



Family Liaison Procedure

This document is part of North Yorkshire Police policy to which all Chief Constable personnel and the functions provided by the Deputy Mayor for Policing as part of the York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority are required to adhere.

Overarching Policies:

Procedures:

Major and Serious Crime Attendance Procedure
Investigation of Death Investigation Procedure
Child Death Procedure
Road Collisions Guidance
Major Incident Procedure

Other Documents:

Authorised Professional Practice for Family Liaison Working with victims and witnesses | College of Policing
Major Crime Investigation Manual Major-Crime-Investigation-Manual-Nov-2021.pdf
(college.police.uk)

Process

Family liaison can be used across a broad spectrum of policing, e.g. an unexplained or violent death homicide, road death, mass fatality any other critical incident, or where family liaison might enhance the effectiveness of the police response. The key aims of family liaison in general are to:

- Secure the confidence and trust of the family thereby enhancing their contribution to the investigation.
- Gather material from the family in a manner that contributes to the investigation and preserves its integrity.
- To work with the family in order to comply with their Rights to receive all relevant information connected with the enquiry, subject to the needs of the investigation, in a way that is proportionate to their fundamental right to respect for their privacy and family life.
- to ensure that the family are given information about support agencies and that appropriate referrals are made to:
 - the Homicide Service
 - victim and witness support
 - the NHS and social services

- credible support charities, in accordance with the family's consent and wishes

This procedure outlines the roles of Family Liaison Coordinators / Advisors (FLCs) and Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) within North Yorkshire Police (NYP); provide a framework for the selection, appointment, training, deployment and management of FLOs in NYP; provide formal management procedures for call-outs, deployment and debriefing of all FLOs. The portfolio holder for Family Liaison within NYP will be a Detective Superintendent.

Family Liaison Coordinators (FLCs)

There are up to five FLCs / Advisors within NYP, who will be of Inspector or Sergeant rank.

FLCs will be trained to the national standard as contained within current national guidance documentation and have knowledge of the role of Family Liaison Officer.

The role and responsibilities of FLCs are detailed in the NPCC Practice Advice for the roles and structure of Family Liaison.

FLCs, along with the portfolio holder, are responsible for maintaining a sufficient number of FLOs within the force, and that they are trained to, and maintain the required standard.

FLCs must submit details of the number of FLO's, FLC's and their skills, to NPoCC for recording on the Mercury system, should out of force deployments be required.

FLCs work on call from a rota published at the start of every year, the on call FLC must be contacted regarding any potential deployment of a FLO.

The FLC will make an informed decision regarding whether to deploy a FLO, how many to deploy, what skills are required and any other additional requirements. The FLC will be responsible for calling out a FLO. Family Liaison does not have an allocated budget and therefore any overtime incurred will be coded to the department or command where the request originates.

Following FLO deployment, FLC's will advise, support and assist the SIO or Lead Road Death Investigator on the strategy relating to the family.

The FLC will complete a biannual review with the FLOs they are responsible for with the purpose of reviewing current deployments, review of FLO logs and ensuring welfare and continued suitability for future deployments.

Family Liaison Officers (FLOs)

The role and responsibilities of the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) are detailed in the NPCC Practice Advice for the roles and structure of Family Liaison

Recruitment for FLOs will be conducted by FLCs.

Prospective FLOs should be capable investigators, and in the case of Police Officers, will have completed their student officer portfolio of work to confirm competence in role.

The role of FLO requires certain personal qualities, including the following, but this list is not exhaustive:

- Good interpersonal skills
- Strong communication and listening skills
- Be confident and self-assured
- Be able to manage their stress
- Have the ability to work alone with minimal supervision
- Be flexible and non-judgmental

FLOs will be geographically spread across the force area, and there is no requirement to be based at certain stations.

Deployment of FLOs

These procedures make no distinction between the roles carried out by FLOs, whether deployed in response to incidents of Homicide, Suspicious Deaths, Road Deaths, Major Disasters or Critical Incidents.

However, it recognises that certain incidents might require the deployment of a FLO with other specialist skills, dependent upon the nature of the incident.

FLOs deployed to Homicide cases should be PIP 2 accredited, with FLOs deployed to road deaths or other critical incidents, at least PIP 1 accredited.

FLOs are to be deployed in pairs. Where this is not possible the rational will be sent to the SIO with the intention the associated risks are acknowledged.

Any need to deviate from this national guidance will form part of the FLC strategy, with clear rationale as to why.

Prior to deployment, the FLC will carry out a thorough risk assessment with the FLO, regarding their suitability for deployment. Details of this are available in national guidance.

FLOs will communicate with families only using NYP phones/devices and will only attend a family address in an NYP vehicle unless authorised by an FLC.

FLCs will inform Resource Management Unit, Coroner's Officers, Welfare, Corporate Communications, and relevant supervision regarding FLO deployment.

FLOs required to deploy for Counter Terrorism investigations will require the appropriate level of vetting.

Exit Strategy

FLOs will explain to families from the outset that their deployment will cease following the investigation (exit).

FLOs will exit from the family at an appropriate time in the investigation. This will be determined and documented by the SIO in conjunction with the FLC and will depend on the context of the deployment.

Training and CPD

CPD is essential to ensure FLOs remain up to date with changes to legislation and procedure. NYP will deliver a minimum of 1 CPD day every year, additionally FLOs will be afforded the opportunity to attend regional and national CPD events. FLC's will record attendance at CPD events.

FLOs must record CPD in their PDR and attend a minimum of one event every two years to maintain their accreditation. FLCs will need to rationale any deviation from this.

Disaster Victim Identification CPD will take place biennially, and FLOs must maintain this accreditation to be deployed to DVI incidents.

Welfare

FLOs are required to have a yearly welfare referral and assessment.

FLCs will conduct quarterly welfare "check-ins" with FLOs regarding their welfare, ongoing caseload, and fitness to deploy.

Prior to, and during deployment, FLCs will check FLO welfare. It is the responsibility of the FLO to bring matters to the FLC's attention.

Definition of Special Terms

FLO – Family Liaison Officer

FLC – Family Liaison Coordinator (NB – NYP use the FLC terminology to describe the role carried out by what is described nationally as Family Liaison Coordinator, and Family Liaison Adviser (FLA))