legal Services or the Force Executive.

As part of the auditing process for Critical Incidents, it is the responsibility of the declaring officer to inform HQ Operational Planning by e-mail, HQ-OPS-Planning@durham.pnn.police.uk as soon as possible, including DHM reference number, and OIC. It is acknowledged that some critical incidents may be extremely sensitive and details do not need to be widely known; in these cases an Operational name can be used.

Operational Planning will maintain a numerical database of incidents for audit purposes.

8.0 How to Complain

Complaints about the overall policies and procedures of a police force, as well as a number of other issues relating to quality of service or operational decisions should be made to the Chief Constable of Durham Constabulary at the following address:

The Chief Constable

Police Headquarters

Aykley Heads

Durham

DH1 5TT

Tel: 101

Fax: 0191 375 2011

Email: CFR@durham.pnn.police.uk