[*Add your logo*]

**Crisis communications plan for [*name*]**

A crisis is defined as any event that can cause harm to [*name*]'s reputation. If an incident occurs that could generate media interest, this crisis communications plan will ensure that staff can alert appropriate colleagues, agree a position statement and key messages, and follow all media protocols.

In the event of a crisis, the communications team is responsible for:

* liaising with the senior management team/crisis response team
* managing all media and social media statements, press releases, interviews and media visits as appropriate
* monitoring press/media coverage and taking action as required
* managing internal communications [*add in link to HR team if internal communications is managed jointly*]
* advising on actions necessary to protect [*charity name*]'s reputation

**Crisis scenarios**

*Outline possible crisis scenarios that present a risk to your charity, detailing the level of risk, worst case outcome, which external and internal stakeholders are involved, and the actions the charity will take to prevent this type of situation from happening.*

*For example, a supporter is seriously injured in a charity fundraising skydive and is taken to hospital, where he later dies. This is a high-level risk for the charity and could seriously damage its reputation, if it was found that the third party company it used to run the skydives was at fault.*

*As well as the supporter, this will affect their next of kin, staff directly involved in the fundraising event who saw the incident happen, and senior staff members and trustees. It will also involve third party organisations including the skydiving company, and emergency services such as the hospital and police.*

*It could lead to questions from the police, legal representatives for the next of kin and major donors, about the third party agency the charity has used to carry out its skydives. If the third party provider is found to be at fault, this could lead to potential resignations among the charity's senior leadership and the board of trustees.*

*Action taken to prevent this crisis scenario from happening: the charity thoroughly researches and evaluates all third party providers before signing contracts with them, to ensure they are professional, reputable and have high health and safety standards.*

**Crisis response team**

*Agree a crisis response team for your church*

Name:

Job title: [*For example, director of communications]*

*Out of hours mobile:*

Email:

Name:

Job title: [*For example, CEO*]

Out of hours mobile:

Email:

Name:

Job title: [*For example, director of fundraising*]

Out of hours mobile:

Email:

Name:

Job title: [*For example, director of services*]

Out of hours mobile:

Email:

Name:

Job title: [*For example, HR director*]

Out of hours mobile:

Email:

Name:

Job title: [*For example, a representative from the legal team*]

Out of hours mobile:

Email:

**Media spokespeople to comment on behalf of [*name*] in the event of a crisis**

*Agree spokespeople to speak to the media in the event of a crisis*

Name:

Job title: [*For example, CEO*]

Out of hours mobile:

Email:

Name:

Job title: *[For example, director of services*]

Out of hours mobile:

Email:

**Timetable to prepare for and follow in the event of a crisis**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Actioned by** | **Completed (please date)** |
| **Actions prior to a crisis** | | |
| Template media statements prepared for possible crisis communications situations | E.g. communications team, with crisis response team sign off |  |
| Embed an emergency sign-off procedure, so communicators know how to quickly seek authorisation for any written material |  |  |
| Set up media and social media monitoring systems |  |  |
| A crisis response team appointed, comprising of CEO and senior managers, to make key decisions in the event of a crisis |  |  |
| Out of hours contact details for crisis response team recorded |  |  |
| Media spokespeople agreed and out of hours contact details recorded |  |  |
| Crisis response team meet regularly to brainstorm potential risks and how they can be managed and monitored |  |  |
| Provide copies of crisis communications plan and other relevant protocols and policies to all members of the crisis response team and ensure they are familiar with contents |  |  |
| Develop a social media policy, outlining how [*charity name*] will respond to crisis situations using your key social channels |  |  |
| Create a checklist of every stakeholder group who must receive agreed communications messages in a crisis. Establish text, email and social media distribution lists and distribution systems for these groups, with details of who is responsible for contacting these stakeholders |  |  |
| Media spokespeople trained in how to deal with the media and crisis situations |  |  |
| Media train a pool of service users and volunteers, who can speak to the media if need be |  |  |
| Staff representatives to be present at charity activities and events |  |  |
| Next of kin contact details recorded for event participants (e.g. fundraising event) |  |  |
| Provide fundraising event participants with contact details for key staff members and ask them to pass onto next of kin |  |  |
| Key staff including crisis response team and communications team to be made aware of any charity activities or events that have a risk attached to them |  |  |
| If a charity event is taking place, such as a fundraising event, ensure contact details for all staff and volunteers involved are passed onto crisis response team |  |  |
| Event participants to be tracked during fundraising events such as the London Marathon |  |  |
| All staff briefed to let their managers and communications team know immediately of any potential crisis situations |  |  |
| All staff and volunteers to be briefed not to talk to media but to refer to a member of the communications team |  |  |
|  | | |
| **Immediate actions once a crisis has taken place** | | |
| The first person to discover an incident will alert crisis response team and communications team and any other people who have key roles to play |  |  |
| Crisis response team to meet within [*timeframe e.g. one hour*] of story breaking or coming to attention, to determine current known facts, position and key messages *(use crisis template below*) |  |  |
| Prepare and issue holding statement to media within [*time frame i.e. two hours*] and agree social media responses/approach |  |  |
| Communicate with key external and internal stakeholders, using distribution systems |  |  |
| Put together full response within [timeframe e.g. 24 hours] |  |  |
| Inform board of trustees |  |  |
| Notify next of kin, if appropriate |  |  |
| Liaise with third parties e.g. event organiser, police, emergency services, hospital, and report back to senior management team and communications team |  |  |
| Provide flow of information for the media through further statements and interviewees |  |  |
| Begin detailed recording of actions in response to crisis |  |  |
| Begin to monitor media output and respond promptly to misinformation |  |  |
| Organise shift system/rota for staff involved in managing crisis i.e. communications team and crisis response team |  |  |
| Ensure adequate breaks and refreshments for staff managing crisis |  |  |
| Explain to media limitations to information that can be provided. Be honest |  |  |
| Arrange media briefings and notify media of times/venues |  |  |
| Brief and rehearse with [*charity name*]'s media spokespeople before interviews/briefings, agreeing information to be released and feeding in expected media questions and angles |  |  |
| If appropriate, make arrangements with local radio to broadcast public information |  |  |
| Anticipate media demands/requirements. E.g. access to families |  |  |
|  | | |
| **Internal communication** | | |
| Ensure staff are briefed on what is happening, how it is being handled and [*charity name*]'s position, and let them know to refer any media interest to communications team – keep them continually updated |  |  |
| Provide briefing information for staff manning telephones so they know what information is in the public domain |  |  |
|  | | |
| **Third parties** | | |
| Establish links with communications personnel at key agencies involved in the crisis (e.g. health, police, fire, event organiser) |  |  |
| Ensure they have immediate copies of anything [*charity name*] releases and vice versa |  |  |
| Share names of [*charity name*]'s key spokespeople |  |  |
| Provide office space and communications equipment as appropriate |  |  |
|  | | |
| **Media monitoring** | | |
| Ensure access to a TV and radio to record coverage |  |  |
| Take notes of main points made in broadcast coverage and record online coverage including social media |  |  |
| Arrange copies of all national newspapers for communications team |  |  |
| Feed media intelligence (i.e. how the crisis is being covered) to crisis response team |  |  |
| Prepare daily press cuttings |  |  |
|  | | |
| **Record keeping** | | |
| Keep chronological record of information released to media and date/time of release |  |  |
| Keep log of key decisions made and reasons for them |  |  |
| Log all media questions and answers provided |  |  |
| Log media attending [*charity name*]'s site/office and media briefings |  |  |
| Keep up-to-date file of media coverage |  |  |
| Keep log of staff hours |  |  |
|  | | |
| **Actions after the event** | | |
| Obtain feedback from other parties for subsequent review of handling of crisis |  |  |
| Evaluation meeting to review the event and lessons learnt, and evaluate the crisis communications plan as well as relevant policies such as the social media policy |  |  |
| Plan ahead regarding future dates related to the incident (e.g. inquests, inquiries, anniversaries) |  |  |
| Thank all who have assisted/cooperated, either publicly or privately as appropriate, including possibly the media |  |  |

**Crisis template**

*In the event of a crisis, complete the following information:*

Incident:

Date:

|  |
| --- |
| Headline facts |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| Unconfirmed information |
|  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Stakeholders: [e.g. next of kin, media, police, staff] | |
| Likely questions  (include difficult questions) |  |
| Possible answers |  |
| Who to contact  (named person whose responsibility it is to contact the stakeholder) |  |
| Method of contact  (for example, phone, email, face-to-face) |  |
| Comment  (stakeholder specific remarks that are essential) |  |