

Volunteers - Media Policy

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Date approved by HWWB Board	07/03/16
Author	Jo Karasinski
Date Implemented	07/03/16
Last revised	
Next revision due	07/03/18
Volunteer Training delivered	As per Volunteer training timetable
<p>The policy on the HWWB website is the only policy that is updated. Please note that it is the individual HWWB staff, board member or volunteer to ensure that they are reading the most current version of this policy. This can be done by checking the version number shown above against the version number of the policy filed here: www.healthwatchwestberks.org.uk</p> <p><u>If required this policy can be supplied in different formats</u></p> <p><u>Tel: 01635 886 210 or email: contact@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk</u></p>	

Responsibilities

1 HWWB Board

Have overall responsibility for volunteers within HWWB

2 HWWB Chief Officer (CO)

HWWB Board have delegated to the HWWB CO the responsibility for developing policies and procedures for volunteering at HWWB and to ensure these are implemented effectively.

3 HWWB Staff and volunteers

All HWWB staff and volunteers are required to read and implement the volunteer policies and procedures.

Volunteers - Media Policy

1. Purpose:

To ensure that

- Healthwatch West Berkshire (HWWB) has a clear process for managing media relations which HWWB staff, board members and volunteers understand and comply with.
- external stakeholders are aware of the policy and agree reciprocal arrangements for sharing press releases and statements in advance.

2. The need for HWWB to have a high and positive media profile

- HWWB are a publically funded body performing a public duty to champion the interests of the population of West Berkshire in their use of health and social care services, we need to be accountable to local people for our work
- the higher our profile, the more people will know Healthwatch West Berkshire exists and the more intelligence we will receive from members of the public about their views and experiences of health and social care
- with the exception of advertising, media coverage is free publicity and has the greatest reach among our target population (the people of West Berkshire) compared to other forms of media - social media, advertising, newsletters, website etc.
- we need a shared understanding with key local stakeholders, ie providers and commissioners, that we need a strong media profile to be effective and that our media releases and statements will be factually correct and responsible.

3. Process for handling media enquiries

In order of action:

- All media requests and contacts should be directed to the Healthwatch Chief Officer - in the first instance.
- Any member of HWWB staff, HWWB board or volunteer who is contacted by from the media making enquiries about HWWB or HWWB's response to issues in local health and social care, should refer the enquiry, without comment, to Andrew

Sharp, Healthwatch West Berkshire's Chief Officer. Contact details are andrew.sharp@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk or phone (01635) 886 210.

- HWWB CO will decide whether a press statement or release should be issued. There may be occasions when HWWB declines to issue a statement. This could include, although is not exhaustive, the following circumstances:
 - there is either insufficient information about the subject matter
 - insufficient time to research the subject matter
 - HWWB has agreed to respect a request that the matter is confidential
- Matters related to staff or to individuals involved with HWWB should never be discussed outside the organisation.
- Once approved the Healthwatch Chief Officer or the Healthwatch Officer with responsibility for that area of work will draft a press statement/release
- This will be checked first by their line manager and once they have signed off it will be forwarded to HWWB CO for final approval. In their absence final approval lies with the with the Healthwatch West Berkshire Chair.
- NB: HWWB policy is to provide only written statements/releases to the media. Comment should not be provided over the phone to print journalists unless the HWWB CO approves to do so.
- planned and proactive media releases should be shared at least 1 working day in advance with external stakeholders who are referenced in the media release. Reactive statements should, ideally, be shared at least 2 working hours in advance with external stakeholders who are referenced in the media release. These are likely to be health and social care commissioners and/or providers. The purpose of this is to give Commissioners and Providers advance notice of the release and statement, and an opportunity to comment on the factual accuracy of the release/statement. It does not give Commissioners and Providers the right to veto or block press releases.

5. Format of Press releases/statements

- must be issued in pdf format to prevent alteration.
- must be on headed paper with the Healthwatch West Berkshire logo at the top right and SeAp logos at the bottom of the page, in that order
- Must be dated or with embargoed date clearly given
- text must be double spaced

6. Circulation of Press releases/statements

- the HWWB CO will circulate it to the media.
- General proactive planned releases will go to all local and regional media as routine. Press statements may go to specific media organisations depending on the circumstances.
- Volunteers may on occasions be asked to comment by the media on issues they are involved with. Unless volunteers are media trained and have the approval of the HWWB CO they should not comment on behalf of HWWB. If you do make a comment it is vital to stress that this is your personal opinion and not that of HWWB.
- Once the release/statement has been covered by the media, a copy will be placed on the HWWB website in the news section and on occasions may go on the slider on the home page as a main story.

8. Media Spokesperson

- usually the media spokesperson will be the CO or Chair of HWWB.
- where HWWB staff, board and volunteer advisory council members have expertise on particular issues (and after media training) will also be offered the opportunity to be interviewed. (See Appendix 1 - Top tips). Ideally a written briefing with Q&A will be provided to HWWB authorised spokespeople before an interview, if not a verbal briefing will be provided.
- Following the media interview a debrief will be arranged to review delivery and impact
- radio and TV interviews will be placed on the HWWB website.
- There may be situations when it is necessary to deal with the media about sensitive issues, and on occasions, prior to something becoming public. The media may need a detailed briefing on what has happened or is likely to happen.
- **This should only be delivered by the CO or the HWWB Chair.**

10. Social media

- Social media is increasing in use and is a good way to reach a wider audience, particularly audiences who may not access traditional media.
- all HWWB social media content should be up to date and accurate.

- all material placed on the HWN website, Facebook page and Twitter account will be checked for factual accuracy by the HWWB staff.
- HWWB website will be updated at least weekly to ensure content is up to date and is promoting the work of HWWB in a timely way.
- HWWB Facebook page and Twitter account will be checked daily by the HWWB staff.
- House style must be used
- Any offensive or damaging content will be removed as well as content that is not accurate or contains profanity or inappropriately derogatory terms about an individual or organisation.

Appendix 1

Top Tips for ensuring positive media contact

STOP, THINK.... Have you got approval from the Healthwatch West Berkshire CO??

- From time to time, hot topics suddenly grab the media's attention and they want an instant comment. Caution should be exercised - especially if we don't have full information about the topic, or it is an area completely outside our area of expertise. We can say no
- Matters related to staff or to individuals involved with Healthwatch West Berkshire should never be discussed outside the organisation.
- **Remember** - there is no such thing as an off the record or non- attributable conversation with a journalist. There are also dangers at social occasions when you may be less on guard. The conditions under which an interview or conversation is given should be clear to both sides from the outset! Remember the terms "off the record" and "non-attributable" can be misinterpreted.
- Always double check with a journalist that they are clear about your understanding of the terms, before an interview takes place. It is absolutely your right to do this and most journalists understand this.
- Prior to every radio or TV interview, all spokespeople should prepare exactly what they want to say. Failure to prepare risks failure to be quoted on the points you wanted to convey, or that the journalist overlooks your comments entirely and quotes another source. This in turn means that they may not re-contact us on that issue and that Healthwatch West Berkshire loses valuable opportunities in the future.
- Be aware of journalists phoning you out of the blue and making casual comment. Don't respond.
- HWWB board meetings are held in public and the media routinely attend. Anything said at a meeting in public can be quoted by the media so please bear that in mind.
- Be clear and concise. Use plain phrases and *avoid jargon*, but do use interesting language that catches the journalist's imagination and makes it more likely they will quote you rather others they speak to.
- Always consider who you are talking to/who you are addressing: Who reads the publication? What sort of articles do they write? How much does journalist know in advance? The staff team or key volunteers may be able to help you with this

information.

- There is no obligation to answer difficult, potentially embarrassing or competitively sensitive questions. However, it is preferable to give a reason (never say “no comment”). For example, consider: “it would be premature to talk about that”, “we don’t have any information on that at this stage”, “that is a confidential matter”.
- If you don’t know the answer, either say you will come back to the question, suggest an alternative source or say it is not your area of expertise.
- If you wish to change the direction of questioning try using a phrase such as “that’s an interesting point, but what is key is ...”

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Screening determines whether the policy has any relevance for equality, i.e. is there any impact on one or more of the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief Including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

1 Name of policy/procedure being assessed:	HWWB - Policies - Volunteers - Media
2. Is this a new or existing policy/procedure?	New
3. What is the function of the policy/procedure?	To guide board members and volunteers on the procedures HWWB has in place in respect of dealing with the media
4. What is it trying to achieve and why?	Ensure volunteers understand HWWB approach to media requests and interviews
5. Who is intended to benefit and how?	Volunteers - understand the measures HWWB has put into place in respect of media requests and contacts
6 Is there any potential for differential impact (negative or positive) on any of the protected characteristics?	No
7. Is there any possibility of discriminating unlawfully, directly or indirectly, against people from any protected characteristic?	No
8. Could there be an effect on relations between certain groups?	No
9. Does the policy explicitly involve or focus on a particular equalities group i.e. because they have particular needs?	No
Signed - Signature: Jo Karasinski Name: JO KARASINSKI Position: Development Officer Date: 17/12/15	

