

Guidance notes for documentary makers

Introduction

Cleveland Police is frequently approached by documentary-makers requesting access to film officers and staff at work. Cleveland Police values openness, and recognises the role of documentaries in showing the public the realities of policing in action. However we need to balance this against the requirement for confidentiality, possible disruption to operations arising from filming, and our capacity as an organisation to provide the necessary support, to ensure filming is carried out appropriately, legally and safely.

In order to ensure that documentary requests are considered thoroughly and fairly, we have developed a process for considering requests. This document provides guidance on how to submit a filming request for our consideration.

How to make a request

Cleveland Police will only consider filming requests that are submitted via the online Documentary Request form. This is available on the Cleveland Police website in the Contact Us section.

You may contact the Corporate Communications Team for an exploratory conversation about your documentary, but you will still need to complete the form for your request to be considered.

We will try to give a decision on requests submitted via the online form within 20 working days.

Completing the request form

Most of the form is simple factual information. However a key part of the form is the description of your filming request. In answering this section, you may find the following pointers helpful:

Give an overview of the programme and what is the overall thrust of it, so we understand what your programme is about, and who it is for

Help us to assess what our time commitment would be, and the possible impact on operations, by explaining:

- Who you would like to film (departments, teams, individuals)
- Your approach to filming and how you would work with the Force
- How you anticipate carrying out the filming, how many people would be involved and how much time you would expect to spend in-Force. For example, from a police perspective, there is a significant difference between supporting an embedded film crew following officers for several weeks, and a series of short face-to-face interviews with individual officers/staff.

We set a high priority on requests that meet our ethos and priorities as a service. That means we are most interested in supporting programmes that:

- Represent the reality of policing in Cleveland (as distinct from other regions)
- Are considered, rather than sensational, in tone
- Support a holistic and nuanced public understanding of the role of the police, and the real-life issues that officers and staff face
- Are deliverable – i.e. it is possible to tell an effective and engaging story without compromising victims, investigations or court proceedings

Questions

If you are a documentary-maker and wish to have an informal discussion about your filming request, please contact the Corporate Communications Team on CorporateCommunicationsUnit@cleveland.pnn.police.uk