



## **Media Policy**

### ***1. Policy Statement***

This policy sets out Manchester Deaf Centre's (MDC) roles, responsibilities and procedures for dealing with the media. It gives a broad guide to staff in developing a positive two-way relationship with the media. Good working relationships with the media are important as a means of communicating with the MDC's members, service users, volunteers, staff members and other potential audiences.

Co-ordination, integration and consistency in handling the media are essential for developing and maintaining a positive and open image of MDC and the services it delivers.

Whilst this document only considers the MDC's relationships with the press and media, many people, including employees and members of the public, base their perception of the MDC on what they read in the paper, hear on the radio or see on TV.

### ***2. Supporting information***

The media includes local, regional, national and specialist press, television and radio and new media such as the Internet. The primary focus is on the local and regional broadcast and print media, although there may be opportunities to raise MDC's profile at a national level.

### ***3. Key principles***

Our key principles when dealing with the media are:-

- To meet the communications objectives set out in the MDC's Communications Strategy & Social Media Policy.
- To develop a positive, pro-active, two-way relationship with the media.
- To respond to all media enquiries quickly, efficiently and within a realistic target deadline.
- To gain media coverage of MDC's services, activities and events.
- To rebut false or inaccurate information as soon as possible.
- To track media coverage relating to MDC.

### ***Duties***

- All staff – within office hours

Any member of staff receiving a request for comment or interview from the media about any aspect of service delivery is requested to refer all such enquiries to Executive Director. If they are not available all calls or online contact requests should be referred to the Project Manager.

- All staff – outside normal hours

Any member of staff contacted by the media out of normal office hours is requested to direct the request to the Executive Director the next working day.

### **4. Procedure**

- Responding to enquiries

All media enquiries, responses issued and the source of information are logged. A record is made of the reporter's name, organisation, date and time of query, nature of enquiry, response made and the source of response. The media enquiry log is held by the Executive Director. The log enables co-ordinated responses to be issued to enquiries on similar subjects and facilitates media monitoring. Once the enquiries are logged the appropriate members of staff are contacted and a response prepared.

- Responding to requests for interviews

On receiving a request for comment or interview the Executive Director will contact the appropriate member of staff for more information and co-ordinate and agree a

response or make interview arrangements. A log is kept of all enquiries and responses. As a general rule only the Chairperson, Executive Director or Project Manager will be asked to undertake radio/TV broadcast or press interviews. This will, however, depend on the subject matter and the decision of the Executive Director. It may be more appropriate for another member of staff with more relevant experience and knowledge to undertake an interview.

Where a request is made to interview a service user or carer their permission must be gained before reporters are granted access.

### **5. Media filming/photos/interviewing**

The media are not allowed to interview, film or take photos on MDC's premises without permission, which must be obtained via the Executive Director. Appropriate escort arrangements will be made. If the media want to interview, photograph or film people who use services, or their carers, on MDC premises, appropriate consent must be obtained. The Executive Director will advise, but pressure must never be applied to comply with media requests.

### **6. Confidentiality**

MDC will, at all times, respect the privacy of people who use services, their carers and staff. Any breach to confidentiality in respect of media activity on any platform may result in disciplinary action.

### **7. Information about members of staff**

No information will be given to the media about any member of staff, including confirmation that they work for MDC, without the permission of the employee.

### **8. Speaking in Public**

All staff should be aware that their views may be used by the media in print, broadcast or digitally, for example, when speaking at conferences or local events. Staff should not include information that could result in the identification of an individual who uses services, without their explicit consent, or any information that may adversely affect the reputation of MDC.

## **9. Grievances and freedom of speech**

Staff should not use any media platform to actively pursue a complaint or grievance against MDC. MDC works hard to maintain a culture where challenge is welcomed and where issues can be discussed in an open and honest way. MDC makes available ample opportunities for staff to raise concerns and to ensure that these are properly acknowledged and discussed. Staff are encouraged to raise concerns as soon as they arise so that issues can be resolved wherever possible.

Anyone who has genuine concerns about services, can speak out without fear of victimisation, reprisal or reproach from MDC. Staff should refer to appropriate HR policy (for example grievance and whistle blowing) in this area. However, disciplinary action may result if service user or staff confidentiality is breached through contact with the media or through social media activity.

Staff are, of course, entitled to speak to the media, or use any media platform, as private individuals. Staff must not, however, imply or infer that they are speaking on behalf of MDC, and must not breach the right to confidentiality of people who use services or other members of staff. Staff should alert the Executive Director if any activity on media platforms is likely to impact on MDC.