

## Investigative reporting

Investigative reports have a basis in everyday journalism. We need to have a story, and one which is interesting to our audience. We need to check the facts, report accurately and fairly. An investigative report has several other features. For example it:

- takes more effort and time, and therefore more resources
- involves original work
- identifies a pattern or a series of events
- exposes information hidden beneath events or actions
- builds up a case using evidence e.g. documents and statements

In investigative reporting it may :

- be harder to obtain information and interviews and
- involve some risk to the journalist and the sources

It will often raise issues such as:

- The need for anonymity
- Questions about secret recording
- Payment
- Safety

As a journalist you will need to:

- have good record-keeping including tapes, e-mails and notes
- keep your information secure
- protect your sources
- think about risks to yourself and possibly your family

It will take time to go through the stages of deciding on the story, doing the research - which could involve large numbers of documents, recording the interviews, putting the report together, ensuring a high quality of production, not to mention time in dealing with any legal or editorial issues which might arise, such as anonymity.

**At some stage you will also need to put any allegations to those who have been investigated and give them the right of reply.**

And finally, what will happen to your story if it's exposed before you're ready?