

The Inquiry is now looking at the relationship between the press and the police.

We're interested in hearing from professionals and the public with information and examples in response to the specific questions below. Your answers may be considered as potential evidence to the Inquiry and may be published in a redacted form as part of the Inquiry's evidence.

Culture, practices and ethics:

1. The Inquiry needs to understand how the relationship between the press and the police currently operates. The Inquiry would be interested in the experiences of police officers, other police staff, and journalists as to how the relationship between the press and the police works in practice.
2. The Inquiry would be interested in the experiences of police officers, other police staff, and journalists as to how the current Police Service policies and guidance in place to regulate the relationship between the press and the police work in practice.
3. The Inquiry would like to build up an overall picture of the nature and level of the interaction that currently exists between the police and the press. The Inquiry would therefore be interested to receive submissions on the type and frequency of contact which currently exists between police officers, other police staff, and the media (differentiating between local and national media contact), with examples where possible.
4. The internet, 24 hour news and social media has brought new challenges for both the police and the press. The Inquiry would be interested in the experiences of police officers, other police staff, and journalists on how this may have altered the relationship, and whether the Police Service policies and guidance in place have kept pace with this changing environment, with examples where possible.
5. The Inquiry would be interested to receive views on the level of awareness and experience that exists within the Police Service of "media crime" (the unlawful interception of communications, bribery of officials by the media and harassment by paparazzi and journalists, for example), with examples where possible.
6. The Inquiry would be interested to receive views as to whether the Police Service governance arrangements, policies and guidance currently in place are sufficient to sustain a transparent and ethical relationship between the police and the press which at the same time upholds the confidentiality and rights of the victims of crime and the public more generally.
7. The Inquiry would be interested to receive submissions on what Police Service training, governance and oversight arrangements exist, and views on whether it is sufficient, to ensure that acceptable boundaries exist between the police and press, with examples where possible.
8. The Inquiry would be interested in the experiences of journalists about whether you have ever felt under any pressure not to report a story involving a police officer or member of police staff (detailing where and from whom the pressure came), with examples where possible.
9. The Inquiry would be interested to receive submissions from police officers, other police staff, and journalists on the extent to which formal and informal interaction between the press and the police is recorded for the purposes of transparency (are such records audited, and if so by whom, for example).

Information control and disclosure:

10. The Inquiry would be interested to receive submissions on the extent to which systems are in place (and an assessment of whether they are adequate) to identify, prevent, manage and investigate police data leaks and breaches.
11. The Inquiry would be interested in the experiences of the victims of crime and the public more generally, who feel that they have been adversely affected (perhaps through a data leak or breach, or through the reporting of a case) by the current relationship between the press and the police, with examples where possible. The Inquiry would also be interested to receive submissions in relation to this issue on whether it is felt that the current investigation and complaint regime are adequate to properly address instances of this type.
12. The Inquiry would welcome submissions on how the police and the media working together is and can be of benefit to the public, with examples where possible.

Professional Standards:

13. The Inquiry would like to receive views as to whether it is felt that adequate governance and oversight arrangements are in place for police officers and other police staff to ensure the effective management and recording of gifts and hospitality, secondary business interests, associations and conflicts of interest.
14. The Inquiry would be interested to receive views as to what type of payments, gifts or hospitality (if any) you consider to be legitimate transactions between police officers, other police staff, and the media, and is and should the approach to payments, gifts or hospitality between the press and the police be different to the approach between the police and other parties.
15. The Inquiry would be interested to receive views as to whether there should be rules in place to govern how and when police officers and other police staff leaving the Police Service can take up posts with the media, commercial or other bodies, with examples of when such a move has been problematic or brought advantages where possible.
16. The Inquiry would be interested to receive views as to whether there should be rules in place to govern how and when members of the press, or the media more generally, can take up posts with the Police Service, with examples of when such a move has been problematic or brought advantages where possible.

Please note that the Inquiry will be considering issues related to module 2 until the end of March but due to the very large volume of evidence we are receiving, it would be helpful to receive submissions by the end of February.