



**NPIA**

National Policing  
Improvement Agency

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

# Family Liaison Officer Guidance 2008

Produced on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers  
by the National Policing Improvement Agency

In addition to these qualities, the personal circumstances of officers have to be considered in the selection process if they have suffered a significant loss in the past eighteen-month period, or have recently undergone a major life trauma such as divorce or serious illness of a close relative or partner. Officers who apply to become a FLO should be consulted about these factors in the decision-making process. Their potential impact should be weighed up on a case-by-case basis rather than automatically excluding from selection for training any officer who has experienced them.

The investigative skills required to take on the role of a FLO vary according to the nature of their deployment and whether they are new to role or established.

#### **New to Role**

- Crime and mass disaster FLOs must be competent at PIP Level 2.
- For specialist roads policing, FLOs must be competent at PIP Level 1.

FLOs who are new to the role should undergo the training and development programme specified in the *NPIA (2008) National Curriculum for the Family Liaison Officer Development Programme*.

#### **Established FLOs**

- Established FLOs for crime investigation and mass disaster must either be already competent to Level 2 of the Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP) or be working towards it with a view to attaining Level 2 status.
- Established FLOs for road death investigations must be competent to Level 1 of PIP.

Evidence of the ongoing competence of a FLO should be included in the officer's annual PDR records.

### **5.3 SELECTION CRITERIA FOR DEPLOYMENT**

Even though an officer has been trained and is fully competent as a FLO, circumstances may dictate that their deployment or retention in the role with a particular family is inappropriate.

The criteria used by SIOs/SIMs to select FLOs for a particular investigation is described in the Role of the Senior Investigating Officer/Senior Identification Manager.

It is the FLO's responsibility to inform the SIO/SIM of any factors that they are aware of that make their deployment or continued retention in the role inappropriate, eg, a change in their personal circumstances, views expressed by the family, conflicts within the family.

### **5.4 ACTION ON APPOINTMENT**

On appointment the FLO should discuss with the SIO/SIM an appropriate strategy for working with the victim's family. The level of involvement by the FLO and specific tasks allocated during the investigation will be governed by this strategy. It is, therefore, essential that the FLO establishes the parameters of their role within the enquiry and is clear about the objectives they are seeking to meet as set out in the SIO/SIM's strategy.

The FLO is responsible for passing appropriate information about the enquiry to the family. This is with the agreement of the SIO in order to avoid compromising the enquiry. As an investigator, the FLO will usually be responsible for taking statements from the family relating to identification of the body and lifestyle, victimology and behavioural characteristics of the victim.

The FLO must make arrangements to meet the family as soon as possible.

Before meeting the family the FLO will:

- Receive a briefing from the SIO/IO or FLC;
- Be made aware of any risk assessment issues.

In all cases the FLO must:

- Familiarise themselves with any available information and intelligence which could impact on the liaison role, eg, Impact assessment document, community tension indicators, previous police involvement with the victim and/or family members;
- Establish the extent and nature of contact with the police since the time of the incident/death;
- Establish what information has been passed to the family, to whom and by whom;
- Establish what information concerning the incident is already in the public domain;
- Update, for the purposes of review, the risk assessment following initial contact with the family.

## 5.5 VICTIMOLOGY

In the aftermath of any homicide one of the highest priority actions is to gather victimology or lifestyle information about the victim.

This is generally done by tasking the FLOs at an early stage (fast-track actions) and should come back to the MIR in the form of statements and messages. These should be cross-referenced to the FLO log. A copy of the log should also be submitted to the MIR.

This information is gathered from those that have been identified as being close to the victim. Usually this is the family of the deceased, but on occasion enquiries can reveal that those closest to the victim were friends and associates that have to be identified through sensitive but thorough investigation.

The advantage of having this lifestyle information is that in the early stages it can open up possible lines of enquiry by identifying such things as routines, places frequented and associates that might not be immediately apparent to the investigation.

Identifying why someone has become a victim of a serious crime can be a vague and subjective exercise. Lifestyle information is, therefore, often at its most useful when it can be compared against the movements and routine of an identified suspect.

All victimology has the potential to provide the investigation with a number of lines of enquiry but is important to prioritise the crucial elements early in the investigation.

The FLO conducting victimology should obtain a recent photograph of the victim, which shows how they looked before the incident, and complete a full Personal Description Form that includes details of jewellery worn and a description of how their hair was worn at the time.