

Document 815	Media Policy
What is this?	This is: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Carriglea Cáirde Services' Media Management Policy2. Carriglea Cáirde Services' draft Crisis Communications Policy
Governance Code Section:	3.1 (b)

Carriglea Cáirde Services' Media Management Policy

1. Scope of Policy

This policy outlines a formal process to ensure all media interviews, releases, statements and inquiries related to Carriglea Cáirde Services are managed professionally and appropriately.

2. Designated Spokespeople

The official spokespeople for Carriglea Cáirde Services are its Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of the Board of Directors. Where appropriate, the Chief Executive Officer or Chairperson may delegate the role of spokesperson to another person. In the event of a crisis or emergency situation, the Chief Executive Officer will handle all contacts with the media.

3. Media Queries and Requests

It is vital that all media inquiries be treated efficiently and courteously with due regard to the fact that all media work to stringent deadlines which require prompt responses.

All media inquiries and requests are to be coordinated through Carriglea Cáirde Services' XXX.

Staff, other than the designated spokespersons or Communication Officer, should refrain from providing information or comment to the media without express permission from the Chief Executive Officer or Chairperson.

4. Media Releases and Statements

The Chief Executive is responsible for the drafting and dissemination of all press releases and statements.

The Chief Executive is tasked with monitoring and documenting all engagements with the media. Out of courtesy, any press release, media monitoring reports or comments relating to specific service area, are to be forwarded to the members of the relevant service area as a matter of policy.

5. Guidelines for Dealing with the Media

Designated spokespersons should follow these guidelines when dealing with the media:

- Remember that in responding to the media, you will be seen as representing and speaking for Carriglea Cáirde Services. Personal opinions should be clearly and carefully identified as such.

- The best approach with the media is to be prompt, helpful and honest. All contacts from the media should be returned as soon as possible, in deference to the journalist's deadlines.
- Note the name of the person calling, the media organisation and, if available, the anticipated time of release of information in print or broadcast. This information should be forwarded to the Chief Executive.
- Make sure you understand each question from the media before answering. If you cannot answer the question, or are uncomfortable providing a response, take the reporter's number and advise him/her that someone who can provide the information will contact him/her as soon as possible
- Do not answer a reporter's question with "no comment" or "I'm not allowed to say". Do not be condescending or underestimate the reporter's intelligence, but make sure the reporter understands your responses. Provide your phone number and/or e-mail address for follow-up questions.
- Do not say anything that could compromise the reputation or financial position of Carriglea Cáirde Services.
- Issues that should not be discussed with the media are 1) legal issues, 2) personnel issues.
- Any media inquiries that involve information about specific members of Carriglea Cáirde Services should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer. These questions should preferably be answered in consultation with the relevant member organisation.
- Where possible, refrain from commenting on the actions of individuals.

Carriglea Cáirde Services' Crisis Communications Policy

1. Purpose

When a crisis occurs, Carriglea Cáirde Services will take immediate action and communicate promptly, accurately, professionally and confidently for the duration of the crisis.

The purpose of this policy is to help mitigate the long-term impact of a communications crisis by coordinating external communications with the media, our stakeholders and the public.

2. Scope

A communications crisis is defined as any situation that threatens the integrity or reputation of Carriglea Cáirde Services. This can occur as the result of an unanticipated emergency or other critical event, negative publicity or a slow-burning legal, financial, human resource, political or public relations issue.

3. Procedures

3.1 The Crisis Communication Team

In the event of communications crisis, the Chief Executive will immediately convene a meeting of senior management and any other relevant personnel. If the Chief Executive is either unavailable, or personally involved in the crisis, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors will head the Crisis Communications Team.

The Head of the Crisis Communications Team has the authority to co-opt additional members if further expertise is required.

The function of the Crisis Communications Team is to coordinate an immediate response and to develop and implement a Crisis Communication Plan. The following procedure will be used in developing the Crisis Communication Plan.

- The CEO will immediately consult with the Crisis Communications Team to identify the key messages to be delivered to both internal and external audiences. The CEO may elect to consult a legal professional for guidance in developing a crisis communications plan.
- A briefing sheet will be prepared for the Board of Directors, management and staff providing instructions as to how to handle questions regarding the crisis. Communication messages will focus on the available evidence and the actions that Carriglea Cáirde Services is taking to mitigate the impact of the crisis.
- The Crisis Communications Team may elect to proactively distribute information to the public in the form of a media release and/or letter to members and other stakeholders. The staff and Board of Directors will be briefed prior to any external information releases and will have access to this information prior to public release.

3.2 Responding to Media Queries

In the event of a communications crisis, it is critical to respond as soon possible to all media queries in order to reduce the chance of speculation and inaccurate information being reported to the public.

The head of the Crisis Communications Team will act as primary spokesperson for Carriglea Cáirde Services for the duration of the crisis. Staff must direct all media queries to the Head of the Crisis Communications Team. If she/he is not immediately available, forward queries to any other member of the Crisis Communication Team, and confirm that they have received the message.

If contacted by the media, staff should refrain from saying that they cannot, or are not authorised, to comment. Instead, they should be briefed to say: "All queries should be directed to our communications team. You can reach them at [contact details]". Under no circumstances should staff comment or share any information with journalists without the permission of the head of the Crisis Communications Team.

If we are not ready to comment, the official spokesperson will tell the media that the situation is still being reviewed, and that will issue a statement at a specific time. Offer a holding statement if required.

For the duration of the crisis all media statements and press releases will be prepared by the Communications Officer in consultation with the Crisis Communications Team. Every media release or statements must be approved by the Head of the Crisis Communications Team prior to release.

Guidelines for dealing with the media during a communications crisis:

- Respond quickly to define and control public perception of how you are handling the crisis or the media will do it for you.
- "No comment" is never a good answer. Be as forthright as possible.
- Never speak "off the record". If you don't want something reported, then don't discuss it with a journalist.
- Prepare thoroughly for all media interviews and be ready to answer difficult questions.
- Show compassion and concern for the people involved/affected.
- Do not be defensive. Admit mistakes. Explain why the mistake occurred and what you are doing to fix the problem. Don't be afraid to say sorry.

3.3 Stakeholder communications

Carriglea Cáirde Services' stakeholders may be either directly or indirectly affected by communications crisis. Stakeholders can be divided into primary and secondary audiences.

Primary Audiences	Secondary Audiences
Staff	Service Users, their families and friends
Board of Directors	Collaborators
Health Service Executive	Minor funders
HIQA	

The head of the Crisis Communications team should brief Carriglea Cáirde Services' primary audiences within the first few hours of the crisis. The briefing should focus on the known facts and the corrective actions that are being taken. It should also provide guidance on how to deal with media queries. The Crisis Communication Team will continue to brief primary audiences regularly throughout the crisis.

Secondary audiences will be included in all public-facing communications. Forward media releases and statements to these audiences before they are issued to the media.

3.4 Social Media

It is easy to become fixated on the news media in the heat of crises. But news of the crises is more likely to first reach our stakeholders and the public via social media.

We have to accept that we cannot prevent or stop the spread of information through social media, nor can we control what others say about us on social media. We can, however, use these channels to proactively communicate our key messages, and influence public perception

Social Media Guidelines:

- Actively monitor social media for relevant comments or conversations. Keep a record of all relevant comments or posts.
- Do not release any information that has not been approved by the Crisis Communications Team. Post key messages agreed by the Crises Communications Team, or share a link to the holding statement.
- Respond quickly to /acknowledge all reasonable comments or questions - even if they are negative. Do not delete negative comments or posts.
- Avoid a defensive tone. Be as transparent and helpful as possible.
- Show sympathy for anyone that may have been affected by the crisis, and apologise for any mistakes that we've made (without admitting direct liability).

- Remember that any social media channel (even if it appears to be password-protected) is potentially open to anyone. Our postings may also be forwarded or “re-tweeted” with added commentary.

Appendix A: Crisis Communications Checklist

▪ **Step 1: Convene Crisis Communications Team**

Gathering as much of a factual summary of the event/situation along an associated timeline will be vital to determining the extent of the crisis and the corresponding response needed from the Crisis Communication Team. Prepare a briefing for primary audiences. Brief staff first, followed by the Board of Directors and then (if negative publicity seems likely) key funders and members.

▪ **Step 2: In the event of media queries, issue a holding statement**

Respond to immediate queries by issuing a holding statement (see Appendix B). We may also publish the holding statement on the homepage of the organisation's website.

▪ **Step 3: Develop and Implement Crisis Communications Plan**

Confirming all the information and sources gathered so far will be essential as the crisis progresses. Answering the questions of who, what, when, where, and why along with specific questions about timelines, impacts and vulnerabilities to stakeholders. Determine procedures for our action plan, analyzing the situation, developing messages and reacting should be finalized within 24 to 48 hours. Formulating key messages that provide one clear message in a timely manner is central.

▪ **Step 4: Monitor and adapt**

Actively monitor print and broadcast and social media to track opinions, comments and reactions. As new information emerges, adapt strategies and messages accordingly.

▪ **Step 5: Define Recovery Plan**

Develop and implement an image restoration strategy as soon as the crisis is over. Assess what changes need to be made to policies and structures to prevent similar crises in future.

Appendix 2: Sample Holding Statement

Immediate Release: [date of issue]; [time of issue]

Statement issued by Carriglea Cáirde Services

Carriglea Cáirde Services confirms that it has received a report of [nature of event/issue]. According to the information received [provide information without admitting liability].

We are currently in the process of establishing the facts, and we will be providing further information as soon as it becomes available. The next [briefing/update] will take place at [time/place].

For further information:

Name [name of contact for the media]:

Title [title of media contact]

Telephone:

Mobile:

Email: