

Desirable content

The following categories of content will help to make your newsletter more informative for the audience. You should try and include as many of these categories as possible.

- Police Procedures and Priorities

On issue 4 listing your community-identified priorities is compulsory. Stress that these have been chosen by people in the local community and explain what has been done or is going to be done to address them. Highlight the benefits this will bring to the community.

Understanding more about the way the police works helps to build trust and reassurance and reduce the fear of crime.

- Feedback and Follow-up

Provide information on the outcomes of successful operations and initiatives.

Place an emphasis on the benefits to the local community.

- Crime Prevention and Safety Advice

The public are keen to know how they can be proactive against crime. Support your priorities with relevant crime prevention tips. Generic crime prevention tips for your use can be found on the SN intranet.

- Engagement Opportunities

People like to know how they can meet you in person and get involved in making their community safer. On issue 4 it is a requirement to list forthcoming events with dates, times and locations plus a brief description of what they can expect. Bear in mind the distribution date of the newsletter and ensure any events etc are after this date. You can also refer them to the team web page for up-to-date information. Encourage people to get involved by joining a ward panel, becoming a Special, Volunteer, Cadet or PCSO.

- Contact Details

The public wish to be given detailed contact information for their local police services, such as address, telephone number and opening times of their local police station, possibly an alternative contact number when the police station is closed, as well as the names of local officers.

- Crime Figures

Care must be taken if using crime figures. Ensure they are approved for release. To avoid raising the fear of crime, support the figures with some crime prevention advice and details of what you are doing to address it.

- Keep it Local

Ensure information is relevant and about what was going on in their area/ward, not in London in general.

- Keep it Police Focused

Ensure all the information is about work your team are doing to address community concerns. The newsletter is not intended to carry stories about the exclusive work of partner agencies. However, do include information on joint initiatives with partner agencies where you have led on it and they address a ward priority.

- Language and Writing Style

People like a writing style that is friendly and approachable, but still professional. Be aware of the messages you are delivering, the tone of voice and words that you use. Inappropriate content and language can increase the fear of crime. Use plain English and avoid abbreviations, jargon or slang expressions. Use the word man instead of male etc. When referring to police operations do not use operational names, just say 'local police operations to tackle street crime' etc. Levels of understanding, technical terms, police speak and acronyms should not be underestimated. For further guidance, see the Plain English Guide available on the DPA intranet site.

- Photos and Images

On the front page we strongly recommend the use of a team photo as an eye-catching intro to the newsletter. Photos really bring a story to life so use them when you can and as appropriate. Ensure you read the guidelines on photos provided in this pack. Do not use cartoon or clipart images as they look unprofessional. Be aware of copyright on any images that do not belong to the MPS. Try to avoid using maps – these appear too small and are difficult to read making them useless. Refer people to the website instead if maps are available in a clearer format there.

- Layout

Although you have been provided with a template, you still need to consider how your newsletter will look once printed. Try not to carry sentences from one page to the next, start a new page with a new sentence. Avoid big empty spaces but make sure it isn't too cramped. You can preview your newsletter to check this.

Consider what you put on the front page. Don't use a general update, use something positive you've done to address a community concern. Use the back for contact and event information.

- Logos

NB: No other logos other than the MPS and SN logos are permitted on these newsletters. They have been created to be a clear piece of police communication. You can include information about working with partners and websites where necessary, but do not include their logos.

News Story Tips

The following tips will help you put together a news story. A good news story template is available on the SN Intranet site to help you structure your story.

- Use stories that highlight the work the team are doing to address community identified priorities and act upon intelligence provided by the community
- Keep the information timely, local and relevant - people want to read about what is happening in their area and what you are doing to tackle it, so it is important to be specific
- Highlight what is different about Safer Neighbourhoods. Arrests are excellent but police officers are expected to do this. The real difference is in the quality of life issues Safer Neighbourhoods officers are tackling that are making a real positive difference to the community. Use stories that show how the community has benefited and feel safer from the work you have done and provide the results i.e. a reduction in the problem/crime, positive feedback from the community/those affected
- Show how you have worked in partnership with partner agencies and the community
- Show how you are working with hard to reach areas of the community to get across messages and tailor operations
- Avoid stories about the team's attendance at an event – they can be of interest but tell the reader little about the work you do and the benefit of it to them
- Remember to highlight all the facts, the who, why, what, where and when
- What was the problem and what effect was it having on the community?

1. What was done, by whom, how and when?

2. What was the result, what positive effect did it have on the community?

- Be careful not to raise the fear of crime with the detail and tone of voice you use. Ensure you tell them about the problem but get the balance right

- and support it with details of what you are doing to tackle it along with some crime prevention advice
- Be careful of subjudice – see Content Tips section in the briefing pack for details
 - Be careful when incorporating news stories involving crime and arrests. The names of individuals and addresses, such as drugs or brothel raids, involved should remain anonymous throughout; this is particularly the case with on-going investigations
 - Keep your stories short and to the point
 - Try to use a photo to illustrate the story – see Photo Tips
 - Try not to date your stories so that they appear out of date when published
 - Do not make reference to a person's/community's ethnic, cultural or religious background. This information is irrelevant to the story.

Photos Tips & Specifications

Photos make your newsletter more eye-catching and help to bring the stories to life. The photos could be of operations in action, your team engaging with members of the public at an event, or the results of an initiative such as a clean up.

Important

- Do NOT take images from the Internet i.e. from Google images. These images are copyrighted and should not be used. The resolution is also too low for print quality and so the image will appear distorted when printed on the newsletter.
- When saving your images ensure that they are saved as .jpg and NOT .png or .gif
- Images must be taken in landscape view. They will automatically fit in the image boxes on the newsletter template without distorting.
- If your camera allows for different size (mega pixels) images, please select 2mpix, this is the best size when uploading to the template. Do not use 5 mpix or above as this will take a long time to upload and may cause technical problems.
- If you are going to crop your image please make sure the aspect ratio is 4:3. The maximum canvas size is 2080 pixels wide x 1560 pixels high. This equates to a 3mp image however it is more suitable to use a size at around half this amount, i.e. 1280 pixels x 960 pixels.

Here are some useful tips for taking and selecting good photos:

- Use a team photo on the front page
- Try and take a digital camera with you to all operations and events
- When taking photos of members of the public, ensure you get their permission and make sure they understand how you intend to use it. If the

- person is under 16, get permission from their parent, guardian or school beforehand. It is good practice to ask the person in a photo to sign a photo release form (found on the SN intranet site), a copy of which is kept by them and you. Be sure you can identify the photo in future in case the person no longer wants you to use it. Please speak to your BPLO if you have any concerns
- You may wish to take photos of people with their backs to the camera (including minors) so that they cannot be identified if that person prefers this.
 - Try to make the photos natural with officers or other people in action and not standing in a row smiling at the camera, as people like to see what the story is about. However, please also bear in mind too much movement may cause blurred photos
 - Take photos with the sun behind you to avoid a reflective glare
 - In areas where there is poor lighting, please use flash photography
 - Try to take photos in recognisable community locations
 - Be aware of what is in the background before taking the photo, such as, a tree that appears to be growing out of someone's head, a vandalised bus stop (unless that is what the story is about), advertisements or phone numbers
 - Ensure officers look smart and are wearing the correct uniform for that occasion, this is particularly important when taking team photos
 - When taking a photo, ensure you are aware of what is happening in the shot, namely people's body language
 - Take before and after photos of clean ups
 - When selecting the most appropriate photos, consider the ones which will appeal most to the reader
 - Ensure you include a caption which describes what the image is about and who is in the image
 - If you do not have any photos for your stories and cannot revisit the area to take some more, consider using generic images
 - Do NOT use cartoon and clip art images - these look unprofessional

Approval Check List for Creators and Authorisers

Please check the following before signing off a newsletter:

- Team name and contact details are correct
- Spelling and grammar – the online template does not have a spell check facility. Text should be checked in a Word document before being pasted into the online template.
- Check road names are spelt correctly
- There is no jargon and acronyms are spelt out in full
- NB: Any forthcoming events, facts and figures are still relevant in date by the time the newsletter is distributed (see Schedule & Actions)

- That any people appearing in photos have given their consent – see Photo Tips
- NB: Information does not prejudice any court hearings (now or in the future)
- NB: Information is evenly balanced and a positive, reassuring tone is used. If crime figures are used or priorities mentioned ensure information is also given about what the police is doing to address this and what people can do to help themselves i.e. in the form of crime prevention advice
- NB: Information is appropriate and relevant to the audience and the work of the SNTs. Do not include stories about work carried out by a partner that doesn't involve an SNT
- Layout – the text is evenly spaced
- Cartoons and clip art should not be used
- Other logos should not be used

For a fuller checklist please see the attached document: Newsletter checklist.