

Media Handling Policy

Date: March 2024

Review Date: March 2027

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Policy Information	
Policy Title	<i>Media Handling Policy</i>
Policy Number	<i>POL039</i>
Version	<i>V4 (March 2024)</i>
Policy Sponsor	<i>Chief Executive</i>
Policy Owner	<i>Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications</i>
Committee and date recommended for approval	<i>Services Committee, 21 March 2024</i>
Date approved by the Board	<i>25 April 2024</i>
Equality Screening Status	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Screened: 5 January 2015</i> 2. <i>Reviewed: 8 February 2018</i> 3. <i>Reviewed: 15 March 2021</i> 4. <i>Reviewed: 19 April 2024</i>
Rural Needs Impact Assessment Status	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Assessed: 8 March 2021</i> 2. <i>Reviewed: 19 April 2024</i>
Date Set For Review	<i>March 2027</i>
Related Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Code of Conduct for Staff</i> • <i>Code of Conduct for Board Members</i> • <i>Social Media Policy and Guidance</i> • <i>Filming Policy</i>

Libraries NI
Media Handling Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Engagement with the media (broadcast, printed and online) is an essential part of the work of every public service.
- 1.2 Libraries NI wishes to promote a clear understanding of its work, how it supports communities in Northern Ireland and to increase access to and participation in library services.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all staff employed by Libraries NI including agency staff and contractors, and to all Board Members of Libraries NI.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of the policy is to ensure a consistent approach to working with the media in a way that achieves the objectives of Libraries NI.

3. Policy

- 3.1 Libraries NI aims to maintain a good working relationship with the media in the interests of openness and transparency, of promoting participation in library services and in line with the principle of freedom of access to information.
- 3.2 Libraries NI will proactively promote its services and an understanding of libraries through the media in addition to responding to media enquiries.
- 3.3 For all media enquiries relating to Libraries NI, members of staff, agency staff, contractors and Board Members should inform the Marketing Team of the enquiry and the details involved e.g. contact name, contact details, media source/outlet, nature of the enquiry. Staff and Board Members should gather the details whilst being careful not to discuss the enquiry.
- 3.4 If a member of staff or agency staff becomes aware of a breach of this policy then they should contact their line manager who must then make sure that both the Marketing Team and Human Resources are informed. If a Board member is aware of a breach of policy then they must inform the Chief Executive.
- 3.5 While all staff and Board Members must co-operate to make sure this policy works effectively and efficiently the Chairperson and Chief Executive are the main spokespersons for the Authority with the Chief Executive having responsibility for the messaging. In conjunction with the Senior Management Team and the Marketing Team, they will decide (either individually or jointly) if another Officer or Board Member will be required to speak to the media on behalf of the organisation. This is particularly relevant with regard to meetings of the Board and Committees which may attract media attention.

- 3.6 For positive news stories, local library news and more general library media coverage, the Senior Management Team can nominate a member of staff to speak on behalf of Libraries NI with a focus on those who have been media trained.
- 3.7 Staff and Board Members should be mindful of the Code of Conduct for Staff and the Code of Practice for Board Members respectively. Any discussions that take place at Board or Committee meetings should remain confidential. Decisions should not be communicated by individual Board Members or employees in advance of the official communication process.
- 3.8 Staff and Board Members must not use their position within Libraries NI, their title or the organisation's logo in any contact they have with the media that is not associated with Libraries NI or its business. The Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications should be contacted if clarification is required on this matter.
- 3.9 If staff and/or Board Members are approached to speak to the media in a capacity unrelated to Libraries NI, they may do so. However, if this occurs in a way that will link them to Libraries NI, e.g. using a branch library address, mentioning your role in Libraries NI, or filming on Libraries NI premises or as a backdrop, prior approval must be sought via the Marketing Team. No one should be interviewed on Authority premises if they are commenting in a private capacity.
- 3.10 It should be noted that several of the media outlets are now through social media and online platforms. Accordingly, this policy should be read in tandem with the Social Media Policy.

4. Authority

Policy Sponsor: The Chief Executive is the Policy Sponsor.

Policy Owner: The Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications is the Policy Owner.

Policy Contact: The Communications Officer is the Policy Contact.

5. Related Documents

- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Code of Conduct for Board Members
- Social Media Policy and Guidance
- Filming Policy