

Media protocol

NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group

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About this media protocol

We aim to maximise opportunities to improve communications with local people and other partners through open, frank and effective media relations - initiating communications and responding to enquiries in a clear, timely and consistent way – to build a better understanding of our work and achievements.

Our central objective is to **ensure a positive media profile - maximise good publicity, minimise the effects of negative publicity and ensure a corporate approach to the media.**

To do this we will:

- Establish and maintain clear and regular channels of communication with the media and create a positive, informed and clear profile of who we are
- Develop and promote consistent key messages
- Respect the right of the media to represent all views
- Seek correction when media coverage is misleading or incorrect

Our media relations standards

- 1 Telling our story** - proactive communication through press releases, briefings and opportunities is key to shaping our positive profile and ensuring our publics and partners understand our work and achievements. This requires our staff and member practices to inform the communications support service as soon as possible about the stories they have to tell about our work, new initiatives, successes that should be celebrated and difficult messages that must be communicated. Information must be timely and relevant to ensure media interest. Opportunities to attend events, interview key people and take photography will increase the appeal of our stories.
- 2 Media enquiries** - a good relationship with the media is built on trust and responsiveness. We must ensure each issue is handled as well as possible and the media understand we are serious about openness and transparency. Our communications support service will respond to important media enquiries with a target turnaround of 4 hours whenever possible - this requires immediate attention and support from all our staff and members involved.
- 3 Management of Information** – our Governing Body and Operational Team will consider communication issues at their regular meetings - discussing communication risks, opportunities and significant planned initiatives.
- 4 Effective media communications**– our Communications and Engagement Team can offer strategic advice and expertise, supported by analysis of media coverage of our activities and channels, through media monitoring.

Our media protocol

We will handle all media issues and enquiries in the following way:

A All media issues about our organisation are handled by our Communications and Engagement Team

- All direct approaches to staff by the media must be referred to the communications lead at the earliest possible opportunity
- The lead will prepare proactive press releases and provide briefings when appropriate, arrange opportunities for media interviews and provide briefings
- The lead will prepare reactive media statements and briefings, arrange media interviews and provide briefings
- The lead will quote the Chair / Accountable Officer / other clinical members – who will also represent us as spokespeople for media interviews

B Our members and the Operational Team should proactively inform our Communications and Engagement Team about all plans that require or may lead to publicity

- All plans that may lead to publicity - proactive or reactive - must be shared with the Team at the earliest stage to ensure communications opportunities and risks are identified and managed

C Our communications support will ...

- Provide advice on issues and review reports that may lead to media interest
- Provide access to other appropriate communications opportunities
- Attend key internal meetings when required to discuss impending communications and engagement issues to identify opportunities and risks

D We will keep our partners informed by...

- Informing NHS England and other relevant partners – about media issues that may be of regional and national significance
- Liaising with our local partners – like Sefton Council, other CCGs and providers etc – on issues where we have joint responsibility or our media response may affect them
- Briefing key stakeholders about emerging issues or change - we will endeavour to ensure they hear news first from us

Social media guidance

Facebook, Twitter and You Tube are amongst some of the most well-known examples of social media. Their power is growing and their application can therefore be useful for organisations to use appropriately to engage and inform their audiences. Whilst there are advantages to using social media, there can also be pitfalls which impact on reputation...

Our approach

...therefore, any engagement using these channels on behalf of the CCG should be managed by our central Communications and Engagement Team. If you have a specific message you would like to cascade via social media, please contact communications who will provide advice and support.

Personal use

The following guidance provides a framework to help members protect themselves and our organisation, without sacrificing the benefits social media can bring to users.

1. Users are personally responsible for what they publish. Remember, anything posted will be published immediately and will be permanently available to a world-wide audience and could be republished in other media
2. Internet postings must respect copyright, privacy, fair use, financial disclosure, and other applicable laws, such as libel and defamation
3. Internet postings should not disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to the organisation or to any third party
4. If staff or members comment on our business they must clearly identify themselves with the disclaimer - "the views expressed are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the CCG." Individuals should neither claim or imply they speak on the organisation's behalf unless they have sought prior agreement via the Communications and Engagement Team
5. Identify yourself – give your full name when you discuss work-related matters. Write in the first person. You must make it clear whether you are speaking for yourself or on behalf of the organisation with approval
6. Be aware of your personal profiles – you may wish to ensure your own personal profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues and stakeholders
7. Be safe – never give out personal details or publish confidential information including that about patients, providers etc
8. Respect your audience - you should show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory
9. Add value – our brand is best represented by its people and what you publish may reflect on that
10. Social media should only be used in work time if it directly supports you in your employed position, and you have gained approval
11. Compliments and complaints – if you are made aware of any complaints/criticisms, or if you are made aware of a particularly satisfied service user, inform Communications.
12. The organisation reserves the right to request the certain subjects are avoided, withdraw certain posts, and remove inappropriate comments

Our communications service

Press releases

We aim to achieve 100% take up of our press releases by the media, which means only producing releases on issues the media are likely to respond to and publish. Press release should be supported with arrangements for appropriate people to conduct follow-up interviews and photo opportunities. Briefing notes will be prepared if appropriate. Our Communications and Engagement Team will produce photography for distribution to the media if appropriate.

Media enquiries

We have highly skilled communications support in helping us to respond to media enquiries. The team relies on people throughout the organisation to respond to their referred enquiries as well and as quickly as possible. Each enquiry is logged and the results evaluated through our media monitoring.

Issue management

It is vital that we identify issues that may provide an opportunity for positive publicity or which may be contentious and plan for them as early as possible. Our Communications and Engagement Team will prepare appropriate responses for any emerging problems, anticipating how the CCG will need to deal with criticism.

Nominated spokespeople

Agreeing a small pool of nominated, skilled spokespeople will ensure consistency of key messages. This will help build our reputation.

Rapid response

In cases where attacks on our organisation are made by media channels, our communications support will prepare a response with background notes, rebuttal statements and general advice.

Contacts

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