



PROCEDURE FOR ISSUE OF PRESS RELEASES

Equality

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Commission has a number of key objectives. One of its key objectives is to enhance public confidence in the ability of the Scottish Criminal Justice System to cure miscarriages of Justice. In order to achieve this objective, the Commission believes that it is vital that it promotes greater public understanding of the Commission's role in the criminal justice system, and, where appropriate, to publicise how it carries out this role.
- 1.2 As a consequence the Commission has decided to revise its procedure for press releases.
- 1.3 This new procedure came into effect in relation to decisions issued after 1 January 2007.

2.0 Timing of announcement of Commission's Decision

- 2.1 It is essential that the timing of any announcement regarding the fact that a decision has been reached by the Commission is strictly controlled, in order that the nature of the decision does not become known to the press before appropriate notification has been given by the Commission to the applicant and others to whom the statement of reasons is issued and, by the Crown, to the victim or the family of a deceased victim, if the Crown chooses to make such notification.
- 2.2 Accordingly, the press notice will not be issued prior to 3pm on the third working day following the date of issue of the letter accompanying the statement of reasons.
- 2.3 In cases deemed by the Commission to be of particular public interest this timeframe may be altered.

3.0 Procedure for Issue

- 3.1 The legal officer will prepare a press statement at the same time as s/he prepares the letters accompanying the statement of reasons for referral.
- 3.2 S/he will e-mail this to the Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) at the same time as the SOR covering letters are passed to the Chief Executive for signature. In the absence of the DoCS, the press statement will be e-mailed to the Chief Executive.
- 3.3 The administration officer will notify the DoCS when the SOR has been issued. On the day that the referral issues the DoCS will e-mail the press release to the Scottish Government Press Office. The press release will be embargoed until 3pm on the date of the third working date from the date the referral issued.
- 3.4 If cases are deemed by the Commission to be of particular public interest this timeframe may be altered.
- 3.5 In conjunction with the issue of the press release from Communications Justice, the DoCS will ensure that the full press release is posted on the news page of the Commission's website.

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