



# Media and public relations policy

This procedural document supersedes: CORP/COMM 27 v.1 – Media and public relations policy



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The Trust discourages the retention of hard copies of policies and can only guarantee that the policy on the Trust website is the most up-to-date version. **If, for exceptional reasons, you need to print a policy off, it is only valid for 24 hours.**

Author/reviewer: (this version)	Adam Tingle – Acting Head of Communications and Engagement
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Approved by:	Policy Approval and Compliance Group
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## Amendment Form

Please record brief details of the changes made alongside the next version number. If the procedural document has been reviewed **without change**, this information will still need to be recorded although the version number will remain the same.

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Changes	Author
<b>Version 2</b>	19 February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated to reflect Trust's new title of 'Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals', addition of social media groups and profiles within monitoring section and update to major incident partner contact.</li> </ul>	Adam Tingle
<b>Version 1</b>	27 October 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a new procedural document, please read in full</li> </ul>	Emma Bodley

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As a transparent organisation, Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals (DBTH) supports the fostering of strong, professional relationships with journalists. We recognise the significant role media coverage can play in people's perceptions of NHS services and their understanding of how to use them.

This policy is designed to ensure that DBTH makes the most of its media coverage and public relations activities to help protect and boost its reputation. This guidance also recognises that the public has a right to accurate information about how public money is being spent, through the media.

All Trust employees are asked to adhere to this policy which has been drawn up to support staff and ensure there is consistency in dealing with the media. It should also minimise the possibility of errors and ensure prompt responses to the media, in the interest of damage limitation.

## 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure a positive image of the organisation is portrayed wherever possible.
- Raise local, national and international awareness of DBTH.
- Be open, honest and flexible as possible in responses to the media avoiding appearing as if there is something to hide.
- Foster good relationships with the local, regional, national and specialist media.
- Ensure staff respond quickly and accurately to the communications team so they can meet media deadlines, whenever possible.
- To be recognised as an organisation that values its staff and the role they play.
- Raise awareness amongst all employees of the importance of gaining good publicity and dealing with the media effectively and responsibly.

## 3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **All staff:** No member of DBTH staff should enter into discussions with journalists without prior contact with the Communications and Engagement team.
- **The Communications and Engagement Team:** Are responsible for handling all reactive media enquiries, proactive media, VIP visits, procurement of media services, managing of social media groups and profiles and media monitoring.

**Communications and Engagement Team contact details:**

<https://www.dbth.nhs.uk/contact/communications-team/>

If employees are contacted by the media out of office hours or need urgent support they should contact the Head of Communications and Engagement on 07825 388105 or the Senior Communications and Engagement Manager on 07850379992.

## 4. PROCEDURE

No member of DBTH staff should enter into discussions with journalists without prior contact with the Communications and Engagement Team. This applies to contact received by telephone, email, through social media, or in person on NHS premises and to approaches made at events or meetings.

All media enquiries should be directed to the Communications and Engagement Team in the first instance by telephone. This will ensure messages given out are consistent, corporate and can be logged centrally.

As set out in [CORP COMM 24](#) - Social Media Policy all staff are responsible for ensuring that they do not post social media content, whether in a personal account or a Trust account, that may reflect adversely on their own professionalism or on the Trust. If approached on social media by a journalist the procedure highlighted below applies.

### 4.1 Taking calls from the media

Should journalists approach staff directly on any issue that relates to the Trust, its staff or patients, or to ask for an opinion or comment from an expert on a medical issue, staff should always explain that all media enquiries are dealt with by the Communications and Engagement Team. They should either transfer the journalist's enquiry to the Communications and Engagement Team (tel: 01302 644244) or take the journalist's contact details and forward them immediately to the same number.

The Communications and Engagement Team will then deal with the media enquiry, by liaising with key Trust staff to prepare and get sign off of the response within the specified journalist's deadline.

### 4.2 Media interviews

All media interviews are carried out with support and guidance from the Communications and Engagement Team, ensuring staff are aware of any corporate sensitivities and general controversial issues.

Please note: Media interviews will only be delivered by members of staff who have been media trained or have conducted them before.

Staff identified for media training will be determined by the Communications and Engagement team and all interviewees should ensure that they:

- Arrive at the interview location on time
- Respect patient confidentiality throughout the interview
- Conduct themselves in an appropriate manner
- Respect and put forward the views of DBTH

### **4.3 Preparing media statements**

All employees should provide information as quickly as possible to enable the Communications and Engagement Team to prepare an accurate statement to meet reasonable demands of journalists. As a guideline, journalists on a daily publication would normally need a response that day and occasionally if there is an important breaking story, within half an hour. Staff should inform the Communications and Engagement team quickly of any issues relating to providing the information.

Press statements responding to media enquiries should always be prepared with, and issued through, the Communications and Engagement Team who will clear them through a member of the Executive Team. All reactive statements must be consistent with the Trust's expertise and competence.

### **4.4 Alerting to the risk of negative publicity**

Employees should alert a member of the Communications and Engagement Team and a member of the Executive Team to any sensitive or controversial issues that are likely to attract negative media attention as soon as possible – even if it relates to something that could happen in the future.

The Head of Communications and Engagement is responsible for informing the Executive Team of any contentious, sensitive or major issue/initiative which is likely to attract positive or negative media across DBTH.

The Communications and Engagement Team will provide contextual briefing of sensitive matters to the Board and Governors proactively, as required.

### **4.5 Proactive (planned) media management**

The Communications and Engagement Team will give advice on how best to attract positive media coverage for good news, events and projects – employees are advised not to contact the media directly. Instead, they should contact the Communications and Engagement Team for advice giving as much notice as possible.

Press releases promoting a project/service should be issued through the Communications and Engagement Team. If the subject is complex or controversial the appropriate director will clear the press release. However, if it is uncontroversial and positive such as the promotion of an

event, a manager can be asked to clear the press release for the Communications and Engagement Team to issue.

Specifically opening new buildings or services should be highlighted to the Communications and Engagement team as soon as possible to ensure media opportunities are maximised.

Employees are encouraged to write articles for professional journals or magazines but are asked to let their line manager and the Communications and Engagement Team know and to forward a copy to them if possible, before they are published. The Communications and Engagement Team may need to be aware in case of enquiries from other journalists.

All media releases must be consistent with the Trust's vision and values.

#### **4.6 Monitoring media coverage**

The Communications and Engagement Team will respond to any inaccurate or negative media coverage about the Trust, except where responding would exacerbate the situation. This could be done by writing a letter to the editor, asking for a correction or putting forward more positive stories to readdress the balance.

Media coverage is monitored by the Communications and Engagement Team and a review of coverage is provided to the Executive Team in the form of a weekly electronic media update.

#### **4.7 Working in partnership**

Employees involved in publishing joint projects with other agencies (for example a council) should let the Communications and Engagement Team know. Even if the other agency is leading on publicity, so that the Communications and Engagement Team can liaise with their communications counterpart to ensure a corporate balance and accuracy in the information provided to the media.

#### **4.8 Speaking at events**

The Communications and Engagement Team is responsible for managing the reputation of the Trust, which includes delivering presentations to external organisations or speaking at events. If you are planning at speaking at an event you must contact the team and inform them of the event, key messages and materials to be presented. The team can support you with your key messages and ensure that all your resources include the Trust's most up to date branding. Please remember that some Google images have Copyright attached and any staff downloading images should seek advice first.

#### **4.9 Use of photography or video**

The Department of Health and Social Care branding team recommends that photographs or video should not be used in publicity material without consent from staff or members of the

public. Any member of the public who is videoed or has their photograph taken to be used in publicity material for the Trust or to promote its services needs to sign a 'Photo Consent' form or if not possible, grant verbal consent when a member of the team explains the potential usage of the photograph. Parental consent should be given for any patients under 16 years of age. A Trust form is available from the Communications and Engagement Team. If a photographer turns up at a Trust event, members of staff should make sure that the photographer and the Communications and Engagement Team are aware of anyone who does not want to be filmed/photographed.

Any filming, radio interviews or press photography must be cleared with the Communications and Engagement Team beforehand.

#### **4.10 Major incidents**

In the event of a major incident, the Head of Communications and Engagement would be part of the Trust's response and would follow the protocol outlined in the Trust's Major Incident Plan.

In the event of a major incident when the Head of Communications and Engagement is on annual leave the Trust will be supported by the Communications and Engagement Team at Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation (RDaSH).

#### **4.11 VIP (very important person), celebrity visits and donations to the Trust**

The Communications and Engagement Team is responsible for managing all VIP/celebrity visits to the Trust (for example: Royal visits, MPs, celebrities and sports people). Staff involved in such visits should contact the Communications and Engagement Team in the first instance so that the necessary guidance can be adhered to.

Similarly, when donations or gifts are made to the Trust (for example, gifts from local football clubs, or donations from individuals) please contact the Communications and Engagement Team to ensure the event is logged and where appropriate, a member of the Communications and Engagement Team will attend to take photographs and produce follow up publicity materials.

No donation visits, however small or large, should take place without being logged and appropriate staffing organised to accompany the visiting members of the public.

#### **4.12 Procuring media services**

The procurement of media services including media training, graphic design, photography and video or audio production should all take place through the Communications and Engagement Team. This will ensure high quality, cost effective services are provided to the Trust.



## 5. TRAINING/ SUPPORT

Media interviews will only be delivered by members of staff who have been media trained or have conducted them with experience before.

Staff identified for media training will be determined by the Communications and Engagement team. If your role requires you to be media trained and you have not had training please contact the Communications and Engagement team who will provide relevant training.

## 6. MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROCEDURAL DOCUMENT

What is being Monitored	Who will carry out the Monitoring	How often	How Reviewed/ Where Reported to
Media coverage featuring the Trust	Communications and Engagement Assistant	Daily	Press cuttings and RSS feeds – reported daily to the Head of Communications and Engagement
Management of the weekly media coverage featuring the Trust	Head of Communications and Engagement	Weekly	Reported to Executive Directors and Non-Executive Directors and other leadership teams
The Trust's social media profiles and groups	Communications and Engagement Team	Daily	All posts are approved by administrators within the team and monitored to ensure conversations and discussions stay within Trust values and rules.

## 7. DEFINITIONS

Media – The main means of mass communications including broadcasting (TV & radio) publishing (newspapers, newsletters, magazines or books) and the internet (podcasts, blogs or videos).

## 8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted on this procedural document in line with the principles of the Equality Analysis Policy (CORP/EMP 27) and the Fair Treatment For All Policy (CORP/EMP 4).

The purpose of the EIA is to minimise and if possible remove any disproportionate impact on employees on the grounds of race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation or religious belief. No detriment was identified. See Appendix 1.

## 9. ASSOCIATED TRUST PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS

[CORP/COMM 24](#) - Social Media Policy

[CORP/EMP 4](#) - Fair Treatment for All

[CORP/EMP 14](#) – Freedom to Speak Up Policy ‘Speak up to make a difference’

[CORP/EMP 27](#) - Equality Analysis Policy

## APPENDIX 1 - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT PART 1 INITIAL SCREENING

Policy	Division/Executive Directorate and Department	Assessor (s)	New or Existing Service or Policy?	Date of Assessment
Media and Public Relations	People and Organisational Development	Adam Tingle	New Policy	October 2018
<b>1) Who is responsible for this policy?</b> People and Organisational Development				
<b>2) Describe the purpose of the service / function / policy / project/ strategy?</b> This policy is designed to ensure that DBTH makes the most of its media coverage and public relations activities to help protect and boost its reputation				
<b>3) Are there any associated objectives?</b> No				
<b>4) What factors contribute or detract from achieving intended outcomes?</b> – resource constraints to promote all positive news stories				
<b>5) Does the policy have an impact in terms of age, race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, maternity/pregnancy and religion/belief?</b> No				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If yes, please describe current or planned activities to address the impact [e.g. Monitoring, consultation] –</li> </ul>				
<b>6) Is there any scope for new measures which would promote equality?</b> No				
<b>7) Are any of the following groups adversely affected by the policy?</b>				
<b>Protected Characteristics</b>	<b>Affected?</b>	<b>Impact</b>		
a) Age	No			
b) Disability	No			
c) Gender	No			
d) Gender Reassignment	No			
e) Marriage/Civil Partnership	No			
f) Maternity/Pregnancy	No			
g) Race	No			
h) Religion/Belief	No			
i) Sexual Orientation	No			
<b>8) Provide the Equality Rating of the service / function /policy / project / strategy</b> – tick (✓) outcome box				
<b>Outcome 1</b> ✓	<b>Outcome 2</b>	<b>Outcome 3</b>	<b>Outcome 4</b>	
<i>*If you have rated the policy as having an outcome of 2, 3 or 4, it is necessary to carry out a detailed assessment and complete a Detailed Equality Analysis form – see CORP/EMP 27.</i>				
<b>Date for next review:</b>	<b>October 2021</b>			
<b>Checked by:</b>	<b>Emma Bodley</b>		<b>Date: October 2018</b>	