

MEDIA TOOLKIT

FOR SCOTTISH CARE

MEMBERS



6 MAY 2020

INTRODUCTION

Scottish Care are aware that members are experiencing increased media interest during Covid-19. We have therefore developed this guide to hopefully provide members with some tips and advice on how to handle media enquiries.

There are many positive reasons as to why you should engage with the media:

- It provides an accurate and realistic picture of the work that you do
- It gives an authentic voice to the story
- Offers you an opportunity to get your organisation's issues into the public eye
- Allows you to say something important about your organisation/sector to a wide audience
- Raises profile of the independent social care sector/your organisation

We would encourage Scottish Care members to engage positively with the media, but recognise that media engagement can be challenging, inappropriate or unconstructive. In these instances, we will try to help you make decisions into whether you should engage with the media or not.



TYPES OF MEDIA ENQUIRIES

You may be approached by the media, through Scottish Care or directly, for a range of different contributions. These include:

- General statement on a sector-wide issue
- Specific statement on an issue which is relevant to/experienced by your service (e.g. a Covid-19 outbreak)
- Radio interview input – this could be pre-recorded or live
- Pre-recorded film piece – this usually involves requests to include staff and/or individuals who you support
- Live film piece – this usually involves a representative speaking to the camera

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- **Apply common sense to all requests**
- **Avoid emotional or reactive responses**
- **Stay calm, professional and factual**
- **Be as open and transparent as possible**
- **Only engage with journalists and media outlets which you know to**
- **be true and responsible in their reporting and approaches**
- **Fully clarify any request in terms of what, when, who and why**
- **Only provide input (in any format) and details which do not**
- **intrude on the privacy and rights of an individual.**



GENERAL GUIDANCE

Here are some considerations that you should take in account of if you are approached by the media and are unsure to whether you should engage or not.

WHAT SUBJECT/STORY ARE THEY COVERING?

- Does it affect your service?
- Does it help address any Covid-19 challenges?
- Make sure not to share any confidential or sensitive information
- Do not provide information that has not already been shared with residents' or clients' families and other relevant bodies (e.g. regulatory bodies) where appropriate

WHAT MEDIA FORMAT IS IT?

- The health and safety of people you are supporting, and your staff is number one priority. If the media request involves filming in person, ensure that appropriate social distancing and health and safety procedures are practised.
- Any filming should be undertaken outside of a service and at a minimum 2 metre social distance. Please ensure any filming participants (e.g. staff members) are also observing social distance from each other.
- If the media request is pre-recorded, it may be that staff can undertake filming themselves inside the service on devices to then share with journalists.

DO YOU/YOUR SERVICE HAVE THE CAPACITY TO TAKE ON A MEDIA REQUEST?

- Avoid any additional pressure on your staff and service if existing pressures already exist
- Is it appropriate to put out a written statement on the media issue instead of doing an interview/any filming to relieve any pressure?

WHO WILL BE INVOLVED?

- Ensure that permission/consent is obtained and recorded for those who are featured or mentioned in the media.
- Make sure that relevant parties are informed that you are taking part in a media request (e.g. communications team, family of supported individuals, staff)
- If your service is part of a larger organisation or has a PR, Communications or Media department, please speak to them before any media involvement.

GENERAL/SPECIFIC MEDIA REQUEST

You could use any general/specific media enquiries to positively shape the national or local view on a subject. In these cases, we encourage members to take part in these media requests, as long as providers can contribute without negatively impacting their service.

When the media approaches you on a general subject and you are unsure of the best way to respond, please feel free to contact comms@scottishcare.org and our communications team will try to support you.

However, please do bear in mind that journalists often want to hear the reality and about front-line work and whilst we can support with general statements, your service and staff are the experts in terms of providing an accurate representation of front-line social care.

If you do decide to go ahead with the media enquiry, it is best to identify a spokesperson who can present the issue in an articulate and balanced way. If the request is for a larger filming piece, we would advise carefully selecting additional individuals who are happy to participate and can also provide a balanced insight.

If taking part in an interview for TV or radio, we would advise interviewees to consider a maximum of 3 key messages to get across.

The majority of media requests will often come from Scottish Care with a short-time scale. If you are happy to be contacted in relation to particular media requests, please pass your details to comms@scottishcare.org. This does not obligate you to participate but indicates that we can contact you to discuss a media request as required.

POSITIVE NEWS

We would always encourage members to share any positive news they may have.

Positive stories are always good to hear but are especially important to share during these unprecedented and difficult times. Any positive stories, large or small, are important to balance the media's representation of the social care sector and to bust some of the myths that exist.

Some examples of what constitutes a good news story could be:

- Individuals recovering from Covid-19
- When staff have done something extraordinary or unusual to support residents/clients
- Any positive partnerships your service has developed with local communities or organisations
- Any activities or initiatives that are in place to support individual/staff well-being
- Any stories about connecting people to their family and loved ones.

Depending on the context and details, these stories may be shared or picked up at a national or local level.

Occasionally there will be requests for stories like these, however most of the time Scottish Care has to proactively present these stories to the media and can help to share your story.

Here are some steps to follow if you have a good news story to share:

- Write a brief summary of your story
- Where possible include a picture or a video clip
- Collate quotes from relevant people about the impact of your story
- Seek permission to use quotes and pictures of relevant people
- Share story through social media channels
 - Scottish Care would encourage you to share using Twitter or Facebook as it is the best way to get your story out there and
- to gain more reach.
- Share story with any local media outlets
- Share story with Scottish Care to share more widely and to support you to share through national or local mechanisms.

CRISIS SITUATIONS

During Covid-19, unfortunately more care services are likely to experience media requests due to a crisis situation in their service, for instance an outbreak of Covid-19 or deaths of individuals.

In these instances, it is especially important to protect the people you support and your staff and to avoid any additional pressures which negatively impact the service.

It is extremely important in these instances to communicate clearly and transparently with families, staff and other groups. Please also ensure that relevant bodies (such as regulators and Health & Social Care Partnerships) have been notified appropriately.

Whilst the obvious option is **not** to engage with the media at these times, there are often reasons why saying something can be better than saying nothing. A negative story with a 'no comment' response can be more damaging than providing a simple factual statement that says the bare minimum. It is likely that the story will still run so a simple statement can provide an opportunity to clarify a situation.

In crisis situations, it will often be more beneficial to issue one written, factual statement to all media requests rather than undertake interviews.

If you do respond to media requests, here are some tips for doing so:

- Designate an appropriate team or individual and direct all requests for information to them – this should be the CEO, service spokesperson or a member of senior management
- Do not allow others in the service to speak to the media
- Get as much information as you can about the request
- Prepare key messages
- Answer what you can, but don't feel the need to respond to everything right away. You can request to look into the situation or gather information and respond at a later time
- Don't say anything you don't want to be published
- Legal issues should be discussed with counsel
- Apply the general principles at all times

AGGRESSIVE/INAPPROPRIATE MEDIA REQUESTS

In any instances where the media are approaching you in an aggressive or inappropriate manner, please note that you always reserve the right not to comment or to state that it is not the appropriate time to comment.

You are entitled to request identification from a journalist or media outlet to ensure they are who they say they are. It is important to check this, especially when approached via phone or email.

The Care Inspectorate have been alerted of instances where journalists have telephoned services posing as a Care Inspectorate employee in order to obtain information about COVID-19 within the service. Please share this alert with all your staff. If you receive a call from someone claiming to be a Care Inspectorate employee and you don't already know them, you can ask the caller to email you. Their staff email addresses end with **@careinspectorate.gov.scot** Any email not ending with this is not from a Care Inspectorate email account.

If you experience inappropriate or criminal behaviour by a media representative including false impersonation, harassment, trespassing or breach of confidentiality (e.g. inappropriate photo taking), please report this to relevant authorities including Police Scotland. The safety of your staff and the people you support is paramount at all times.

Scottish Care is happy to support members with media requests – please email comms@scottishcare.org or call 01292 270240.



REFERENCES

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/financial-theory/10/crisis-management.asp>
<https://www.cognitionagency.co.uk/blog/7-tips-dealing-media-former-journalist/>
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