

Swindon Local Safeguarding Children Board Media Strategy



1 Introduction

The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a multi-agency body, created to promote the safeguarding of children within the Swindon area.

This strategy outlines the way in which the LSCB will work with the media, both print and broadcast to ensure good information for the public about its' work, and promote national and local safeguarding aims.

Wider 'communications' with all stakeholders such as partner agencies, children, young people and families, and organisations that work with children in the community are not covered within the remit of this strategy.

The primary route for internal communication is through the website, which has a section for families and children and young people, and the e-zine.

Therefore the key aims of the Media Strategy (and the LSCB Media Sub-group that holds responsibility for implementing the strategy) are to provide good information to the public through the media, that promotes the welfare and safeguarding of children and young people, through: -

- being re-active when unforeseen events arise and providing information in response to media queries effectively.
- being prepared for anticipated publicity where activities of the LSCB might attract media interest
- being pro-active, gaining the support of the media to promote the safeguarding agenda in Swindon, through good news stories, media campaigns and features
- being opportunistic, and engaging with the local media where national events, campaigns or news stories arise.
- providing media support for other activities associated with the LSCB.

The LSCB Media sub-group meets quarterly to further these aims. It can also be convened on an ad hoc basis as the need arises.

2 Strap line

All releases other than Press Statements from the LSCB will have the strapline 'Safeguarding Swindon's Children Together' and the LSCB logo. (For Press Statements see Appendix 1).

3 Enquiries to the LSCB

General public enquiries should go to the LSCB Office (01793 463803). For most enquiries the LSCB Business Manager will respond as appropriate.

Media enquiries must always be referred to the Group Director; Children or the Director Children and Families.

4 Resources

The resource needs attached to this strategy are relatively small and will be funded from the LSCB budget.

5 Roles & Responsibilities

The individual members of LSCB's Media Sub-group contribute to effective communications, both inter-agency and external relating to business of the LSCB.

There are two areas of roles and responsibilities for members of the Media Sub group

- a) that for the LSCB
- b) that for their individual organisation

5.1 LSCB

- The LSCB Media Sub-group will work collaboratively to draft and approve media statements involving relevant officers within their organisations
- For all Media Sub-group work, a lead will be identified from within the group so as to share the load across agencies.
- All members will respond to requests for comments on draft within the given timescale. Where there is time to plan media releases, e.g. serious case reviews, these should allow enough time to respond.
- When an immediate media response is required this will be the responsibility of the Chair of the LSCB or whomever they designate this to. In such an event the other members of the group will be notified as soon as possible.
- The LSCB Media sub-group will work collaboratively to draft and approve feature material.
- For all LSCB media requests the LSCB Business Manager is identified as the person to be contacted in the first instance and inform the Chair of the LSCB or the Chair of the LSCB Media Sub group who will identify who the most appropriate person is to respond.
- Members of the LSCB Media sub-group will be the first point of contact in their organisation for media enquiries for the LSCB and should identify who will deputise in their absence.
- Where individual agencies are contacted in the first instance and enquiries relate to that agency, the organisation's communications manager should be informed. A decision will be made as to whether it is a single agency matter, in which case they can respond. Where more than one agency is involved,

the guiding principle should be that there is communication with the LSCB and partner agencies.

- The LSCB Business Manager will maintain the web site.

5.2 Own Organisation

Members are expected to:

- Attend meetings of the LSCB's Media/Communications Sub-group regularly and consistently and special meetings as and when required.
- Send a representative who is briefed and can speak for their agency if they are unable to attend.
- Represent the views of their agency / organisation at the group.
- Speak for their agency / organisation with authority.
- Consult with relevant staff within their agency / organisation on all pertinent issues.
- Disseminate information to relevant staff within their own agency / organisation in an appropriate and timely manner following meetings if required.
- Ensure that senior managers are aware of issues that are likely to create large media interest positive as well as negative.
- Produce or ensure the production of media reports to / from their agency / organisation as required.
- Participate in media activities as and when required and give or obtain approval.
- Immediately identify any potential conflict of interest.
- In representing the LSCB, to recognise that their role is to represent the multi-agency perspective.

6 Serious Case Reviews

Handling the communication around Serious Case Reviews will be an important part of the role of the communication group. During a Serious Case Review, we have to be prepared for any eventuality with respect to media interest. In particular, if there is an inquest, we need to be aware that this may re-focus interest on the case.

6.1 Media Process for Serious Case Reviews

1. The LSCB Business Manager will inform all members of the Media Sub-group when the LSCB Chair has confirmed the need to undertake a Serious Case Review.
2. At the next Media Sub-group, a lead will be identified for the case from the within the group. This will normally be the communications member for the agency with the greatest involvement in the case, though the aim is also to share the work between the represented agencies.

3. If necessary, the Media Sub-group will schedule an extra meeting to coincide with the completion of the Overview Report and sign off by the LSCB. This meeting will draw up a media plan and make recommendations to the LSCB Chair and agency Chief Executives about how media interest in the case is to be handled, for example whether a press conference should be called, or a press statement issued or held in readiness to respond to media enquiries.
4. A briefing meeting for Chief Executives and/or other agency spokespersons will be scheduled as required.
5. If an inquest is to be held, the Media Sub-group may need to re-visit the case to ensure that we are prepared for any new interest generated.

There should be sign up to the agreed process from chief Executives of each organisation and an instruction that other members of each organisation should cooperate fully with the group to provide all necessary information.

Communications staff are bound by the same rules of confidentiality as everyone else in our organisations and this should be recognised and respected.

7 Case Studies/Testimonials

When there are positive news stories we will, where possible, illustrate the work of the LSCB, using appropriate case stories and testimonials.

