



## **Media Enquiries Policy**

The way that media enquiries to the organisation are handled is important, because the initial impression made (e.g. in the way a telephone call is handled) can be very influential in the way that journalists view us and write about us. We also need to ensure that we could deal adequately with any hostile press enquiries or with a development which could show the Woodcraft Folk in an unfavourable light. This is a normal part of media planning work undertaken by businesses and voluntary organisations, and discussion of procedures for this eventuality should not be taken to mean either that we anticipate hostile media attention or that we have anything to hide.

### **1. Handling Initial Enquiries at Folk Office**

When a call is received, if the Communications Manager or one of the Joint Chief Executives is available, the phone call should be transferred normally. Dealing with press enquiries should take priority over any other activity. If they are not available, the caller should be asked briefly to explain the reason for the call. If this is a very simple enquiry (e.g. which can be sorted out by sending out an annual report), this should be dealt with by the person taking the call. If it is more complicated or concerns a policy issue, the caller should be asked for their number and told that someone will ring them back as soon as possible. Ask the caller for the timescale in which they need a response to their enquiry. Their name, phone number, e-mail address and publication should be recorded.

It is absolutely essential that the caller is rung back as soon as possible. The Folk Office team should contact the Communications Manager or one of the Joint Chief Executives, or failing them the chair of trustees. If none of these can be reached within the timescale indicated by the journalist, should use their judgement as to whether it is appropriate to respond to the enquiry using one of the agreed position statements. All media enquiries must be logged with the Communications Manager (see 5 below).

### **2. Handling Enquiries Received Other Than at Folk Office**

Members of General Council, centres and project-based staff, and others may receive enquiries directly on issues in which they have some involvement. Anyone speaking to the media must make it clear that they are speaking in a personal capacity and not as a representative of the organisation as a whole. Regional staff,

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centre managers and project workers may, if they feel comfortable doing so, speak to the media on issues directly related to their own work, and they must ensure that reporters are aware that they are not speaking for the organisation as a whole.

Any issues of policy or any enquiry that appears to be hostile must be referred to Folk Office. No staff member, except the Communications Manager and Joint Chief Executives, is required to speak to the media, and staff should not be afraid to politely tell a journalist that someone else will call them back. Staff and members are responsible for passing details of their contact with the media to the Communications Manager to be logged (see 5 below).

### **3. Woodcraft Folk Spokesperson(s)**

Under normal circumstances, the people who have authority to speak on behalf of the organisation at any time are the Communications Manager, Joint Chief Executives and the chair of trustees. These people may authorise other people to speak, according to the issue in question. The Communications Manager will be responsible for creating opportunities, particularly for children and young people, to develop spokesperson skills and to participate in media activities.

### **4. Woodcraft Folk Communications Manager**

The Communications Manager will sometimes act as a spokesperson though wherever possible will seek to facilitate another spokesperson to represent the organisation including young members and volunteers as appropriate. The Communications Manager will brief journalists and facilitate contact between reporters and the appropriate people within the Folk, as well as issue press releases and provide reporters with photographs when required. The Communications Manager also advises the Joint Chief Executives and other Woodcraft Folk members when requested, and will provide media training to members. The Communications Manager maintains a database of media contacts and a log on media enquiries and coverage.

### **5. Media Log**

The media enquiries and coverage log is maintained by the Communications Manager. All media enquiries received should be noted in the log. The information logged should include the name of the journalist, his/her publication, phone number, e-mail address and the subject of the enquiry, as well as details on what action was

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taken. The entries must be dated, and the dates of subsequent actions also noted. It is the duty of all Woodcraft Folk members and staff speaking to national media or speaking about issues that affect the organisation as a whole to provide the details to the Communications Manager for inclusion in the log. The enquiries log should be available for inspection by the Joint Chief Executives and members of General Council at any time.

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