Crisis Communication
Media Liaison and Engagement

The Abduction and Murder of April Jones
Overview

- Overview of the incident
- Media attention day one
- Week one media liaison plan
- Impact of social media
- On going media liaison
- The Trial

*Not covering community relations, documentaries or family liaison*
Dyfed-Powys Police is investigating the abduction of five year-old April Jones from Machynlleth.

Her abduction, which took place at 7pm in the Bryn Y Gog estate in the town, was witnessed by another young child when she was seen getting into a grey/ or light coloured van or van sized vehicle. Whilst the details of what happened are vague at the current time, it appears the suspect left the scene and drove off with April.

At the time of her disappearance April was wearing a purple knee-length coat with grey fur around the hood, her school white polo top and black trousers.

If you have information which could help police please call the dedicated incident Number: 0300 2000 333
Aim

To share the processes we put in place, and the approach we took to media liaison

Understand the impact of social media, community reassurance and internal communications.

Realise the importance of being prepared and asking for help
At 1929hrs on Monday October 1\textsuperscript{st} 2012, the abduction of five year old April Jones was reported to police. April was last seen playing on her bicycle with her friend on the Bryn Y Gog Estate where they both lived in Machynlleth.

It quickly became clear that this was a critical incident and it was highly likely that April Jones was in danger.
What happened next

Family use of social media #AprilJones
Media aware of incident
Try to establish facts
Issue an appeal – TV, radio, social media
Confirm validity of photographs
Develop a communications plan
Designated media spokespeople
Mutual aid
What happened next

Phone interviews
Despatch team to Aberystwyth
Plans in place for a media centre in Aberystwyth
Plans for lunchtime press conference in Aberystwyth
Close working with investigation team
Managed expectations of media in Aberystwyth
The First Press Conference
Talking about the Search Operation
What did we do?

Media feedback
Press officers at each site
Managed expectations
Appropriate spokespeople
Naming of suspect
Charging Mark Bridger
From October to the Trial

On going search operation
Family
Pre Case Management Hearing
Media conspiracies
Consultation to inform planning
Pre trial briefing
Media liaison through the trial
BBC Breakfast - Search
Lessons Learned

Spokespeople
Consultation with media to inform planning
Team briefings for press officers
Practical issues/logistics
Assign roles
Online password protected media centre
Close working with CPS
It was all about relationships
• On May 30\textsuperscript{th} 2013 Mark Leonard Bridger was found guilty, by a unanimous jury, of the abduction and murder of April Jones, as well as perverting he course of justice.

• He still hasn’t said what he did with April’s body

• Paul and Coral Jones are now campaigning for April’s Law to restrict extreme online child abuse images
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