

<b>Defence Instructions and Notices</b> (Not to be communicated to anyone outside HM Service without authority)	
<b>Title:</b>	Contact with the Media and Communicating in Public
<b>Audience:</b>	All Service and civilian personnel
<b>Applies:</b>	Immediately
<b>Expires:</b>	When rescinded or replaced
<b>Replaces:</b>	2011DIN03-025
<b>Reference:</b>	<b>2014DIN03-024</b>
<b>Status:</b>	<b>Current</b>
<b>Released:</b>	September 2014
<b>Channel:</b>	03 Defence Policy and Operations
<b>Content:</b>	The authorisation procedures that all members of the Armed Forces and MOD civilians must follow before making or responding to contact with the media or communicating in public.
<b>Sponsor:</b>	Directorate of Defence Communications
<b>Contact:</b>	DDC-Secretariat Clearances. Tel:9621 [REDACTED] or 0207 21 [REDACTED]
<b>Keywords:</b>	Public relations; Media handling guidelines; Relations with the media; Public speaking training; Corporate communications strategies and plans; Media interviews and briefings; Speeches lectures and talks; Conduct and behaviour; Use of social media.
<b>Local Keywords:</b>	DDC, Communicating in public, Media.
<b>Supplements:</b> (Please click on the links to access >>>> )	<a href="#">Annex: A</a>
<b>Related Info:</b>	<a href="#">2014DIN05-023: The Future of Defence Communications – The formation of the Directorate of Defence Communications</a> <a href="#">MOD Online Engagement Guidelines</a> <a href="#">2012DIN05-012 Contact with Parliamentarians</a>
<b>Classification:</b>	OFFICIAL

## Summary

This summary sets out the key features governing contact with the media and communicating in public, supported by Annexes. Expanded instructions and guidance are set out in Sections 1 to 10 in the main body of this DIN.

We want the public to understand the work and achievements of the Armed Forces and MOD. In some cases contact between individuals working in Defence and the public can be achieved directly. In other cases, the media play an important role in achieving this. However, such contact needs to be managed so that the reputations of the Department and Services are not compromised. This document sets out how contact with the media and other public communications are regulated across Defence. All contact with the media or communication in public by members of the Armed Forces and MOD civilians on defence topics must be authorised in advance. This Instruction explains the authorisation procedures personnel must follow. The key principles are:

- all requests for active or reactive contact with the national or international news media must be authorised in advance by the Directorate of Defence

Communications (DDC) via the line manager/chain of command, involving Service, Top Level Budget (TLB) or Arms Length Body (ALB) media staff as appropriate. Provisions for communicating with regional and local media outlets are outlined at Para 43;

- 'contact' in this context means passing information or expressing opinions on matters relating to Defence;
- where unplanned or short-notice contact with the media cannot be avoided, personnel must immediately notify DDC or Service, TLB or ALB media staff and provide a written account of the contact;
- personnel must also seek formal authorisation to speak, write or otherwise communicate in the public domain on defence topics using any other non-news media or channel. Permission must be obtained before an individual can enter into any commitment. Personnel at 1\* level and above must seek approval through DDC. Those below 1\* must go through their line manager/chain of command – if they wish to speak on sensitive or high-profile topics such as those identified in Annex B, the individual's chain of command or line management must refer to DDC;
- these rules still apply if individuals encounter:
  - journalists or other members of the news media in a social setting (whether work-related or not);
  - third party individuals with known links to the media, such as commentators, academics, representatives of industry, think-tanks or lobby groups, or former serving personnel with a media profile.Any such encounter involving a member of the Armed Forces or MOD civilian should be reported and advice sought from DDC, Service, TLB or ALB media staff;
- any opinions offered on social media about wider Defence, Armed Forces, or Allies' policy or activity could be interpreted as communicating on behalf of their Service or the MOD. Any individual wishing to communicate via social media on any defence issue that goes beyond a non-contentious message relating to the individual's role must apply to DDC for authorisation to do so. This applies to all personnel regardless of whether they post information in their own name or under a pseudonym. See Annex B for an illustrative list of high profile or contentious topics;
- a failure to follow the procedures outlined in this Instruction could result in disciplinary or administrative action in accordance with [JSP 440](#) and the MOD Civil Service and Single Service Misconduct policies.

Annex A sets out the process for requesting clearance for contact with the media and communicating in public. The online 'Request for Authorisation' can be found [here](#).

Annex B sets out an illustrative list of high profile or contentious topics.

Annex C lists key DDC and appropriate Service / TLB / ALB media contacts.

Annex D outlines the authorisation process using flow charts.

## **Contents**

### **Sections:**

1. Introduction
2. Effective communication
3. Contact with the news and non-news media
4. Communicating directly with the public
5. Communicating online and on social media
6. Contact with Parliamentarians
7. Security considerations
8. Payment for speaking to the media and public speaking and writing
9. Authorisation
10. Senior Leader Communication Plans

Annex A: Process for requesting clearance for contact with the media and communicating in public

Annex B: Illustrative list of high-profile or contentious topics

Annex C: Contact details

Annex D: Authorisation Flow Charts



## Purpose

1. This Instruction sets out the arrangements that all MOD personnel – military and civilian – must follow if they wish to have contact with the media, or otherwise write or speak in public on Defence or related matters. 'Contact' in this context means passing information or expressing opinions on matters relating to Defence. These procedures have been put in place to ensure that national, operational and personal security is upheld, and that standards of political impartiality and public accountability are met at all times. They are consistent with the Civil Service Code and Civil Service Management Code, and the relevant Queen's Regulations for the Armed Forces and departmental civilian regulations (the [MOD Civilian Personnel Policy: Standards of Conduct and Behaviour](#)).

## Applicability

2. This Instruction applies to the following:
- all members of the regular Armed Forces;
  - all members of the Volunteer Reserve Forces;
  - members of the Regular Reserves undertaking Service duties;
  - cadets and civilian volunteers when on duty;
  - Crown Servants within the Reserve Forces and Cadets Associations and their Council;
  - MOD civil servants and other civilian employees; and
  - Contractor personnel working in MOD or Armed Forces posts.

It covers all public speaking, writing or other communication, via any channel, including the internet, social media and other online sharing technologies, on issues relating to an individual's official business or experience or otherwise related to Defence.

3. It does not apply to contact with the House of Commons Defence Committee (or other Parliamentary Select Committees) for which separate arrangements apply: advice on this can be obtained from the MOD HCDC Liaison Officer (see **Annex C: Contacts**). Also, it does not apply to a member of the Armed Forces or MOD civilian contacting their constituency MP on a personal matter. However, it does apply to other contact with parliamentarians, either individually or in groups (such as the All-Party Parliamentary Group). See SECTION 6: Contact with Parliamentarians.

4. Nor does it apply to elected officials of a recognised trade union or staff association when they publicise their association's or union's views on an official matter which, because it directly affects the conditions of service of members, is of legitimate interest to them. Full details of this are contained in the [MOD Civilian Personnel Policy: Standards of Conduct and Behaviour](#).

5. It does not cover the signing of No. 10 e-petitions, which all military and civilian personnel may sign in a personal capacity (but they should make no reference to their rank or that they are an employee of MOD). However, personnel wishing to create or submit e-petitions must seek appropriate authorisation as set out in this DIN.

6. The Instruction does not cover public communications by the Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) relating to criminal investigations. These are dealt with independently by the MDP Press Office, which is accountable to the MDP Chief Constable.

7. This Instruction remains in force for an unlimited period unless explicitly superseded.

## SECTION 1: Introduction

8. Within the obvious security constraints, the MOD and the Armed Forces operate a policy of openness about their activities. It is important that the Armed Forces and MOD are able to explain their roles and Government policies and decisions relating to Defence. The MOD must also comply with relevant legislation, such as the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All members of the Armed Forces and MOD civilians are encouraged to engage with the public about what they do. However, such contact must be properly authorised to ensure that it is appropriate and worthwhile, as well as to protect individuals against possible misreporting. Members of the Armed Forces and MOD civilians must exercise honesty in all their engagements and should not undertake any activity which might call into question their political impartiality or Service or Departmental reputation.

9. All contact with the media or communication in public by members of the Armed Forces and MOD civilians must be authorised in advance, where this relates to an individual's official business or experience or is otherwise related to Defence. Unauthorised disclosure or leaking of information causes damage to the Department and the single Services and corrodes the trust between Ministers, the Armed Forces and the Civil Service. Security breaches also have the potential to cost lives and seriously undermine our operational military capability. Engaging in such activities (including the acceptance of payments in contravention of SECTION 8) without obtaining relevant authorisation at the appropriate level as detailed in this document could result in disciplinary or administrative action being taken in accordance with [JSP 440](#) and the MOD Civil Service and Single Service Misconduct policies. It will be regarded as a serious disciplinary breach and in the most serious cases this could ultimately lead to an individual being removed from post, dismissed or discharged. Also, individuals who do not act to prevent breaches by others could be subject to such measures. If individuals have a concern about wrongdoing at work there is a [Whistleblowing and Raising a Concern](#) policy with set procedures to be followed linked [here](#).

10. DDC has ultimate official authority for internal and external communication including all matters related to contact with the news media and communicating in public. DDC staff will consult Ministers as necessary. Personnel who are in any doubt about the need to obtain authorisation should seek advice from DDC or the appropriate Service, TLB or ALB media team (see **Annex C: Contact Details**) before committing to communication with the media or writing or speaking in public.



## SECTION 2: Effective communication

11. Presenting and explaining Defence business to improve public understanding of what we do is an integral part of the work of the Ministry of Defence and of the Armed Forces. Defence personnel are encouraged to look for opportunities in line with the procedures set out in this DIN to communicate the roles and achievements of the Armed Forces and MOD – whether through face-to-face engagement, via briefings, in written responses to enquiries, or via new digital formats/channels.

12. Online channels help members of the Armed Forces and MOD civilians keep in touch with friends and family and allow our people to explain their work to the wider public. However, Service and MOD civilian personnel must first follow the rules on prior authorisation (see SECTION 9); conduct and behaviour; collective and personal security (see SECTION 7); use of official IT; data protection and communicating in public (see SECTION 5: Communications online and on Social Media).

13. Before considering contact with the news media or otherwise communicating in public the following factors should be taken into consideration:

- What is the desired effect and how will it be measured?
- Does the benefit justify the time, cost and effort?
- Is there a risk to operational security or of disclosure of sensitive or protectively marked Crown capabilities or information or personal details?
- Would Service or Departmental reputation be compromised?
- Are there any national security (of the UK or allies) or international relations implications?
- Would this call into question political impartiality?
- Are there any commercial implications, including ensuring that neither MOD nor its staff endorse or appear to endorse any particular company, product or service?
- Are there any patent or copyright implications, for example has Defence Intellectual Property Rights (DIPR) been consulted before research work is made public, or is MOD-originated Crown copyright work intended to be used or distributed?

14. Individuals who are likely to have contact with the media in their official duties should undertake appropriate training to develop the skills necessary to do so effectively. Courses are available internally from the Joint Media Operations Centre (JMOC) (see **Annex C: Contact Details**). Personnel seeking to contact the media or communicate in public should familiarise themselves with the Department's latest Top Level Messages which are updated monthly and available on the external [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk) or from DDC-Secretariat 2 (see **Annex C: Contact Details**).

15. DDC is responsible for the following areas of communication activity at the departmental level:

- Overall planning and control of Defence communication activity, including strategy, planning, clearance procedures and evaluation
- Strategic marketing and non-news public relations campaigns
- News: including a 24/7 media office operation and online news presence through [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and on official social media channels
- Internal communication including intranet online communication

In addition, Service, TLB and ALB media teams represent their organisations and have staff based in the UK regions and overseas who work closely with the DDC team.

### SECTION 3: Contact with the news and non-news media

16. DDC staff are the Department's professional advisers on communicating with news and non-news media representatives and organisations and are the officially sanctioned channel for dealing with them. The term 'non-news media' refers to channels such as magazines, books and non-news TV and radio programmes and documentaries. The guiding principle is that all contact with (including the acceptance of hospitality from) the media must be referred to the line manager/chain of command and to the appropriate Service/TLB/ALB communications team, and to the relevant DDC team if necessary (see SECTION 9, below 'Authorisation' and **Annex C: Contact Details**). Activities covered by this include:

- contact with journalists;
- contact with individuals with known links to the media (such as commentators in academia, industry or think-tanks, lobby groups etc);
- writing letters to newspapers;
- contributing to online debates or otherwise commenting on online items;
- participating in radio or television programmes (including documentaries, discussion shows or phone-ins) on any topic related to Defence matters;
- contact with the media when attending outside events, e.g. at conferences and seminars; and
- issuing invitations to media representatives to speak at briefings, courses, study days or other Service or Departmental events.

17. Any member of the Armed Forces or MOD civilian approached by a journalist or a third party with known links to the news media (including former serving military and civilian personnel) on any Defence matter should note the request and refer the matter to the relevant Service, TLB or ALB media staff or DDC-PR-News team as soon as possible (see **Annex C: Contact Details**). Under no circumstance should they divulge any Defence information or express an opinion on a Defence matter without prior permission, regardless of whether it seems non-contentious or might be thought to be already in the public domain. Where a journalist requests information under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (or other information access legislation and regulations) or requests are received for potentially contentious information from any source, the DDC-PR-News team must be consulted. If it is necessary to telephone a journalist who has submitted an FOI request in order to clarify or refine its terms, care should be taken to keep the conversation focused on the matter at hand. A note of the conversation should be made immediately and passed to DDC-PR-News (see **Annex C: Contact Details**).

18. Some members of the Armed Forces or MOD civilians might from time to time have other contact with journalists or others who are active in the news media. This can include those working for lobby groups, the Defence industry or academics who have links to the news media. Contact could stem from previous official duties or through social or family connections. Individuals are reminded that regardless of previous contact or authorisation, any request for information from a journalist or other persons with news media connections (however innocuous), must be referred immediately to DDC-PR-News or Service or TLB/ALB media staff. Where a journalist is embedded with the Armed Forces in operational theatres, the scope and nature of the contact permitted will be agreed in advance with DDC and PJHQ.

19. Where approval is given to communicate with the media, the range of topics that can be covered and the terms of the engagement (e.g. whether it is a background briefing or 'on the record') will be agreed at the time of authorisation. Individuals should not comment

on or disclose official information beyond that agreement. Following contact with the media, the individual involved should report back to the DDC-PR-News team member nominated for that contact. This helps to protect individuals in the event of any subsequent misreporting and allows appropriate follow-up action.

20. Contact with the national news media, both print and broadcast and their online versions, is always handled by DDC-PR-News. They also sometimes handle contact at the regional level as do Service and TLB/ALB media staff and others with a specific DDC delegation. These delegations are rare but, where an individual is granted a delegation, they may engage with specified media outlets without recourse to DDC, subject to the following caveats:

- all delegations are recorded in agreed formal job descriptions or terms of reference; and
- that any issue that is judged to be novel, contentious or of strategic importance such as those subjects listed in **Annex B** is referred as soon as possible to DDC-PR-News.

Individuals with a delegation must ensure they keep records and inform DDC-PR-News of all contact with the media and the information communicated. Requests for delegation should be sought from DDC-PR-Head of PublicRelations.



## SECTION 4: Communicating directly with the public

21. DDC staff are also the Department's professional advisers on wider communication and engagement with the public. Members of the Armed Forces and MOD civilians must seek formal authorisation if they wish to speak, write or otherwise communicate in the public domain on Defence issues. Permission must be obtained before an individual can enter into any commitment.

22. Examples of communicating on Defence Issues in public are:

- publishing material (for example books, articles, academic papers, or any other text, audio, still images, video or other content) or submitting material with the intention or likelihood of publication, in any medium (print or electronic) available outside Government;
- self-publishing or otherwise releasing material on the internet or via online sharing technologies, for example through a blog, podcast or other shared text, audio or video, including through mobile devices;
- speeches and presentations at conferences or other events where the public or media may be present;
- completing external questionnaires, taking part in external surveys, polls or contributing to external studies or research projects;
- contributing on Defence issues to any online community or shared electronic information resource available outside Government, for example a bulletin board, newsgroup, wiki, online social network, multiplayer game or other information-sharing application;
- when requested to provide a comment for a supplier in relation to their provision of goods or services to the MOD.

23. In all cases, the impact of the communication must be considered carefully, both in terms of the effect on its intended audience but also on any unintended audience through subsequent coverage by the media. It is the responsibility of all personnel to minimise the scope for misreporting and misrepresentation and not to stray beyond the issues on which they have been approved to speak.

24. MOD's policy in respect of suppliers is that as an impartial central government department, staff may make factual statements in respect of contractual positions only. Staff must not express a preference for, or give or appear to give an endorsement of any company, product or service, for example if asked by suppliers to give input to their press releases or PR material. Additionally staff have no delegation to permit third parties to make use of MOD logos (for example in conjunction with suppliers' press releases), even to indicate companies are suppliers to, or are under contract to MOD. The policy on badge usage by third parties and DIPR contact details is set out in both the internal MOD Names, Logos and Insignia [DIN 2009DIN05-052](#) (in particular paragraphs 19 and 22) and reinforced in the following documents: [MOD Copyright Licensing Information](#).

## SECTION 5: Communicating online and on social media

25. Members of the Armed Forces and MOD civilians are encouraged to explain their work, but within certain limits to protect security, reputation and privacy for themselves and the MOD (see SECTION 7: Security Considerations). Social media (such as social networking sites, blogs and other internet self publishing channels) are recognised as important channels to enable personnel to keep in touch with family and friends and to collaborate across organisational boundaries. [The MOD Online Engagement guidelines](#) provide advice on the effective use of online channels and [further guidance is available on how to use security settings](#) on the most popular social media sites. When using these channels, which include posting images and videos as well as writing, personnel must:

- follow the same high standards of conduct and behaviour online as would be expected elsewhere;
- always protect personal information and operational security;
- get authorisation from their chain of command when appropriate;
- ensure they are familiar with [The MOD Online Engagement guidelines](#).

26. Armed Forces and MOD civilian personnel do not need to seek permission when communicating online about non-Defence matters. However, they must do so before communicating about Defence matters. This applies regardless of whether an individual posts online in their own name or under a pseudonym; any such pseudonym must be declared when seeking approval.

27. In practice, the pace of communication on social media means that the normal approval cycle for publishing individual items is not appropriate. Individuals can ask permission to make multiple contributions online on the following basis:

- **Personnel below 1\*** intending at a future date to use online channels to communicate:
  - **ONLY non-contentious 'Official' Defence information about their own role** may do so once they have prior approval from their line manager or chain of command;
  - **BEYOND non-contentious 'Official' Defence information about their own role** must apply for prior authorisation from both their line manager or chain of command and DDC via the relevant Service or TLB/ALB communications staff. If approved, the specific approval will set out those areas on which the individual is permitted to communicate. All other areas are not permitted. Content that relates to sensitive personal or operational information (e.g. having PERSEC or OPSEC consequences – see SECTION 7) will not be permitted.
- **Personnel at 1\* and above** intending at a future date to use online channels to communicate about any Defence matter must seek prior approval from DDC, following the process described in SECTION 9 (paragraph 40).

## SECTION 6: Contact with Parliamentarians

28. The rules and authorisation procedures governing contact between members of the Armed Forces and Defence civilians and Parliamentarians are detailed in [2012DIN05-012 Contact with Parliamentarians](#). All contact between members of the Armed Forces and MOD civilians and Parliamentarians must be authorised in advance through Ministers, their offices or the Parliamentary Branch. These rules do not apply to members of the Armed Forces or MOD civilians contacting their constituency MP on a personal matter.

29. Any contact with the House of Commons Defence Committee (HCDC), or with other Select Committees in the House of Commons or House of Lords, must be routed through MOD HCDC Liaison Officer (see **Annex C: Contacts**).

30. Any invitation to speak to parliamentarians, including All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPG) must be treated in the same way as any other piece of public communication. An invitation cannot be accepted until endorsed by Ministers under the terms of [2012DIN05-012 Contact with Parliamentarians](#). Individuals must then seek formal authorisation to communicate in public in line with the process outlined in paras 39-46.



## SECTION 7: Security considerations

### Operational security

31. Experience shows that our adversaries take a close interest in information put into the public domain by members of the Armed Forces and MOD civilians and look for opportunities to use it to their advantage. All personnel are reminded of the paramount requirement to protect operational security. They must also avoid actions that might damage relations with other nations or harm the security or other interests of partner nations. Personnel must not pass on any classified or other information that has not been authorised for release, including to friends and family. Members of the Armed Forces or MOD civilians wishing to speak or write about their recent experience in an operational theatre or about operations that are continuing must consult PJHQ Media Operations staff (see **Annex C: Contact Details**) regardless of whether they are still serving in that theatre or elsewhere.

### Personal security

32. There are inherent personal security risks to communicating in public, which have been heightened by the growing use of online communications channels. Social media in particular can present risks to operational and personal security unless users take appropriate steps to safeguard their information. Unsafe use of these channels, most likely through the deliberate or inadvertent posting of private information or details, could compromise both personal and operational security. The threats are diverse and can range from organised crime to espionage to terrorism. The risk is highest if the mass of information in the public domain can be used to link Service information with personal details. Once online, information is permanently available and can be replicated on other media channels with no means of removal and could be used by those who wish to target members of the Defence community. Personnel should follow security guidance, and they should at all times seek to protect their personal information and be wary about the details they share online. Personnel should be aware of the risks and exercise judgement in all public communication. The amount of risk will vary from individual to individual, but it will invariably relate to that person's role in Defence.

33. Media contact or exposure can create potential operational or personal security risks for some individuals in particular trades or groupings. The implications and risks are considered by DDC and Service and TLB/ALB media staff, in consultation with the TLB/ALB security staffs, before authorisation is granted.

### Official Secrets Act and Intellectual Property Rights

34. Personnel should be aware at all times that anything they say or write in public might be reported and publicised. It is an individual's responsibility to comply with the Department's policy on unauthorised disclosures, the Official Secrets Act, to protect intellectual property rights (IPR) and to comply with any other applicable laws. Relevant guidance and instructions on IPR can be found in [2005DIN01-11: Intellectual Property – Publication of MOD Policy](#) and [2011DIN05-44: Copyright and Crown Copyright Material: Policy, responsibilities and procedure for use](#). Commercially sensitive material must not be disclosed. The security or other national interest of partner nations must be fully protected, even where UK interests do not appear to be directly affected. Personnel are reminded that they have a lifelong obligation to comply with the provisions of the Official Secrets Act and that security breaches also have the potential to cost lives and seriously undermine our operational military capability.

## **SECTION 8: Payment for speaking to the media and public speaking and writing**

35. The overarching principle regarding payments to serving members of the Armed Forces and MOD civilians is that they are paid once by the Crown for their work. When required, it is a normal part of the duties of serving personnel and civil servants to explain their work in public and this should not attract additional personal payment. Serving military and civilian personnel must not accept payment, royalty or fee for any activity which would, or could be perceived to, involve the disclosure of official information or draw on official experience. This includes all contact with the media such as interviews, articles or briefings, and any other public disclosure (e.g. books, public speaking, conferences etc) relating to the person's work. Where an organisation offering payment insists on making a donation to charity, the choice of charity must lie with the organisation offering the payment to avoid any potential or perceived conflict of interest.

36. Payment to an individual for information or speaking engagement or interview may only be authorised if the subject matter falls entirely outside their MOD work or experience, does not use official information and has been prepared in an individual's own time, without using any MOD resources. Commanding Officers/Heads of Department or Division should be consulted in the first instance to ensure this is the case. If in doubt they should take advice from TLB/ALB or Service Media and/or Secretariat staff who should in turn consult DDC-Secretariat Clearances in accordance with SECTION 9 if uncertain. If authority to proceed is given it is incumbent on individuals to make it clear that they are not acting in an official capacity.

37. Where members of the Armed Forces or MOD civilians are invited to speak or participate in an event, conference or seminar in an official Defence capacity and that event is being run as a commercial activity, the individual concerned should seek advice from their relevant Director of Resources about whether the MOD should request a payment for their participation. JSP 368 – The MOD Guide to Repayment outlines the procedures that should be followed.

38. Serving academics who believe they may have a case for being paid for academic research must first seek approval from their Commanding Officers/Heads of Division. If content that there is a potential case for exemption, the Commanding Officer/Head of Division should contact DDC-Secretariat Clearances before giving approval to proceed.

## SECTION 9: Authorisation

39. The following authorisation procedures apply to all personnel without a specific DDC delegation (see Para 20).

### Senior Personnel (1\* and above and civilian equivalents)

40. All personnel of 1\* rank and above and civilian equivalents must seek approval via DDC before accepting any invitation to speak or write publicly on Government or Defence matters - whether through the media or some other channel - unless they have a specific delegation. Requests should be submitted at least 10 working days in advance of the intended communications activity to DDC-Secretariat Clearances (see **Annex C: Contact Details**) following the process outlined in the flowchart at **Annex D** and using the online form at **Annex A**. For requests at this level, DDC will often require advance sight of the proposed text or speaking notes. For the most senior leaders in the MOD listed at paragraph 47, the special arrangements described there will apply.

41. In practice, requests are considered at a weekly planning meeting, chaired by DDC-PR-Head of Public Relations, who will advise if Ministerial approval is required. Personnel should also ensure that any hospitality received is recorded and reported in accordance with Departmental or Service arrangements. Personnel of 3\* rank and above and civilian equivalents are reminded that records of their contact with the media including any hospitality accepted will be published on a regular basis in line with Cabinet Office procedures.

### Personnel below 1\* level and civilian equivalents

42. For all personnel below 1\* level and civilian equivalents, communication in public and contact with the media on high-profile topics and contentious issues (such as, but not restricted to, those listed in **Annex B**) must be conducted under the specific direction of DDC. In the first instance personnel below 1\* and civilian equivalents wishing to have contact with the media or communicate in public on topics such as those listed in **Annex B** should seek permission through the chain of command or line management who must refer to DDC. For speaking engagements, permission must be sought from DDC, at least 10 working days in advance following the flowchart at **Annex D** and using the Request for Authorisation link at **Annex A**. The list of high-profile topics in **Annex B** will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis but it is not exhaustive. If in doubt about whether the communication should be referred to DDC, ask.

43. For communication on other subjects not associated with topics such as those listed in **Annex B**, personnel below 1\* and civilian equivalents must first go through their line manager/chain of command (Commanding Officer (CO) or Head of Department or Division), and consult local TLB/ALB or Service media staff. The authorisation process for subjects not associated with topics such as those in **Annex B** is as follows:

- a. For contact with regional and local news media. Military COs of the rank of Colonel and below (and equivalents) may speak to regional or local media on routine matters relating specifically to their own area of responsibility. They should not comment on other Government or Defence issues. A record should be kept of this contact, and either local Service or TLB/ALB media staff or DDC-PR-News should be kept informed (see **Annex C: Contact Details**). Contact with regional/local media on issues outside the scope of an individual's own responsibilities or on any issue which may be considered novel and contentious or relate to the topics such as those outlined in **Annex B** requires prior authorisation from DDC.



For all other regional or local news media cases, except for topics such as those listed in **Annex B**, Service and TLB/ALB media staff have delegated powers of authorisation from DDC. Service or TLB/ALB media staff will refer contentious issues to DDC-PR-News. Where there is a risk of a regional/local issue becoming a national issue, DDC-PR-News will take over the lead.

b. National news media. DDC-PR-News are responsible for authorising all contact with the national news media, including both proactive and reactive media handling. They will seek advice as necessary from the single Service Assistant Heads in DDC and will judge whether Ministers need to be consulted before engagement with the news media takes place. Only DDC PR Deputy and Assistant Heads, DDC-PR-Head of PublicRelations or the Director of Defence Communications can approve engagement with the national news media.

c. Foreign media or contact with media abroad. DDC-PR-News, in conjunction with PJHQ, are responsible for authorising contact with foreign media in operational theatres. In locations where there are accredited UK Defence Advisers/Attachés (DAs) they can engage with the host nation's national or local media subject to those instructions or guidance the British Ambassador/High Commissioner might issue to all accredited staff. DAs must use their judgement and if the topic or the profile it will get in-country is likely to be picked up in UK media they must inform DDC-PR-News in advance. Similarly, if the contact is with correspondents of UK media or international media (e.g. *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Agence France Presse*, *Al Jazeera*, *Russia Today* - this list is not exhaustive) then DDC-PR-News must be contacted in advance. If the presence of UK or international media was not known in advance or in any circumstances where the DA judges the coverage will be controversial at national (host or UK) or international level, DDC-PR-News must be informed as soon as practicable. Outside operational theatres, there are a number of events in other nations which might include interaction between other members of the Armed Forces and MOD civilians and the media. Where this occurs or is expected at a local or regional media level, it is normally sufficient for permission to be granted by the relevant Service Command media staff or accredited DA. Where there is the potential for UK or foreign national or international media contact, DDC-PR-News should be informed. The procedure for authorising contact with foreign media in the UK is the same procedure as for contact with the UK national news media.

d. Communicating in Public through non-news media. For guidance on communicating via online channels see SECTION 5: Communication online and on Social Media. DDC-PR-Head of PublicRelations (see **Annex C**: Contact Details) is ultimately responsible for authorising all contact for the non-news media to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place as described in JSP 579. DDC-PR-Campaigns teams will seek advice as necessary from DDC-PR-News and Service or TLB/ALB Command staff and will judge whether Ministers need to be consulted before initiating contact with or responding to approaches from the non-news media. The following channels should be used to obtain authorisation to engage with the non-news media:

- Navy, Army and RAF personnel through their chain of command to DDC-Single Service staff
- Civilians through their management chain to DDC-Secretariat Clearances

All personnel should bear in mind that what could appear to be a single Service or a local establishment issue can have implications for the reputation of all three Services and the wider MOD.

e. Speaking in Public. For public speaking, members of the Armed Forces and MOD civilians below 1\* level should ensure the considerations at para 13 have been addressed and should follow the flow chart at **Annex D**. Where there is potential for national/international/foreign media interest, or if the subject is connected with high-profile or contentious topics such as those listed in **Annex B**, this must be referred to DDC by the relevant TLB/ALB or Service media team or Secretariat, following the process in **Annex A**.

f. Defence medical and healthcare topics. Material on Defence medical and healthcare matters should be cleared by the chain of command or line management in the first instance. All medical papers for publication and public presentations from within Surgeon General's HLB should be sent to the Joint Medical Command Medical Director (JMC Med Dir) and Defence Primary Healthcare Hd Strategy & Integration (DPHC Hd Strat&Int) as appropriate for clearance and capture in Surgeon General's Research Compendium. Papers relating to specific single Service medical issues should be directed in the first instance through the chain of command to the appropriate single Service Medical Director (Med Dir), who will refer the clearance to the JMC Med Dir where necessary. JMC Med Dir, DPHC Hd of Strat&Int, and the single Service Med Dirs will correspond with HQ SG (Hd of Sec & Fin staff) to clear any particularly sensitive papers and presentations. Hd of Sec & Fin will then confirm or withhold clearance with Med Dir, Hd Strat&Int or the single Service Med Dirs and, when appropriate to do so, forward it with his recommendation to DDC. Details about the Surgeon General's policy on media and those in the care pathway can be found in JSP 950 (Medical Policy) Leaflet 1-2-3 and 1-2-5 available from HQ Surgeon General (see **Annex C: Contact Details**).

44. Authorisation to speak in public or publish written material outside Government circles will only apply to the material submitted and cleared. Further permission is required if alterations of fact or opinion are made. The granting of permission to communicate does not confer official endorsement of the material (either of its factual content or the opinions or views expressed) and this should be made clear when communicating.

45. Articles or notices for in-house MOD or single Service publications on non-controversial and non-sensitive topics can be submitted direct to in-house editors through the chain of command or line management. However, the same guiding principles apply. It is important to remember that editors of internal publications with an external readership (e.g. if they are available on subscription or on the internet) must follow the procedures for external clearance as detailed in para 43d and must ensure that no sensitive or contentious material is inadvertently released.

46. Where there is a significant cost to MOD or a significant number of MOD personnel are being asked to speak at a specific external event it is likely that Ministerial approval will be required regardless of the rank/grade of those involved. In such cases, the appropriate MOD policy lead must justify the proposed overall level of attendance in view of the cost to the taxpayer in terms of time, effort and money. Personnel should also ensure that they cover the provisions of para 37 with regard to commercial events. In case of doubt DDC-Secretariat Clearances should be consulted (see **Annex C: Contact Details**).

## SECTION 10: Senior Leader Communication Plans

47. Specific communication plans will be developed for the most senior leaders in the MOD and submitted for Ministerial approval on a quarterly basis in advance. Invitations received from external bodies or proposals raised within Defence will be synchronised by the DDC PR Planning & Coordination team (see **Annex C: Contact Details**), who will also seek out additional opportunities. Individual DDC PR staff will be allocated to support the delivery of these plans. The senior leaders for whom these arrangements apply are:

Ministers:	Senior Officers/officials
SofS Min(AF) Min(DEST) Min(DPWV) Min(Res) USofS	CDS PUS VCDS 1SL CGS CAS Comd JFC CJO CDM DIO – Chief Exec

Annex A: Process for Requesting Clearance for Contact with the Media and Communicating in Public

Annex B: Illustrative list of High-Profile or Contentious Topics

Annex C: Contact Details

Annex D: Authorisation Flow Charts





## Annex A: Process for Requesting Clearance for Contact with the Media and Communicating in Public

Requests must be submitted a minimum of 10 working days in advance of the engagement. You may be asked for your script, text or presentation so please consider this when timing your application. Those serving in the Front Line Commands should send their applications through their Service's media and communication staff.

Invitations should not be accepted until engagement has been approved.

All 1\* or above Armed Forces officers and MOD officials wishing to engage with the public and/or media in accordance with DIN 2014DIN03-024 "Contact with the Media and Communicating in Public" should create a new request on the MOD Communications and Engagement Tracker at the following link, ensuring they select the tick box to confirm that this is a request for clearance:

### [Request for Authorisation Form](#)

For assistance with this process please contact: DDC-Secretariat Clearances (9621 [REDACTED] or 0207 21 [REDACTED])

This should also be completed by grades below 1\* if required in accordance with Authorisation Flowcharts at Annex D.

The above process should be followed wherever possible, but where access to the planning tool is not available the proforma below may be returned to DDC-Secretariat Clearances.

Training on engagement with the media is available from the Joint Media Operations Centre please contact JMOC SO2 Trg Del (DII address: [REDACTED]) to discuss your requirement.

### Personnel Details

Applicant's Details			
Name:			
Job Title:			
Area of responsibility:			
Unit:		E-mail:	
Tel No:		Rank/Grade::	
Desk Level Contact			
Approval sought by (Rank/Name):			
Tel No:		E-mail:	

### Event Details

When													
Date of event:				Date Invitation Received:									
Where													
Venue (including address)													
publication or comms channel													
Hosted by Institution/Organiser or publisher:													
Nature of Event													
Type of Engagement (Tick as appropriate)													
Speech	<input type="checkbox"/>	Article	<input type="checkbox"/>	Q&A	<input type="checkbox"/>	Online or Social Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	Panel Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Media Engagement	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Title of Event:													

Title of Speech/ Session													
Purpose of Event/Agenda details:													
<b>Purpose of Participation</b>													
What is the benefit to Defence?													
Key Points to be made by applicant	•												
Contentious Issues that may be covered:	•												
Presentational Risks and Proposed Mitigation													
Audience (Tick as appropriate)													
General Public	<input type="checkbox"/>	Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parliamentari ans (Westminster or Devolved)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Academia/ Think Tank	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Online or Social Media	<input type="checkbox"/>
List of Notable Attendees													
Details of other contributors (e.g. other Panel Members) (if applicable)													
Will the engagement be recorded? (if yes please give details)													
Will hospitality be offered? (if yes please provide details)													

The Department's Top Level Messages are produced monthly for use by Defence personnel engaging with the public and media. Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with this document before carrying out the engagement(s) detailed above.

**Declaration:** I have read DIN 2014DIN03-024 "Contact with the Media and Communicating in Public" and can confirm that I accept responsibility for the views I express and will not say anything that I am not content to be quoted by name to have said. I understand that if the scope of the proposed media/public speaking engagement expands beyond that envisaged in this application, I will inform the Media and Communication chain of command. In addition, if media appear at a public speaking engagement when they were not expected and/or there was a controversial line of questioning that may subsequently attract attention, I will inform the Media and Communication chain of command or if necessary, direct to the DDC-PR News Duty Officer on 9621 [REDACTED] or 020 721 [REDACTED]

Applicant		
Signed:	Rank:	Appointment:

DDC Authorisation:
Approved / Not approved / Further Action Required:
Signed (Rank/Name/On behalf of):
Date:

## **Annex B: Illustrative list of high-profile or contentious topics**

All contact with the media and communication in public on the following topics requires prior approval from DDC. Service and TLB/ALB media staff must direct media enquiries on these topics to DDC PR Media and personnel of any rank or grade must seek authorisation before communicating on them:

- Annual Budget Cycle (ABC)
- Spending Review
- Preparations for the next SDSR
- Reductions in Service and civilian personnel
- Estates/Basing Strategy
- Future Reserves 2020
- Trident/Successor
- Carrier Strike/F35 Lightning
- Materiel Strategy
- Scotland and Defence

This list will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis but it is not exhaustive. If in doubt about whether the proposed communication activity should be referred to DDC, ask your Service/TLB/ALB communications staff or DDC.





## **Annex C: Contact details**

### **DDC PR**

DDC-PR-Head of PublicRelations	Mil: 9621 [REDACTED]	Civ: 0207 21 [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]		
DDC-PR-News Media DepHd	Mil: 9621 [REDACTED]	Civ: 0207 21 [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]		
DDC-PR-Campaigns DepHd	Mil: 9621 [REDACTED]	Civ: 0207 21 [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]		
DDC-PR-PlansCoord Grid SCO	Mil: 9621 [REDACTED]	Civ: 0207 21 [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]		
DDC-PR News Duty Officer	Mil: 9621 [REDACTED]	Civ: 0207 21 [REDACTED]

### **DDC Strategy**

DDC-Strategy Head	Mil: 9621 [REDACTED]	Civ: 0207 21 [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]		
DDC-Strategy-Comms CCO	Mil: 9621 [REDACTED]	Civ: 0207 21 [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]		

### **DDC Secretariat**

DDC-SecBM-ContentSvcs Head	Mil: 9621 [REDACTED]	Civ: 0207 21 [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]		
DDC-Secretariat Clearances	Mil: 9621 [REDACTED]	Civ: 0207 21 [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]		
DDC-Secretariat 2	Mil: 9621 [REDACTED]	Civ: 0207 21 [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]		

### **For Single-Service issues**

DDC-Strategy-Navy	Mil: 9621 [REDACTED]	Civ: 0207 21 [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]		
DDC-Strategy-Army	Mil: 9621 [REDACTED]	Civ: 0207 21 [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]		
DDC-Strategy-RAF	Mil: 9621 [REDACTED]	Civ: 0207 21 [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]		

## Service media staff

### **Navy**

Email: [REDACTED] Mil: 9383 [REDACTED] Civ: 02392 [REDACTED]

### **Army**

Email: [REDACTED] Mil: 9439 [REDACTED] Civ: 01264 [REDACTED]

### **Air**

Email: [REDACTED] Mil: 9522 [REDACTED] Civ: 01494 [REDACTED]

## Other Contacts

### **House of Commons Defence Committee Liaison Officer**

Email: [REDACTED] Mil: [REDACTED] Civ: 020 721 [REDACTED]

### **JFC**

Email: [REDACTED] Mil: 967 [REDACTED] Civ: 030 [REDACTED]

### **PJHQ**

Email: [REDACTED] Mil: 9360 [REDACTED] Civ: 01923 [REDACTED]

### **HQ Surgeon General**

Email: [REDACTED] Mil: 9442 [REDACTED] Civ: 01543 [REDACTED]

### **Joint Media Operations Centre**

Email: [REDACTED] Mil 95 [REDACTED] Civ: 01296 [REDACTED]

### **DE&S**

Email: [REDACTED] Mil: 9352 [REDACTED] Civ: 03067 [REDACTED]

### **DIO**

Email: [REDACTED] Mil: 94 [REDACTED] Civ: 0121 [REDACTED]

### **DBS**

Email: [REDACTED] Civ: 01253 [REDACTED]

### **Ministry of Defence Police**

Email: [REDACTED] Mil: [REDACTED] Civ: 01371 [REDACTED]

### **Dstl**

Email: [REDACTED] Mil: [REDACTED] Civ: 01980 [REDACTED]

### **UK Hydrographic Office**

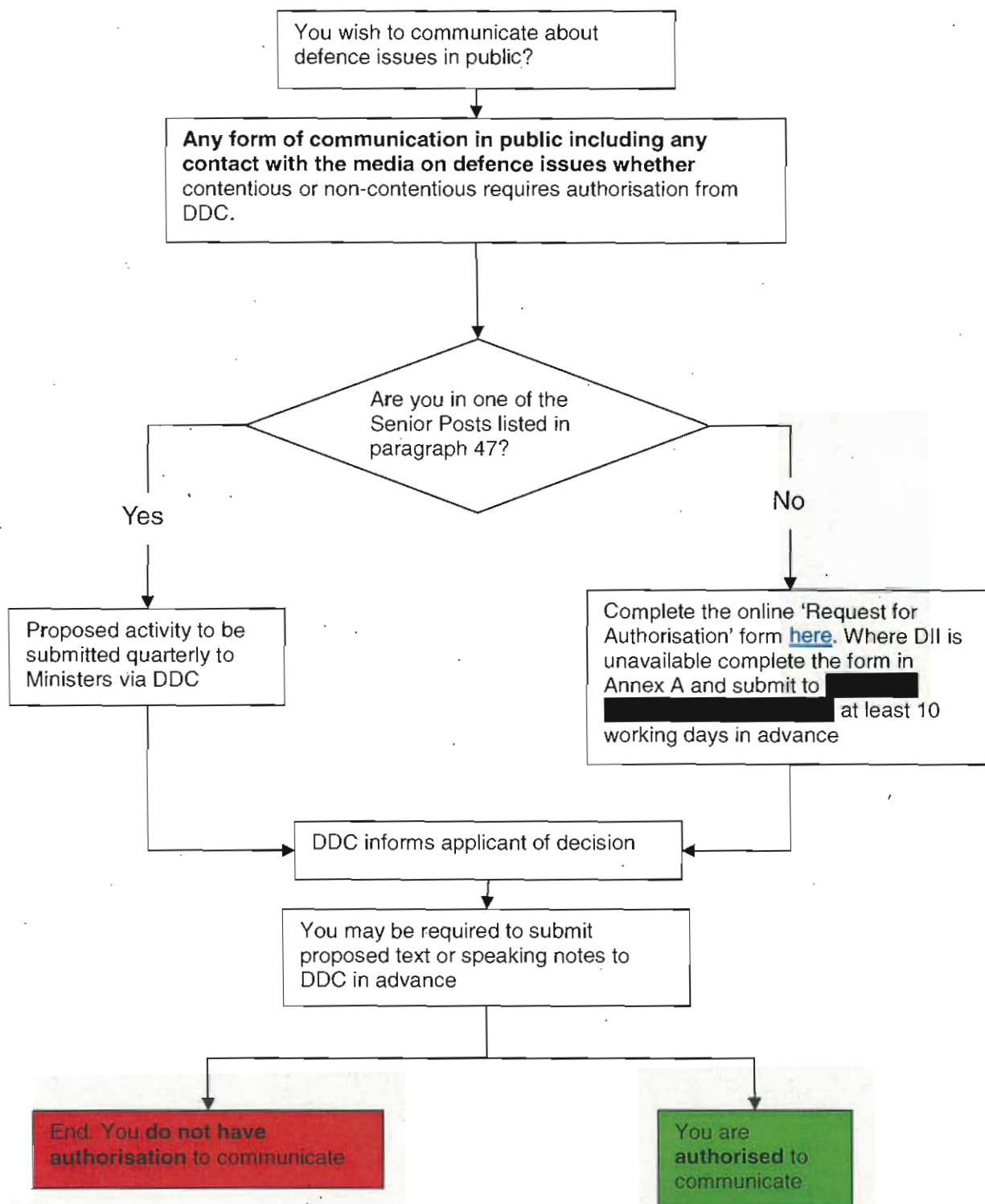
Email: [REDACTED] Civ: 01823 [REDACTED]

### **Defence Support Group**

Email: [REDACTED] Mil: 94 [REDACTED] Civ: 01684 [REDACTED]

## Annex D: Authorisation Flow Charts

### Flow Chart 1 – Personnel of 1\* rank (and equivalents) and above





**Flow Chart 2 – Personnel below 1\* rank (and equivalents)**

