

T/Chief Constable
T/Chief Constable Darren Martland
Police Headquarters
Carleton Hall Penrith,
Cumbria
CA10 2AU



1st October 2025

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – FOI 1287/25 Family Liaison Officers

I refer to your request for information which was received by Cumbria Constabulary on 4th September 2025. I note you seek access to the following information:

I would like to request a copy of your policies on Family Liaison Officers, in particular, in relation to their deployment in the case of families bereaved by suicide.

I would be grateful if you could answer the following questions:

1. *What guidance do you follow for the deployment of family liaison officers?*
 - (a) *National Police Chiefs Council found here: [Working with victims and witnesses | College of Policing](#)*
 - (b) *Your own guidance or policies, if so, please may you provide a copy*
 - (c) *Other, please detail what these are*
2. *Does your guidance allow for the deployment of Family Liaison Officer's in the case of families bereaved by suicide?*
 - (a) *Yes, if so, please detail the requirement for deployment*
 - (b) *No, if not please detail the reason for this*

Your request for information has now been considered and I can confirm Cumbria Constabulary does hold some information relevant to your request and where this is the case I have today decided to disclose this to you.

Question 1a.

The Constabulary complies with the NPCC Guidance referred to in your request, which includes NPCC – Practice Advice – management and Structure for Family Liaison 2020

This guidance states:-

"The primary purpose of a Family Liaison Officer (FLO) is that of an investigator. Their role is to gather evidence and information from the family to contribute to the investigation and preserves its integrity. The FLO also provides support and information, in a sensitive and compassionate manner and secures the confidence and trust of families. FLOs will liaise with families of victims of crime (primarily homicide), road fatality, mass fatality or other critical incident. They will ensure bereaved families are given timely information in accordance with the needs of the investigation.

Forces should ensure that they have a sufficient number of trained Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) to deploy to incidents of:

- *Homicide*
- *Fatal Road traffic collisions*



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- *Mass fatalities*
- *Rail fatalities*
- *Critical incidents where family liaison might enhance the effectiveness of the police response.*
Eg: Missing Person who may be victims of crime (homicide) or Child deaths.”

Question 1b.

The Constabulary's Policy and Procedure for "Sudden, Unexplained & Suspicious Deaths" approved on 14th December 2023 and amended December 2024, contains a section on Family Liaison Officers which is reproduced below for your information

Family Liaison Officers

Family liaison officers (FLO'S) are available in cases of homicide, other major crime, road death and any incident classed as a critical incident. FLO's should not be used for delivering death messages unless it is by exception. Deployment of a FLO or number of FLO's must be through a Family Liaison Coordinator (FLC). The FLC will consider how many FLO's are needed and assist with joined up timing of any investigation updates to family members. There is no call out procedure for FLO's or FLC's. The SIO or LIO is responsible for contact the FLC who in turn will identify suitable FLO's. Contacting FLO's directly should be avoided unless in exceptional circumstances. A FLO deployment would not ordinarily take place during the early hours of a morning, therefore consider using other police officers to deliver urgent death messages etc. The primary role of an FLO is to carry out investigation into the death appropriately and professionally with respect to the needs of the family. Where a FLO has been deployed in a coronial investigation/inquest – all contact and communication with the bereaved family will be via the FLO and not via HM Coroners Service.

Question 1c.

N/A

Question 2.

Force Policy & Procedure and NPCC guidance does not set out a requirement for deployment of a FLO in instances of suicide.

There is a definitive list (as shown above), of the type of crime and incidents which would generally initiate the deployment of a FLO.

There is however a 'catch all' category for those incidents, that are not part of the definitive list, that does allow for the deployment of a FLO. That being a critical incident. If a particular suicide was declared a critical incident, then the deployment of a FLO could be considered. However, it is highly unlikely that a suicide would be declared a critical incident and is mainly preserved for the cases described above. Namely, missing persons who could be victims of homicide or child deaths.

Whilst every care has been taken in the retrieval of the information provided, please do not hesitate to contact us for clarification, if you do have any issues or queries relating to this information.

Complaint Rights

If you believe your request has not been properly handled, or you are otherwise dissatisfied with the outcome of your request, you have the right to request an internal review.

In the first instance, please email freedomofinformation@cumbria.police.uk quoting the FOI reference number and explain why you are dissatisfied. Your complaint will be considered and a response will be provided to you after your complaint has been investigated.

If you remain dissatisfied following conclusion of the internal review, you have the right, under section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to complain directly to the Information Commissioner.



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The address for the Information Commissioner can be found below:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Complaints to the Information Commissioner can also be made online:

[Make a complaint | ICO](#)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in Cumbria Constabulary.



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