



MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Responsible Officer	Executive Manager: Community Engagement.
Approved by	Chairman
Review by	Executive Manager: Community Engagement
Last Reviewed	12/07/2015
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INTRODUCTION

Local, state, national and international media are vital partners in achieving the goals of Community Veracity. In order to maximise the advantages of media presentation and minimise the risks of media misrepresentation it is necessary to establish guidelines for how media contacts will be conducted.

It is not the intention of this policy to curb freedom of speech or to enforce strict rules and regulations. Rather, the intention is to establish a framework for achieving an effective working relationship with the media. The organisation welcomes the opportunity to talk to the media and, through them, to debate issues in the public arena.

In dealing with the media, staff, Board members and other volunteers should be conscious that they may be seen as representatives of the organisation and should therefore avoid making comments or participating in photo opportunities that may damage the long-term reputation of Community Veracity.

PURPOSE

Community Veracity works with the media in order to

- advocate for the goals of the organisation
- promote the work of the organisation
- inform the public of the details of the organisation
- assist in fundraising for the organisation

In order to ensure that these purposes can be fulfilled, this policy regulates the choice of people entitled to speak for Community Veracity.

The media themselves have a vital role to play on behalf of the community in holding Community Veracity to account for its policies and actions. It is important that they have access to officers and members and to background information to assist them in this role.

To balance this, Community Veracity must have the capacity to defend itself from any unfounded criticism, and will ensure that the public are properly informed of all the relevant facts (if necessary using other channels of communication).



It is the responsibility of all staff, board members and volunteers to ensure that effective media relations are maintained in order to achieve the aims of Community Veracity. Naturally, in doing this, certain legal constraints might apply (eg not making comment on current court cases, especially those before a jury).

This policy deals with the day-to-day relationship between Community Veracity and the media and does not address how the organisation will work with the media in a crisis, for which separate guidelines are available as an [Our Community Helpsheet on What to do in a Media Crisis](#).

CORE POLICY

Community Veracity operates on the values of

- **Honesty:** The organisation will never knowingly mislead the public, media or staff on an issue or news story.
- **Transparency:** The organisation will promote openness and accessibility in our dealings with the media, whilst complying with the law and maintaining confidentiality when appropriate.
- **Clarity:** All communications with the media will be written in plain English
- **Balance:** Information provided to the media by Community Veracity will as far as humanly possible be objective, balanced, accurate, informative and timely.

Community Veracity should seek to establish and maintain a good and open relationship with the media. It is important that the organisation works with the media to communicate important public information messages about its work and its goals.

However, contact concerning any significant matter in the name of or on behalf of Community Veracity should only be made by staff, Board members and other volunteers where:

- They have consulted the Communications Officer nominated by the Board
- They have the required expertise to speak on the issue under discussion
- They have some experience in media relations.

Where any of these criteria do not apply, staff, Board members and volunteers are recommended to exercise extreme caution and to seek guidance from the most senior staff or Board member available.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board shall nominate a Communications Officer to coordinate Community Veracity's relationships with the media.

The Communications Officer, CEO and the Board Chair are all authorised to speak on behalf of Community Veracity.



Other staff, Board members and volunteers are advised to ensure they are properly briefed and guided by the Communications Officer, CEO or Board Chair before talking to the media on any issue related to Community Veracity.

Where information or public comment is requested or required, the Communications Officer shall determine the most appropriate person to respond.

Staff, Board members and other volunteers, and third parties, are encouraged to deliver public presentations that discuss Community Veracity's work and its goals, provided that they make it clear where such presentations are or are not authorised by the organisation.

All staff, Board members and other volunteers must observe Community Veracity's Privacy Policy in relation to client records.

PROCESSES

Significant statements on behalf of Community Veracity shall be made as authorised by the Communications Officer, CEO or Board Chair as detailed above.

It should always be made absolutely clear whether the views put forward regarding any issue relating to Community Veracity are those of the organisation or of an individual. At all times consideration should be given as to how the correspondence may affect the reputation of Community Veracity.

The Communications Officer is responsible for:

- Producing and updating a list of key contacts for distribution to local press and radio and TV stations. The Communications Officer can also be contacted for preliminary discussions on any story or if a journalist or researcher is unsure who to approach for a comment.
- Producing the organisation's annual public relations plan, which shall be consistent with the organisation's business plan and marketing plan.
- Coordinating all media conferences for Community Veracity. All such conferences shall be videotaped by the organisation.
- Authorising all media releases from Community Veracity, and for mounting them on the organisation's website. All media releases must also be checked and approved by staff in charge of the relevant area before distribution.
- Being involved in any approaches to the media to feature Community Veracity's work.
- Receiving and coordinating a response to all approaches from all national press, radio or TV stations or specialist press.

All staff, Board members and volunteers are responsible for:

- Providing advice (preferably before the issue becomes public knowledge) to the Communications Officer on any issues that are likely



to be complex or contentious or to be sustained for any length of time. In such a situation the Communications Officer will work with the relevant staff and Board members to produce a communications plan which will ensure that balanced, timely information is provided to keep all parties informed.

- Ensuring that no photos of clients, patients, employees, or students shall be released to the public via advertising, news media, or internet, or by any other means, without the approval of the Communications Officer, who shall satisfy themselves that the organisation's Privacy Policy has been observed.
- Notifying the Communications Officer of any contact made in the name of Community Veracity to the media and providing the name of the reporter or writer and the media outlet they represent.

Any significant media contacts with Community Veracity's staff or members on any issue likely to prove contentious shall, where possible, be videotaped.

Any filming or taping on Community Veracity's property or of the organisation's proceedings by the media is subject to prior permission of the Communications Officer, CEO or Board Chair.

Every effort should be made to assist the media in their inquiries. Where media queries involve requests for information that will require substantial staff work to produce, such work must be authorised by the CEO. It will usually be necessary to provide information in addition to that which is requested in order to set the facts and figures in context. Requests for detailed information of this nature, whether from the local or national media, should be referred to the Communications Officer.

Community Veracity reserves the right to withhold certain sensitive information concerning, say, commercial transactions or governmental negotiations. Any such information will be clearly labelled and clearly notified to relevant staff.

If any unauthorised releases of confidential information do occur, an investigation will take place to establish who was responsible and appropriate action will be taken.