

Support others to make best use of the media

Overview

This standard is about helping other people work with the media effectively. It involves enabling individuals to make informed decisions about what they want to say, through their contact with the media. You will be supporting individuals who are not used to working with the media, including colleagues, victims, survivors and their associates. Contact with the media may be reactive - reacting to requests from the media for comment or information, or proactive - where the person initiates contact with the media in order to get across their message.

The media with which your organisation has contact may be press, both newspapers and trade/technical journals, radio or television and may be based locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

There are two elements

1. Assist people to prepare for contact with the media
2. Support people during their contact with the media

Target group

This standard is relevant to those with responsibility for coordinating contact with the media.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

Assist people to prepare for contact with the media

1. maintain an accurate and up-to-date record of those media organisations with which your organisation has contact, including their named contacts and their particular interests and specialisms
2. Introduce yourself and explain your role
3. encourage individuals to review and express their aims and objectives in working with the media, including:
 - 3.1 the messages they want to get across
 - 3.2 any concerns and anxieties they have about contact with the media
4. support individuals to identify the values, aims and policies of their organisation, where they are representing their organisation in the media
5. listen and respond to points made, communicating using techniques which suit the needs and abilities of the individuals
6. explain to individuals using language they can understand:
 - 6.1 the potential advantages and risks of working with the media
 - 6.2 how the media works
 - 6.3 how it may respond to the individual and their message
 - 6.4 the different methods of contacting the media including what each might involve
7. discuss options for who should interact with the media, including making preparations for responses to questions the media might ask
8. explain the codes of conduct that apply to the media and the steps the individual can take if they feel they have not been fairly treated
9. suggest to individuals how they may manage their anxieties, maintain control of their interactions with the media, and present a positive image of themselves and their messages
10. discuss and clarify with individuals the nature and level of support they need
11. meet individuals' requests for support, where appropriate, including referring to an appropriate person where the requests exceed your role and responsibilities
12. discuss and agree with individuals the respective roles and responsibilities of all concerned during the contact with the media
13. seek immediate support and assistance from appropriate people where you are unsure of actions that you should take

Support people during their contact with the media

14. support individuals during their contact with the media using methods which promote the independence of individuals and encourages them to have control of the process and the outcomes

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15. check that your support is consistent with agreements made with individuals, your role and responsibilities, and is in line with your organisation's policies and procedures
16. make interventions, where appropriate, using techniques which respect the dignity, independence and rights of individuals and supports their efforts to present their views
17. offer support to individuals who experience difficulties or distress during their contact with the media in line with their needs
18. monitor individuals' emotional and physical well-being, and identify any signs that indicate potential harm and intervene immediately in line with their needs
19. seek immediate support and assistance from appropriate people where you are unsure of actions that you should take
20. make records of the information provided to the media, in line with your organisation's requirements
21. offer positive and constructive feedback to individuals on the way that they handled their contact with the media
22. monitor media output, and retain press cuttings and any recordings of radio and television transmissions relevant to individuals' contact with the media, and review these with individuals where requested
23. advise individuals about how to make a complaint about media coverage, if they feel they have been unfairly treated

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. legal and organisational requirements which relate to media relations, and their impact for your area of operations
2. legislation, policies and procedures relating to data protection, health and safety, diversity and their impact for your area of operations
3. the role of your organisation and its services, and the services which it provides in supporting others to make best use of the media
4. organisational policy and procedures regarding confidentiality of information and the disclosure of information to third parties, and the specific circumstances under which disclosure may be made
5. the limits of your authority and responsibility, and the actions to take if these are exceeded
6. good practice communication techniques relevant to the situation and how to apply them
7. the various forms of media, the timescales to which they work in relation to different types of event and the different approaches which they may take
8. codes of conduct and guidelines which apply to the conduct of the media
9. how to make complaints about the conduct of the media
10. how the media may distort the messages which individuals are attempting to give and why this may occur
11. the values, aims, objectives, policies and work of media organisations identified as relevant to the intended contact
12. the potential benefits and risks of building relationships with the media,
13. ways of building and sustaining effective relationships with media contacts
14. the importance of being clear about the key messages to convey to the media and how to keep to those messages and avoid being drawn into disclosing more information than intended
15. the potential risks associated with inappropriate disclosure of information, including:
 - 15.1 to the individuals
 - 15.2 to those using the services of your organisation
 - 15.3 to relationships with other organisations
 - 15.4 to relationships with the media
16. features of effective press releases, including:
 - 16.1 what media organisations look for in press releases
 - 16.2 how to structure them in a way that is likely to maximise interest, particularly in relation to issues that may not seem high profile and newsworthy
17. ways of preparing individuals for contact with the media, including the use of role play, and rehearsing interactions

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18. the tensions that can arise between individuals' wishes and your role and responsibilities within your organisation, and methods for dealing with these
19. the different ways of supporting individuals speaking on behalf of their organisation, and supporting individuals who are speaking in a personal capacity
20. why it is important that individuals speaking on behalf of their organisation are fully aware of their role and responsibilities in representing the views of their organisation rather than their personal views
21. the ways in which it is necessary to alter communication styles when working with different individuals and representatives of different organisations
22. sources of specialist advice and information for dealing with the media, how to access these and how to identify when you need support
23. the options for supporting individuals, and the reasoning processes used in determining the most appropriate options for the individuals concerned

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