

## PC24 Media, Press and Public Relations Policy

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<b>Next Review date:</b>	One year from effective date
<b>Target audience:</b>	All staff employed by Primary Care 24 (PC24)
<b>Impact Assessment Date:</b>	One year from effective date
<b>Summary</b>	To provide clarity and support to staff when encountering all types of media directly or when being involved with public relations activities (including social media engagement) when acting independently or as a representative of PC24.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Control Reason</b>	<b>Title of Accountable Person for this Version</b>
V1.0	10.02.2021	First draft of PR policy to support colleagues encountering media attention.	Communications Manager, PC24.
Reference Documents		Electronic Locations (Controlled Copy)	Location for Hard Copies
		Primary Care 24 Intranet/Policy Documents & Guidance. Shared drive – precise location TBC.	Wavertree Head Office, L13 1FB
Consultation: Committees / Groups / Individual			Date: September 2020

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

1.1 This policy will provide clarity and support to staff when encountering all types of media directly or when being involved in public relations activities (including social media engagement) more widely when acting independently or as a representative of PC24.

1.2 This policy provides staff with some of the typical and most common activities that occur when dealing with the media and provides guidelines on appropriate actions when dealing with media enquiries.

1.3 This policy will support the successful local and national awareness of PC24 in terms of its quality of care and patient services.

## **2.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

This policy applies to all PC24 staff including contractors, agency workers, volunteers and placement workers. It is intended to support staff who access all platforms of media, connected or unconnected to their work.

## **3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **3.1 Executive Team and Senior Managers**

3.1.1 Executive Team members and Senior Managers are required to bring any media enquiries to the attention of the Communications Team at the earliest opportunity.

3.1.2 Executive Team members are responsible for approving press statements and media requests.

### **3.2 Line Managers**

Line Managers are responsible for ensuring their staff are aware of this policy and that any misuse of social media or inappropriate interactions with the media are managed appropriately. Line Managers may make recourse to the disciplinary policy.

### **3.3 Human Resources (HR) Department**

HR will manage any queries on the application or interpretation of this policy prior to any action being taken and will monitor and review the policy if required.

### **3.4 Communications Team**

3.4.1 The Communications Manager is the initial point of contact for any media enquiries that relate to PC24's staff, services and patients. This also applies to any media enquiries that relate to anyone in a personal or professional capacity, where the organisation's name or services are associated in any way to the enquiry. In the absence of the Communications Manager, such enquiries should be sent to the Director of People or the On-Call Manager for escalation.

3.4.2 The Communications Manager will identify the appropriate key spokespeople for quotes and interviews and issuing responses which aim to meet reasonable media deadlines.

3.4.3 The Communications Manager will provide support and advice to individuals representing PC24 through media activities.

3.4.4 The Communications Manager will facilitate and arrange appointments to undertake media activities.

### **3.5 Staff at PC24**

3.5.1 All staff are expected to bring any media enquiries to the attention of the Communications Team at the earliest opportunity.

3.5.2 Staff are asked to protect the reputation of PC24 and their line of work by behaving in a professional manner if they are involved in any media related activities.

3.5.3 Staff are responsible for any information they make available on social media, whether this is posted during work hours, breaks, or when not at work.

3.5.4 Staff should be aware that using social media in a personal capacity in their own time, may still be representing the image of PC24 and any inappropriate actions referred to on social media may impact on people's perception of PC24 by association.

3.5.5 Staff are expected to support the Communications Team with helpful information and opportunities (such as a reasonable notice period for a request) to maximise social media reach and impact if that service or team is requesting posts to be published in relation to their area of work or service.

## **4.0 DEFINITIONS**

4.1 Media - is the term used for all communication outlets or tools used to store and deliver information or data. This consists of many channels and platforms such as print, publishing, the news, photography, broadcasting (radio and television), social media and advertising.

4.2 Social Media - is the term used for internet-based tools used on computers, tablets, and smart phones, to help people keep in touch and enable them to virtually interact. It allows people to share information, ideas, views, photographs and videos. Current examples of such platforms are FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat and TikTok.

4.3 Media Enquiries - direct or indirect contact from media channels such as news platforms (nationally BBC/Sky/ITV for an example and regionally The Echo, Liverpool TV). This also includes contact from these channels via social media as per above.

4.4 Public Relations - is a communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and the public. Public Relations can also be viewed as an ongoing maintenance of a favourable public image for an organisation or professional body / person.

## **5.0 POLICY PROCEDURES**

5.1 PC24 respects the freedom of speech of all its staff. However, any response to media enquiries and / or social media are public spaces and the content will be

available to all members of the public. As such, any employee's comments can be seen as a reflection of the organisation.

5.2 Speaking with the Media. Should journalists or any representatives of media outlets approach PC24 staff directly on any issue that relates to the organisation, its staff or patients, or to ask for an opinion or comment from an expert on a medical issue, they should be referred to the Communications Team before responding. If this is not possible please contact the On-Call Manager or escalate to the Director of People.

5.3 Media Statements. Media statements are official responses from PC24 to negative or controversial media enquiries. Media statements are usually written by the Communications Team on behalf of PC24 and signed off by the relevant director, clinician or senior manager.

5.4 Identifying Spokespeople. The PC24 Communications Team has a number of staff members who have either undergone media-training and/or are informal/formal spokespeople who are able to speak confidently about their area of expertise. If you are contacted directly by the media, please alert the Communications Team and they will be able to organise a specialist representative dependant on the subject.

5.5 Filming and Photography Requests. Before any filming or photography takes place in any of the PC24 locations, where possible all patients and staff using the area will be asked for their consent. A consent form or a confidentiality agreement form can be requested through the Communications Team or the Office Manager.

## **6.0 GETTING HELP**

Contacting the Communications Team or Director of People.

Postal address: 4-6 Enterprise Way, Liverpool, L13 1FB.

Telephone: 0151 254 2553.

Email: [communications@pc24.nhs.uk](mailto:communications@pc24.nhs.uk)

Web: [primarycare24.org.uk](http://primarycare24.org.uk)

## **7.0 RELATED POLICIES**

This policy is aligned with the PC24 social media policy, Data Protection/Confidentiality, Information Governance, IT Security and the Disciplinary policy. All policies are located within the PC24 intranet and shared drive.

## **8.0 MONITORING COMPLIANCE**

The HR department and Communications Team will monitor the number of issues raised by staff members in relation to contact with the media.

## **9.0 INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING**

This document will be included in the corporate induction and highlighted in Staff newsletters and Managers newsletters. The policy can also be found on the PC24 intranet.

Specialist media training can be made available to key individuals at regular intervals by the organisation. This will most likely be for potential key senior spokespeople (such as Board of directors, clinical directors, and heads of services) who have not had media training or who require a refresher. The Communications Team can co-ordinate the delivery of this training via an external agency and will aim to cater for a number of people during one session rather than on individual requests.

## **10.0 EQUALITY AND HEALTH INEQUALITIES**

PC24 is committed to an environment that promotes equality and embraces diversity in its performance as an employer and service provider. It will adhere to legal and performance requirements and will maintain equality and diversity principles through its policies, procedures and processes. This policy has been implemented with due regard to this commitment. To ensure that the implementation of this policy does not

have an adverse impact in response to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 this policy has been screened for relevance during the policy development process and a full equality impact analysis conducted where necessary. PC24 will take remedial action when necessary to address any unexpected or unwarranted disparities and monitor practice to ensure that this policy is fairly implemented.

## **11.0 MAIN REFERENCES**

Below is a list of the relevant statutory provisions which influence Primary Care 24's operation in relation to the policy/procedure:

Equality Act 2010

Health & Social Care Act 2012

Caldicott Principles 2013 and

Data Protection Act 2018.