

Media Guidelines for Council of Governors

Introduction

Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital NHS Trust (the Trust), is an organisation that is accountable to the public and will inevitably and regularly attract the interest of the media. Whether being proactive or reactive it is essential that the Trust is able to engage with the media on a basis of authority and knowledge.

The Trust's Communications and Marketing office is experienced in all aspects of media handling and is adequately equipped to ensure that the Trust's excellent reputation is maintained at all times.

These Media Guidelines for Stakeholders conforms to communications guidelines within the NHS. The Media Guidelines will provide a framework through which relationships with the media will take place within the Trust. When referring to the term 'media' within these Guidelines the Trust is relating to journalists, researchers, editors and others working for the press in all forms, i.e. radio, television or internet sites.

1.0 Rationale

- Effective media relations are essential to the success of any organisation in the public eye. The most successful organisations effectively manage the media in helping to build good relationships with their stakeholders and the general public. They are also equipped and prepared to react to any approaches by the media.
- Public confidence in an organisation can soon be damaged by a 'bad news' story. This damage can be instantaneous and catastrophic, or gradual and erosive. In the latter case this damage can be repaired, but needs a great investment of time and effort, in the former case the damage may be irreparable.
- Clear internal arrangements for media relations ensure that the right people are conveying the right message, at the right time and to the right audiences. These Media Guidelines provides a mechanism through which the Trust can be effective in media management.

2.0 Scope

- The Media Guidelines will apply to all nominated and elected Governors.

3.0 Media Guidelines

3.1 Reacting to Media Contacts

- If approached by the media Governors should offer no comment on behalf of the Trust.
- Governors must not make comment to the media formally or 'off the record' unless specifically sanctioned to do so by the Trust's Chief Executive, Chairman or its Communications and Marketing Office.

- All unsolicited media contacts should, in the first instance, be referred to the Trust's Communications and Marketing Office who will deal and respond appropriately to all such contacts.

Communications and Marketing Team

E-mail – Matthew.Back@lhch.nhs.uk or Gillian.donnely@lhch.nhs.uk,

- Members must adhere to these principles when undertaking all communication activities.

3.2 Proactive Media Contacts

- Members should not make contact with the media without the prior approval of the Chief Executive, Chairman or their nominated deputy.
- If Members feel that the Trust could benefit from media exposure they must liaise with the Communications and Marketing team who will offer their advice and support.

4.0 Rights of Staff Side Representatives of Recognised Trade Unions or Staff Associations

- These Media Guidelines do not restrict the rights of staff side representatives of recognised trade unions or staff associations to express their views through or to the media directly.
- Staff side representatives of recognised trade unions or staff associations are fully entitled to make comment on behalf of their staff association or trade union. They are not able to make comment on behalf of, or represent, the Trust.

5.0 Implementation and Compliance

5.1 Corporate Oversight

- The Marketing and Communications Office will take every step to ensure that Members adhere to the Media Guidelines.

5.2 Training

- The Marketing and Communications Office will work closely with Members to ensure that training on effective media relations is available to those who require/request such training.

6.0 Review

- These Guidelines will be reviewed on an annual basis.