

Job Description

A Post Details	
Job Title: Media Relations Advisor	Grade: B001
Department: Communications and Engagement	Division: FHQ
Reports to: Media Relations Lead	Contract Type: Permanent
Level of Vetting: Baseline	Numbers in Post: 4
B Purpose of the Post	
<p>Media Relations Advisors are the voice of BTP, they play a vital role in supporting the Force to prevent and detect crime, as well as building and protecting public confidence - by responding to and proactively engaging with both the media and the public on our social media channels.</p> <p>A key part of the criminal justice process, they produce statements, crime appeals, convictions and sentences for BTP cases. They are expected to find new and innovative ways to engage with the communities we serve - be that responding to a comment on Twitter, joining the latest TikTok trend or reaching people through a local Facebook page.</p> <p>Media Relations Advisors also participate in the 24/7 on-call rota, responding to journalists and incidents outside of office hours. They need the confidence to react to breaking news, the gravitas to give sound advice to senior officers and the ability to handle both traditional and social media during high profile incidents and cases.</p>	
C Dimensions of the Post	
<p>Financial – Direct or Non-Direct</p> <p>None.</p> <p>Staff Responsibilities – Direct or Non-Direct</p> <p>Non direct oversight of the work of the social media engagement officers to ensure that they are aware of key lines and messages and that they understand when to escalate social media matters.</p> <p>Any Other Statistical Data</p> <p>The communications and engagement team provide services critical to British Transport Police being able to professionally communicate and engage with its workforce, the media, stakeholders and the public, in order to deliver its strategic objectives and values. Media relations plays a critical role in the Force – the postholder will find them answering questions regarding things such as a breaking incident, an ongoing court case or crime statistics. They may also need to interpret escalated social media content to interpret whether it poses a risk from a public safety or a criminal behaviour perspective, deciding on the relevant action to take. The post requires the ability to assess information from a number of sources and make decisions quickly and on a wide range of issues.</p>	
D Principal Accountabilities	
<p>Respond to requests for information from local, specialist and national news outlets, assessing information from a number of sources and make decisions quickly on how to respond to a wide range of issues.</p> <p>Participate in the 24/7 on-call rota, confidently responding to incidents and enquiries out of hours researching information and making decisions on responses to a wide range of often complex issues, including critical incidents.</p> <p>Provide a point of escalation for social media content that is considered a media relations concern by the social media engagement officers or the Force Contact Centre</p>	

Writing and releasing information about criminal appeals – within the binding rules of media law – encouraging the public to give information, find wanted individuals / people sought in connection with offences. Confidently adapting messages for different audiences and platforms, in order to help bring offenders to justice quickly and effectively.

Writing and releasing information about convictions and sentences for criminal cases, to demonstrate the judicial process taking place and publicising the work of BTP in bringing offenders to justice. This includes sourcing information, locating court materials, such as CCTV or victim statements, and working on the best way to release this to the media and public.

Attending court to offer specialist support and advice for our own staff, liaising with court staff and to provide a point of contact for media during court cases.

Owning a number of national portfolios – from metal theft to county lines or violence against women and girls – and act as a lead for the force on the traditional and social media planning for that issue nationally. That could be working with our campaigns team to target certain areas or groups, working up a calendar of media opportunities and proactively finding ways for BTP to add comment to issues nationally.

Negotiating and organising interviews with the media regarding important subjects – and offering media knowledge, advice and support for our people throughout the process. This includes researching and providing clear and concise briefings on often complex issues, writing statements where appropriate and attending interviews – including at incident scenes.

Providing major incident support undertaking a role that can include attending the scene to manage and brief the media, covering the Media Relations desk, responding to social media comments and taking calls from the media. They may need to provide cover for other members of the department as needed.

Act as media lead to Senior Investigating Officers during criminal investigations, supporting the investigative team by devising and implementing communication plans - offering advice on releasing appeals, how best to update the public and gaining the best coverage for detections and convictions.

Proactively seeking opportunities for BTP to add expertise and comment to issues of national importance, such as Violence Against Women and Girls, or suicide.

Recognising and highlighting potential media risks or issues – which could be a query from a journalist or a tweet starting to gain traction - to senior management.

Lead on media training for people within BTP/BTPA, to better prepare them for occasions when they will have dealings with the press.

Offer sound advice regarding media law for colleagues across the force, acting as a subject matter expert to protect against legal misconduct.

Build relationships, both with the media, external partners and stakeholders, and internally within the force, to ensure the team are utilising the media effectively to help achieve BTP's strategic objectives.

E Decision Making

Participating in the 24/7 on-call rota, the Media Relations Advisor needs to be able to confidently respond to incidents and enquiries out of hours. This involves quickly researching information and making decisions, and being accountable for those decisions, on responses to a wide range of often complex issues and critical incidents.

Expected to take decisions within media law, mainly: 1. The Contempt of Court Act 1981 which governs freedom of officers to discuss cases before trial after arresting and charging suspects in order to protect the right to a fair trial. 2. The Sexual Offences Act which protects the right to anonymity. Abides by reporting restrictions imposed by law courts.

The post holder may need to work alongside the Gold Commander in the Gold Suite providing advice and guidance that will influence the handling of communications relating to critical incidents or planned events.

F Contact with Others

Internal

Regular contact with officers and staff at all levels within the organisation, from frontline officers to members of our Chief Officer Group. They are expected to be able to offer sound advice to colleagues across the organisation on all issues regarding media and social media.

Liaise with other members of the communications and engagement department to ensure there is a consistent and corporate approach to issues and that knowledge is shared.

Expected to represent the department at meetings regarding their own national portfolio areas, ongoing investigations and other issues.

External

Daily contact with reporters, with an expectation that they are able to think and act quickly and respond effectively.

Daily contact with members of the public on social media with the expectation the officer is able to respond appropriately or raise the matter with senior management. Daily contact with members of the public on social media. Works with the families of victims to draft the wording in tributes. Produces videos featuring the victims of criminality.

Regular contact with stakeholders and other agencies, representing the force at meetings with communications colleagues from other organisations and building important relationships with BTP's partners.

G Essential Criteria

Qualifications and Training:

Educated to a degree level in Media, Communications, or Public Relations

Experience:

Experience of working within a newsroom, press office or similar environment.

Strong background in writing and communication, with a portfolio of work that demonstrates the ability to write quickly and for different audiences.

Skills:

The ability to work in a fast paced and high-pressured environment, providing high quality content to quick deadlines.

The confidence and gravitas to offer advice to senior management and other members of the organisation – including the ability to challenge decisions when in the force's best interests.

The ability to act, particularly out of hours, without having to seek advice each time, on breaking incidents and incoming media queries.

The ability to form effective relationships with both colleagues internally and members of the media.

The ability to identify risks to the force – such as trending social media content – and ensure it is being handled and raised with the appropriate people.

To be self motivated in seeking out ways for the team to continually improve and finding new ways for BTP to speak with its communities.

Knowledge:

Training and an understanding of media law – what BTP can and cannot say, and why.

A passion and awareness of social media and how police forces can use it for good.

Understanding or willingness to learn about police and crime-related issues on the news agenda.

Desirable criteria:

Business experience within the transport and/or policing sectors.

Experience and understanding of organisational politics and experience of working within a politically-sensitive environment.

H Additional Information

You will be a resilient individual, able to work collaboratively in a fast-paced environment and quickly adapt to changing and evolving circumstances and priorities. Believing that understanding the audience is at the heart of all effective communication, you will be keen to build knowledge of your audience and use that to guide your communications outputs, anticipating and adapting to audience trends.

You will have excellent interpersonal skills that allow you to communicate at all levels in a clear manner and with a commitment to delivering exceptional customer service. Believing that effective communications are crucial to the delivery of policing and keeping the public safe, to achieve this objective you will be able and willing to challenge at any level in an appropriate manner.

British Transport Police covers 3 countries, and this role may require travel across the countries to meet with stakeholders, members of staff, management and suppliers as needed.

British Transport Police believes in inclusivity in public service, and as such your working hours will be reflective of operational and public needs.

For Panel to complete only:

Line Manager Approval:

Panel Approval:

Date:24/02/2022