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Addysg a Gwella Iechyd  
Cymru (AaGIC)  
Health Education and  
Improvement Wales (HEIW)

# **Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)**

## **Media Handling Procedure for All Staff**

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**Approved by: Executive Team**

**Date Endorsed: July 2022**

**Review Date: July 2025**

**Document No: V2**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

As an NHS organisation, Health Education and Improvement Wales will attract media attention, as may staff who work here, and people who use our services.

Positive publicity is welcome and helps the organisation maintain its reputation. Effective use of the media over time can help to enhance the image of the organisation. Equally, negative publicity can be extremely damaging to our reputation. Therefore all media attention and interest requires careful handling and must be managed in a way that meets our legal duties.

This media procedure provides HEIW staff with clear guidance on dealing with the media, inviting the media onto HEIW premises, and who should respond to queries from the media on behalf of HEIW. In relation to this procedure, the term media includes all journalists, news reporters, writers and researchers from radio, TV, websites, newspapers, magazines and specialist publications.

The aim is to ensure there is consistency in dealing with the media on HEIW premises and on behalf of HEIW, to minimise the possibility of errors and avoid conflicting information being provided to the media.

## **2. SCOPE**

- 2.1. The Media Handling Procedure applies to all HEIW employees and to Board members.
- 2.2. The procedure provides a framework within which all activities involving the media will take place within HEIW.

## **3. PRINCIPLES**

- 3.1. Effective communication makes an effective organisation. The procedure provides a mechanism through which HEIW can enhance organisational effectiveness.
- 3.2. HEIW believes staff should have access to expert knowledge to assist and support them in undertaking activities with the media. This procedure sets out a framework to provide this knowledge.
- 3.3. Common standards are required to ensure all communications are effective. Common standards are also important in forging a strong corporate identity. The procedure establishes common standards that should be followed in all media-related activities.

## **4. CORPORATE SUPPORT FOR COMMUNICATIONS**

- 4.1. HEIW has a central corporate communications and engagement department. The department is accountable to the Chief Executive.
- 4.2. The corporate communications and engagement department supports HEIW in fostering a culture of openness and transparency in the organisation, managing the reputation of the organisation, and linking the organisation to internal and external stakeholders.
- 4.3. The corporate communications and engagement department acts as a source of expert knowledge and support for all staff engaging in communicative activities.
- 4.4. The corporate communications and engagement department works with the Chairman, Chief Executive and Executive Directors in managing HEIW's relations with local, regional and national media organisations.
- 4.5. The communications and engagement department is the first point of contact with the press and media, and is responsible for pro-active HEIW media releases, social media and reactive press and media responses.
- 4.6. HEIW communications and engagement department contact details:  
The communications department is open Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm (excluding Bank Holidays).  
  
General email address [HEIW-comms@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:HEIW-comms@wales.nhs.uk)  
Via reception on 03300 585 005  
Head of Communications and Engagement: 07773 598993  
Deputy Head of Communications and Engagement: 07971 300562
- 4.7. General media queries received out of hours will be actioned by the communications and engagement department on the next working day. Any urgent/major incident media issues out of hours will be escalated by an Executive Director to the Head of Communications and Engagement.

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE**

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS**

- 5.1. All staff and Board members should follow this procedure. Managers at all levels are responsible for ensuring the staff for whom they are responsible are aware of and follow this procedure. They are also responsible for ensuring staff are updated in regard to any changes in this procedure.

- 5.2. This procedure does not affect the terms of the medical staff / dentist contract.

## **DEALING WITH THE PRESS AND MEDIA**

### **General**

- 5.3. All press and media enquiries must come directly to the communications and engagement department in the first instance and not to members of staff.
- 5.4. Any staff who receive any queries or requests of any nature from journalists / writers / TV companies should refer them to the communications and engagement department at headquarters straight away. Staff should not answer any questions on behalf of HEIW. It is alright to say you cannot help and direct the media to the communications and engagement department.
- 5.5. Staff should not give interviews directly to journalists on behalf of HEIW without first liaising with the communications and engagement department.
- 5.6. Staff who are giving interviews on behalf of another organisation or which they represent, e.g. a Royal College, must make it clear that they are doing so in that context, rather than as a representative of HEIW. If the interview is taking place on HEIW premises the communications and engagement department must be informed in the first instance, and permission sought for the filming to take place on HEIW property.
- 5.7. When necessary, the communications and engagement department is able to advise and support staff who are subsequently interviewed by the press and media.

### **Response to media enquiries**

- 5.8. All press and media enquiries must come directly to the communications and engagement department in the first instance and not to members of staff.
- 5.9. Staff may receive queries in a number of different ways including telephone, email and in certain circumstances where media interest is particularly high on the way to and from work.
- 5.10. Staff receiving queries from journalists / writers / TV companies should refer them to the communications and engagement department at headquarters in the first instance. Staff should not answer any questions on behalf of HEIW. It is alright to say you cannot help and direct the media to the communications and engagement department.
- 5.11. The communications and engagement department will find out more details from the media regarding their enquiry. They will then liaise with relevant staff for information in order for the communications and engagement team to compile a suitable response. HEIW is committed to using the Welsh language – any queries received in Welsh will be responded to in Welsh.

- 5.12. If you are contacted directly by the media / press please do not nominate and give contact details of another colleague directly to the press / media. Contact the communications and engagement department directly with the request / query and the name of the colleague you think should be contacted. The communications and engagement department will liaise with the media / press and member of staff.
- 5.13. It is important for the communications and engagement department to be involved from the start as they may be aware of wider interest in the issue, or a national angle which may have led to the query in the first place, and this may influence the content and context of the response.
- 5.14. The way and speed in which HEIW responds to the media will influence the media's perception of staff and the organisation. Please assist the communications and engagement department by providing all the relevant information about the subject as quickly as possible – after all, you are the expert in that subject.
- 5.15. The Head of Communications will inform the relevant Executive Director, Chief Executive and Chairman of any media enquires that may attract significant cover. The communications and engagement department will also advise the communications department at the Department of Health and Social Services (Wales).

### **Press and media visits**

- 5.16. Press and media must seek permission via the communications and engagement department, and not an individual staff member, before visiting, taking photographs, broadcasting from, or filming on HEIW premises.
- 5.17. All visits by the press and media must be arranged through the communications and engagement department and require the permission of HEIW which is gained via the communications and engagement department and an appropriate senior member of staff.
- 5.18. At times HEIW may receive requests to film / interview HEIW staff, trainees or students in a hospital or healthcare setting. The privacy and security of patients and staff is very important. HEIW can give permission for a person to take part in the filming or an interview, but cannot give permission for it to take place within a hospital or other healthcare premises. This permission can only be given by the specific Health Board or Trust's communications department. The HEIW communications team will liaise with colleagues in the relevant communications department before responding to the original request.
- 5.19. If you are contacted directly by the media / press please do not nominate and give contact details of another colleague directly to the press media. Contact the communications and engagement department directly with the request / query and the name of the colleague you think should be contacted. The communications and engagement department will liaise with the media / press and member of staff.

- 5.20. If you are a member of staff and want to invite the media on to HEIW premises please liaise with the communications and engagement department first.
- 5.21. Visitors should not invite the media onto HEIW premises without agreement. They should speak to a member of staff who will liaise directly with the communications and engagement department.
- 5.22. The communications and engagement department works hard to cooperate with the media wherever possible. However, there are times when this might be inappropriate, for example, for legal reasons. The communications and engagement department can advise on these situations and where necessary liaise with other organisations such as the police.
- 5.23. Anyone being filmed or interviewed must give their permission beforehand.

### **Requests to film documentaries / TV programmes**

- 5.24. The NHS regularly receives requests from film and TV production companies wanting to film programmes or 'fly-on-the-wall' documentaries.
- 5.25. Many of these requests are for 'pilots' – this means the company doesn't have a contract to make the programme and is pitching the idea to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party such as BBC or ITV at a later date. It is important that HEIW does not waste valuable resources on a programme that may not be shown.
- 5.26. In addition, many of the companies who approach the NHS are not always who they say they are. Sometimes they will say they are the BBC or ITV, when in fact they are a 3<sup>rd</sup> party private production company commissioned by one of these broadcasters. There is a difference and they don't always follow the same practices / rules as the organisations they claim to be.
- 5.27. Most production companies try to sell their idea and gain access to premises by claiming it would be positive for staff and the organisation to take part. This again isn't always the case. Quite often, after a number of hours or days filming, the end result can be minimal. The focus may be only on an individual's personal circumstances and not on showcasing services. In these instances the organisation is merely the backdrop or way-in, and there is little or no benefit to the organisation.
- 5.28. On the other hand, a programme which is based on how our services operate can be very beneficial. So it is important to sort out the wheat from the chaff.
- 5.29. These types of requests can take up a lot of time, and it is therefore very important we balance what HEIW will gain from taking part in the filming with the resources it will take up and the possible disruption to services.
- 5.30. When deciding whether or not to take part in these a number of factors have to be considered:
- What if any is the advantage to be gained by HEIW?

- What if any impact will filming have on delivering services?
- Is there any political reason why it would not be appropriate to take part – HEIW is politically neutral.
- Is there any potential risk to HEIW's reputation?
- Is there any risk to patients, students, trainees or staff?
- Does HEIW have the necessary resources available to facilitate the filming?

### **Good news stories**

- 5.31. The communications and engagement department is responsible for ensuring the media get every opportunity to write and broadcast good news stories, so the public and other organisations develop a positive view of our work.
- 5.32. Good news stories come from across the organisation. Staff are not expected to write their own media release, only to provide the communications and engagement department with the necessary information and pictures – they will do the rest.
- 5.33. There are plenty of examples of what makes a good media release, for example:
- Award wins
  - Examples of where HEIW programmes / projects have positively affected healthcare services and or patients
  - Data – we've seen a positive increase in..... We've seen positive reduction in..... Number of trainees doing xyz reached new high.....
  - New programme / project and benefits of it
  - Opening of new..... and benefits of it

### **Pre-election period**

- 5.34. As part of the NHS, HEIW is a politically neutral organisation. Therefore there may be times when it is not appropriate for HEIW to comment on a media query, allow filming, or release information if it would lead others to question our impartiality. This is more likely to happen around the time of political elections and the period leading up to the elections which is usually six weeks.

### **Significant media interest**

- 5.35. In the event of significant media interest the communications and engagement department will consider:
- Alerting staff to be aware of media interest
  - Issuing a press release or statement



### **Out of Hours enquires**

- 5.36. The communications and engagement department is open Monday – Friday, 8.30 am – 4.30 pm (excluding Bank Holidays).
- 5.37. General media queries received out of hours will be actioned by the communications and engagement department on the next working day. Any urgent / major incident media issues out of hours will be escalated by an Executive Director to the Head of Communications and Engagement.

### **Consent for publicity**

- 5.38. Pro-active press and media publicity often includes the use of patient, trainee, student or staff stories. Written consent is necessary from anyone identified as a candidate for publicity purposes.
- 5.39. Initially, the individual should be approached by a member of HEIW staff and asked if they consent to be identified in a publicity event. This could involve some or all of the following being used: their name, personal details, image, comments and details of their medical condition. How exactly their personal information will be used should be clearly explained and the individual offered the opportunity to ask any questions.
- 5.40. Once the individual has agreed, they will be asked to sign an HEIW consent form ensuring they fully understand what they are consenting to. This will include identifying the range of mechanisms that their story and/or image or comments etc may be featured – including the press and media, HEIW website, Facebook or YouTube (where appropriate), or publications like the Annual Report. Consent forms can be found on the intranet and should be filled in with as much detail as possible to ensure consent is informed.
- 5.41. The signed HEIW consent form and associated personal content e.g. photo, quote, should be sent to the Communications and Engagement Team for logging.

### **Whistle-blowing to the press and media**

- 5.42. HEIW has a whistle-blowing procedure which staff who have concerns about an issue must follow. HEIW recognises there may be times when staff wish to escalate concerns and it is important that they feel confident and able to do so. The whistle-blowing policy sets out the correct process to enable them to escalate concerns in an appropriate and responsible manner.

### **Compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016.**

- 5.43. HEIW will ensure the confidentiality of personal identifiable information in communicative activities.

- 5.44. HEIW staff and Board Members will, in all communicative activities, ensure that they comply with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016.

### **Inaccuracies in the media**

- 5.45. From time to time errors and inaccuracies do appear in the media. As negative media coverage can damage HEIW, its staff and the credibility of the services we provide, we sometimes need to try and put the record straight.
- 5.46. On behalf of HEIW the communications and engagement department will raise their concerns with the reporter and media organisation. If necessary the communications and engagement department will issue a letter or statement clarifying or correcting the published information. In extreme circumstances the communications and engagement department may put in a formal complaint with the media organisation and / or regulatory body.

### **Social Media**

- 5.47. The communications and engagement department is responsible for managing all HEIW's social media sites. Members of staff should not set up unauthorised social media sites representing, or in the name of the organisation or any of its directorates, departments or services.
- 5.48. If a member of staff is interested in developing a social media presence for their department or service, they should first read the All Wales Social Media Policy 2016, plus the HEIW guidelines on setting up a social media account for work, both of which can be found on the intranet.
- 5.49. Social media also extends beyond the recognised brands of Facebook, Twitter, etc and includes dialogue and discussion on newspaper websites and online news pages. The communications and engagement department monitors, and where appropriate, posts responses.
- 5.50. The role and value of social media is recognised and HEIW acknowledges everyone has the right to express themselves using social media. It also recognises its role on offering advice on safe use of social media, and highlighting the responsibility of all individuals to be aware of the potential consequences of posting content onto accessible platforms.
- 5.51. The blurring of boundaries between a person's private and professional life on social media is recognised and it is important staff understand and are mindful that inappropriate use could damage their own reputation as well as others,

including family, friends, colleagues and NHS Wales. NHS Wales staff have a responsibility to adhere to the national All Wales Social Media Policy 2016.

- 5.52. The All Wales Social Media Policy is available on the intranet. Staff are also referred to the guidance issued by professional organisations e.g. GMC and NMC as well as those issued by BMA, RCN, RCM and ACAS.