



Running a Safe Surgery Advice for Members and Members' staff

Version 2 – October 2021

Introduction

The practical guidance in this revised edition has been drawn together from authoritative national advice provided by the police National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO), the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI), and the Security Industry Authority (SIA).

This practical guidance is intended to compliment advice provided by your local police, the Parliamentary Liaison & Investigation Team (PLaIT) and the Members' Security Support Service (MSSS).

Constituency surgeries are vital to supporting the needs of constituents. Members hold surgeries in different ways, virtually and at different venues. This document provides guidance for MPs and their constituency staff to reduce risk and vulnerability whilst holding physical surgeries through practical precautions you can take to help keep yourself, your staff and other constituents more secure in these situations.

Always make sure the local police know the dates, times, and locations of surgeries.



Communicating about the surgeries

Like many events, Members will want and need to communicate about their surgeries – such as when it is happening and the location. Typically, this is via their website or social media.

However, as well as providing important and useful information to the public, these details also provide vital information to hostile actors who may be planning a malicious act.

It is generally not possible to remove this information as it would have a significant adverse effect on ability of the public to meet with their MP.

However, this risk can be mitigated by providing this information alongside information about what measures are in place or have been undertaken to help keep the public, MPs and their staff safe and secure. The information needs to be informative but without the detail that could be useful to a hostile actor.

This protective security approach, known as ‘security-minded communications’ (SMC) is well established as a method of informing, reassuring and recruiting the public to be part of the security effort by explaining what you are doing to help keep constituents safe, and encouraging them to be part of it by being vigilant and reporting anything unusual. A key element of this deterrence effect is publicising the collective partnership of the MP, staff, venue and police/emergency services to help keep the MP, public and venue safe and secure. However, it is important not to give away any exact details of how these security measures are implemented. For example, it is better to state that security guards or police may be present without the exact numbers of these personnel.

You should use all available channels of communications, for example your website or social media, or a leaflet that visitors may be handed when they arrive at the venue (which they can study whilst waiting for their appointment).



Communicating about a Member's location – constituency events

Providing publicly available detailed information about a Member's movements in advance of their attendance at an event can provide information to inform a hostile actor's planning.

Some simple changes to communications, where appropriate, can help provide information about a Member's movements but without detail that could be useful to a hostile actor.

For example, not providing specific details in advance of where and when a MP will be visiting/at an event.

Instead of stating: "Tomorrow at 10:30am MP XXX will be visiting Jones & Sons bakery, followed by Millie's florists and Kingsway shopping centre in Eastline Town Centre."

You could state: "Tomorrow MP XXX will be visiting a range of businesses in the constituency to discuss the impact of YYY."

This provides sufficient information to constituents about their Member's activities without the specific detail that could enable a person with malicious intent.

Alternatively (or in addition), communications about the visit could be put out after the event, where detailed information can be shared.

Verifying appointments

Operating an appointment-based system can allow staff to verify the identity of constituents and bring previously problematic constituents to the attention of the Member and other colleagues.

When a person wishes to book an appointment, this is an opportunity to confirm that they are indeed a constituent. You should check and verify as much information about them as possible. This allows staff to check whether an appointment is needed in person, the reason for the meeting and to identify any concerns.

Checks should not be a barrier to allowing constituents to freely engage with their Member. Reasonable requests for advanced information may include confirming whether they are resident in the constituency and checks on the electoral register and other databases you may have access to.

If you have cause for concern you should share these with the police. Share any serious concerns with police when they arise. but if you encounter a suspicious request, you should report it to your local police.

Staff should advise constituents to bring some form of identification (ideally photographic and bearing their address). It is recognised that some constituents may not possess such documents, in which cases other forms of identification may be checked such as benefits correspondence. A lack of photographic identification should not be used as a barrier to obtaining help from a Member.

Choosing a location

It is recommended that a small number of suitable venues within an MP's constituency are identified for regular use, with effort invested in planning and implementing simple but effective security measures for each of these venues.

- Opt for a venue with which you are familiar with the layout.
- Try to vary locations to make them less predictable.
- Consider only providing the exact address once an appointment has been made.
- Select a venue which has good pre-existing security – such as a Town Hall. Some locations already have additional security functions such as trained and licenced in search and screening visitors and their bags.
- Consider the impact of other events occurring at the same venue and nearby when the surgery is being held.
- Where possible, try to demarcate the area where the surgery is being held, so you can control persons entering that space.
- Make sure it has good external lighting on the approach to the building.
- Make sure there is more than one entrance/exit.
- Ideally, choose somewhere with a lobby area where the constituent can be met, and staff can gauge the attitude and behaviour of the constituent.
- Consider where an SIA operative may be best placed to observe proceedings.

Arriving and departing

- When arriving and departing, remain vigilant and be mindful of the route to and from the venue, varying this as much as possible.
- Remember to carry and use your lone worker device if you have one.

Preparing for a safe surgery

- Ensure you are familiar with the exact surgery location and postcode.
- Be clear on how you would contact the police in an emergency. Please note, quoting Operation Bridger will not necessarily elicit a quicker response, as the police prioritise responses on the information they are given.
- Ensure all staff/volunteers (especially any new ones) are aware of security protocols, exits, etc.
- If you have requested the support of an SIA-Licensed security operative, ask them to arrive an hour before the surgery opens. Discuss your plans, and any particular requirements or concerns you may have with them when they arrive. (Further information on requesting a security operative is provided below, and a list of briefing points you should talk through with the operative is provided at Annex A.)
- Discuss a plan with your staff for what you would each do in the event of an emergency.
- Practice and rehearse that plan.
- Consider if there is a suitable area or separate room where bags, coats and ancillary items can be left, so these are not brought into the meeting room with the Member.

- Check the space used for the surgery (including any corridors and waiting areas) for items which could be used to cause harm.
- Consider how you would summon help – landline, mobile phone and/or lone worker device. Check the devices are fully charged and operational. Where poor mobile phone coverage exists, enable Wi-Fi calling if available. Please note – lone worker devices are not limited to one network and connect to the strongest network, so these are an excellent method of communication where poor cellular coverage exists.
- Maintain an incident log to record any incidents. Consider also recording details of any constituent’s behaviour where it caused you concern or was otherwise unusual – keep details of date, time and type of unacceptable behaviour. Share this information with all colleagues.
- Identify a safe area with an escape route which can be used in an emergency.
- Agree a key phrase to alert staff in the event of an emergency.
- Do not arrange to meet an unknown constituent on your own. When meeting constituents ensure colleagues know where you are, how long you expect to be, and how to contact you.
- Lone worker devices can be used to inform the monitoring centre of your location prior to entering a venue. In the event of a subsequent activation, the call centre will know your precise location. For more information or additional training on using the device, please contact the Members’ Security Support Service on **020 7219 2244** or email **safe@parliament.uk**

When meeting a constituent

- Where possible always work with a colleague, so that one of you can summon help if necessary.
- Maintain line of sight with other colleagues where possible.
- Have your mobile phone and lone worker device to hand.
- Leave the door ajar, make sure you are positioned closest to the exit.
- Position a desk or table between yourself and the constituent.
- Have a planned 'exit strategy' to use if you feel uncomfortable or threatened. For example, you could say: "I need to talk to my colleague" or "I need to go to my car for paperwork" and leave the venue.
- Consider how the SIA operative would alert others to a developing issue.

Dealing with aggression

For information on dealing with aggressive individuals, visit skillsyouneed.com/ps/dealing-with-aggression.html

Further advice is also available from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust: www.suzylamplugh.org

Meeting people when out and about

- Don't post your movements in advance on social media or share personal information about you or your family.
- Be aware of your surroundings and who is around you.
- If you feel uneasy about an individual or situation, trust your instincts. Leave the area and head towards a safe well populated public area such as a shop.
- Pre-book a licensed cab if required. Never get into an unlicensed mini cab off the street.
- Don't publicly advertise who you are unless you are there in an official capacity, e.g., don't wear a name badge unless you must.
- Store ICE ('In Case of Emergency') numbers on your mobile phone

If you think you are being followed

- Try to remain calm.
- Keep to well-lit and populated areas.
- Cross and re-cross the road to see if they follow you.
- Keep moving and head to the nearest safe place.
- Call the police as soon as you can or activate your lone worker device.

First aid

Download the citizen aid app from **www.citizenaid.org**

This provides advanced first aid techniques before 999 services arrive, and advanced first aid kits can be purchased from this site.

Security operatives: constituency surgeries

MSSS is developing a new framework for the central provision of security operatives to help at constituency surgeries (so as to reduce the burden on constituency teams). It is planned to have this in place by Friday 22 October 2021. All constituency offices are being consulted on their immediate plans for surgeries, and requirements for security operatives now. Contact MSSS to register your interest or demand for a centrally provided security operative by calling **020 7219 2244** or emailing **surgerysecurityrequests@parliament.uk**.

The existing model whereby IPSA provide funding for a Security Industry Authority (SIA) approved security operative as a reassurance measure for constituency surgeries is still in place, should this be your preferred route. It is essential that the security operative holds an SIA Door Supervisor Licence. (Other types of SIA license exist but qualify the holder for other security roles much less relevant to the security risks associated with running a surgery).

- Any security company or individual contracted by the Member must be SIA regulated.
- The MSSS can supply details of a public register of SIA regulated companies and individuals in your constituency.
- The agreement will be directly between the Member and the company or individual.
- IPSA will only consider claims or funding for SIA registered individuals or companies.

Requesting security support

Contact MSSS for a list of SIA approved individuals and companies by calling 020 7219 2244 or emailing **safe@parliament.uk**

Alternatively, a list of SIA approved individuals and companies in your region is available at:

www.services.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk/Pages/acs-roac.aspx

IPSA funding is available for security operative duties at constituency surgeries. Other services such as patrols, personal protection and escort duties are outside the agreed scope of reassurance measures. If you have concerns about threats, disruption or demonstrations at a constituency event these should be reported to your local police for them to consider and provide advice.

Good security providers will want to attend the premises to make a thorough assessment of threat and risk.

The security provider will want to know details of any existing or planned security at the premises such as personal attack alarms, CCTV or access control.

SIA Approved Contractor Scheme

The SIA maintains an Approved Contractor Scheme (ACS). When you choose an SIA approved contractor, you can be sure that the business you are working with has been independently checked.

Types of SIA Licence:

There are different types of SIA licence that determine the activities that security operatives can perform. Security operatives would not perform close protection duties like escorting you to and from venues, to train stations or vehicles.

You should be contracting a door supervisor, as they will be trained to physically intervene to defuse a volatile situation. If a door supervisor is not available a security guard may be used. Security guards are trained in guarding duties, but not to physically intervene.

Additional information

If you feel more personalised advice would be beneficial you should contact your local police commander, or the Members' Security Support Service on 020 7219 2244 or email [**safe@parliament.uk**](mailto:safe@parliament.uk).

The Parliamentary Liaison and Investigation Team (PLaIT) is a police team based at Parliament. They can be contacted on x4955 or by email [**plait@met.pnn.police.uk**](mailto:plait@met.pnn.police.uk).

There are a range of products available to help staff and visitors know what to look for and how to report, and to encourage this vigilance and reporting behaviours. This includes that provided on the ACT Awareness e-learning:

[**www.gov.uk/government/news/act-awareness-elearning**](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/act-awareness-elearning)

And employee vigilance campaign:

[**www.cpni.gov.uk/security-campaigns/employee-vigilance-campaign**](http://www.cpni.gov.uk/security-campaigns/employee-vigilance-campaign)

Useful links:

[**intranet.parliament.uk/security/advice-for-members/**](http://intranet.parliament.uk/security/advice-for-members/)

Protecting lone workers:

[**www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf**](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf)

Personal Safety at work:

[**www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety-at-work**](http://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety-at-work)

Personal Safety at home:

[**www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety-at-home**](http://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety-at-home)

Personal safety and the law:

[**www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety-and-law**](http://www.suzylamplugh.org/personal-safety-and-law)

Annex 1 – Briefing points for SIA-Security Operatives at Surgeries:

- MPs' constituency surgeries are an essential part of the UK's democratic process, enabling constituents (some of whom are among the most vulnerable people in society) to discuss matters with their MP in person.
- Your vital role is to help ensure the safety and security of all attending, and to do so in a way that is welcoming and reassuring.
- Read the below and ensure you understand these key messages. If you have any questions, bring these to the attention of the caseworker in attendance before the surgery starts.
- Arrive one hour before published doors open time, checking in with the person agreed to receive you. Note that you should arrive in time to complete preparatory checks before the MP's arrival.
- Check phone signal and contact numbers. Ensure your phone and radio (if appropriate) have sufficient battery life. Ensure you have precise details of the address of the venue in case you need to call 999.
- Familiarise yourself with the venue and immediate surrounding area. This should include escape routes, fire safety equipment, first aid kits, ability to lock down the surgery.
- Once inside, confirm your role, listen to plans for how the surgery will operate, and discuss any particular requirements or concerns they have.
- In particular, agree how entry to the surgery will be managed. For example, is anyone who arrives to be granted entry (subject to search), or is admission limited to people who have pre-booked an appointment (in which case, who will check an individual is expected). Are people expected to show some sort of ID before being granted entry, and if so, who will check that?

- As you familiarise yourself with the venue, look out for any obvious threats, hazards, and items that look unusual or out of place.
- If, for example, the surgery is taking place in a community hall, ensure that any kitchen area is secured to prevent access to knives.
- Locate emergency exits, check that they are not obstructed and can be opened and ensure that routes to them (within the building) and away from them (outside) are free from obstructions. Re-secure them, so that they can only be opened from the inside (preventing their use as an entry route that by-passes security).
- Plan how you will control access at the entrance – in particular, how you will position yourself so that one visitor can't easily pass while you are talking to and/or searching another.
- You should locate yourself at the entrance to the surgery, in a position that makes your presence obvious and enables you to control entry.
- It is essential that you remain vigilant, alert to what is going on around you at all times, even when you are talking to a visitor, or searching them or their possessions.
- If you have any concerns about the visitor's behaviour you should try to de-escalate the situation.
- If at any stage you feel at risk, you should call or shout to draw others' attention to the situation.
- At the end of the surgery, you should have a short debrief discussion with the MP and/or their staff to discuss any security concerns or issues arising during the surgery. You should make a written record of this discussion and pass it to your employer.

If at any point you have concerns about safety or security, consider calling the police.

