Marketing Communications Toolkit
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Marketing Communications Toolkit

1.0 Introduction
This toolkit is designed to help support Service Delivery Organisations (SDOs) in developing successful local marketing communication strategies.

The toolkit should be used in conjunction with the Marketing Strategy Workbook (section 7 – integrated marketing communications) and will form an important part of the Strategic Marketing plan for your SDO.

In today’s challenging economic and political climates, communicating with your stakeholders is becoming increasingly important. With limited financial and physical resources, this process becomes even more difficult. It is therefore vital that SDOs consider not only the content of the messages they want to send out to their audiences but the form of communication and the media that they wish to utilise.

This toolkit will help you form Marketing communication objectives and strategies and will provide you with practical knowledge to develop and improve the relationships with your identified stakeholder groups.

By having an effective Marketing Communication process you will be able to raise awareness of your SDO within the local area whilst maximising the return on your investment.

2.0 What are marketing communications?
Marketing communications can be defined, in simple terms as

"a process where an organisation communicates with its audiences. An organisation must decide what it wants to say, how it is going to say it and choose an appropriate method of transmitting its message."

Marketing Communications is an ongoing process and should form an integral part of your SDOs activities, so it is essential that you plan carefully to make them as effective as possible. We will be covering planning in more depth in section 5.2 of this toolkit.
The communication element of the mix has the ability to **Differentiate, Reinforce, Inform and Persuade (DRIP)** your existing and potential customers, as well as other important stakeholder groups.

It is therefore vital that marketing communication is given the time, energy and resources it deserves, as it is such a key tool in developing the future success of your SDO and how it is perceived by not only your stakeholders, but the general public too.

**2.1 Components of marketing communications.**

There are five main categories that make up the marketing communications mix.
These five components can then be broken down into more detail resulting in the diagram below. It is this more detailed analysis of the marketing communications toolkit that we shall concentrate our efforts on.

**Tools of marketing communication**

All of the tools of marketing communication can be used in isolation, but the reality is that you will be more successful with a strategy employing a combination of the above methods to achieve maximum impact.

A note on word of mouth: Satisfied customers buy more and recommend more. Word of mouth will be your most successful marketing tool, but its based on your customer experience. Customers enjoy a growing level of choice and increasingly have less money to spend. Your customer’s radars will therefore be on alert for any reason to spend their money elsewhere. Customer experience matters. Like any other organisation, you can clearly define your brand promise, but others will own its execution, care staff, the receptionist, invoicing clerks etc. Your brand promise can become lost or suffocated if all of your staff are not engaged in delivering it. Get your customer experience right and all of your marketing communications can be built around it.

Each tool can be judged by the 4C's criteria.

**Cost** – is the overall cost of the campaign too expensive? How much will it cost to reach a given number of individuals? For example an advertisement in a local newspaper may cost £500 and reach 10,000 readers costing 5p per reader, however you may only generate 5 leads,
meaning the cost per lead is £100. This may be much more expensive than other forms of communication.

**Clout** – Can the campaign reach a large number of people? Can you personalise the message?

**Credibility** – as we have seen, advertising can generate a large amount of coverage for a reasonably low cost, however as an advert has been paid for by the advertiser, it can sometimes lead to a lack of credibility in the eyes of the reader. It is the fact that the company is promoting its own viewpoint (“blowing its own trumpet”) rather than these views being expressed by a third (neutral) party that sometimes leads a reader to disbelieve the message. It is possible to get a balanced or unbiased perspective from a journalist’s article or a voice of authority on the subject which therefore lends much more credibility to your message. PR is a great way of attaining credibility and we shall be covering this in much more depth later in this toolkit.

**Control** – do you have the ability to target a select audience? Can you alter the message as the campaign progresses?

It may be worthwhile setting up a table when you come to choose what methods of communication you are going to employ.

This is an example only - you should do your own.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sponsorship</th>
<th>Advertising</th>
<th>PR</th>
<th>Direct mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>free</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clout</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.0 **Marketing communication objectives**

Like any business or marketing plan, you require objectives to know “where you are going” or “what you want to achieve”.

Marketing communications is no different. You will need to identify what the aims of your communications are. Here are some examples.

- To increase general awareness levels of your SDO.
- To increase awareness of the services your SDO offers.
- To attract new customers to your SDO.
- To attract usage of your service from existing customers.
- To market new services to existing customers.
- To promote the impact your SDO achieves (see appendix 1, impact reporting)
- To increase the level of grants, gifts or donations from collaborators or donors.
- To increase your level of “share of voice” (SOV). Simply put this reflects the levels of recognition that your organisation has in comparison to your competition. That is, the level of awareness that people have of your business.

Here are some handy tips for raising awareness levels (and enhancing SOV) of your SDO.

1. Sharing news stories with The Association – can get you wider coverage.
2. Creating articles for New Directions.
3. Locating carers prepared to tell their stories for national and local initiatives such as Carers week and other news requests- keeping a stock of case studies and quotes to use as and when required.
4. Utilise Gordon Conachie’s Carer blog on your SDO website – a great source of information which you can contribute to.
5. Take an active part in national surveys.
6. Create local e-mail groups for policy information available through the monthly newsletter from the policy and parliamentary team. Include MPs, Councillors, Carers leads and local partners.
7. Creating a link to the carers hub from your website.
8. Contributing stories and information to partner organisations, funders and networks.
10. Creating links to and from your website to like minded organisations, partner organisations and those you collaborate with.
11. Use of Twitter to develop word of mouth
12. Registration on donation sites such as Virgin money give, Blue Dot, Easy fundraising etc
13. Development and use of impact reporting to funders and within your annual review / report and accounts

Remember that all objectives should adhere to the SMART Criteria. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound.

4.0 Stakeholder groups
A stakeholder can be defined as a person, group, organisation, or system that affects or can be affected by an organisation's actions. Put simply stakeholders are “groups without whose support the organisation would find it difficult to exist”.

In terms of your SDO here are some examples of stakeholders.

**Primary Stakeholders** – (usually internal to the organisation) include – employees, customers (carer or person cared for) suppliers, core funders, trustees, volunteers, The Association, other Crossroads schemes etc...

**Secondary Stakeholders** – (usually external to the organisation) include – local communities, general public, media, MPs, networks partner organisations, other carer organisations etc.

Stakeholders effectively own your reputation as they influence as well as being influenced, they therefore form an important part of your SDO’s target audiences.

4.1 Target Audiences
Whilst considering your marketing communication objectives, you must of course decide who your target audiences are going to be. A key element of planning a communication strategy is to identify and understand who your audiences are. Consider the following.

- Who are you trying to reach?
- Do you have a primary audience (one that is more important than the others)? For example your SDO may work more closely with young carers rather than older carers.
Or you may be in an area where personalisation has really taken off and so reaching carers directly will be the key to your success.

- Think about all of your stakeholder groups – is the message consistent across all of these audiences or will it be different for each group?
- Ensure you use the correct language, so that the audience understands your message. This may differ for each stakeholder group. For example – internal employees will understand technical jargon, but customers or potential customers may not.
- Ensure your messages fall within your SDO / Crossroads brand values. This will add relevance and consistency to your communications.

We have listed overleaf some potential target audiences that could be relevant for your SDO.
Potential audiences for SDOs.

It is highly likely that your SDO has some or all of the above stakeholders which means they are likely to be your target audiences. Each audience will need to be considered carefully so that...
you can decide on the methods of communication you are going to use whilst ensuring that they have the maximum possible impact.

5.0 Marketing communications – strategy

5.1 Benefits
A good marketing communications strategy does not need to be complicated. A simple, planned approach can deliver excellent results in terms of getting your SDOs message heard and your name recognised. Here are some of the benefits of planning what you say, how you say it and when you say it.

- Aids reputation enhancement.
- Helps raise awareness of what you do.
- Increases familiarity of your services within your target audiences.
- Helps you to reach new sections of the community.
- Can increase share of voice.
- Improves efficiency of resources.
- Improves profitability.
- Can help you to prepare better for potential instances of negative press coverage.

5.2 Planning
A marketing communications plan forms part of the overall business marketing plan. The two are not mutually exclusive, they are integrated.

Your SDO marketing plan will have a section within it covering the communication element of the mix. This details the methods of how you intend to promote your business to your different stakeholder groups. It will include your communications objectives, the strategies you intend to use to achieve those objectives and perhaps some tactical detail too.

Detailed below is a 10 step checklist that will help you develop a marketing communications plan.

Communication planning checklist:
1. Think about promoting the business as a whole not just a specific service that you offer. The image of your SDO is dependent upon the way you promote all the elements of the marketing mix, not just the product category.
2. Develop a profile of your target audience for the message you will communicate. Think about all of your stakeholders (see the potential audiences for SDOs graphic above) not just your primary audience.
3. Decide on the message you are going to use. What is the objective of the message (do you remember DRIP from earlier in the document?) are you Differentiating, Reminding, Informing or Persuading?
4. Think about how you want your audiences to view your organisation – make sure your message will help you give them the image of your SDO that you want them to have.
5. Decide on a budget – this may have an influence on the type of media you employ to project the message and on its effectiveness.
6. How should the message be delivered? Which element(s) of the communication mix are we going to employ?
7. Decide what action you want your audience to take as a result of receiving your communication. Do you need a “call to action”?

9. Undertake your plan – once you have prepared the plan, don’t defer it and forget all about it. We tend to do things if we go through a formal planning process, so make sure you do!

10. Measure what the actual achievements were in comparison to what you expected to achieve. If they are not as good as expected, ensure you learn what went wrong so your next communication is more successful.

A good way of initiating the planning process is to devise a plan for the year. An example could be as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Action required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>New website launch</td>
<td>Online activity, engage with users, develop blog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>New respite service</td>
<td>e-mail to stakeholders, press release for external coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Latest annual report</td>
<td>Launch to funders / commissioners, press release on positive highlights of report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Open day for carers week</td>
<td>Press release, ask MP to attend, e-mail existing carers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>New carers initiative launch</td>
<td>Press releases re new funding, growing organisation, positive news to be highlighted. Launch event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Start fundraising initiative</td>
<td>Develop facebook page, tweet, build online activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Develop links to local BME group</td>
<td>Articles for their newsletters, focus groups etc..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Considerations for a marketing communications strategy

The following 10 items for consideration will help you to devise an effective marketing communications strategy.

1. **The target audience** – ensure you know who you want to reach and why. Is there a common factor linking a specific audience together? The care beneficiary / carer may be the prime audience but there may be other audiences involved such as social workers or GPs.

2. **The offer** – what are you wanting to promote? What are you “selling”? Promote the benefits of your service, not necessarily the features (though they can be influential) and what it can do for your target audience.

3. **The strapline – A slogan** - a simple sentence that explains what you do. A fine example is “Crossroads Care are the people carers turn to”. For more Crossroads Care examples refer to your brand guidelines.

4. **A clear message** – the clearer you are about “who you are” and “what you do” the better. This ensures your messages will be simple and easier for your audiences to understand. Ensure you have a consistent approach to the message contents and the media you use to communicate it.

5. **SDO vision and mission** – is it easy to understand? Do you understand it? More importantly does your audience understand it and can your staff, volunteers and trustees back it up?

6. **SDO logo** – do you consistently use the Crossroads Care logo and branding (in line with the Crossroads Care brand guidelines)? Your logo should be a representation of what your organisation does and something that is easily associated and recognisable to your
organisation. Logos are an important part of branding so ensure it reflects your brand values.

7. Your brand – is your brand message or logo used on your marketing materials? Ensure a consistent approach to communications through your brand.

8. Marketing materials – again a consistent approach helps. Develop a set of materials that integrate with other promotional tools to create a family of materials with a consistent look and feel. Make sure your newsletters, html e-mails, and direct mail all have the same look and are branded consistently.

Think about the range of communications, can you reduce them? For example- a bespoke leaflet for each individual audience may be expensive and needless. Can one leaflet cover all your audiences? Can you work with the branding guidelines and design a range of templates that have a consistent look and feel to them so all you have to do is update the text? Once again a consistent approach helps with your brand integration and recognition in the eyes of your audiences.

9. Your services – by offering a reliable, professional and efficient service you will build your reputation and of course enhance your brand. Be realistic in your communications about what you can deliver, don’t over promise. It is your staff that deliver the service, so ensure that they understand your organisation’s values as this will reinforce any messages you send out through other marketing media. Think of your staff as a discrete stakeholder group and ensure that you communicate with them properly.

10. Practice what you preach – ensure you deliver what your messages say that you are capable of doing. Follow the previous nine considerations and make sure you put them into practice. If you do, you greatly increase the chances that you will produce an effective marketing communication strategy that will promote your SDO and its services in the best possible way.

5.4 Selecting the appropriate communication tools

We have explained what marketing communications are, we have talked about setting marketing communications objectives and we have looked at the potential audiences that you may want to target.

Once you have decided what you want the message to say, how you are going to say it and who you want to hear it, you then need to select an appropriate method of communicating your messages.

Before you can do this you will need to understand a little more about each form of communication.

A paid for form of promotion. There is no such thing as free advertising. There are three reasons for using advertising.

- To provide an audience with information. (Creating awareness)
- To persuade the audience to buy from you. (Promote benefits of your service)
- To reinforce your existence by repeating your key messages.

It is thought that a reader needs to see the advertisement at least 7 times before they recognise and understand it. This could therefore cost quite a lot of money before you see any real return on investment.

Advertising is difficult to evaluate unless you include a response mechanism – such as, a voucher for money off or driving people to your website.
PR is generally free publicity, which can be good or bad. (If you employ a PR agency then they will obviously charge a fee for their services).

PR involves a sustained attempt by the organisation to build a reputable image through the media. (Newspapers, trade journals, magazines, TV, Radio, internet). To achieve this you need to be confident about your abilities to build relationships with the media and have confidence in the messages you are putting out.

PR is a two sided coin, the good side you have an element of control over, bad PR is more difficult to control. You may need expert advice from The Associations PR manager and more often than not it is about damage limitation, making the best out of a no win situation.

PR features later in this workbook.

Direct marketing is a form of communication that addresses the recipient directly. It can take the following forms.
- Direct mail – letters specifically addressed to the recipient.
- E-mail.
- Telemarketing (telesales call).
- Leaflet drops.
- Text messaging.
- Newsletters.

Direct marketing is a good way of contacting existing customers as you should already have their contact details.

To use direct marketing for new customers you would need to purchase a mailing list from one of many organisations available. This is a list of potential customer names and contact details. Success rates are much lower than using direct marketing to existing customers.

Due to data protection limitations, it is unlikely that you will be able to obtain lists of carers or referrers. However, over a period of time, you can build your own, but you should gain consents and give people the option to opt out of communications.

A specific short-term promotion that offers the customer something over and above what they would normally receive. Sales promotion tends to be used with tangible products and is often a way of clearing unwanted or excess stock. An example would be BOGOFF (buy one get one free). Sales promotions are a good way of attracting new customers but do not really engender a sense of loyalty from the recipient.

It is unlikely that SDOs would be able to use this technique to attract or retain customers.
Word of mouth or viral communication as it is sometimes known. This is where information is passed on person to person.

If you provide excellent service and your SDO field staff are true advocates of your values then this can be a powerful tool as “the word will spread” about the good things your SDO is doing.

However word of mouth is a double edged sword. Should your service levels drop or not be up to standard then the likelihood of one person telling another about your poor service increases greatly.

A conservative estimate is that a person who receives poor service will tell between 8 and 10 people. This can be exacerbated by technology such as social media, as people are likely to use Twitter or Facebook which opens up a whole new and larger audience.

SDOs may wish to consider how they can build word of mouth through incentives for staff and customers, for example offering staff a bonus for introducing a friend who becomes a new member of staff and successfully completes their training / induction / probation.

Trade fairs or exhibitions and personal selling have very similar attributes. Trade fairs are held so organisations offering similar or related services can meet huge numbers of potential customers in one place. They are useful for generating quality leads and for finding out what the competition are doing or where new partnerships may be formed. If you attend an exhibition such as activities linked to Carers Week / Carers Rights Day, ensure that staff who represent you are professional, understand your business and are aware of the objectives you have set for the event. It is also useful if they display good people skills and are dressed appropriately.

Personal selling is the most effective form of promotion. It allows you to tailor your approach to meet the needs of an individual customer. Personal selling requires your staff to have good listening skills, promote your services and organisation and to be able to have a constructive dialogue with the customer / potential customer. SDOs will need staff in place who can turn a referral into a contract with individual customers. In the past this has been managed by a senior carer / care co-ordinator, but there has been no competition for the service. With personalisation, the skills required to build care packages within budgets and secure customers are different. It is essentially about trying to build long term relationships with customers by understanding their needs and by gaining their feedback on a regular basis. This is the primary way of improving the products and services you can provide.
Benefits of sponsorship are
- gives the client exposure to specific audiences at an event, which enables them to promote simple awareness based brand messages
- to suggest to the audience that there is an association between the sponsor and the sponsee, which by implication maybe of value or interest
- allows members of the target audience the chance to form a positive view of a sponsoring organisation without interference from other persuasive forces.

Drawbacks of sponsorship may include associating yourself with the wrong organisation or cause, which could be damaging to your organisation.

SDOs are most likely to secure sponsorship to help resource a fundraising activity such as a dinner dance or a conference.

Not so long ago digital media consisted of just websites however the explosion of social media has opened up a huge array of communication channels. It is no longer acceptable to have only a website. Here are some forms of digital channels.
- Website.
- Video – YouTube.
- Images – FlickR, Picasa.
- Social media - Twitter, Facebook, Linkedin, Blogs.
- SMS – texting.
- Podcasts.

These are just a few examples.

The power and speed of digital communication is breathtaking. It is a highly beneficial form of communication where information is broadcast in a second. It is relatively inexpensive and quick to go from nothing to having a website that is fully integrated with social media. Once you have set the basics up it is relatively easy to keep things up to date.

It is recommended that you appoint somebody in your organisation who has responsibility for looking after your website and for updating digital media in general.

We have explained in more detail what social media is about in the section below.

5.5 Social media
Social media is the term used to describe social interaction through the internet. This includes audio, video, images, text, content sharing and social networking and podcasts.
Social media is generally free to use, it is relatively simple to set up, however it takes time and effort to keep producing output, so again planning is advisable. It should also be integrated with any other marketing communications you are doing.

**Considerations**
Social media is a great way of communicating with your stakeholder groups in an informal or semi formal manner. It is important to remember that you are communicating on behalf of your organisation so please be very careful about what kind of information you divulge. You should have guidelines that say what you can and can’t communicate.

Please remember to stay within legal parameters and be aware of copyright and data protection laws.

A brief explanation of the main forms of social media is detailed below and should be considered as part of an integrated approach to your marketing communications strategy.

**Social media**

**Social networks**

Facebook, Linked In, Bebo, Myspace and Google+ are examples of social networks (there are many more).

Social networks enable you to set up an online group that other people can be members of, such as Facebook. Facebook started out as a way for students to communicate with each other but has exploded to become the largest social network in the world with over 300 million users. It contains ‘wall’ space for posting messages, lets you upload photos and gives you the opportunity to create pages advertising events and invite attendees. You can also join other groups and connect with people who may have important updates about networking events, funding and services. You can add contact information and details of where your group meets and add information to encourage members to join or volunteer.

You can also use Facebook as a search engine in terms of targeting potential customers. There is a rich source of information available, however to attain some of it there will be a fee.

Bebo, Myspace and Google + are similar to Facebook, however LinkedIn is slightly different.

LinkedIn is aimed at professionals. Users register and create profiles similar to Facebook, however postings on LinkedIn are all work related. There is no social activity posted. There are groups to join and the opportunity to upload presentations and videos. This is a great way to communicate with fellow professionals and keep up to date with current trends, and of course a great source for broadcasting your marketing communications to potential referrers.

**Blogs**
A blog is a log or an online journal that allows you at write about things that concern your group or organisation. A blog can act like a normal website, because you can add stories, upload photos, allow people to leave comments, embed videos from YouTube, add Twitter posts and
Flickr photos and post links to other websites. People can subscribe to your blog for updates and you can subscribe to other blogs. Many community groups or smaller charities use a blog to have an online presence, due to its ease of use and low cost.

SDOs may want to consider linking Gordon’s blog to their website to ensure people who access their website have up to date information about campaigns and policies for carers.

**Twitter**

Twitter is a “microblogging” service. You can send short messages totalling no more than 140 characters. These messages are called “tweets”. You can post links to other blog pages, websites and pictures within a tweet and it is remarkably easy to use. It is ideal for sending quick messages about events, fairs, and fund raisers. Once you start to tweet you begin to build up “followers” who read your tweets and you can quickly build numbers.

Your followers can send on your tweet to other users this is called “re-tweeting”.

**Photo sharing**

Photo hosting websites such as Flickr, Picasa and ImageShack allow you to upload an image so that people can view it (though you have no control over the advertising which might appear on the same page as your photos). Photo sharing websites tend to provide a dedicated space for you to display your photos in different ways, such as a slideshow. However, make sure you read the terms of use on photo sharing websites, because some websites might consider your photo to be their property if you upload it. Websites such as Flickr allow you to say whether other people can use your images or not.

An added benefit of photosharing is that you can build links to your website through posting images it helps with search engine optimization (SEO).

They are easy to use and are free of charge. Please note that you should always gain consents from staff and customers when taking photographs and that these consents should cover all possible uses of their images.

**Video Sharing**

The world’s most popular video platform is YouTube. It is an ideal medium to post any videos you have of events or fairs that you have been running. These can link into your website too as well as Facebook. You can add sub titles to your videos on YouTube too. Please note that you should always gain consents from staff and customers when filming and that these consents should cover all possible uses of their images.
Podcasts
A podcast is an audio recording that you can make available for others to download and listen to. They can be heard via a computer, an ipod or a phone. Do you have any useful hints and tips for carers? Then why not record them as a podcast, this would be a great way of communicating if you had partially sighted carers or recipients of care.

RSS feed
RSS Feed (really simple syndication) – is news that can be automatically fed onto your website by you or from partners or other organisations that your users might be interested in. You can subscribe to RSS feeds through an organisation’s website. Google sites also allow people to subscribe to your news, which is fed onto a browser page like iGoogle or Google Reader.
### 5.6 Matching media to audiences.

You have learned to consider the factors affecting marketing communications, you have seen a checklist to help you put a communications plan together, you are aware of your audiences and the tools of marketing communications.

Now we shall look at putting what we have learned so far into practice by formulating a sample strategy of selecting the best channels to communicate to the relevant audiences. The table below is an example, you should create your own.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Advertising</th>
<th>P.R.</th>
<th>Direct marketing (inc e-mail)</th>
<th>Personal selling</th>
<th>Sales promotion</th>
<th>Web</th>
<th>Social media</th>
<th>Networking</th>
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<tr>
<td>Carers / recipient</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social / Health workers</td>
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<td>Donors existing</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Politicians (mp/council)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media (press)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff / volunteers</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner organisation</td>
<td></td>
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<td>General public</td>
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This table is just a sample of what you can do. It is not meant for you to replicate but to give you an idea of how to match the correct communications media to the relevant audience. You need to complete your own version for your SDO and ensure it becomes part of your communications plan.
5.7 How to measure the success of your communications campaigns.
Each form of communication should be able to be measured, so you can monitor the success of your campaigns. Sometimes seeing what works best can be trial and error, no matter how well you research and plan, things can and do go wrong. You will find that what works for one SDO may not necessarily work for another. Each SDO will have its own audiences and they will all react in different ways.

By continually monitoring your communication activities you will be able to switch resources from the poorer performing media to the more successful ones.

Here are some ways of measuring success rates of communication campaigns. We would also advise that you have a set question on referral forms so you know where your enquiries have come from. This will allow you to thank referrers and ensure a continuous flow of business and allocate more resources to routes which generate the most leads.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Difficult to quantify unless you include some kind of response mechanic. Perhaps include a bespoke web url just for adverts (for example, visit <a href="http://www.SDO1.com">www.SDO1.com</a> for more information) or perhaps ask them to text a word such as “care” to a shortcode number. This way you can tell how many people are interested and you will also have their mobile numbers too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>If you get a newspaper story printed the paper should be able to tell you their circulation. The industry standard measurement for PR is Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE) which tells you how much you would have paid for the coverage. AVE has its drawbacks and the PR industry is now adopting more realistic and suitable methods of measurement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Mail</td>
<td>E-mail – look at the settings and ask for a read response. Flyers and letters should include a feedback mechanic. An added value offer, a prize draw if they text or e-mail back. Ensure that you have e-mail address, phone number, web address and text details printed on your communication. Direct mail to the general public has a very poor response rate. You will be lucky to get 1% responding, so do your homework and try to make it as targeted as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal selling / sales teams</td>
<td>This is likely to yield the best results. It is also the most expensive form of communication as employing sales teams is not cheap, though their long term benefits to the organisation will far outweigh their annual costs. You may already have sales statistics to measure your staff. However it is worth doing customer / stakeholder surveys to help measure intangibles such as helpfulness, quality of service etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales promotion</td>
<td>Can be expensive – best used to gain new customers. Work out what you can afford to give as the added value offer. The easiest measurement is the number of people who sign up or make enquiries. Ensure you set up a response mechanic such a bespoke e-mail address or url.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Website              | To measure the success of your website you should register with Google analytics. This is a fantastic free service (you need a Google account – which is free) and is an amazingly powerful tool. You can measure visitors to your website, how long they stay on the site, what pages they
read, how they found your website and many, many more answers to most of your questions.

You can also monitor your Google rankings to see what kind of position your site has in the search engines terms. For example if your SDO is based in Leeds and if a potential customer types in a search term “carers in Leeds” then you would look through the Google pages to see where you appear. You would hope to be on the first page as the further down the rankings you are the less likely you are to be picked. There are ways of trying to ensure you have a high ranking on the search engines, some organic and some paid for, but good SEO (search engine optimisation techniques) may help with your rankings. You may wish to consider the use of key sites and or pay per click advertising.

| Social media | If you have links to your website with your Facebook and Twitter accounts, you will be able to see via the Google analytics tool the source from where the visitors came to your site. LinkedIn has a section where you can see who has viewed your profile, but this is a paid for service. In terms of twitter, the greater number of followers you have, the greater audience you are communicating with. With Facebook and Twitter, if you post a read more link into your postings you can measure success by aiming them to your website. |

### 6.0 The message.
We have looked at the strategic and planning aspects of marketing communication. We have also looked at the varying tools that you can employ to broadcast your message, and how to measure the success of these tools.

What we now need to concentrate on is the message itself and how to write a message and prepare a statement for release to the press.

#### 6.1 Message theory
Creating a message may sound straightforward and something that is easy to do, that requires little thought. Like many things, it is not quite as simple as we are led to believe. It is important that what you say in your messages can be understood by the potential recipient, so the style, content and language used are all vital to ensure that your message is clearly understood.
The above graphic demonstrates the message process. Source is the sender of the message (your SDO). Coded message is the process of converting meaning into a format that the receiver can understand (such as, a press release). The medium of transmission is the tool used to carry the message (newspaper). The receiver is the recipient of the message (carer) and the decoded message is the interpretation of the message by the receiver (what they take it to mean).

The receiver may have a totally different interpretation of the message than the source. This can be due to noise (for example, jargon or use of acronyms). Noise can be physical like interference on a phone line in a telephone conversation. It can be background noise that results in the conversation being misheard and therefore resulting in an erroneous interpretation of the message. It can also be an element in the message that the receiver cannot understand. Feedback is the response from the receiver to the source (sender). Do they make an enquiry to use your service for example?

It is therefore vital that the source of the message should use simple, understandable language that the receiver can interpret in the way the sender intends. Use the kind of language and method of transmission that your audience can understand.

For example, if you have BME customers, who have difficulty understanding English, then use language and an appropriate method of communication they can understand.

**AIDA**

AIDA is an acronym for detailing the purposes of a message. AIDA can be used orally or in written messages, and was originally designed as a method to help salesmen win new customers. AIDA stands for:

1. **Attention**
2. **Interest**
3. **Desire**
4. **Action**
Attention (awareness) - attain your audience’s attention, without this they are going to discard and ignore your message. All of your hard work will lend up in the bin, without somebody even reading it. You can get their attention in many ways. By using language that catches the eye of the reader, something that pulls the reader in to the message, not scares them away. What’s your hook?

Interest – once you have gained attention the next stage is to keep their interest. Mention the things that are likely to be interested in. Talk to them about things that cause their problems, demonstrate how you may be able to help them.

Desire – once they have demonstrated an interest you need to create the desire for them to use your services. Desiring something is a motivation that leads to action. A key characteristic would be show them how your service can solve their problem. Focus on benefits.

Action - This is the outcome you want as a result of your message. For example, you may want the prospective customer to make an enquiry / refer someone to you / make a donation.

7.0 Reputation Management and Public Relations (PR).
Reputation management and PR go hand in hand. They can be vital to the success of your organisation and therefore deserve to given serious consideration with regards to your communication strategy.

7.1 Reputation management
It is a commonly acknowledged fact that people often form an opinion of an organisation before they have dealt with them, through what they see, hear and read in the media. With the power of the internet information is readily at hand about almost anything we want to know. This includes organisations and people. Therefore the ability to prejudge something or someone is now much more accessible.

Your organisation’s reputation could be likened to a shop window. It is how you are perceived by your stakeholders and if your reputation is good it can be your business’ greatest asset however if it is poor it can be its biggest liability. It is vital that you manage your reputation. Section 7.7 deals with managing bad press coverage.

How is a good reputation developed? – Reputation is almost intangible and difficult to quantify in financial values or a figure on your balance sheet. However it is reflected in your finances as higher income streams from a good reputation. It is guaranteed that a poor reputation will have a negative effect on your financial performance.

So how can you ensure your reputation is good? By ensuring that you do the best you can in all areas of your organisation. The quality of service you provide, the way you communicate with stakeholders, the management of the marketing mix all contribute to a good reputation.

The tree analogy overleaf perhaps explains things a little better.
The roots of the tree represent the business operations. They signify strength, as without the roots the tree will fall. They represent what you do in the day to day running of your business. By having good business processes and managing your stakeholder relationships you underline the strength of your SDO.

By having strong brand values that everybody understands and ensuring that the quality of your staff and service delivery levels are top class. These result in the tree above ground level blossoming. The results are shown as customer satisfaction, which relates to continued future growth which in turn leads to a strong financial performance.

As you can see reputation is formed by many contributing factors and it only requires just one of these factors to fail for your reputation to start to drop.

The value of Public Relations and the quality of your marketing communications are essential in telling your stakeholders about your business. So ensure that you do things as well as you can and get them right.

### 7.2 Public Relations (PR)

The Chartered Institute of Public Relations defines PR as

> "Public Relations is about reputation - the result of what you do, what you say and what others say about you.

Public Relations is the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics".

Public Relations = Reputation management – every communication you send out to an audience, be it internal or external, to funders or your local MP, carries with it your reputation. A poorly written article or press release will not get published by the magazine or newspaper you
send it to, and a poor communication, be it an advert or an e-mail will not reflect well on your organisation and has the potential to cause lasting damage.

Getting your message right will prevent this from happening and hopefully this workbook has provided you with the knowledge to feel comfortable not only in approaching the press (or a PR agency) but actually writing your own press releases.

7.3 Generating stories
It is fine to talk about writing articles, but before you begin to write anything you need to have something to write about. (PR covers all forms of media, TV, internet and radio, so exploit all possible avenues).

Working for a carers charity you will come into contact on a daily basis with human beings. Journalists love human interest stories and particularly good news stories.

There will be times when press coverage about your SDO may be negative and you may need professional advice from The Association’s PR manager to manage the situation properly. However the amount of positive stories will hugely outweigh the negatives and you should mine this rich seam of potential good news stories to your benefit.

Supporting carers or providing a care service is good news in itself. To try to get publicity for some of these stories you will need to choose the subjects carefully. Here are some tips.

- Have there been any issues at a national level associated with carers? If it has been bad publicity, a good news story can redress the balance.
- Have caring issues featured on a TV documentary? This could be a time that the press are looking for more stories – can you supply some good news?
- Has a carer storyline appeared in the soaps recently – another opportunity?
- Have you won any local awards, have you been nominated? Has a member of your staff? Shout about it!
- Do you have a recipient of care who you could use as an advocate for your SDO and is willing to help promote the cause?
- Remember if you are using a carer or a recipient of care in your story you must ask their permission at every stage of the process.
- Have you built a plan for Carers Week / Carers Rights Day?
- Ensure you keep in touch with The Association’s PR manager. He is here to help you maximise opportunities and offer advice. He can also help you to share resources and pass on information about best business practice and good news stories through case studies.

You can come up with many more ideas, if you give it some thought.

7.4 Tips for writing your own press release

Composing a press release
There are four main areas that you need to consider when you are composing a press release.

1. **Get the basics right – Is the story newsworthy?** If it isn’t you have no chance of getting it into a publication. Ask yourself - what you are trying to achieve, who you are trying to communicate with and what you want as the end result or key message? Structure your articles accordingly, for instance, “How SDO xxx serve carers across the
Northwest”. Write a brief introduction in laymans terms to explain the context to someone completely new to your field prior to moving onto the body of the article. (30-50 words).

Keep sentences and paragraphs short and gear your message towards an action. If you want your reader to do something for instance, you could begin it with ‘is becoming a fundraiser right for you?’ and end your article with ‘come along to our open day to find out’.

Add your website address and other point of contact details. Post the article on your blog/website and put a link to it in your article.

Check any facts, in particular dates, times, locations and contact details.

2. **Come up with a headline** – be succinct but try to make it memorable and obviously relevant to your message. Sometimes being witty can help draw attention to your article. It is your headline that is the attention grabber – remember AIDA?

3. **Main elements of the article** – make the article easy to read. Use quotes if possible. Make the article relevant to the reader. Use the locality, if you are targeting a Leeds newspaper say “Leeds Carer wins award”.

Make the article interesting and impactful. Use quotes or statistical information, for example “1/10 carers in Leeds get no governmental support”.

Use the Human interest story. Caring is all about Human interest so exploit that characteristic.

Understand your audience, try and relate to their motivations.

Don’t be scared to ask for help in your article, use questions like “Leeds care project looking for volunteer support, can you help?”

Have there been any other current care issues that have been raised in the press in the past few days? Can you exploit the current levels of interest? Perhaps a celebrity involvement?

4. **Language / tone of voice** - this links into the diagram showing message coding and decoding above. Ensure the article is written in a language that the reader can understand. Use positive, dynamic words not passive, lifeless words. Avoid the use of any technical jargon, unless the reader works within your field they are unlikely to understand what it means. Do not use acronyms either for the same reason. Your tone of voice in the article should be knowledgeable, authoritative, but most of all approachable. You don’t want to alienate your reader! You will be covering one or possibly all of the following objectives in your article - differentiate, reinforce, inform and persuade (remember DRIP?) so using the right tone of voice is essential.

The following section has come straight from the horse’s mouth. These are hints and tips supplied by two journalists from a large regional newspaper. This is what they like to see and
generally speaking if a press release ticks all of these boxes then you have a good chance of getting some coverage.

- **Tell the journalist what it is.** – Tell them it is a press release, put it in the title.
- **Make it easy to read and jargon free.**
- **Use a quote and make it relevant** – your release may get re-written, but the one part they cannot change is the quote. So make sure you include one. Provide pictures if you can too.
- **Don't waffle, give them enough to go on** - aim for between 350 and 450 words.
- **Provide a 24 hour contact number** – expect to be called at strange times of day and evening – journalists work shifts.
- **Grab their attention** – make it the first paragraph. Clearly show what the story is about.
- **Use notes to the editor if needed** – this is background info about your organisation. A reasonable sized paragraph will suffice. Place it at the bottom of the release.
- **Ensure it is addressed to the correct person** – don’t send it to the sports journalist!
- **Explain why you are sending them the information** – are you aiming to publicise an award win or a volunteer recruitment day?

See appendix 2.0 for a sample press release.

Try to put yourself in a journalist’s shoes. What is in it for them? The importance of news is subjective. What may seem important to you may be trivial to somebody else. Read your target media and look at what they are writing and who they are aiming their messages at. You should then try to write your story to match the target media’s audience.

Think carefully about the style of your approach – the following is an example of a possible perspective that a journalist may adopt.

You may want to recruit volunteers for your charity and send a story to a local newspaper that looks similar to a job advertorial (for example, work with great people for a great cause). However a journalist may interpret this as your charity does not have enough help and concentrate on what this says about the local community! This may have more news value, but could potentially lead to damaging coverage.

By thinking like a journalist you should be able to avoid possible pitfalls and have a better chance of getting your article published.

**Widening the net – other media opportunities**

- **Start to target the trade press.** Can you contribute features which are co-ordinated by The Association? Look at regular features and ask if you can be included in one of them at some point.
- **Regional / local papers** – same theory as trade press – look at regular features – can you offer yourself up as an expert?
- **Radio** – contact your local radio station if you have some good news, especially good for events and fundraising activity.
- **New Broadcast opportunities** – internet TV, micro TV stations – many major cities have their own TV station. Podcasting and video too.
Insider secrets

- **Always say thank you** – no matter how grumpy journalists may appear, they always appreciate a thank you.
- **Keep an eye out for the article in the press** – when you see it say thanks!
- **Always try and take a journalist's call and always return a call** – they have very tight deadlines. Sometimes they won't be able to use your story, but if you are always willing to make yourself available for a comment then you have a good chance of getting good stories published.
- **Journalists never forget** – try to be civil and helpful, be wary of upsetting them!
- **Be positive.**

Who do I send my press release to?
Always try to send your press release to a specific journalist. Find out his name and contact details.

If you want to know the newspapers that are available in your region visit [www.newspapersoc.org.uk](http://www.newspapersoc.org.uk) here you will be able to get access to demographic data of the region, the newspapers, and a breakdown of their readership.

In terms of radio stations you can identify stations local to you by visiting [www.radio-now.co.uk](http://www.radio-now.co.uk)

7.5 How news is recycled. (How a small acorn can grow to be a mighty oak)

With the developments of social media and internet coverage, news travels very fast and within minutes a major story can be on air. Journalists now carry flip cameras with them so interviews can be published online within a few minutes of the interview taking place. Major news networks can pick them up within minutes.

Most news is recycled. Stories start at a local level and can soon be picked up by the major TV networks. This is how it *could* work.

Recycling of News

Article covered in a village newspaper (free press)

Local town newspaper picks up on the story and publishes it.

Regional newspaper picks up the story and publishes

Local radio and TV pick it up from the regional press and the story gets covered on regional TV

National press pick up the story and publish

National TV pick up the story and national coverage ensues!
7.6 Building relationships with the press
Having a good relationship with members of the press can be beneficial in terms of exploiting opportunities for positive coverage.

Get to know journalists and editors within the trade press, local press and local radio / TV. Try to get to know DJs on your local station. They are great for gaining publicity, and you could hopefully get them to attend events and become celebrity endorsers of your SDO.

Try to find out journalistic deadlines, it will be different for every publication. Try to meet them socially on occasions or at events that you may both be attending.

Always remember that a story is never certain to be published, something more important may crop up and your story could be dropped.

7.7 Managing Bad Press
There are times in all businesses when things go wrong. In the care sector when something goes wrong, there is a possibility of it ending up in the press.

However it is not all bad news, depending on how you handle things you can actually come out of the situation in a stronger position. If you plan and prepare for a potential crisis you will handle the incident in a much more professional and effective manner.

If you find that you are getting some negative press issues, contact the PR manager at The Association so you can work together to make the most of the bad situation.
- Respond quickly and decisively.
- Be honest.
- If you are wrong, own up and admit your faults – apologise.
- If you are not wrong then don’t apologise.
- Never respond with a no comment – it sends out signals that you don’t really care, or lack empathy.
- Keep your staff, customers and the media informed.
- Prevent any staff member from making comments direct to the press. Any interaction through the media should be controlled by one person in the organisation.
- Put your viewpoint across with a well written statement stating the facts of the case and how you intend to rectify the situation.
- Ensure that the head of your organisation is available for a quote or to talk to the media if required.
- In conjunction with the PR Manager at The Association ensure impacts on neighbouring schemes are minimised.

If you apologise, have an empathetic approach and rectify the situation the public can be very forgiving. If you can follow up the bad press with some positive press releases then any damage caused will be minimalised.

Spokesperson
Ideally it would be good if you could appoint one person who is authorised to speak to journalists and the media. You must ensure that staff and stakeholders are aware who they should direct media enquiries to.
Do you have the resources available to send someone on a media training course? This would help them and your organisation. There are several reputable organisations who provide one day courses that cover the written press, TV and radio interviews too.

8.0 Recruiting celebrity support.

Wouldn’t it be great to have a celebrity supporting your SDO? There are great benefits to having celebrity support, but it can be difficult to achieve.

Obtaining the support of a local celebrity rather than a national figure is sometimes easier. Perhaps DJs from a local radio station, a local TV presenter, a sportsman from a local club – football, rugby, or cricket? These will be easier to contact than national celebrities who have agents and PR companies representing them. If you want to recruit a national celebrity, link up with the PR manager at The Association who will support linking into their PR agency. The PR agency is interested in getting their client coverage, but is also worth contacting their agent. The choice of celebrity is also a factor. You should research your potential celebrity’s interests and history of charitable support. Someone who has an interest in caring or a specific condition is much more likely to be sympathetic to your cause.

Consider celebrities who fit your target audience profile and avoid celebrities who have had negative press coverage.

Celebrities are not always altruistic in choosing the charities they wish to represent, remember it looks good for them to be associated with a charity, so it is a mutually beneficial relationship. Give careful consideration to who attempt to recruit. You would be able to develop a more meaningful relationship, if you had a celebrity that had a link to caring. It makes it easier to sell in stories. If they’ve got no link to your cause it can be really hard to get them to interact with the media.

Here are some useful pointers to help you recruit the right celebrity for your SDO.

- Research thoroughly first - get someone with a link. If there’s a corporate angle, check they are not already involved with a competitor. For each request you can only go to an agent once so you also need to look at who their clients are and just pick one of them to ask. If that person says no, you can’t then go to the others as they’ll be second-best.
- Don’t approach them if they’re formally aligned to another charity (Patron / Ambassador) or fronting something for them at the time of asking (it’s ok to ask them afterwards when they’re finished but by then the story might well already have been used up).
- Approaching them through their agent can be a good approach, as they’re used to that form of working. Contact them through e-mail or writing. Be clear about what you want their involvement to be – preferably unless it’s a set event, be flexible on what time / date you would like the celebrity.
- Respect the fact that they’re doing this for free and that also their agent is donating their services for free too
- Match opportunities to their strengths and situation and learn over time what they will and won’t do. For instance some celebrities hate public speaking and won’t do it; if they have young children, they won’t do anything which involves over-night stays, extensive travel or during school holidays.
- Provide a full briefing / support before the day, on the day and then a follow-up thank you afterwards, you may need to cover expenses
• Maintain contact with them throughout year, not just when you need them, but don’t 
overdo it – a few of the mailings need to personalised though – birthdays / congrats / 
good luck etc.

How to approach an agent.
Agents look for a one-sided straightforward email (never phone – they want it in writing) – near 
the beginning it needs to state clearly why you specifically want that person. This is why 
research is so important. If you refer to any members of their family if they’ve directly cared for 
someone, you need to try to find out their names and use this or the area in which they lived. 
Anything that makes it look well thought out and not a circular makes a difference. 
Acknowledge in the letter that the agent is also doing you a favour in dealing with it (for 
estimate, "thank you very much for your time and support in looking at this for XXXX and 
forwarding it on”) as this creates goodwill for future requests. Transport / refreshments should 
be offered as a matter of course if it’s a celebrity appearance. If it’s a quote you’re after, state 
you’ll draft it for their endorsement. The agent just needs reassurance that it’ll be easier and no 
extra work for them.

Appendices

1.0 Impact reporting, new guidance.

SDOs that hope to engage, inform and inspire their stakeholders will try to communicate clearly 
the impact of their work. All SDOs should tell their stakeholders how they are fulfilling their 
purpose and achieving the change that they seek. 
Good impact reporting helps beneficiaries, volunteers, donors and other supporters understand 
and engage with a charity’s vision. It also helps staff and trustees focus on results and work to 
achieve their vision. 
Yet communicating impact is not easy. While financial reporting by charities is regulated through 
the charities SORP, and trusteeship is guided by the Code of Good Governance, impact 
reporting has until now lacked a framework of requirements or suggested practice. 
The principles set out in this document are the result of a collaboration between seven 
organisations1, coordinating work taking place on how charities communicate impact.

How should charities communicate their impact?

There are six general principles that define how charities should communicate their impact:

• Clarity: The reader can quickly and easily understand the organisation through a coherent 
narrative that connects charitable aims, plans, activities and results.

• Accessibility: Relevant information can be found by anyone who looks for it.

1 The seven organisations are New Philanthropy Capital, Acevo (Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations) incorporating 
the ImpACT Coalition, CFDG (Charity Finance Directors Group), the Institute of Fundraising, The SROI Network, NCVO (National Council for 
Voluntary Organisations).
• **Transparency:** Reporting is clear, open and honest.

• **Accountability:** Stakeholders (including the people who benefit from the charity’s services) have the means to hold the charity to account for its actions.

• **Proportionality:** The level and detail of reporting reflects the size and complexity of the organisation.

• **Verifiability:** Claims can be verified externally, and the charity shows where it has been subject to peer review or external audit.

**What should charities communicate about impact?**

There are six specific principles that define what charities should communicate about their impact.

• **Clear purpose**
  - What needs or problems are we trying to address?
  - Why are we here? What is our mission? Why us rather than anyone else?
  - What is our vision? What change are we trying to bring about? What do we want our impact to be, and over what timescale?
  - What do our key stakeholders want us to achieve?

• **Defined objectives**
  - What do we aim to achieve? What are our measurable short and long-term objectives?
  - How do these objectives help us achieve our vision?

• **Coherent activities**
  - What are we doing to achieve our objectives? What are our activities, outputs and expenditure?
  - Are our activities part of a coherent plan?
  - How do these activities achieve our objectives? What is our ‘theory of change’—our plan showing how our activities lead to change?

• **Demonstrated results**
  - What are we achieving and how does this compare with our objectives?
  - To what extent are we contributing to our overall goals?

• **Evidence**
  - How do we know what we are achieving?
  - Do we have appropriate evidence of these results?

• **Lessons learned**
  - What are we learning about our work?
  - What are the unintended consequences of our work (positive or negative)?
  - How are we communicating what we are learning? Are we sharing knowledge, publishing results and collaborating with other organisations?
  - How are we using what we have learned to improve what we do? Are we revising our strategies, programmes, activities or operations?

**Applying the principles**

The principles of good impact reporting guide charities through communicating their impact. This could include:

• annual reports, annual reviews and impact reports;
• management information, board reports and organisational reviews;
• reports to funders, supporters, investors and commissioners;
• communications materials, such as websites, brochures and leaflets;
• fundraising materials;
• key messages about the organisation; and
• communications with, and feedback and responses from its beneficiaries.

If applied appropriately, the principles can help you to:
• be accountable to your stakeholders, engaging them in open and honest dialogue;
• engage and inspire supporters and potential supporters;
• review your activities and impact against your vision and purpose;
• challenge your assumptions and revise strategies and plans; and
• ensure that you are helping your beneficiaries in the best way possible.

2.0 – Sample press release.

Background to the release
The Norfolk project was running an event but didn’t have much PR experience. Ian Manley (The Association’s PR and Communications Manager) supported them by writing the press release, issuing and attending on the day to manage press, they provided young carers that were willing to act as case studies and arranged for a local ‘celebrity’/retired footballer to attend to help boost the media profile on the day.

The resulting piece appeared in the Eastern Daily Press, and there was a similar article in the Norwich Evening News.

Subsequent to this the project now has greater experience in writing press releases and dealing with the press. Ian still helps out, but only to the extent of reading through any press releases they produce before they’re issued. The level of his support has gradually tailed off as they’ve become more experienced, and they pretty much handle all press activities themselves now.

The press release is detailed below.

Wednesday August 11 2010
For immediate release
For media enquiries: Ian Manley on 0207 922 7743 or ian.manley@crossroads.org.uk

Press invitation: Reporters and camera crews are invited to attend the launch of the Norfolk Young Carers Forum on Wednesday, August 18 at Eaton Vale Scout and Guide Activity Centre, Church Lane, Norwich, NR4 6NN between 12pm and 1pm.

Interviews will be available with Joanna Brown [Forum Participation Worker] as well as some young carers.
Key representatives from Health services, County Council, Parliament and the Big Lottery Fund have also been invited to attend.

Please contact Ian Manley to confirm attendance.

**New forum to support young carers in Norfolk**

A new forum to support young carers in Norfolk will be officially launched at a special activity day in Norwich on Wednesday, August 18.

The Norfolk Young Carers Forum has been set up by Crossroads Care, the charity that provides breaks and support for carers, in response to demands from local young carers for more support to make themselves heard, after some were involved in setting up the National Young Carers Forum and visiting Parliament.

As well as initially coming up with the idea for the forum, young carers from Norfolk were involved in the interview process for the new person who will be running the forums.

Samuel, 14 was part of the group that came up with idea.

“The forum is going to be very helpful to all young carers across Norfolk. It will help them get their voices heard,” he said.

“Also it will show to services that sometimes they get it wrong, they need to understand what we really want and need. It will be great to help with the organisation of trips and activities. It will give us occasions to meet others in the same situation. It will be nice to know that I will be helping others for the future so they do not have to face the struggles that I or others have faced”

With funding from the Big Lottery, the project will consist of local forums in five key areas across Norfolk all supported by Crossroads Care.

These groups will meet monthly, giving young carers the chance to explore issues affecting them, discuss the help they receive and identify any areas which require greater understanding and support.

Two young people from each forum will then take part in the Norfolk Young Carers Forum which will represent young carers from the county, with an annual one-day conference planned for the summer of 2011 to celebrate the achievements of all young carers across the County.

Joanna Brown, the new Forum Participation Officer who will be running the forums, said that the young carers will have a crucial role in advocating for the needs of fellow young carers across the county.

“With funding cuts happening around us it is crucial that any money spent on supporting young carers is actually meeting their needs. The only people who can tell us that, and ensure support and activities provided are useful are young carers themselves,” she said.
“These forums give a great opportunity for young carers in Norfolk to have their say and be listened to”.

Around 200 young carers from across Norfolk come together to mark the launch of the Norfolk Young Carers Forum at a special event on Wednesday 18th August at Eaton Vale activity centre, Norwich. As well as learning more about the initiative, they will get the chance to enjoy a range of activities including.

Notes to the Editor:

For further press information about Crossroads Care, spokespeople or interviews with carers please contact: Ian Manley on 0207 922 7743 or ian.manley@crossroads.org.uk

Young Carers

Young carers are children and young people under 18 who have a caring responsibility for someone in their family who has a physical or mental illness, a disability, or a substance misuse problem. They take on caring responsibilities that are inappropriate to their age. Many young carers experience bullying, and most miss days off school due to their caring responsibilities. Some drop out of school completely and fail to attain any GCSEs.

The reasons young carers, through no choice of their own, find themselves in caring situations are varied but their love and commitment to the parent or sibling depending on them is unparalleled.

Crossroads Norfolk Young Carers Project

Crossroads Norfolk Young Carers Project has supported nearly 1300 young carers from as young as 4 up to 18 since it started in 2003.

The Project provides advocacy, emotional and practical support to young carers on all aspects of daily living affected by their caring responsibilities. It also enables young carers to have a break from their caring tasks by enjoying leisure and cultural pursuits.

Crossroads offers support to the families where there are young carers by listening to their needs and coordinating services to make life easier for all family members.

There are also 32 young carers groups across the county where children and young people are given the space to be children, unwind and make friends.

We are aware of some 2,000 young carers in Norfolk but we know that there are many more that are still ‘hidden’ young carers and missing out on support.

Norfolk Young Carers Forum

Norfolk young carers have had a real taste of true consultation and being listened to through commitment to being members of the First National Young Carers Forum with 9 other young carers from England. They have enjoyed their role and influence, in particular how everything they said at the consultation event at HMS Belfast ‘New Deals for Carers’ was included in the

Their drive for influencing decision makers was further called upon when talking to the Prime Minister and MPs (including MPs from Norfolk constituencies) at the All Party Parliamentary Group for Carers. The visit came about after Barbara Keeley MP attended a national conference where she was impressed by the impassioned speech given by one of our Norfolk young carers. As a result she arranged the day at the House of Commons.

As a result of their positive influence through the National Young Carers Forum, Norfolk young carers asked us for help to have a Norfolk Young Carers Forum based on the same model in order to have a voice about what is happening to them.

A successful bid to the Big Lottery Fund 2 to set up a Norfolk Young Carers Forum over the 5 years has resulted in the recruitment of a Forum Participation Officer. The interviews were led by young carers who had undertaken intensive training.

The Forum will help raise awareness of young carers, improve their self esteem, and reduce their isolation. Through positive participation the Forum will

- give young carers a voice to influence how services to young carers are delivered, implemented and monitored by the providers of the voluntary and statutory agencies
- spearhead the planning, organisation and evaluation of services and activities for all young carers in the county
- organise an annual young carers conference, giving them greater opportunity to raise awareness about the issues important to them, receive training through workshops, and celebrate their achievements