



Pan Ayrshire Child Protection Committees Joint Media Protocol

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Version log

Review

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JOINT MEDIA PROTOCOL

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this joint media protocol is to outline the agreed process to be followed by Child Protection Committees (CPC's) across Ayrshire when engaging with the media.
2. As there is some commonality in terms of partner agency representation within CPCs in Ayrshire, and a number of shared media titles, this protocol will ensure that there is a consistent approach to managing media activities in relation to child protection matters across the region.
3. This protocol defines the responsibilities of individual member organisations and the timescales to be adopted in media matters, particularly in relation to responding to media enquiries.

KEY PRINCIPLES

4. Media professionals within each Local Authorities are available to support and provide advice to those not accustomed to dealing with journalists and wider media circles, which can be both challenging and demanding. Such advice includes:
 - I. members of the Child Protection Committee must not engage directly with the media;
 - II. in all instances, any contact with the media must be directed through the Corporate Communications Team; and
 - III. under no circumstances should individual cases be discussed with the media. The only exception to this will be in relation to a Significant Case Review, in which case, Chief Officers will be involved in discussions on how best to respond to the media in conjunction with the Independent Chair of the CPC. (see Significant Case Review section).

POSITIVE MEDIA APPROACHES

5. Proactive media approaches are owned and managed by the Child Protection Committee. The timings, key messages and communication channels will be determined by the CPC with support from the Communications Team.
6. The following process should be followed where the CPC or one of its sub groups wishes to promote activities or issues relating to Child Protection:
 - a decision to promote an activity or issue is taken by the Child Protection Committee or one of the sub groups in line with the objectives in the Communications Strategy;

- the Child Protection Lead Officer (or named lead contact) will liaise with the Communications Team to agree the aims and proposed outcomes of the media activity and the key messages to be promoted;
- planned media activities will be approved by the Chair of the CPC, then shared with relevant members of CPC - for information - at least two working days prior to implementation;
- the Communications Team will share details with communications teams in relevant partner organisations;
- media coverage will be monitored and evaluated by the Communications Team and feedback will be provided to the Chair of the CPC; and
- the Child Protection Committee will report media activity to the Chief Officer Group on a regular basis, noting any evaluation / evidence of impact.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

7. All media enquiries relating to Child Protection matters will be handled by the Communications Team of the relevant local authority in accordance with established media protocols and procedures.
 - If a member of the CPC is approached by the media for information/comment on a child protection related matter, that individual must refer all enquiries to the Communications Team in the first instance.
 - The Communications Team will liaise with the Chair of the CPC to discuss how best to manage the enquiry.
 - The Communications Team will prepare a draft response for consideration /approval by the Chair of the CPC.
 - The Communications Team will circulate the draft response to the Communications Team of relevant member organisations (e.g. Police Scotland / NHSAA) for information or input as required.
 - The Chair of the CPC will sign off changes and subsequently approve the final response prior to issue.
 - The Council's Communications Team will issue the response to the media on behalf of the CPC and will circulate the final response to the Communications Team of all member organisations for information.
 - If it is more appropriate for an individual CPC member organisation to respond to the enquiry (e.g. NHSAA or Police Scotland), the Council's

Communications Team will contact the relevant CPC member and pass on details of the enquiry.

- That CPC member will liaise with their respective Communications Team to prepare a draft response and (as outlined above) will send a copy to the Chair of the CPC for information.
- The relevant Communications Team will circulate the response to the Communications Team of all member organisations for information.

SIGNIFICANT CASE REVIEWS

8. The CPC Chief Officers' Group (COG), in conjunction with the Chair of the CPC, will liaise with the Communications Team to agree the most appropriate action for reporting the findings of a Significant Case Review
9. If it is agreed that the media should be informed, the Communications Team will prepare a media plan for consideration by the Chair of the CPC and the members of COG. Details of this media plan - including key messages, communications channels and timings - will be approved by the Chair of the COG.
10. If the Chair of COG is not available, the Vice Chair will assume these responsibilities. If neither is available within the required timescale, the Communications Team will discuss this with at least one member of CPC who has knowledge of the issue and seek their approval.
11. The Communications Team will ensure that any press enquiries in relation to SCRs are brought to the attention of the relevant Communications Teams in partner agencies.
12. Any subsequent statements/ responses relating to SCRS will be agreed with relevant COG members in conjunction with their respective Communications Team.

This protocol will be reviewed annually.

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