Guide to conducting media interviews
Part 1. Background

1. What is the media?

The term covers the main means of mass communication: print, broadcasting (radio and television) and the internet.

Print

- National newspapers (broadsheet and tabloid – also published online)
- Regional and local newspapers (including free papers and magazines)
- Monthly and weekly consumer magazines aimed at specific audiences (e.g. men, women, health, sports etc.)
- Trade publications (e.g. magazines and newsletters for doctors, nurses, pharmacists etc.)

Broadcast

- Radio (national, regional, local)
- Television (international e.g. BBC World Service, CNN etc. national, regional, local)

Internet

- Online news (newspapers, radio, TV) and Online magazines
- Blogs
- YouTube
- Stories spread by social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.)

Newswires

There are also Newswires, e.g. Reuters, providing rolling news feeds for journalists.
Which is the right media for your story?

The media trades in stories: words, pictures and sound. Each publication, programme or online platform will have a target audience.

- Monitor the various media to get to know their character, interests and the type of material they publish / broadcast
  - Who are their readers, listeners, watchers, followers?
  - What type of stories do they publish / broadcast?
  - Which journalists write on which topics?
  - Do they need images?

- Create a media list, including the names of specific journalists / broadcast programmes / social media platforms with an interest in health and social matters that match the concerns of your organisation

Timing

News will be current and have short deadlines. Feature articles / programmes will have much longer lead times. Know:

- What are the lead times and deadlines for information to be received before the publication / broadcast is ‘put to bed’, i.e. finalised before publication or broadcast. For example, weekly publications can be put to bed from one week to a month and monthlies from three to six months ahead of publication or broadcast
- What are your journalists key timings e.g.:
  - When do they decide what they are going to write about / broadcast?
  - When do they submit their stories?

What do journalists want?

- A unique angle – relevant to their audience
- Something new
- Something exclusive
- Something seasonal/unusual
  - Tie-in to something topical
  - Some sort of visual image/usable graphic
  - Good timing
  - To get their by-line published
- Comments from experts

What to remember about journalists and broadcasters

- They are very busy: deadlines are real and they get nervous, too
- They want a good story and are looking for facts
- They are under pressure
- The hate no call backs, no comment and stalling
- They are not out to get you, but they may ask unexpected questions