

CONTROLLED DOCUMENT

Dealing with the Media Policy

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust (the 'Trust') has a duty to protect its patients and staff, in line with patient confidentiality, Caldicott Principles, Freedom of Information and the Data Protection Act. Additionally, the external reputation of the Trust and its staff is of high importance. Opinions expressed in the media have influence over public opinion, with potentially adverse effects on patient choice, associated referrals, income and recruitment.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to ensure the Trust has a clear and consistent approach to dealing with the media.
- 1.3 This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following documents to ensure that the Trust, its patients and its employees are duly protected.
 - Procedure for Condition Checks
 - Major Incident Communication Plan (held locally by the Communications Team)
 - Social Media Policy and Procedure
 - Celebrity and VIP Policy

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all areas and activities of the Trust and to all individuals employed by the Trust including contractors, volunteers, students, locum and agency staff and staff employed on honorary contracts.
- 2.2 This policy covers all aspects of media liaison, including:
 - Media enquiries;
 - Press releases and statements;
 - Photography and filming by external organisations;
 - Condition checks;
 - Proactive media and publicity;
 - Case studies and endorsements; and
 - Major incident

2.3 This policy does NOT apply to patients/relatives taking photographs or making recordings for their own purposes

3. Framework

3.1 This section describes the broad framework for dealing with interactions with media.

3.2 Definitions

Media	Any persons or organisations who are involved in the production of mass communications, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio • Television • Film • Newspapers • Magazines • Internet sites • Social media e.g. Twitter, Facebook, blogs • Trade communications i.e. case studies or testimonials
Media Enquiry	A media enquiry is typically a telephone call, email or message on social media from an individual journalist representing any broadcast or print/online media organisation. The organisation can operate on a local, regional, national or international level and freelance journalists or bloggers may also submit enquiries.
Press Release	A press release is any proactive release of information to media regarding the Trust's activity or that of its employees
Statement	A statement is a reactive release of information regarding the Trust's activity or that of its employees.
Condition Check	A condition check is an update on the condition of a patient. It does not reveal any personal information about the patient or their treatment and does not reveal which ward they are being treated in. A condition check for media can only be given with the consent of the patient.

3.3 Media enquiries

- 3.3.1 Any comment, interview, image or information given to the media provided by staff in their capacity of an employee of the Trust, must be approved in advance by Communications.
- 3.3.2 Any member of staff approached by the media must refer the individual or organisation to Communications. Communications can be contacted on 0121 371 6491 in the first instance. Urgent out-of-hours enquiries must be directed to the Trust switchboard 0121 371 2000 who will contact the On-Call Communications Manager or executive on duty.
- 3.3.3 Communications will ensure that appropriate spokespeople are made available to give interviews to media organisations as and when required.
- 3.3.4 In the event that a member of the Communications team is not available, staff must take a message and relay it to the Communications team as soon as reasonably possible without entering into a discussion with or providing information to the journalist. The message must include the journalist's name, organisation, contact details, deadline and a brief summary of the enquiry or questions being asked.
- 3.3.5 The Communications team will provide 24-hour communications support via an On-Call Communications Manager.
- 3.3.6 The Communications team will also keep staff informed about key media coverage which affects the Trust, ensuring that stakeholders are fully briefed about any media enquiries/activity which may have an impact on them or affect the reputation of the Trust.
- 3.3.7 Members of the media may also submit Freedom of Information (Fol) requests to the Trust. Where this occurs staff should suggest they submit their request to the FOI email inbox:

foi@uhb.nhs.uk

3.4 Press releases and statements

- 3.4.1 All press releases and statements must be approved by Communications.
- 3.4.2 Where the release of information concerns issues of a serious nature, such as an investigation or legal proceedings, any statements will be approved by a member of the Board of Directors.

3.5 Photography, filming or recording

- 3.5.1 Permission for the media to film or photograph property, patients or employees on Trust premises must be sought and granted by Communications. Any unauthorised filming, photography or audio recording on Trust premises including car parks and grounds will be stopped and anyone taking part in this activity may be escorted off Trust premises.
- 3.5.2 Any individuals or organisations requesting opportunities or permission to film or photograph its activity, staff or patients on Trust property must be referred to Communications.
- 3.5.3 Consent must be obtained from any persons who will be identifiable on photographs or in footage. Retrospective consent would only ever be required in the event of a media crew being embedded within the Trust to film emergency attendances. In this case a Consent Protocol would be created on a case-by-case basis. Please refer to the associated Photographic and Video Recording Consent and Confidentiality Policy.
- 3.5.4 Subject to 3.5.5 a representative from Communications must be present during any photography, recording or filming as identified in 3.5.1.
- 3.5.5 In some circumstances Communications may grant permission for media to photograph or film on site unaccompanied i.e. a long-term documentary. In this instance the Director of Communications or nominated deputy will issue an Authorised Media ID badge.

3.6 Condition Checks for the media

Details are contained in the procedure for Condition Checks for the media. There is a separate Condition Check process for emergency services/other health or social care organisations. Condition checks will only be provided with the explicit consent of the patient.

3.7 Proactive media and publicity

- 3.7.1 The Trust actively seeks positive publicity for its services and employees.
- 3.7.2 Individuals of departments seeking to publicise 'good news' i.e. new services, treatments or achievements, must in the first instance contact Communications who will approach appropriate media on their behalf.

3.8 Case studies and endorsements

3.8.1 Suppliers and trade organisations regularly seek to use the Trust's reputation to showcase their products or services. Those who wish to use the Trust as a case study must approach Communications who will assess the suitability of being associated with the company publicly and ensure the language used is in accordance with NHS identity guidelines.

3.8.2 Staff must not agree to participate in a commercial case study on behalf of the Trust without approval from Communications.

3.9 Major Incidents

In the event of a Major Incident, the Major Incident Plan, which outlines the procedures for managing the media during a Major Incident, will be activated. Please see the procedural document Major Incident Plan for details.

4. **Duties**

4.1 **Director of Communications**

The Director of Communications has overall responsibility for media relations and information released to the media and through official Trust communication channels, along with facilitating media/high-profile visits to Trust premises for the Trust and approves the Condition Check Procedure for the media.

4.2 **Director of Corporate Affairs**

The Director of Corporate Affairs is the Trust Senior Information Risk Officer and has overall responsibility for Information Governance.

4.3 **Divisional Management Team**

The Divisional Management Team is responsible for ensuring:

4.3.1 All staff in their division understand and follow the requirements of this policy;

4.3.2 Information released to the media relating to their areas of accountability is accurate and appropriate and their delegated managers and supervisors act in accordance with policy to protect the organisation's reputation; and

4.3.3 All staff in their division respond without any undue delay to requests by Communications to provide information for media enquiries.

4.4 On-Call Communications Manager

The On-Call Communications Manager will be responsible for:

4.4.1 Ensuring the local implementation of policy, including taking appropriate management action of non-compliance in accordance with the associated Disciplinary Policy; and

4.4.2 Responding as quickly as is reasonably practical to requests by Communications to provide information for media enquiries.

4.5 Security

Members of the Security team will escort any member of the media off the site if they are on site without the consent of Communications.

4.6 All Staff

All Staff must:

4.6.1 Protect the confidentiality of individuals (including patients, staff, and visitors) in relation to the media at all times;

4.6.2 Be mindful of how they portray their position at the Trust outside of the workplace. Any behaviour or comments which could bring the Trust into disrepute as a result of association could lead to disciplinary action;

4.6.3 Ensure that they adhere to this policy at all times. Any incident which the Communications team assesses as having significant reputational damage or having breached any legislation or Trust protocol will be reported to the Director of Communications or nominated deputy;

4.6.4 Notify Communications if a journalist, photographer or film crew approaches them, directly, or is on site without a member of Communications present or a valid Authorised Media ID badge;

4.6.5 Employees who are found to breach the Trust's policy will be managed in line with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy. A breach amounting to gross misconduct may result in dismissal.

5. Implementation and Monitoring

5.1 Implementation

5.1.1 This policy will be communicated to all staff via the In the Loop email system;

5.1.2 Arrange appropriate training for Trust identified spokespeople.

5.1.3 The Policy will be available to all staff via the Trust's intranet.

5.2 Monitoring

Monitoring of this Policy is outlined in Appendix A.

6. References

Communications Act 2003

7. Associated Policy and Procedural Documentation

Disciplinary Policy

Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations Policy

Data Protection Confidentiality and Disclosure Policy

IT Acceptable Use Policy

Procedure for Condition Checks

Major Incident Communication Plan (held locally by the Communications Team)

Photographic, Video and Audio Recording Consent and Confidentiality Policy

Social Media Policy

Celebrity and VIP Policy

Appendix A

Monitoring Matrix

MONITORING OF COMPLIANCE	MONITORING LEAD	REPORTED TO PERSON/GROUP	MONITORING PROCESS	MONITORING FREQUENCY
Condition checks for media	Deputy Director of Communications	Director of Communications	Communications maintain a log of any condition checks processed for media.	As required
Compliance with policy	Deputy Director of Communications	Director of Communications	<p>Communications record and maintain copies of all press releases and statements issued to the media.</p> <p>Communications maintain a record of agreed on-site media.</p>	Monthly
Ad hoc incidents	Deputy Director of Communications	Director of Communications	Any incident which Communications assess as have significant reputational damage or having breached Patient Confidentiality, Patient Consent or any other legislation, will be reported to a member of the Board of Directors.	By exception