PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The 'Public Communications Plan' seeks to provide a framework to assist in providing an appropriate welfare response to those affected by an emergency, in a multi-agency setting.

The document provides generic guidance and is not intended to be a set of instructions or bind responders to a course of action.

It recognises the importance of planning, agreeing, applying and exercising a coordinated response by the emergency services, health, local authorities, other agencies and industry in keeping the public warned and informed during all phases of a major incident.

1.2 How to Use

This document should be used to provide guidance and templates to support effective communication with the public and other key audiences such as the media. It should be used in conjunction with plans relating to the acute and recovery phase of an incident and any specific plans available.

1.3 Background

The challenges faced by communicators in responding effectively during an emergency have increased.

The 24 hour news cycle, combined with widespread use of social media and almost universal ownership of camera phones and smart phones means information, rumour and speculation can come from multiple sources and gain widespread coverage extremely quickly – increasing the need for official, accurate and consistent information to be provided rapidly.

The multi-agency nature of the response to emergency incidents also creates its own challenges – coordinating the release of information from multiple agencies with potentially different views and priorities is crucial to avoid public confusion.

Experience in Cumbria over recent years has highlighted the following key 'lessons learnt':

- Speed of communication – information is circulated very widely, very quickly via social networking platforms and traditional media. This trend will continue to accelerate; information in the future will spread more widely and quickly.
- Demand for information – there is an expectation for official information to be provided quickly and regularly. There is also an increasing demand from central government for more information, more quickly.
- Importance of regular and consistent messaging

- Mobility of the media – journalists and citizens can move quickly, expect them to do so.
- No two situations are the same – apply the core principles and pre-prepared arrangements, but stay flexible
- Importance of a framework – keep activity structured and focused
- Mutual aid for ongoing situations – be prepared to call on extra resource when needed
- Importance of challenging misinformation – it spreads fast, our response must equally so.

1.4 Context/Legal Requirements

1.4.1 Civil Contingencies Act 2004

There is a legal requirement under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) to provide information to the public.

1.4.2 Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) Regulations and Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information (REPPIR) Regulations

Under the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) regulations 2015 and the Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information Regulations (REPPIR) 2019, there is a duty to provide information to the public. The Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information (REPPIR) Regulations 2019 specifically aims to ensure that members of the public likely to be, or actually affected by, a radiation emergency, are given appropriate information. It is the duty of the local authority, in cooperation with the site operator to prepare and disseminate prior information; local government is required to ensure that information is received by those actually affected by an emergency and that the arrangements to provide this information are incorporated into the wider response plans.

2   Generic Communications Response to an Emergency

The communications response to an emergency incident typically follows a pattern.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│            Notification              │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ⇩
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│    Identifying the Communication     │
│             Coordinator              │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ⇩
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Establish the Team          │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ⇩
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│    Creation and Implementation of    │
│      the Communications Strategy     │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ⇩
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│       Moving to Recovery Phase       │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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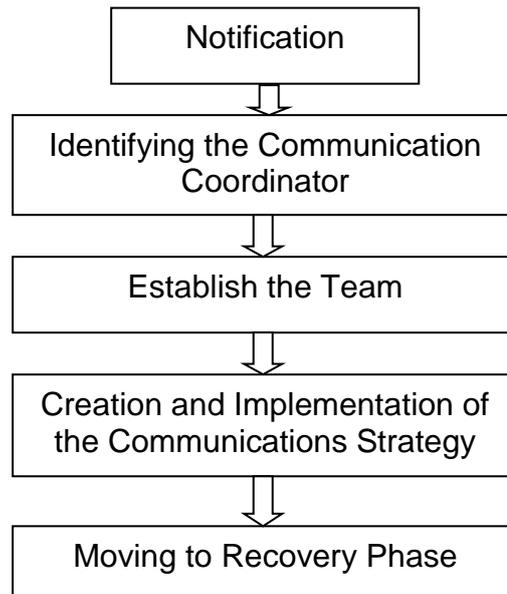
2.1   Step 1: Notification

Following the declaration of an incident the police communications team will distribute the media activation message to all relevant agencies.

Police communications may unilaterally issue urgent public warning messages immediately following an incident and prior to the creation of the Strategic Coordination Group.

2.2   Step 2: Identifying a Communications Coordinator

Following the media activation message senior communications officers from relevant agencies will consult with each other to agree who will fulfil the role of Communications Coordinator. They will also discuss and agree the level of resources required from each agency for the communications team.

The Communications Coordinator is part of the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) and will be involved in discussions at the strategic level, i.e. they will decide what we want to achieve through our communications plan. They will liaise with the key communication managers from Category 1 and 2 responders. There are also certain types of emergency where a communications lead may be taken by adviser organisations to the Strategic Coordination Group **(**SCG), such as Government departments (e.g. Animal Health).

It is important that this strategic advice is not limited to the area of media relations. The media have an important role in warning the public; however, there is a need to consider a full range of communication channels at a strategic level.

Ideally, the communications coordinator should come from the lead agency, as they are more likely to have existing knowledge about the type of incident being dealt with.

2.3   Step 3: Establishing the Team

Depending on the nature of the event a multi-agency team is likely to be required to deliver all the communications activity.

It might be appropriate for a communication manager from one responder agency to manage the operational process under the direction of the communication coordinator.

The role of the team will be to:
- Identify key groups and individuals affected by strategic and operational decisions
- Develop a coordinated communication plan
- Prepare joint messages/statements
- Establish communication facilities, as required. (i.e. communication centre, media briefing centres)
- Coordinate the functions to ensure implementation

2.4   Step 4: Creation and Implementation of the Communication Strategy

The Communication Strategy will be shared with all Category 1 responders and any other agencies involved in responding to the incident. The strategy will usually have the following objectives:

- Raise awareness of risks and steps people can take to be prepared/stay safe
- Alert the community to immediate danger
- Provide information for avoiding personal harm and obtaining assistance
- Advise on steps being taken to handle the situation
- Disseminate steps being taken to recover and return to new normal
- Manage media interest and requests for information from stakeholders and central government

Any communications strategy for an incident or emergency should not consider the 'public' as a single group. Divide into audience groups, identify which channels of communication are the most effective for each audience group and ensure messages are appropriate to each.

Important considerations

Recording

Consideration must be kept of any possible future inquiry into the incident. For this reason the team must ensure that a record is kept of its decision making process, and of all enquiries and disclosures that are made in the course of an incident.

Monitoring

Monitoring of all media – broadcast, print and social – will provide key information to the communications team. Effective monitoring will:

- Inform development of messages and public information
- Support the team to brief media spokespeople on any likely lines of questioning
- Ensure the team can challenge any inaccuracies or misreporting quickly to reduce the risk of confusion
- Help identify risks, issues and recommend mitigating actions to be put in place as soon as possible

2.5 Step 5: Moving to Recovery Phase

It is important that agencies continue to provide relevant information during the recovery phase. Ensuring all those involved are kept fully informed of what actions they should be taking and giving them details on where appropriate advice and information can be obtained.

At the point the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) steps down from the briefing table and is replaced by the Recovery Coordination Group (RCG), it is appropriate that the position of Communications Coordinator moves to the relevant local authority.

Planning for recovery should start during emergency phase and the Recovery Coordination Group (RCG) will run in tandem with the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG). Communications planning for the recovery phase should also start as part of the development of the recovery strategy.

The lead local authority for the recovery phase should discuss and agree with the communications coordinator to ensure there is sufficient capacity for both the acute and recovery phases.

The communications coordinator for the recovery phase will be part of the recovery coordination group; other sub-groups will be tasked with delivering the various strands of the recovery plan

In order to establish links with each of the sub-groups a communications representative should attend each of the sub-groups in the early stages. This can be scaled back once links are established and in agreement with the sub-group chairs.

3   Structure, Functions and Responsibilities of Key Personnel

The structure of the communications team should be based around key communication tasks relevant to an emergency situation; these are illustrated in the diagram below.

It is the job of the Communications Coordinator to prioritise these tasks and allocate the available communications staffing resource as appropriate. Dependent on staffing this could mean staff covering multiple areas of activity.

Additional support can be drawn from within responder organisations where possible. For example, the web managers from across responder organisations could be tasked with updating the responder websites, under the direction of a communication manager who provides information about the key messages and the overall communication objectives.

The core communications team will be based at the Emergency Control Centre (ECC). Satellite teams, still under the control of the Communications Coordinator, can be created to manage media briefing centres or media briefing points as required.

3.1 Basic Communications Team Structure and Function

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

CORE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

MEDIA BRIEFING CENTRE MANAGER

STAC LIAISON — COMMUNICATIONS CO-ORDINATOR

MEDIA BRIEFING POINT MANAGER

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS

SOCIAL MEDIA
- Issue social media updates
- Monitor social media and respond to 3rd party content
- Repeat social media content from other responders

MEDIA
- Issue press releases and public warning messages
- Field press enquires
- Liaise with Media Briefing Centre Manager
- Liaise with Media Briefing Point staff
- Monitor broadcast and print media

DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS
- Update website
- SMS/Cell broad-cast
- Liaise with contact centres and PIPs
- Leaflets / door drops
- Liaise re public address
- Liaise re community meetings
- Monitor public feedback via contact centres & PIPs

STAFF AND STAKEHOLDERS
- Internal comms in affected agencies
- Liaison with community leaders / voluntary organisations / community groups / trade associations
- Liaison with other responders
- Monitor feedback from staff and stakeholders

RECORDING
- Record key decisions taken by communications teams

3.2 Communications Coordinator

The Communications Coordinator has overall responsibility for the communications response to the incident, under the direction of the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG).

The nature and location of the incident will dictate who the strategic communications manager will be. More often than not this will be a senior communications manager from within the police. However, if appropriate, the role may be undertaken by another agency.

Responsibilities include:

- To devise the overall media and communications strategy
- To assist and advise in the identification of appropriate spokespeople
- To organise liaison with the communications officers of partner agencies
- To ensure partners and stakeholders are kept informed of communications and media activity.
- Ensure decisions and logs of actions taken or considered, together with rationale and timings, are maintained.
- Ensure appropriate staffing of the Corporate Communications functions is maintained.
- Ensure media coverage is monitored and any relevant issues are reported to the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) for discussion.
- Ensure that any information or intelligence from the media is passed to the appropriate operational responders.
- Consider wider communications implications, including community communications, internal communications and the needs of any particular audiences or groups of people.
- Advise Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) spokespeople prior to interviews/press conferences.

3.3 Communication Officers

The core communications tasks (social media, media, direct communications, staff and stakeholders and recording) will be undertaken by communications officers from responding agencies under the direction of the communications coordinator.

While communications officers may work across more than one task, a lead will be appointed for each and they will report to the communications coordinator in relation to that task.

Communications officers should not issue any messages, releases or responses that have not been reviewed by the Communications Coordinator

3.4 Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee - Communications Liaison

If resources allow the Communications Coordinator should nominate a communications officer to attend meetings of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC); providing communications input as Scientific and

Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) are formulating their own advice can be valuable in identifying potential communications issues. Potentially this can remove the need for additional debate at meetings of the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG).

3.5   Media Briefing Centre Manager

If a Media Briefing Centre (MBC) is established (see paragraph 4.5.1) the Communications Coordinator will appoint a centre manager. Their role includes the management of media representatives attending the centre and supporting responder agency representatives and spokespersons.

Responsibilities include:

- Close liaison with the Communications Coordinator regarding media enquiries, reporting and development of key messages / statements.

- Appoint a team to support Media Briefing Centre (MBC) manager if required, including arrangements for facilities management to take account of the physical environment, equipment and catering facilities.

- Close liaison with the dedicated Police press spokesperson who will have been identified and deployed to the Media Briefing Centre (MBC) by Police Strategic Command (Police Gold Command), ensuring they are fully briefed at all times.

- Decide in conjunction with the Communications Coordinator who will attend the press conference and what format the conference will take depending on what stage in the emergency. The core attendance will be Police, operator and local authority, together with any relevant agencies; for example for specific advice such as health or the environment.

- Arranging press conferences and briefings, ensuring that appropriate spokespeople are available and in place in good time and that the dedicated police spokesperson is fully briefed on the current issues, potential questions and key messages from Strategic Coordination Group (SCG).

- Arranging internal briefings with communication colleagues within the SCC to ensure representatives are fully briefed on information coming from Strategic Coordination Group (SCG).

- Keep the Communications Coordinator advised of any matters which may require their advice or which may affect decisions of the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG).

- Ensure the security of the Media Briefing Centre (MBC) and specific sections within it.

- Ensure that as far as possible basic needs of the media are catered for by the Media Briefing Centre (MBC), i.e. toilets, catering, interview areas, parking and access to the centre.

- Where possible ensure that all press conferences are recorded by either video or audio for future reference.

3.6 Forward Media Briefing Point Manager

If a Forward Media Briefing Point (FMBP) is established (see paragraph 4.5.2) the Communications Coordinator will appoint a manager. They will normally be an experienced police communications officer or police officer, and a dedicated police spokesperson will be identified and deployed. Their core function is to act as the central liaison point between all agencies and media attending the scene.

Responsibilities include:

- Act as the central liaison point between all agencies and media attending the scene.
- Ensure this area has suitable access control and sufficient security arrangements.
- Manage any communications staff on the scene
- Ensure that requests for interviews are discussed with Strategic Coordination Group (SCG through the Communications Coordinator
- Identify within the Forward Media Briefing Point (FMBP) a suitable location for such interviews to take place.
- Ensure the police spokesperson is fully briefed on agreed key messages issued from Strategic Coordination Group (SCG).
- Ensure close liaison with the Communications Coordinator on media attendance at the scene, any issues arising and questions being posed.
- Manage the Forward Media Briefing Point (FMBP) in order that the needs of the media are met but that the operational requirements to deal with the incident itself are not hampered by the media's presence.
- Ensure the media is warned regarding the dangers existing outside the authorised areas and are clearly informed of where they are permitted to go. This advice will be provided to the Forward Media Briefing Point (FMBP) Manager by Police Tactical Command (Police Silver Command).
- Where appropriate arrange for pool footage to be shared among media organisations
- Deliver key messages to the media that have been pre-arranged at Strategic Coordination Group (SCG).
- Where appropriate redirect media back to the Media Briefing Centre (MBC).

4   Communication Channels

In any emergency response situation it is likely to be necessary to use a range of communications channels to deliver the communications strategy.

4.1 Urgent Public Warning Message

This is likely to be the first piece of communication issued in the event of an emergency. It provides critical information that allows people to take action to protect them or avoid harm.

By convention the media will report these messages verbatim.

Some site specific plans may contain Urgent Public Warning Messages to be issued in the event of an Off-Site incident.

4.2 Media Releases and Statements

Official media releases and statements are the fundamental basic channel and source of content for other channels.

All releases and statements must be coordinated to ensure no conflicting information is released which could cause confusion. Any release or statement relating to the incident overall must be reviewed by the Communications Coordinator prior to issue.

These will then be issued by the incident communications team and shared with all Category 1 Responders. All media releases and statements will be recorded on the Resilience Direct (RD).

Individual agencies may issue their own releases or statements but these must be reviewed in advance with the communications coordinator to avoid any conflicting or misleading information being issued.

4.3 Social Media

Social Media is a core channel and its effective use is important, particularly in the acute phase of an incident.

As part of the communications strategy it should be agreed which social media account(s) will be used as the main source of information; this is likely to be the lead agency's own account. Consideration will also need to be given to agreeing any identifying hashtags.

Each agency will ensure that it is 'following' or has 'befriended' other partner agency accounts so that we can support each other by retweeting messages or signposting new public information.

Each agency will monitor and manage their social media accounts.

Facebook, Twitter and other social media must be considered in the same way as traditional news media; with only pre-approved content should be issued.

4.4 Websites

Accurate and up to date information on responder websites is important. As part of the communications strategy it should be agreed which website will be used as the main source of information, this is likely to be the lead agency's own site.

Individual agencies may provide information through their own websites e.g. health advice on NHS Choices but this should be cleared through the

communications coordinator. Any pages on agency websites should link to the respective information on the lead agency and other agency websites.

4.5   Media Interviews and Press Conferences

The media will expect to be provided with interviewees and demand will grow as an incident progresses.

All agencies will need to identify media spokespeople as directed by the communications coordinator. They should be prepared and trained to take part in media interviews and press conferences on behalf of their agency.

Press conferences/briefings will be agreed by the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) and the communications coordinator will determine who should be present and notify the relevant agencies.

Requests for individual media interviews should be agreed by the communications coordinator and the relevant agency communications officer should ensure the interviewee is fully briefed on agreed messages and lines to take.

To ensure accurate information is issued as soon as possible designated media liaison officers from Category 1 responders may be sent to various locations where relevant information is generated, and possibly to the scene of the incident.

For site specific incidents site operators should appear at press conferences and conduct media interviews separately from other agencies.

4.5.1   Media Briefing Centre

If the nature or size of incident is such that it will attract a large media interest a Media Briefing Centre should be established. Media briefing centres are already established in some areas but if one is not available then a suitable building should be identified by the Police or the lead agency in consultation with the Duty Officer.

MBC provides a focal point or base at which the Media can concentrate their resources and allows the responder organisations easier access to the media, providing a forum for the spokespersons of the key responding organisations.

For further details on MBC please see Annex B and Appendix 1

4.5.2   Forward Media Briefing Point

The media will want to get as close to the incident as possible so a media briefing point should be established as soon as possible. The briefing point will be a muster point for journalists, will be the location for 'on-site' interviews and will act as a meeting point to brief media with latest updates. The Forward Media Briefing Point (FMBP) needs to be as close to the scene as (is safely) possible because that is obviously where the press will wish to, preferably with a view of emergency services at the scene, taking in to account:

- Operational efficiency of all services
- Preservation of the scene
- Need for privacy of those affected (casualties and families)
- Access to certain areas may need to be controlled and supervised
- The area must be safe for all personnel

In many cases, a Forward Media Briefing Point (FMBP) with good views over the incident site and regular briefings may be sufficient for the media's needs and a Media Briefing Centre (MBC) may not need to be opened.

The Communication Coordinator should deploy a senior Press Officer to the location as the Forward Media Briefing Point (FMBP) Manager to make contact with and assist the press in the early stages of the incident. Depending on the nature of the incident, other agency press officers may also be deployed there by their respective organisations.

All press officers should ensure they have a fluorescent tabard clearly marked on the back with the words 'Press Officer'.

4.6   Telephone Enquiry Service

This service will be delivered on a best endeavours approach utilising mutual aid where possible until a long term solution is identified.

4.7   Contact Centres and Telephone Information Points

A number of agencies now operate Contact Centres who may receive calls during and after an incident. The communications team will be responsible for ensuring accurate and timely information, e.g. media releases, is shared with these agencies. A list of all Contact Centres can be found in Appendix 3.

It may be appropriate to include details of one call centre, for example the relevant district council, in any public information to direct and manage enquiries. This should be agreed with the relevant agency to ensure there is the capacity to field the calls. Mutual aid may need to be considered to support increased volumes of calls and extended operating hours.

Agencies should ensure any issues and themes are fed in to the communications team to inform development of public messages.

4.8   Public Information Centres

Public Information Centres often become increasingly important as an incident moves towards the recovery phase.

Public Information Centres provide a space to relay key information to communities 'on the ground' and an opportunity to gather feedback from those communities which can shape the communications response.

They may be established within premises such as public libraries where people can visit in person to make enquiries related to an emergency.

Public Information Centres will not be expected to cope also with telephone enquiries; these should be referred to the Telephone Enquiry Service (if established) or directly to telephone helplines established by other agencies.

For further details on Public Information Points Please see Annex C and Appendix 2.

4.9   Internal Communications

Each agency is responsible for internal communications for their own agency and sharing relevant key messages in line with the agreed communications strategy.

Annexes (Non Sensitive)

Annex A Communications Templates

Media Activation Message Template

This message will be sent via email or fax by Cumbria Constabulary to communications officers at the relevant agencies. However, it is important that communication officers ensure that they are part of their individual agencies information cascade.

URGENT! - MEDIA ACTIVATION MESSAGE

Please pass immediately your Press Officer, Media or Communication Officer/Team

Following an incident at:

Time:

Date:

Place:

Arrangements to coordinate a response are being introduced.

All Press Office, Media and Communications Officers must now:
- Be on stand by to attend SCG or the ECC, further details to follow.
- Make immediate contact with Cumbria Constabulary Press Office by return on
  Telephone :   01768 217009
  Fax :   01768 217018
  Email :   pressoffice@cumbria.police.uk

- Consult the Cumbria Constabulary Press Office before any statement or media releases are released.
- Start to define your agencies response and if necessary identify a media spokesperson. The subject matter for that spokesperson must at this stage be authorised by the Police Press Office.

Date: Time:

Authorised by:

Urgent Public Warning Message

URGENT PUBLIC WARNING MESSAGE   **No.**

Incident Title:

1. Brief outline of the incident

e.g. Outline the incident: who, what, when, where, why and how

TBC

MEDIA RELEASE   **No.**

Incident Title: | |

1. Brief outline of the incident

| e.g. Outline the incident: who, what, when, where, why and how |

2. What is being done

| e.g. Give reassurance - In response to the incident emergency services are providing a well practiced co-ordinated response…... |

3. Effected areas.

| e.g. Area sealed off, roads close and diversions, details of any evacuation and where people have been evacuated to. |

4. Casualties

| e.g. Details of casualties and which hospitals they have been taken to. Contact details for concerned friends and family. Casualty Bureau details. |

5. Health Advice

| e.g. Any health issues or advice. |

6. Any other information

| e.g. Any other public information. |

7. What to do now

| e.g. What the public need to do: only phone 999 if necessary, be vigilant, help neighbours. |

Communications Strategy

The Communication Strategy must fit in to the overall strategy determined by the SCG Chair.

Incident						
Overarching outcome						
Overarching key messages						
Risks						
Audiences	**Survivors**	**Other possible victims**	**Local people**	**Friends & relatives**	**General public**	**Etc…**
Starting point						
Outcome						
Messages for each audience						
Key Channels						
Evaluation and feedback						

Survivors	Those in the immediate vicinity and directly affected, possibly as wounded casualties
	The needs of this group are the main focus of attention in the first hour of an incident and beyond. Providing information to Group A is, in effect, an extension of the warning phase. Those at the scene are under direct instruction from the emergency services. Those in charge of operations are best placed to decide what advice or instructions are required, by whom and how quickly.

Other Possible Victims	Those close by who may need to take action to avoid further harm
	The needs of this group are the main focus of attention in the first hour of an incident and beyond. This group urgently needs to know what they need to do immediately – countermeasures advice. Group B will also want to know why the advice is being given. The emergency response organization is unlikely to be able to rely solely on the media to reach the Group B audience. The media may be used to provide reinforcement of the basic safety messages.

Local People	Those in the area who may be disrupted by the consequences of the emergency and the clear-up process.
	Local media can be particularly helpful in addressing Group C, providing general information about the emergency, information on how the public can help and advice on disruption in the area, e.g. traffic bulletins. The use of message formats agreed with broadcasters in advance will avoid unnecessary questions of editorial control under pressure.

Friends and Relatives	Those who are not affected directly but know or are related to those who might be.
	Friends and Relatives are usually alerted to an emergency through the national media. The most likely first response is to phone the people they know in the area, either to find out if they are safe or to get more information. There is evidence from past disasters that the emotional impact of watching events unfold, which may be affecting a close relative or friend, can be very significant. Where people at a distance can be reasonably sure that a relative or friend is caught up in the incident they will be desperate for information. Media briefings must address this reality.

| **Wider Audience** | Those who are not affected but are concerned, or alarmed about wider implications, or simply interested. |
| | There is evidence from past disasters that the emotional impact of watching events unfold, which may be affecting a close relative or friend, can be very significant. Where people at a distance can be reasonably sure that a relative or friend is caught up in the incident they will be desperate for information. Media briefings must address this reality. |

Annex B Media Briefing Centres

Media Briefing Centre (MBC) locations
Are available in Appendix 1

Media Briefing Centre (MBC) criteria
Notwithstanding above, a Media Briefing Centre (MBC) can be set up at any location as long as it has the following essential criteria.

a) A building with ample space to house the media and capable of accommodating a press conference with several hundred journalists in the audience. Note that sound amplification in this space may be required, as may a raised dais or stage area to allow line of sight for spokespersons.

b) Office space with power and communication links for use by the Media Briefing Centre (MBC) manager and staff.

c) Refreshment facilities for Media Briefing Centre (MBC) manager and staff. Note if possible it is a good idea to try and lay in a provision at which the media can purchase refreshment.

d) The proximity and ability to run cabling from the press conference site to the Outside Broadcast (OB) vans. Ideally not more than 50m.

e) Parking space for the considerable number of media Outside Broadcast (OB) vehicles that will appear. Note that Outside Broadcast (OB) vehicles tend to be large transit vans with satellite installations on the roof and for larger prolonged events several vehicles from the same broadcaster may be deployed. The Outside Broadcast (OB) technicians may also elevate transmission masts but in any case will be looking for clear ground-to-satellite sight lines.

It is essential from the outset that the Media Briefing Centre (MBC) Manager and team plan to avoid disruption to the usual users of the building, local residents and businesses in the operation of the Media Briefing Centre (MBC). Assistance in the traffic management that this will require may be necessary from Cumbria Constabulary.

Boundaries
The importance of defining clear boundaries in dealing with the media cannot be overstated. It is important that responder organisations work with the media and aid them in broadcasting the correct factual story, yet the response must never become media driven.

Annex C Public Information Centres

Activation
The Communications Coordinator, with agency support, is responsible for deciding whether, and how many, Public Information Centres should be established. The Communication Coordinator may elect also to establish Centres in locations such as libraries or District Council offices. The Management Team will consider the need for:

a. Main and satellite Public Information Centres, and the number of these which are required.
b. Extra communications facilities, and the preferred path for the flow of information from the Emergency Control Centre (ECC) to each Public Information Centre.
c. Times of opening and appropriate staffing levels.
d. Representatives from agencies involved in the emergency, each of whom can deal directly with enquiries concerning their particular areas of responsibility.
e. Notifying the public of the locations and purpose of Public Information Centres.

Staffing

Senior Librarians, who will normally operate from the Main Public Information Centre for each District, are responsible for establishing and running all centres located in libraries within their Library group. Public Information Centres will be staffed by libraries' personnel. Other agencies, local Elected Members and some local residents may be invited to assist according to circumstances.

Operation
The Public Information Centres will receive Public Warning Messages, and Press Statements directly from the Communication Coordinator. They will then relay all information to all library-based satellite centres for which each main centre is responsible.

The Senior Librarian in charge of the main centre will relay enquiries directed to the main and satellite centres which library staff were unable to answer to the relevant communications officer in the Emergency Control Centre (ECC).

The communications officer at the Emergency Control Centre (ECC) with responsibility for direct communication is the liaison for Public Information Centre Managers.

Annex D Frequently Asked Questions

1. General Points
- What has happened?
- How long will it last?
- What is the affected area?
- Are there casualties?
- How can I find out if friend/relation is involved?
- Where can information be obtained from?
- How can I help?

2. Roads
- What is closed and where?
- Why is the road closed
- Alternative routes and diversions?
- Is there standing traffic and for how long?
- Effects of high/low temperatures?
- Need for feeding/watering/sheltering?

3. Sheltering
- What does sheltering mean?
- How long should I shelter for?
- Am I safe where I am?
- How can I seal my house?
- Should I open the door?

4. Evacuation
- Where can I evacuate to?
- How long will evacuation last?
- Where are the Reception Centres?
- What can I do with my pets?
- What will happen to my children in school?
- Who will look after my property whilst empty?
- What can I take with me?

5. Transportation
- Are sea/rail/air links affected?
- How can I check if friend / relative affected?
- How long will disruption last?

6. Chemicals
- What chemicals are involved?
- Is chemical dangerous and what affect?
- Are chemicals contained?
- Do I need to take any precautions?
- Any advice regarding contamination?

7. Health
- What are the health implications?
- Where can I get medicines from?
- What hospital can I use?
- How can I catch it?
- What are the symptoms?
- Where can I go for vaccinations?
- How can I get checked/monitored?

8. Animals
- Is livestock affected?
- What is the area affected?
- What can be done to mitigate effects?
- Can livestock be moved?
- How can I feed livestock?
- Should domestic pets be kept outside?

9. Nuclear
- Am I at risk?
- What are Stable Iodine (KI) tablets?
- When should (KI) tablets be taken?
- Where can I get KI tablets from?
- Is radioactivity dangerous?
- What are the effects?

10. Food
- Can I drink the water?
- Where can I get water from?
- Are there foodstuffs I cannot eat / drink?
- How long are foodstuffs prohibited for?
- Where can I buy food?
- Are tinned goods safe?

11. Schools and Colleges
- Can my children go to school?
- Are my children safe at school?
- How can I pick up children from school?
- Will schools remain open?
- Is medical care being provided in the school?

12. Utilities
- Are any utilities affected?
- Nature of effect and duration?
- Is there any provision for replacement.
- Is fuel supply restricted?
- Where can I buy fuel?

13. Fire & Flood
- How widespread is fire / flood?
- Will it affect me?
- What can I do now to mitigate effects?