



GRAMPIAN SCG PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Version:

02

Owner:

Grampian SCG Public
Communications Liaison
Group

Approval Date:

8 Mar 2010

**Planned Review
Date:** 7 Dec 2010

Approved By:

Colin Mackenzie
Chair SCG Plans Workstream

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1. Background

1.1 Legislation

This plan has been produced by the Grampian Strategic Coordinating Group as part of it's arrangements to meet the requirements of:

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/ukpga_20040036_en_1

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning)
(Scotland) Regulations 2005

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2005/ssi_20050494_en.pdf

Preparing Scotland (and associated guidance documents)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/243492/0067754.pdf>

1.2 Consultees

This plan has been produced in consultation with all Category 1 and 2 Responders' Corporate Communications in the Grampian Area.

1.3 Purpose

The SCG Public Communications Liaison Group (PCLG) has prepared a plan to ensure effective partnership handling of public information and media relations in the event of an emergency or major incident in the Grampian area.

1.4 Aim

The aim of this plan is to coordinate a multi-agency communications handling in the event of an emergency .

2. SCG Public Communications Response

2.1 Mutual Aid

No single responder organisation has the resources to deal with the media interest and public communications requirements of an emergency situation in the Grampian Area. Grampian SCG Public Communications Plan acknowledges this situation and relies on mutual aid and the quick passage of information, freely shared, between member organisations.

2.2 Public and Media Interest

In recognition of the Civil Contingencies Act, public demand for information, the need to warn and inform, and the speed and scale of media response:

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- The SCG Public Communications Plan will be initiated at the earliest threat of an incident developing into a situation which may attract considerable media attention and/or require substantial public communications effort.
- SCG agencies dealing with the emergency should quickly be in a position to respond with a structured and integrated approach that establishes them as the authoritative source of accurate and consistent information.

2.3 Public Communications Lead Agency

2.3.1 Common Information Picture When the wider consequences of an incident are deemed sufficient to require multi-agency meetings under the auspices of the SCG, the SCG Resilience Support Team will facilitate the collation of a common information picture from information provided by all responders involved in the incident. The information picture will inform the multi-agency decision making process. Part of the common information picture is an assessment of the public communications situation. The common information picture also acts as the primary source of information on the incident response, for all public communications relating to the incident.

2.3.2 Lead Agency Public Communications Tasks In order to provide an effective multi-agency public communications response to an incident, a number of tasks must be addressed at the earliest stage of the multi-agency response:

- Coordination of the public communications output from each organisation involved in the response, to ensure that no one responder organisation unwittingly contradicts, or embarrasses, another and the information requirements of a criminal investigation are met.
- Assessment of mass media output and effect of SCG public communications messages, particularly on the local population, to be contributed to the common information picture.
- Deployment of public communications staff to the incident scene.

These tasks require a number of public communications staff to be deployed locally at the incident scene and within SCG Support. These staff would form the basis of a larger, multi-agency public communications cell if required. The multi-agency public communications cell would be formed around the Corporate Communications Department of either Grampian Police, NHS Grampian, Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen or Moray Councils in recognition that these are the only organisations who could supply the required staff and facilities at short notice, upon which a multi-agency public communications response could be formed. The organisation given this role in an incident will be known as the SCG Public Communications Lead Agency.

2.3.3 Separate Public Communications and Response Lead Agencies The SCG Public Communications Lead Agency will coordinate multi-agency public communications in support of the organisation leading the response. In most cases this will be the same organisation, but there may be situations where a lead responder organisation is unable to provide the public communications staff and facilities required to support the multi-agency response. In such cases either Grampian Police, NHS Grampian, Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen or Moray Councils will be appointed SCG Public Communications Lead Agency, to support the lead responder and in particular, the lead responder's public communications staff.

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2.4 Lead Communications Officer and Initial Response

2.4.1 Identification The senior communications officer of the responder organisation identifying the potential emergency, becomes the Lead Communications Officer and will remain so until the SCG decides otherwise.

2.4.2 Activation The Lead Communications Officer (LCO) will activate the SCG Public Communications Cell (SCG PCC) in the following circumstances:

- On an SCG Tactical level of response being initiated.
- If the incident requires a multi-agency response and the public communications demands are likely to be such that the Lead Agency's immediately available on-call staff will require assistance.
(In such cases, the LCO should inform their own organisation's Tactical commander that whilst the incident may have minor impact and be dealt with at operational level, the media and political interest alone may warrant SCG Tactical or Strategic being initiated.)

The LCO will use appropriate means to alert as quickly as possible, the communications officers of all SCG organisations to the incident and request support to form the SCG PCC.

2.5 SCG Public Communications Cell – Concept of Operations

Having activated the SCG PCC in accordance with Paragraph 2.4.2, the LCO will form the SCG PCC using initial (on-call) response staff from their own, and partner organisations as appropriate. The minimum numbers of staff required for an SCG PCC will be:

- Lead Communications Officer x 1
- SCG Information Coordinator x 1
- Forward Media Liaison x as required
- Information Input x 1
- Information Output x 1

As an incident expands, or as more public communications staff become available, the LCO may increase the size of the SCG PCC or, incorporate the initial response staff into the lead agency's own, full scale PCC, established in accordance with their own media response plan.

The Lead Agency's PCC once established, will assume the roles and responsibilities of the SCG PCC.

SCG member organisations are expected to provide support to the PCC as requested by the LCO.

2.6 SCG Public Communications Cell – Staffing Requirements, Roles and Responsibilities

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The role of the SCG PCC will be to provide the SCG with a single point of contact, responsible for coordinating all SCG public information input, and information output, for the purposes of assessing the public information situation relating to the incident and ensuring enquiries are appropriately dealt with. The minimum numbers of staff required to deliver the SCG PCC responsibilities, detailed below, are as follows:

2.6.1 Lead Communications Officer

Staff Required: Single post, initially senior communications officer from lead responder agency, located with SCG Chair, SCG Tactical Lead or SCG Tactical/Support.

Responsibilities:

- Support and advise SCG Strategic/Tactical lead.
- Advise on formulation of SCG Public Information strategy.
- Control all SCG information output.
- Establish quick exchange and release of all SCG communications, invoking "10 minute rule" wherever possible.
- Prepare initial public information statement for media release.
- Ensure there is sufficient staffing for the SCG PCC, enlisting mutual aid, if required.

2.6.2 SCG Information Coordinator

Staff Required: Single post, appointed by LCO. May be from own organisation or, may be an on-call communications officer from a partner agency. Located with SCG Tactical/Support.

Responsibilities:

- Liaise with all partner organisations co-located at SCG Tactical/Support.
- Contribute public information input to SCG collective situational awareness.
- Effect exchange and release of all SCG communications under "10 minute rule".
- Deputise for LCO if required at SCG Strategic, or Tactical, briefings.

These two posts are supported by:

2.6.3 Forward Media Liaison Point

Staff Required: Number of communications staff required will depend upon the number of scenes and level of media interest. Staff may come from any SCG member organisation and will be located at the scene, or scenes.

Responsibilities: Establish contact with media at the incident scene and liaise with LCO and SCG Information Coordinator.

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2.6.4 Information Input

Staff Required: Number of communications staff required will depend upon scale of incident and availability of staff. No requirement for staff to be located with LCO, staff may be located in lead organisation, or partner organisation's, own offices

Responsibilities:

- Collate and coordinate all media requests for information.
- Monitor and report the nature and quantity of public requests for information to all agencies.
- Monitor conventional and social media output and public perception of the response.

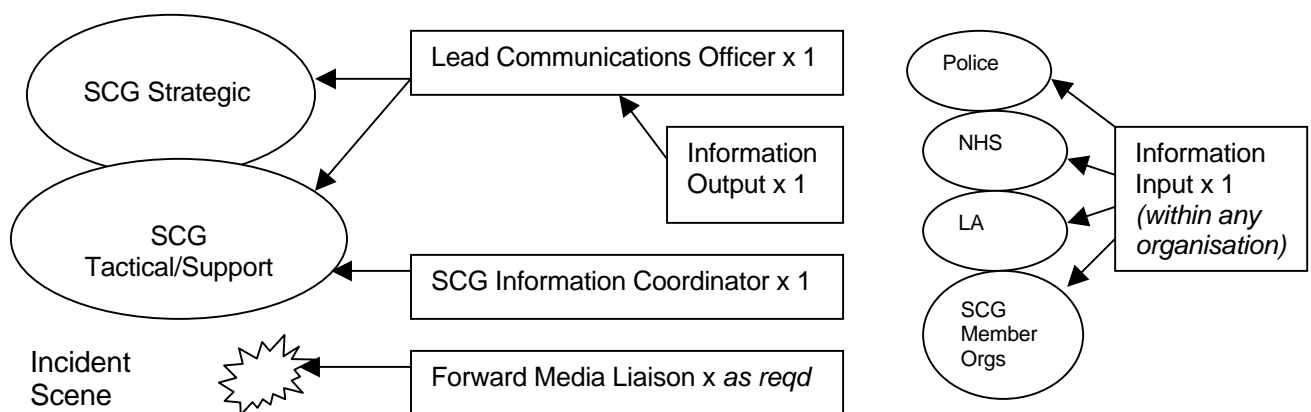
2.6.4 Information Output

Staff Required: Number of communications staff required will depend upon scale of incident and availability of staff. A minimum of one member of staff needs to be located with LCO. Further support, if available, or required, to deliver the responsibilities detailed at 2.6, may be provided by communications staff located in lead organisation, or partner organisation's, own offices.

Responsibilities:

- Ensure the output of all SCG information, from all member organisations, to all audiences, is coordinated by the Lead Organisation
- Provide assessment of public information situation and requirements, for SCG briefings.
- Assist LCO to appoint and support an incident spokesperson and coordinating spokespersons from partner agencies.
- Write common information output as required by LCO

2.6.5 Minimum Staffing Location Diagram



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2.7 SCG Public Communications Cell – Operating Principles

Communications staff will mainly operate using their own organisation's plans and procedures but, when working for the SCG PCC will adopt the following operating principles:

- In the approach to public communication, consider the following:
 - Raising awareness of risks
 - Alerting people to immediate danger
 - Providing information to avoid harm
 - Advising on steps to be taken
 - Describing the recovery process
- Forward Media Liaison Points and Media Briefing Centres will be established in accordance with the procedures of the organisation tasked with their set-up.
- All channels of communication will be considered for use in conveying the appropriate messages to the identified target audiences, including websites, SMS, helplines as well as media.
- Releases will be coordinated by the SCG PCC and all agencies will ensure that key partners have sight of their releases before issue. In order to ensure quick response the LCO will normally allow 10 minutes for consideration of information then authorise release, (the "10 minute rule").
- Careful consideration will be given to the Lord Advocate's Guidelines and the possibility of any criminal proceedings . Where incidents involve loss of life and/or possible criminal proceedings, the LCO will ensure that the Procurator Fiscal is included in release clearances.
- Agencies will share with key partners relevant details regarding the incident, plans for public information, media relations, and information obtained from media. Information sharing among agencies will be coordinated by the SCG PCC.
- Public warning and media response will be as quick and open as is possible.
- Agencies will react favourably to requests for a representative to speak to the media after consultation with the LCO.
- Any costs incurred in response to an incident should be detailed and accounted for.

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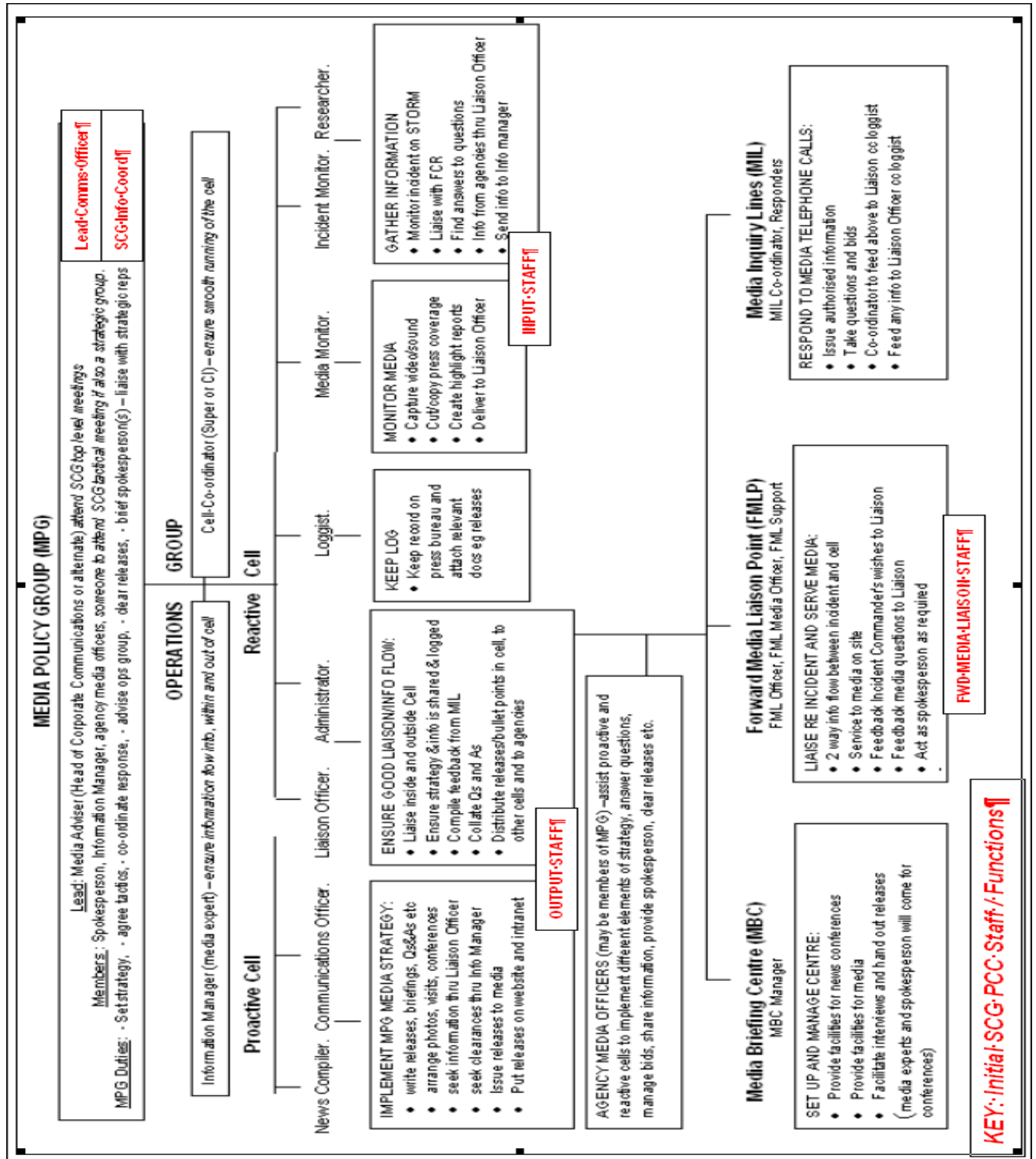
Appendix A Exercise Record

Date	Ex Name	Ex Description
20 Mar 07	EX ARDBEG (Plan V1)	Exercised Police Media Cell with observers present from other SCG organisations. Exercise run with the assistance of Escott-Hunt consultants.
18 Apr 08	EX BALVENIE	Exercised Police Media Cell with involvement of other SCG organisations. Exercise run with the assistance of Escott-Hunt consultants.

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Appendix B Example of Full Public Communications Cell (Grampian Police)



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Appendix C SCG Public Communications "On-Call" List

Aberdeen City Council – Request On-Call Media Officer

Office Hours – Tel: 01224 523188

Out of Hours – Tel: 07734 162349 or 07801 792825

Aberdeenshire Council – Request On-Call Media Officer

Office Hours – Tel: 01224 665108

Out of Hours – Tel: 07770 314617

Grampian Fire and Rescue Service – Request On-Duty Officer request Media Officer

Office Hours – Tel: 01224 633788 (Control Room)

Out of Hours – Tel: as above

Grampian Police – Request On-Call Media Officer

Office Hours – Tel: 01224 306430

Out of Hours – Tel: 01224 306401 (Control Room)

Moray Council – Request On-Call Media Officer

Office Hours – Tel: 01343 563601

Out of Hours – Tel: 07974 191318

NHS Grampian – Request On-Call Media Officer

Office Hours – Tel: 01224 558819

Out of Hours – Tel: 07623 844473 (pager)

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