

Managing Media Attention Following a Bereavement

After a crime, you might find the media are interested in you, the family member who died and about what happened. 'The media' refers to people who work for TV, radio, newspapers and magazines.

Some people want to share their story with the media, while others want their experiences to remain as private as possible.

The information in this guide will help you to decide how to deal with media interest.

You can talk to your Key Worker if you have any questions or concerns. They are available to help you with practical support.

Places You Are Likely to Come Into Contact with the Media

- At the location of the crime
- At your home, reporters might try and visit you at your house
- At court proceedings, reporters will be allowed in the court or may wait outside the court
- Via social media or by phone

Details Reporters Might Want to Know

- Details about the person who has died, such as their full name, age or occupation
- Information about how the person died
- Details about what the person was like and how they will be remembered
- Details about any memorial service or commemoration
- Photographs of the person who has died

Details the Media is Allowed to Publish

- Anything that has been said in court or used as evidence, including evidence or testimony given by either a witness or a defendant
- The name, age, and address of anyone who is involved in a court case
- Photos of anyone involved in a court case, including photos taken by a photographer or photos from social media

According to the media regulator stories must

- Be accurate and should not include misleading or distorted information or images, including headlines not supported by the text
- Distinguish clearly between comment, conjecture and fact

Where Journalists Can Find out Information

Journalists might try and contact you, your family and friends to find out information about what happened

Check your social media privacy settings. If your account is public, your information will be available to anyone on the internet. On Facebook, your profile picture will be private only if you temporarily deactivate or permanently delete your profile

After a person's death, their image and personal information may be accessible via their social media account. If the social media profile of the deceased is public, the information will be visible to anyone online until the account is memorialised, deactivated or deleted

Your Choices When Journalists Get in Touch

You do not have to make comment to the media if you do not want to. It's your choice.

If You DO Want to Talk to the Media

- You can speak to them yourself or you can appoint a family member or a person you trust to deal with any media inquiries on your behalf. (You might appoint your Key Worker as your point of contact for the media)
- You can ask for their questions in advance so that you have time to prepare
- You can request that the media use a particular photograph of the person who has died in their coverage. Speak to your FLO or your caseworker and they can support you to share your chosen photograph with the appropriate people

If You DO NOT Want to Talk to the Media

- You can contact The Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO: the independent regulator of most of the UK's newspapers and magazines) and ask them to issue a 'private advisory notice'. These notices are circulated industry-wide to inform reporters of individuals or families who do not want contact with journalists
- You can create a written statement and refer any journalists to it who might approach you with questions
- If reporters try to call you, you can change your answer phone message to state that only personal callers should leave a message as you do not wish to speak to the media
- If you are at home and do not wish to answer your door, pin a short note to it to say that you do not wish to speak to journalists and do not want to be disturbed
- If a journalist approaches you without having arranged an interview, this is called "doorstepping." This is a breach of the regulators code of conduct and you can make a complaint (you can ask your Key Worker for more information on how to help you with this)

If You Don't Want Photos or Videos Of You to Appear in the Media

Let photographers know clearly that you do not wish to be photographed and that you are asking them to stop. You can add that, under the Editors' Code of Practice, journalists must not continue their activities once asked to stop

Avoiding Media Coverage of the Death

You might find the media speculating about the crime and the people involved.

There are some ways in which you can protect yourself from this

- Do not Google your name or the crime
- You can block certain words, phrases and pages in your social media feeds

Rules Professional Reporters Should Follow

Newspapers, magazines, TV and Radio are overseen by different organisations. These regulators can intervene to fine companies or set out action to rectify a situation.

People writing for personal blogs or on social media are not required to follow the same rules as professional reporters.

Things you can do if a reporter continues to contact you after asking them to stop

- If you feel physically threatened or in immediate danger call the police
- If you are being telephoned repeatedly it can be useful to use voice-mail for a time. Change your answer phone message to state that only personal callers should leave a message as you do not wish to speak to the media
- Find out the journalist's name and the name of the publication or agency they work for and report the journalist to the appropriate regulator

IPSO have an emergency advice line which can be used out of office hours. This is for cases of harassment by a journalist or for pre-publication advice. It should not be used for general enquiries or to make a complaint.

IPSO 24 hour emergency advice line: 07799 903 929