



Handling a crisis in the media

Falkirk CSV- 15 January 2025

What today's session will cover...

Tips and techniques for handling a crisis in the media.

- What's a crisis?
- How to prepare for them before they happen
- Different types of crises with egs
- Handling your crisis - some key things to think about / comms steps to take
- Handling the media in a crisis
- Q+A



Crisis, what crisis?



Crisis?

"An event, accusation or perception that seriously threatens the reputation or even the viability of an organisation."

Trevor Morris, author and former professor of public relations



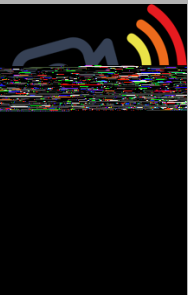
In our DNA?

“Crisis management is part and parcel of the work we do as charitable organisations.”

Fadi Itani OBE, Muslim Charities Forum



Before a crisis breaks...



Before a crisis breaks

- Plan
- Predict
- Practice
- Perform



Have a **plan** for what to do when a crisis hits

- Who is your crisis management team?
- How will you come together?
- Who do you need to communicate with, how and when?
- Who will do what?



Routinely **predict** what crises you could face

- Top 5/10 issues?
- Periodically review
- Instil a proactive mindset across the organisation



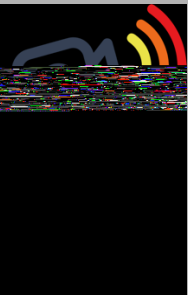
Practice responding to a crisis

- Role play an emergency
- Test and refine plan



Perform

- Simulate media interviews on predictable issues and imagined crises
- Record, watch back, learn techniques



If you don't...

• ~~Plan~~

• ~~Predict~~

• ~~Practice~~

• ~~Perform~~

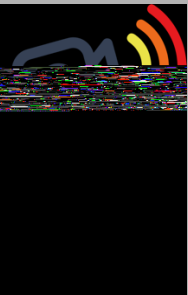
Predicament

Panic

decision
Paralysis

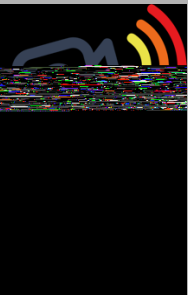


What **kinds of crises** hit charities?



Kinds of crises

- **Predictable:** closures; mass redundancies; risky change in policy direction; controversial appointment



NEWS

Closure of mental health charity 'a sad day'



JRC had been helping people since 2017 and focused on raising awareness through mental health education sessions

Guide Dogs UK plans 160 redundancies after costs 'rise considerably'

01 May 2024 News



Sam Wait
776 articles

Email Twitter



Guide Dogs UK

Charities Criticise Tesco's Evening-Only Food Collection Policy

14 May 2024 IN BUSINESS Business Matters



Former MP suspended for sexual misconduct appointed to senior charity role

09 Jan 2025 News



Emily Moss
96 articles



By Farnaces/Adobe

Kinds of crises

- **Predictable:** closures; mass redundancies; risky change in policy direction; controversial appointment
- **Unforeseen:** an unguarded comment; a mistake; a complaint; the actions of an individual



Gregg Wallace dropped as charity ambassador amid inappropriate behaviour allegations

Sky News
Updated 29 November 2024 · 2-min read



EastEnders star leaves script on train revealing 'key character will be killed off at Christmas'

Shock death scene planned for the Christmas Day special leaked after soap star left top secret papers on a commuter train



Kamala Harris caught on hot mic admitting concern with election campaign

'We just told all the family secrets, s**t,' vice president said
James Liddell • Tuesday 29 October 2024 15:31 GMT • 157 Comments



Charity Commission 'accidentally' resnares critical post about Mermaids

12 Apr 2024 News


Harriet Whitehead
 1375 articles
 Email Twitter


 Mermaids logo

THE TOP SECRET

Kamala Harris appears to be caught on hot mic admitting campaign struggle

Kinds of crises

- **Predictable:** closures; mass redundancies; risky change in policy direction; controversial appointment
- **Unforeseen:** an unguarded comment; a mistake; a complaint; the actions of an individual
- **A major story:** that will likely run for more than one news cycle



DAILY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR



THE TIMES

Friday February 9 2018 | thetimes.co.uk | No 72453

Only £1 to subscribers £3.60

Top Oxfam staff paid Haiti survivors for sex

● Charity covered up scandal in earthquake zone ● Girls at 'Caligula orgy' may have been under-age

TIMES INVESTIGATION

Sean O'Neill Chief Reporter

One of Britain's biggest charities covered up the use of prostitutes by senior aid workers in earthquake-torn Haiti.

A Times investigation has found that Oxfam, which receives £300 million a year in British government funds and public donations, allowed three men to resign and sacked four for gross misconduct after an inquiry into sexual exploitation, the downloading of pornography, bullying and intimidation.

A confidential report by the charity said that there had been "a culture of impunity" among some staff in Haiti who covered up the child sex abuse.



Human eggs grown in lab offer hope to infertile

Tom Whipple Science Editor
Helen Pottick

Human eggs have been grown to maturity outside the body for the first time in a breakthrough for fertility science.

Scientists at the University of Edinburgh announced that they had removed egg cells from women's ovarian tissue and developed them in a laboratory to the point where they were ready to be fertilised. The advance may one day be used as an alternative to IVF to help older women to conceive. It could also help to preserve the fertility of girls undergoing cancer treatment.

Evelyn Telfer, the senior scientist involved, said that the work was the culmination of 30 years of research to better understand the early stages of reproduction. She said that the development of eggs in a laboratory could help to preserve fertility in girls undergoing cancer treatment.

THE TIMES

MailOnline

'They've taken a political decision that the British Empire was wicked': Fury as National Trust vows to press on with 'woke' review into colonial past after being cleared of breaking charity law

I've read the National Trust report and it's a one-sided take on history, full of woke prejudices

Properties are named and shamed for their link to slavery

The Telegraph

Simon Heffer

The National Trust has been



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Asia | China | India

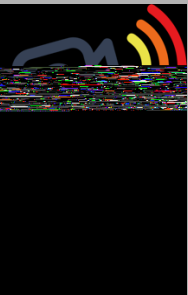
NZ charity unknowingly distributes meth-laced sweets



The Times broke the story on its front page

- Among the male staff accused of sexual misconduct is Oxfam's then-director of operations in Haiti, Roland Van Hauwermeiren. He is alleged to have used prostitutes at a villa rented for him by the charity.
- In a statement, **Oxfam denies claims of a cover-up.** It says the behaviour of

Handling **your** crisis ...



The FALKIRK HERALD

Groups forced to find new venues as Falkirk area community centre boards up windows and shuts doors

By James Trimble



 Comment

Published 30th Sep 2024, 12:44 GMT | Updated 30th Sep 2024, 17:26 GMT



That plan ...

- Who is your crisis management team?
- What are your roles and responsibilities?
- Is this a crisis? Establish the facts!
- How will you come together?
- How will you communicate?
- Who will do the research?
- Who will monitor media and social media?
- Who is responsible for formulating the messages?
- Who has sign off authority?
- Who will identify the audiences and spokespeople?
- Who will lead on the response(s)?
- Who will handle media interviews?
- Which stakeholders will you inform, who takes lead, how a



Facing a crisis - steps you need to take

- Draft a Q+A
- Agree a (reactive) holding statement
- Have an up to date one-pager on the charity + pics
- Monitor media/ social media
- Website/ FB?
- Keep all staff informed - and ensure they understand comms/ media protocols
- Stakeholders
- Get media training for spokesperson in how to deal with crisis interviews
- + ideally service users trained to speak to media too

Media handling plan: Safeguarding

Last updated: XXX

Status: Confidential / FINAL

This document contains our holding statement and Q&A for questions related to safeguarding at the charity. If you receive a media request about these issues, please raise it with XX and / or YY immediately. The below are designed as a guide – any final statement will need to be signed off by XX, YY and ZZ.

Key contacts:

- Press handler/office: tel/ email
- Out of hours: tel
- CEO: tel

Holding statement:

Statement: “We’re committed to making the CHARITY a safe and rewarding place for our staff, volunteers and customers. To ensure this is the case, we have robust safeguarding and whistleblowing policies, which aim to allow all adults and children who come into contact with the CHARITY to live free from abuse. We run mandatory safeguarding training for all staff and continually monitor and review our procedures to ensure we’re meeting the highest standards of safeguarding.

“In the instance of an allegation being made, we refer cases to the Police or Local Authority where required and support their investigations. We also carry out our own thorough investigations to ensure any issues can be immediately addressed.

“Safeguarding covers a wide range of issues, and of the small number of cases we look at, many are related to someone raising a concern about the personal wellbeing of a colleague or volunteer due to signs of things like self-harm or neglect, not associated with the CHARITY.

“The health, safety and happiness of our staff and volunteers are of paramount importance to us. Without their commitment, we wouldn’t be able to do our vital work of X.”

Q&A

Safeguarding and reporting

What is safeguarding?

- Safeguarding is a term used to denote measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow people — especially children, young people and adults — to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

What safeguarding measures does the CHARITY use?

- We are committed to making the CHARITY a safe and rewarding place to work and volunteer. To ensure this is the case, we have robust safeguarding and whistle-blowing policies in place and are confident in our procedures.
- You can find out more about our safeguarding policy at: <https://www.CHARITY.org.uk/>

Do you have a safeguarding team at the CHARITY? How many people work on safeguarding?

- We have a dedicated Safeguarding Lead, responsible for our safeguarding strategy across the CHARITY.
- In addition, we give extensive safeguarding training to senior colleagues across the organisation, who then [lead](#) the implementation of our safeguarding policy across the charity.
- All staff members complete mandatory online safeguarding training, and we regularly check that this is happening. In our last review, 99% of our employees had completed this training.

When did you develop your safeguarding policy?

- We have had a safeguarding policy for many years (at least since 2010) and continually review it to ensure we’re meeting the highest possible standards. This process is led by our dedicated Safeguarding Lead. The current policy was last updated in 2017 along with guidelines for handling fundraising events.

How frequently do you review it?

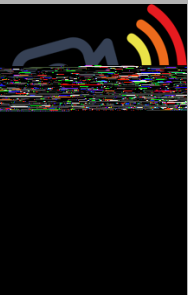
- We regularly review our safeguarding policy to ensure we’re maintaining the highest possible standards of safeguarding. This includes keeping up to date with the latest guidance from the Government, Charity Commission and Charity Retail Association. We last updated the policy in 2017 and will act quickly to update it if guidelines change.

Additional things to think about in Falkirk

- Will you join together with other affected charities/ community centres?
- Share media response / load
- Independent / third party advocates who can fight your corner?
- Keep them fully briefed of developments.
- Thanks and goodbye events - media invited

Handling the **media** in a crisis...

(What to say and how)



Crisis? Media want to know...

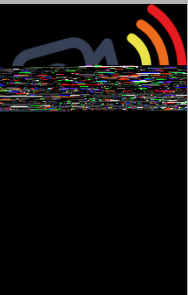
- What happened?
- Why did it happen?
- What are you doing about it?

Answering these questions quickly and satisfactorily will help avoid rumours and misinformation circling



Release as much info as quickly as you can

- Your crisis plan should cover the procedure for quickly gathering accurate information about the issue at hand
- Share accurate up to date information about the work that you do - your history, impact, awards etc
- Address or correct any misinformation quickly
- Dedicated person to handle emails/ calls
- Decide where and how you will interact with media
- Out of hours



No comment?

- You have to publically address the issue
- **Nothing** says: 'write whatever you want about us!' like no comment
- There's always a way to say very little - if you need to - without saying 'no comment'
- It is only the manner or amount of info that is up for discussion



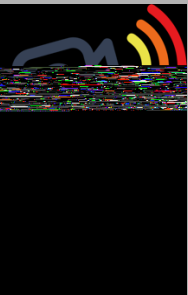
Don't forget social media

- Ensure there are people available to deal with social media.
- Fertile ground for speculation, guesswork and allegations to breed and spread.
- More and more often, news or comment appearing on X, TikTok, Facebook etc drives the mainstream media.
- Keeping abreast of the social media is vital in handling a crisis.



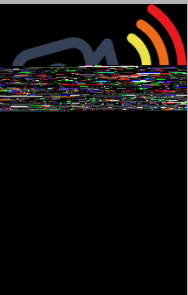
How to frame your response

- Empathy
- Context
- Action
- Message of hope



Keep it simple

- Be honest and open
- 3 key messages
- Repeat




In summary...

- 4 Ps
- Once news is out - act fast and communicate often
- Keep it simple, be honest
- Stick to your roles and stick to the script

A crisis will end eventually



Template



CharityComms

Crisis communications plan template

15 July 2018

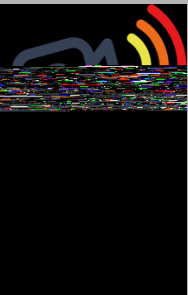
[Download Template](#)

The image shows a promotional banner for a crisis communications plan template. It features the CharityComms logo at the top, followed by the title 'Crisis communications plan template' and the date '15 July 2018'. A green button with the text 'Download Template' is positioned below the date. The background of the banner is dark green with a faint illustration of a person running through a doorway.

<https://www.charitycomms.org.uk/article-type/templates>



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Thank you

Lisa Mangan, media trainer and message coach

[LinkedIn](#)

