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## STATEMENT OF INTENT

LD Training is committed to communicating in plain language with the public to:

- Encourage greater interest and involvement in the work of the organisation
- Promote access to services provided by LD Training and its partners
- Encourage the debate needed to improve services



## AIM

To communicate effectively and regularly with both public and staff to:

- Publicise LD Training's achievements and aspirations
- Seek views on proposals
- Involve the public in decision-making, wherever possible.



## SERVICE USERS

Proactive media communications are essential to promote the services provided by LD Training and to publicise the benefits to the local community – not least to meet funding bodies' requirements and attract business interest.

In recognition of the diversity of the local community, LD Training will communicate with service users using a variety of methods including:

- LD Training's own website & learner website
- Local papers, radio and television
- Public shows and events
- Service specific/community of interest newsletters, as appropriate
- Specialist communications, e.g. newsletters to businesses
- Annual report and summary, published annually

It is essential that communication with the media is co-ordinated, to ensure that all members of staff are giving the same message. The Director will nominate a key communications contact – this employee will be responsible for co-ordinating the production, timing and issue of press releases, individual employees will be responsible for producing press releases for their area of responsibility. All media enquiries will be directed to the Director in the first instance.



## STAFF

LD Training recognises that effective internal communications are vital if staff are to understand their role, its contribution to the organisation, and the impact of policies and proposals. Effective communications are essential to the self-esteem of staff and to the promotion of the efficient working practices.

Methods of internal communications comprise:

- Regular team meetings – all staff are expected to attend.
- Memos, as required
- Regular 1:1 / supervision sessions held between line manager and employee – at least once a month
- Training and workshops, held as required to impart relevant knowledge and expertise.

All staff are encouraged to take responsibility for helping to ensure efficient and effective communication within the organization by sharing appropriate knowledge, news and information with each other.



## WORKING WITH THE MEDIA - GUIDANCE FOR STAFF WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

The following outline some basic concepts about producing a press release – for all media – papers, radio and television:

- Start with the most newsworthy part of the story; you need to grab the editor’s attention quickly.
- Try not to start with words like it, the, on, at... (For example, “LD Training has a new...”)
- Use a maximum of 250 words – try to keep the press release to one sheet of A4 if you can.
- Paragraphs should be 3-4 sentences long.
- Use double-spacing between lines.
- Include the 5 W’s: who, what, where, when, why
- Think of a headline and put that in bold at the top of the press release. It can help grab the editor’s attention.
- If you can, put in a quote from one of the people involved in your project.
- Finally, remember to put full contact details at the end of the press release. If it’s a service, include how it can be accessed (opening times, appointments/drop-in etc.).



## WORKING WITH THE MEDIA - GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

### LOCAL PAPERS

90% of press releases received by local papers end up in the bin! The following might help yours avoid that fate:

- It's a good idea to get to know the paper to give you an idea of the issues that they cover.
- A press release is the best way to let them know about your story. It can be posted, faxed or e-mailed, but don't send it all 3 ways!
- Be clear about the message that you want to convey. Don't use jargon or abbreviations.
- Make sure that your named contact person is going to be available, so that a journalist can talk to them if necessary.
- Where possible, send your press release to a named contact at the paper.
- It can be useful to enclose background information about your story. Don't put this on the press release, use separate sheets or enclose a report/handout you've already written.
- Make a follow-up phone call after you've sent your press release.
  
- Think laterally – instead of a news story, you might be able to get coverage on:
  - the letters page
  - the clubs page
  - the community news page
  - the sports pages
  
- Give the paper warning that your event is going to take place. As a rule, Friday is the deadline for the coming week's paper. Don't give more than a month's notice as a more recent event could overshadow your story.
- The press rarely promise to attend events or send a photographer, although they will try to. Take photographs yourself – the paper will consider using them, provided they are well composed and sharp. All sizes colour or black & white photos will be accepted.
- If you use a computer to type your press release, you could always use spellchecker!



## WORKING WITH THE MEDIA - GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

### LOCAL RADIO

Compared to TV and newspapers, radio has lots of time to fill so is likely to pick up stories not covered anywhere else.

There are 3 types of radio station – local, regional and national. Stations which produce their own news are the most likely to cover projects like ours – although some stations get their news from a news agency, so are unlikely to have time to fit in features about our projects.

Use the “writing a press release” information, but remember that you need to tell radio stations before the event happens, as they'll give you publicity on the day.

If interested in your story, the radio station will either do a story based on your press release or ask you for an interview. If they can they'll get an interview as they like to use different voices.

Radio stations don't give much warning of interviews and will often phone and ask for a comment there and then. If this happens, ask them to call back in twenty minutes or so, to give you time to prepare.

Try to have someone available to talk to the station – they won't keep chasing you for an interview and you could lose the opportunity to get that publicity!

There are a number of ways the station can interview you: over the telephone, by visiting you with recording equipment, in a satellite studio, or face-to-face in the main studio.

The last option is the best as the sound quality is good and you have eye-to-eye contact with the interviewer, which makes it seem more natural.

Whatever way they can interview you – do it!

Before you do the interview, do some research:

- What exactly is the subject they're interested in?
- How much detail do they want from you?
- What type of programme is it for?
- How long will the interview last?
- Will it be pre-recorded or live?
- What is the content of the first question?

In preparation for the interview:

- Choose the most appropriate person from your organisation to do the interview
- Learn your brief – use three key points that you want to get across
- Put notes on card, not on paper (as paper makes a noise when you turn the page)
- Choose your words carefully

In the interview:

- Speak as normally as possible
- Ignore the microphone
- Be alert
- Be confident, but not cocky!
- Don't use the interviewer's first name
- Don't answer "yes" or "no"
- Don't be tempted to fill silences – this is a trick interviewers sometimes use to get you to say things you wouldn't otherwise say!
- Don't get angry
- Don't volunteer irrelevant information
- Listen to the question
- Don't get sidetracked
- REFUTE incorrect statements
- Don't be defensive
- Keep it simple
- Avoid jargon and abbreviations
- Be precise
- Be emphatic (care about what you're saying!)
- Be prepared! Don't do the interview without notice.



## WORKING WITH THE MEDIA - GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

### LOCAL TELEVISION

- Local television are unable to give community projects the same coverage as local papers and radio - but it's worth getting in touch, just in case.
- It's best to wait until you've got a great event for them – don't waste their time and yours on small events they won't be interested in.
- Give the TV station plenty of notice – remember they have a large catchment area = lots of stories. The stories will be finalised around a day in advance.
- Don't send amateur video and still photos – they won't be used.
- A press release is the best way to get the TV station's attention, but don't e-mail it as they don't always get seen.
- Forward the press release to a specific person such as the News Editor – get their name if you can.
- Write clearly and get your points across early in the press release. Definitely get the important information in the first paragraph.
- Follow up the press release with a telephone call.
- Try to think of the background – TV likes lots of interesting, moving pictures with lots of people involved.
- Don't exaggerate the event in the press release – the TV crew may leave if it's not what they expected!
- Line up some good talkers ready for interview.
- If you are interviewed on camera, avoid looking into the camera – look at the interviewer.
- Get your points across in two or three bullet points.