

**Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board**

**Media Protocols**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board includes members from a wide range of key partner agencies and organisations

1.2 Key partner agencies and organisations include Herefordshire Council, Wye Valley NHS Trust, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust, the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, West Midlands Ambulance Service, West Mercia Police and the National Probation Service. All agencies that have a responsibility for safeguarding should be considered with regard to any media activity

1.3 There are occasions when individual cases come to the attention of the media that require accurate and timely responses. It is a HSAB responsibility to ensure adults at risk remain protected through partnership working.

1.4 A Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) is held when an adult dies as a result of abuse or neglect, whether known or suspected, and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult. These findings need to be made public in a manner that ensures that the public has access to the facts of the matter, reduces rumours and reassures the public about the actions being taken to improve services.

1.5 Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and as so many organisations and agencies are involved in achieving this. It is important that messages issued to the local press and via social media are consistent and controlled.

**2. Scope**

The following protocols apply to members and staff of all HSAB partner organisations, when dealing with safeguarding issues.

**3. Working protocols**

3.1 All communications relating to the work of HSAB, including Safeguarding Adult Reviews, will be managed by Herefordshire Council’s communications team, with support from communications teams in partner organisations.

3.2 No individual, service area, agency or organisation may produce or issue press releases, make press statements or post comments on the internet on issues with implications across agencies relating to the safeguarding of children or the work of the HSAB. Neither must they issue comment, written or verbal, or organise a press conference or invite the press to a safeguarding event, without prior discussion with Herefordshire Council’s communications team.

3.3 No individual should speak to any publication, radio or television station on safeguarding issues with implications across agencies without the knowledge and guidance of the communications team.

3.4 Elected members may find themselves involved in cases from time to time as residents in their wards seek assistance or advice. Irrespective of their involvement, they must refer all media enquiries to the communications team as outlined in these protocols.

3.5 All press calls in relation to a safeguarding issue with implications across agencies to any agency should be referred to Herefordshire Council’s communications team (01432 260006). In the event of being contacted directly by a local or national journalist, the member of staff should:

* + Take the name of the journalist, the publication or broadcast media they represent and their telephone number.
	+ Then advise the journalist to contact the communications team in the first instance or offer to transfer their call.
	+ Notify the communications team immediately if the call is not transferred and provide the journalist’s contact details. The communications team will then contact the journalist directly.

3.6 The communications team will support the chair of HSAB or, where appropriate, the director for adults and communities, in agreeing press responses and in preparing for any press interviews in liaison with relevant agencies.

3.7 Members and staff of HSAB and partner organisations should notify the communications team of positive or negative issues that may be of future press interest so that statements can be prepared in advance of enquires if necessary.

**4. Working protocols for the communications team and the media**

4.1 All local, national and trade/professional press calls should be routed through the communications team. One telephone number for all initial press enquires will be used.

4.2 If the police are involved and the issue relates to a possible criminal offence being investigated, the communications team will liaise with the police press office and other agencies involved agreeing a media strategy.

4.3 The communications team will never knowingly mislead the press, the public or employees on any issue. It will work with the media to aim to ensure that any publicity describing policies, aims, decisions and review results is objective concentrates on facts and explanations, and promotes clearly what HSAB aims to achieve for adults at risk in Herefordshire.

4.4 The value of integrity will be maintained. This means that there are sometimes matters where HSAB and its members should properly respect confidentiality. HSAB will not discuss with the media individual cases relating to personal health or social care issues.

4.5 HSAB will not comment on information provided to the press anonymously or comment on quotes that cannot be attributed. These anonymous comments are often inaccurate or malicious.

4.6 If the media is materially inaccurate in its reportage, the communications team will seek to correct misinformation, working with the publication, programme and HSAB. In order to manage the risk of the publication of potentially libellous material, the communications team will respond only to professional journalists from established newspapers or radio or TV stations.

4.7 All news releases and statements must be printed on HSAB press release paper and must be produced by and issued through the communications team.

* 1. A position statement will be included with each press release explaining the role of the HSAB.

4.9 For urgent press releases the communications team will make every effort to contact the director for adults and communities and chair of HSAB. But if this fails, then the relevant most senior manager will be asked to clear urgent work.

4.10 When strategic partners are featured or are participating in the production of a press release, that partner will be consulted on content if possible before release.

4.11 The communications team will identify a number of designated spokespeople from HSAB to give in depth broadcast and printed media interviews on operational and technical matters and on issues of public interest.

4.12 The chair of the HSAB or the director for adults and communities will be approached in the first instance for interviews on safeguarding issues.

1. **Compliance**

The communications leads of the HSAB member agencies listed below are responsible for managing these media protocols in their respective organisations.

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| **Organisation** | **Communications lead** | **Contact details - List updated May 2021** |
| Herefordshire Council | Alex Floyd | 01432 261899                                        alexandra.floyd@herefordshire.gov.uk |
| Wye Valley NHS Trust | John Burnett | 01432 355444 ext. 2928 John.Burnett@wvt.nhs.uk |
| Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health Care Trust | Communications  | WHCNHS.Communications@nhs.net |
| Herefordshire and Worcestershire CCG | Kerry Thomson (Lead) | 01432 383795/ 07834 788380 Kerry.thomson5@nhs.net and hw.comms@nhs.net  |
| National Probation Service – West Mercia | Harry Harper Rebecca Gough | 020 3334 3536 – harry.harper@justtice.gov.uk rebecca.gough1@justice.gov.uk  |
| Community Rehabilitation Company | Chief Officer - Dal Veysey | Dal.Veysey@justice.gov.uk |
| West Mercia Ambulance Service | Murray McGregor | 01384 246496 or Out of Hours: 07909 528550 |
| West Mercia Women’s Aid | Helen Richardson | Helen.Richardson@wmwa.org.uk |
| West Mercia Police | Melinda CookseyAlex Gale | Mobile: 07814773721  Direct Dial: 01905 331002 Ext. 7742020melinda.cooksey@westmercia.pnn.police.ukMobile: 07779543174alex.gale@westmercia.pnn.police.uk |
| CAFCASS | Rebecca Jenkins | Rebecca.Jenkins@cafcass.gsi.gov.uk |
| NHS England | Claire Deeley |  0113 825 0646 england.nemedia@nhs.net  |
| West Mercia Youth Justice Service | Keith Barham | 01905 732200 keith.barham.whyos@westmercia.pnn.police.uk |