



<u>Policy Title</u>	Family Liaison Officers
<u>CCMT Sponsor</u>	ACC Operational Support
<u>Department/Area</u>	Crime Support
<u>Section/Sector</u>	Major Crime

1.0 Rationale

- 1.1 Liaison with the family of someone who has died or is missing in traumatic circumstances is one of the most demanding of all tasks performed by police officers
- 1.2 A crucial consideration throughout a homicide investigation is providing support to the family of the deceased. Families should be considered as an integral part of the investigation and this concept is central to its success.
- 1.3 It is of paramount importance that families are treated appropriately, professionally, with respect and consideration given to their needs. This absolute principle must be reflected at all levels within police structures and due consideration given to any police action which may impact on a family, from media statements made by a Chief Constable to the telephone operator who responds to a query by a family member.
- 1.4 Securing the confidence and co-operation of a victim's family can positively impact on the wider issues of community trust and confidence as well as bringing positive benefits to the investigation.

2.0 Intention

- 2.1 The intention of this policy is to ensure the four main objectives of family liaison are achieved by:
 - appropriate deployment of Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) to individual cases
 - supporting and supervising FLOs

3.0 General Principles

3.1 In cases of unexplained death, missing persons, road deaths, and critical incidents, primary responsibility for family liaison rests with the police.

3.2 The four main objectives of family liaison are:

3.2.1 To provide care, support and information in a sensitive and compassionate manner to the family who are themselves victims of crime.

3.2.2 To ensure that family members are given information about other police departments and support agencies and that referrals are made to Victim Support and other agencies in accordance with the family's wishes.

3.2.3 To gather evidence and information from the family in a manner which contributes to the investigation and preserves its integrity.

3.2.4 To secure the confidence and trust of the family thereby enhancing their contribution to the investigation.

4.0 Challenges & Representations

4.1 Any person directly affected by this policy may make representations in relation to this document, and/or any decision in consequence of it, to:

Detective Chief Superintendent Crime Support
Thames Valley Police Headquarters
Kidlington
Oxon
OX5 2NX

4.1A complaint against an individual officer's conduct should be progressed through the Complaints Against Police Procedures.

4.2 The areas covered by this policy are open to scrutiny by H.M. Inspector of Constabulary during official inspections.

5.0 Guidance, Procedures & Tactics

5.1 Training

5.1.1 **General family liaison.** All Thames Valley Police Officers, by their generic training and experience, act as liaison officers with families in cases of sudden death (where circumstances are not suspicious), delivering death messages, updating families regarding missing person inquiries and other similar policing activities. In most of these

instances the role of family liaison can be performed by the officer investigating, or taking action, without further training.

5.1.2 **Road Death family liaison.** All FLOs deployed to liaise with families after road death will be selected, trained and deployed in accordance with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Family Liaison Strategy Manual.

5.1.3 **Major Crime family liaison.** All FLOs deployed in Major Crime investigations will be selected, trained and deployed in accordance with the ACPO Family Liaison Strategy Manual. In addition, they must have proven investigative experience and skills prior to selection for FLO training.

5.1.4 Every Family Liaison deployment will be considered by the Family Liaison Coordinator in conjunction with the Senior Investigating Officer and the officer/s selected for the necessary skills, training and background skills.

5.2 FLO Co-ordinators

5.2.1 The roles of Force FLO Co-ordinator and Deputy Co-ordinator(s) will be performed by nominated officers on the Major Crime Unit. They will be responsible for national and regional FLO liaison and response to mutual aid requests.

5.2.2 The Roads Policing Department will also appoint FLO Co-ordinator(s) to support Roads Policing FLOs.

5.2.3 The Force FLO Co-ordinator(s) will be responsible (at the request of the SIO) for the selection of FLOs in all cases as outlined at 6.5 below. In cases of Road Traffic Death where the offender fails to stop, The Force FLO Co-ordinator(s) will appoint FLOs in consultation with the Roads Policing FLO Co-ordinator(s).

5.3 Deployment

5.3.1 In considering the deployment of FLOs the Senior Investigating Officer¹ (SIO) should take account of the individual FLO's ability to perform the function, at that time, effectively². The SIO will task the FLO Co-ordinator³ to select an FLO (s).

5.3.2 The FLO Co-ordinator should not exclude an individual FLO from being appointed to an investigation without discussing the reasons with the SIO; so far as this does not breach confidentiality.

¹ SIO includes Deputy SIO

² See ACPO Family Liaison Strategy Manual for circumstances to consider when appointing an FLO.

³ FLO Co-ordinator includes Deputy FLO Co-ordinators.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

- 5.3.3 The SIO/Deputy SIO together with the FLO must risk assess the circumstances in which the FLO is deployed. For example, control measures may need to be undertaken where there is a suspect within the family, if the offender's family are likely to attempt retribution on the victim's family or if the location to which the FLO will be deployed has inherent risks.
- 5.3.4 The risk assessment must be recorded on forms from the ACPO Family Liaison Strategy (see Appendix A).
- 5.3.5 Only crime FLOs will be deployed to:-
- Major crime inquiries
 - Critical incidents
 - British subjects murdered or missing in suspicious circumstances abroad
- 5.3.6 Untrained non-detective officers may be deployed in the cases defined at 6.5 above in exceptional circumstances to perform the family liaison role. Such deployment may be appropriate if the family has specific requirements, which require specialist knowledge, skills or experience to meet family liaison objectives. These could include:-
- Religious needs
 - Cultural needs
 - Interpretation is required (e.g. English is not the family's first language, or they are hearing impaired)
- This list is not exhaustive.
- 5.3.7 An untrained officer must **never** be deployed without a trained FLO. The SIO and FLO Co-ordinator must consider whether to deploy more than one trained FLO with an untrained FLO.
- 5.3.8 The reason for deploying an untrained officer and any control measures required to protect them must be recorded in the FLO strategy in the SIO's policy log.

5.4 Deaths of serving Thames Valley Police staff

- 5.4.1 In cases where Thames Valley Police staff die unexpectedly as a result of suicide or death whilst abroad the staff member's Area Commander or Head of Department must consider whether a FLO should be deployed.
- 5.4.2 The final decision whether to deploy will be made by the Area Commander or Head of Department after consultation with the FLO Co-ordinator.
- 5.4.3 In cases where Thames Valley Police staff die unexpectedly as a result of where an injury or road death when they are on duty the staff member's Area Commander or Head of Department must consider whether an FLO should be deployed.

- 5.4.4 In cases of road death whilst on duty the subsequent investigation will involve Roads Policing, the Professional Standards Department, and potentially area CID and Crime Support. In such cases a FLO will be appointed in consultation with the FLO co-ordinator and those conducting the investigation.
- 5.4.5 In cases of unexpected death as a result of injury on duty the final decision whether to deploy will be made by the Area Commander or Head of Department after consultation with the FLO Co-ordinator.

5.5 Notification of Deployment to Areas/Departments

- 5.5.1 In order to meet the welfare and support requirements for FLOs (see below) it is essential that they are not over deployed. Therefore FLOs will be abstracted from Areas and Departments when the need arises.
- 5.5.2 In all cases where it is necessary to deploy an FLO from an Area or Department, the FLO Co-ordinator will notify Gold (on call strategic commander). The FLO Co-ordinator will first check with FLOs to see who can take on the commitment. The FLO Co-ordinator will tell Gold who the most appropriate FLO(s) would be to deploy.
- 5.5.3 Gold will be responsible for notifying the Area/Department⁴ where the FLO is stationed that they are to be deployed on FLO duties. The Area/Department will consider whether it is practicable to release them.
- 5.5.4 Gold will be the final arbiter in cases where the Area/Department state that it is not practicable to release the nominated FLO at that time.
- 5.5.5 Although training courses for FLOs will not be allocated in line with the Total Resource Allocation Formula (so FLOs may not be distributed in line with TRAF⁵ across areas), their deployment will be taken into account in the overall figures of area staff abstracted onto Major Incident Rooms.
- 5.5.6 If an Area/Department deploys a trained FLO on a family liaison commitment, they must inform the FLO Co-ordinator in order that accurate deployment records are kept.

5.7 Support and Supervision

- 5.7.1 The support and supervision needs of FLOs, with particular regard to their health and welfare, must be met as detailed in the ACPO Family Liaison Strategy Manual.

⁴ This should be at management team level.

⁵ Total Resource Allocation Formula

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

- 5.7.2 The strategy for FLO deployment will be recorded in the SIO's policy log. See appendix B for examples of FLO deployment and exit strategies.
- 5.7.3 Any supervisor or colleague of a FLO who has got concerns or issues regarding their deployment in the FLO role should bring to them to the attention of the individual FLO or the FLO Co-ordinator.
- 5.7.4 During FLO deployment the SIO or FLO Co-ordinator must be notified of any complaints by the family and take appropriate action.
- 5.7.5 At the conclusion of each deployment each FLO will be debriefed by the FLO Co-ordinator to discuss the commitment. This debrief will include:-
- Inspecting FLO logs
 - Identification of good practice
 - Obtaining details of any new support agencies/contacts identified for circulation to other FLOs and inclusion on the database of such contacts
 - welfare and support issues.
- 5.7.6 In Thames Valley Police each individual FLO will attend mandatory debriefings with the Force Welfare Department or with someone nominated by them every 12 months. More frequent debriefings may be arranged at the discretion of the FLO Co-ordinator taking into account:
- the number of times the FLO has been deployed
 - the circumstances of the case(s) they have been deployed to
 - the extent of the family liaison required (e.g. large family, necessity to liaise with schools)
 - the death was as a result of a major disaster (or terrorist attack)
 - exceptional media interest
 - personal circumstances
- 5.7.7 The FLO Co-ordinator will hold a confidential referral file⁶, under lock and key. It will be clearly marked, "This file has been created on the advice of the Welfare Department." It is solely for the use of the FLO Co-ordinator. This file will only contain a record of the dates each individual FLO has completed a mandatory visit to the welfare department.
- 5.7.8 No FLO will be re-deployed in the role unless the requirement to attend mandatory debriefings is complied with.
- 5.7.9 Identified FLOS within each of the four Major Crime Offices will arrange bi-annual meetings with all FLOs from their geographic area. These

⁶ This file will be marked as "restricted" under the Government Protected Marking Scheme.

peer meetings will be a forum to support one another, identify areas of good practice, raise areas of concern to the co-ordinator and discuss any other matters that may be of relevance.

- 5.7.10 Two FLO seminars will be arranged per annum for the benefit of all Thames Valley Police trained FLOs. The purpose of these seminars is to share and gather good practice for implementation, provide networking opportunities, monitor workloads and to assist with the development and training of FLOs.

6.0 Communication

6.1 Links to Police National Legal Database Other

This policy should be linked to the [ACPO Family Liaison Strategy](#)

6.2 Communications Strategy

Publication on the intranet, referred to when the FLO role is advertised, notification to current FLOs, SIOs.

Target audience = FLOs, SIOs, Supts Crime and Operations, Crime Managers.

7.0 Compliance and Certification

7.1 Human Rights Certification

(i) Legal Basis

The Family Liaison Officer role is undertaken with the consent of the officer performing the role. From the outset it is made clear that it is necessary for the FLO Co-ordinator (and Deputy) to be aware of the FLO's private circumstances, which may have a bearing on their ability to perform the role. They make an informed decision to take on the role, to disclose relevant personal circumstances, and agree to mandatory psychological assessments and Welfare Department debriefs.

The family consent to information and evidence being gathered from them by FLOs to contribute to the investigation. The issue of a suspect within a family is dealt with in the (ACPO) Family Liaison Strategy. The Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 applies to information gained from the family.

(ii) Human Rights Articles Engaged

It is acknowledged that this policy has the potential to engage the following Articles:-

- Article 6 Right to a Fair Trial
- Article 8 Right to Respect for Private & Family Life

In the event that an Article of the Convention is engaged, then the legitimacy for the engagement is provided within the text of the Articles.

- Article 6 Right to a Fair Trial. It applies in its entirety when a person is detained/arrested/charged.
- Article 8 Right to Respect for Private and Family Life. A public authority may interfere with the exercise of this right in accordance with the law and as is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of:-
 - national security
 - public safety or the economic well-being of the country
 - the prevention of disorder or crime
 - the protection of health or morals
 - the protection of rights and freedom of others

(iii) Prohibition of Discrimination

By engaging any of the aforementioned Articles, there is the potential to engage Article 14 of the Convention. The enjoyment of the Rights and Freedoms set forth in the European Convention of Human Rights shall be secured without discrimination on any grounds, such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status. Actions taken as a consequence of this policy will be applied fairly and impartially, having due regard to natural justice and human rights.

7.2 Race Equality Impact Assessment

This policy is currently being assessed for its relevance to race equality.

7.3 Diversity (Human Resources)

In the application of this policy, the Force will not discriminate against any persons regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnic origin, religion, age or disability.

7.4 Data Protection

This policy can be made available to the public, it is not protectively marked. Personal data and information obtained in connection with this policy will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

7.5 Freedom of Information Act

This is a publicly available document (with the exception of appendix B which gives examples of methods of police working) and will be made available on the Thames Valley Police Freedom of Information Publication Scheme website.

7.6 Protective Markings

Although this policy is not protectively marked as per the government protected marking scheme, documents produced as a result of this policy will be protectively marked as compromise may cause substantial distress to individuals or prejudice an investigation.

7.7 Health & Safety at Work

Risk assessment is covered in section 5.3 (Deployment) and Appendix A of the policy.

8.0 Monitoring and Review

8.1 Links to Best Value/PPAF/Priorities/Performance Indicators

This policy contributes to the Strategic Objective:
'To provide an effective and timely response focussed on the needs of the citizen'

This policy has no links to Best Value.

8.2 Review Process

A full review will be carried out every 2 years by the policy author and will examine:

- Changes in legislation
- Court rulings – Domestic, European and Human Rights
- Examples of good practice from other Forces or other organisations
- Changes in Home Office Circulars
- Developments with ACPO Policy Unit

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

- Representations made by individuals and relevant organisations
- Relevant Race Equality data

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Risk Assessment Forms

Family Liaison Risk Assessment Forms

Form 1

Other Document Number

D.....

Family Liaison Risk Assessment

Victim(s) Details:

SIO

Deputy

Restricted

Details

Full Address (to parents/visit)

--

State if Victim or Suspect's family:

--

Household Members <small>(with whom request for Liaison has been identified)</small>	Date of Birth	Telephone or Mobile No's <small>(if available)</small>	Date details established
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

Household Member	FLO Deployed for Initial Visit	Station/ Contact Number
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

Household Member	Database Searches Conducted <small>(insert date)</small>				
	PNC	Force	LIO	Domestic Violence	Others (specify)
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					

Complete Details continuation forms if required

Restricted

File Content

	Date Form 2 created	Signature
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

To be completed each time Form 2 is attached

Risk Assessment Form Notes of Guidance

There are two Risk Assessment forms for use when Family Liaison is a requirement. The forms -

FORM 1 fulfils the function of a storage folder and indicates a specific address and details of household members to whom liaison may apply. The actual Risk Assessments relevant to that address are completed on Forms 2 and stored within the Form 1 folder.

A separate Form 1 folder is used for each address where liaison is required.

Each Form 1 will be given a document reference number by the M.I.R.

FORM 2 is completed for each specific Risk Assessment relevant to the address indicated on Form 1.

THINGS

All efforts must be made to establish and record relevant information immediately after a decision to deploy officers has been taken. Further required information is added later, together with the date it became known.

In any event, an assessment of risk must be carried out prior to deployment of the 'family' liaison officer(s) and the details of the assessment recorded on Risk Assessment Form 2.

This initial assessment must include any perceived risk to officers and must be recorded on Form 2 (using additional forms as required), e.g. when officers are deployed to deal with a suspect's family after charge and there is local off loading towards the family?

Further Form 2 Risk Assessments should be completed after the initial visit to the address and although the assessment must be made by the SIO/Deputy SIO or trained assessor, it is accepted that in many instances the details of identification and the risk on the form will be completed by the 'Family' Liaison Officers themselves.

Once completed, the Risk Assessments are stored in the appropriate Form 1 and logged on the rear page of that folder.

ADDITIONAL RISK ASSESSMENTS

Additional Form 2 assessments must be completed when significant changes in the circumstances surrounding this liaison occur. These are shown on the Form 2 under the following headings:

PEOPLE

When the persons known to be present during a personal visit to the address differ from those shown on the Form 1 or when the media/press are present or when the personal circumstances of the persons assessed have changed (e.g. family group meetings, an adverse change in behaviour characteristics which indicate potential risks or in a case of a family member having been arrested and then released).

ACTION/ACTIVITY

When the officers have been detailed additional tasks, which differ significantly from the previous liaison activities (e.g. Risk action in a search of premises or seizure of property).

LOCATION

Where the potential risk increases at the address shown on Form 1 (e.g. increased risk recorded on Community Impact Assessment Document) or when liaison occurs at any location other than the address shown in the Form 1 (e.g. hospital, funeral service or court proceedings).

ENVIRONMENT

In circumstances where the environment in which the Officers are working changes (e.g. neglect of the home or risk to the officers health due to presence of contagious or infectious disease).

N.B. This Form 2 can be used in conjunction with any existing research profile used by some police forces to analyse potential risk.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Form 2

Potential Risk / Hazard / No Apparent Risk				To Whom: Officer / Family / Other		Name of Liaison Officer	
People	Action/Activity	Location	Environment				
<small>Circle appropriate one</small>							
Why							
Control Measures				Reasons			
<input type="checkbox"/> Remove <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce <input type="checkbox"/> Accept <small>Circle as appropriate</small>							
Name & Signature of Assessor			Date	SIO	Name & Signature for Completion		
					<small>Please print Name & No.</small>		
Other Agencies notified							