

Press and Media Policy and Procedures

July | 2018

Responsible Committee: Executive Leadership Team

Date Effective: July 2018

Supersedes: August 2015

Next Review Done: July 2021

Version Number: 3.0

Comments (details of change):

1. Overview

SELDOC is an established and highly respected company. We have a reputation for providing excellent, professional, high quality services and we enjoy strong relationships with our customers whether commissioners, member practices or patients.

While providing this service, the news media may become interested or we may wish to engage with the local media to promote our company and services we provide.

2. Purpose

The policy is designed to help staff to:

- Adopt, wherever possible, a proactive approach towards the media, by recognising the value of the media as a means of communicating with patients and the public.
- Make sure that messages about SELDOC are clear, consistent and positive.
- Promote positive media coverage to protect the reputation of SELDOC.
- Support staff in understanding their responsibility in dealing with the media.
- Deal with difficult media issues.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors of SELDOC and its subsidiaries as well as members of its Board of Directors. The policy covers all external news media including broadcast, electronic and print.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Board

The Chair of the Board has overall responsibility for media issues but this is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer who has corporate responsibility for this area of work.

4.2 Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for promoting the work of SELDOC in the media, and protecting the company's reputation and will:

- Act as the main contact for the media within the organisation and will make sure that other relevant members of staff and Board are briefed on media enquiries.
- Co-ordinate media releases on behalf of SELDOC.
- Co-ordinate a response to any letters, articles or news coverage that portrays SELDOC in a negative way, except where responding would exacerbate the situation. Individual responses to such issues should be co-ordinated by the Chief Executive Officer but the Chair of the Board will authorise the communication release.

- Provide practical support and manage the media during a serious untoward incident.

4.3 All Staff

All staff within SELDOC are responsible for:

- Informing the Chief Executive Officer of issues which might create both positive or negative interest from the media.
- Inform the Chief Executive Officer, or during the OOH's period contact the On-Call GP Director or Operational Manager, if you have been approached by the media for comment or made a comment during a public meeting. **Remember** any comment you make will be taken as the views of SELDOC.
- Helping the Chief Executive Officer to provide the media with information as required, meeting editorial deadlines wherever possible.
- Making sure that contact with the media is made by following the appropriate procedure.

5. Procedure for handling media enquiries

If you receive an enquiry from the media the first thing to remember is:

DON'T PANIC

Don't be pressured into giving a comment immediately to a pushy journalist.
Explain that the Chief Executive Officer deals with all media enquiries and refer them to him/her, or during the OOH's period the on-call GP Director or Operational manager. Take the contacts full details together with the reason for his interest in SELDOC, and pass on these details as above.
Often journalists will try to bypass the media pathway and go directly to the person involved or specialist, particularly if it is a 'difficult' issue/situation. Be firm but polite – and pass it on quickly.
Every effort should be made to contact the Chief Executive Officer, or within the OOH's period the GP director or Operational manager on- call. If you are unable to contact one of these, please contact in the first instance either the Director of Operations, Medical Director or Director of Finance.

You should avoid making any comment even if you are being pressed hard. The journalist should be reassured that every effort will be made to get the information to them as quickly as possible.

Once the nature of the enquiry and the response deadline has been established, the Chief Executive Officer will contact the relevant member of staff for an appropriate

response. Every effort should be made to meet the journalist's deadline and provide relevant information. A 'no comment' response should be avoided.

All contact by staff with the media should be reported via the Chief Executive Officer. The media tends to feed off each other, particularly from local to regional, regional to national press. What is said today to the local press might well come back in the guise of the Daily Mail in a few days time taking a different aspect/angle. We must not provide unconnected or conflicting communications.

The Chief Executive Officer will liaise with partner organisations or commissioners on all aspects of media enquiries as appropriate and will ensure that any message or response is aligned to other communications being made.

An audit trail will be made on every occasion that SELDOC receives media attention, showing progress and outcome.

6. Press releases

All press releases should be made in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and authorised by the Chair of Board. These should always be planned and co-ordinated following consultation with all relevant staff.

All press releases should be made in the same format, and e-mailed or faxed direct to journalists by the Chief Executive Officer.

7. Personal use of social media

Social media is as important as any other communications channel. A message published on a website such as Twitter or Facebook has the potential to be as widely-read as a newspaper headline.

We are aware that many employees of SELDOC have their own social media accounts. Whilst we acknowledge that these profiles are private, we would draw your attention to the details below.

- Avoid entering into discussions on social networking sites that concern the organisation. These comments can easily be picked up by search engines, and they could appear with your name beside them.
- Ensure that you do not compromise your professional code of conduct and/or conditions of your contract of employment by discussing work-related issues, patients, colleagues, managers, the organisation, or partner organisations on your social media profiles.
- The organisation has a responsibility to ensure that all employees feel that they are protected from bullying, harassment and discrimination. Employees are therefore reminded of the Bullying and Harassment Policy whilst using social media.

8. Patient confidentiality

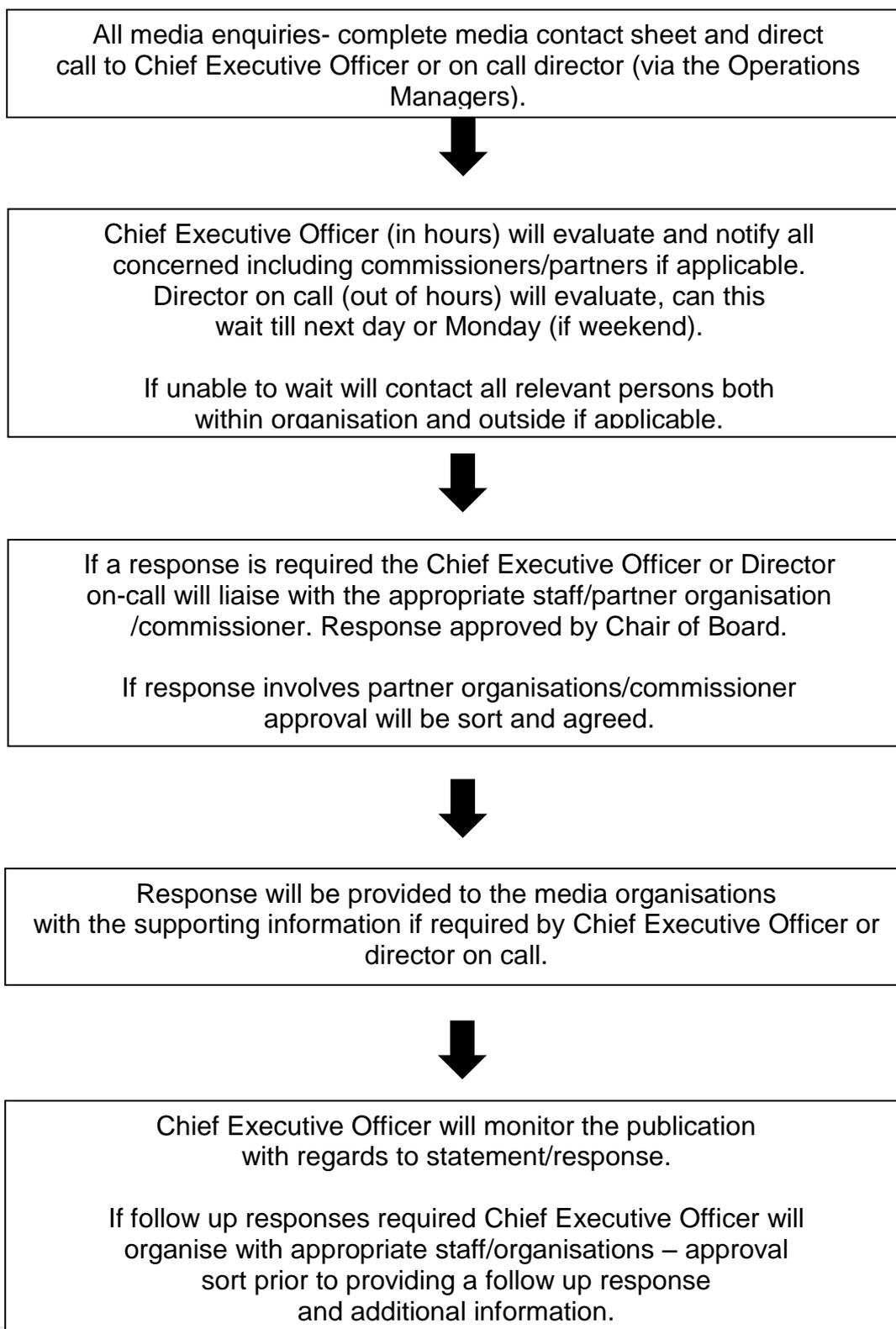
All SELDOC staff has a duty of confidentiality to patients. Unauthorised disclosure of personal information about any patient/employee is regarded as an extremely serious matter and could result in formal action.

SELDOC will not release information to the media about individual patients without the prior consent of the patient or, where the patient is indisposed, their next-of-kin to comply with Caldicott guidelines.

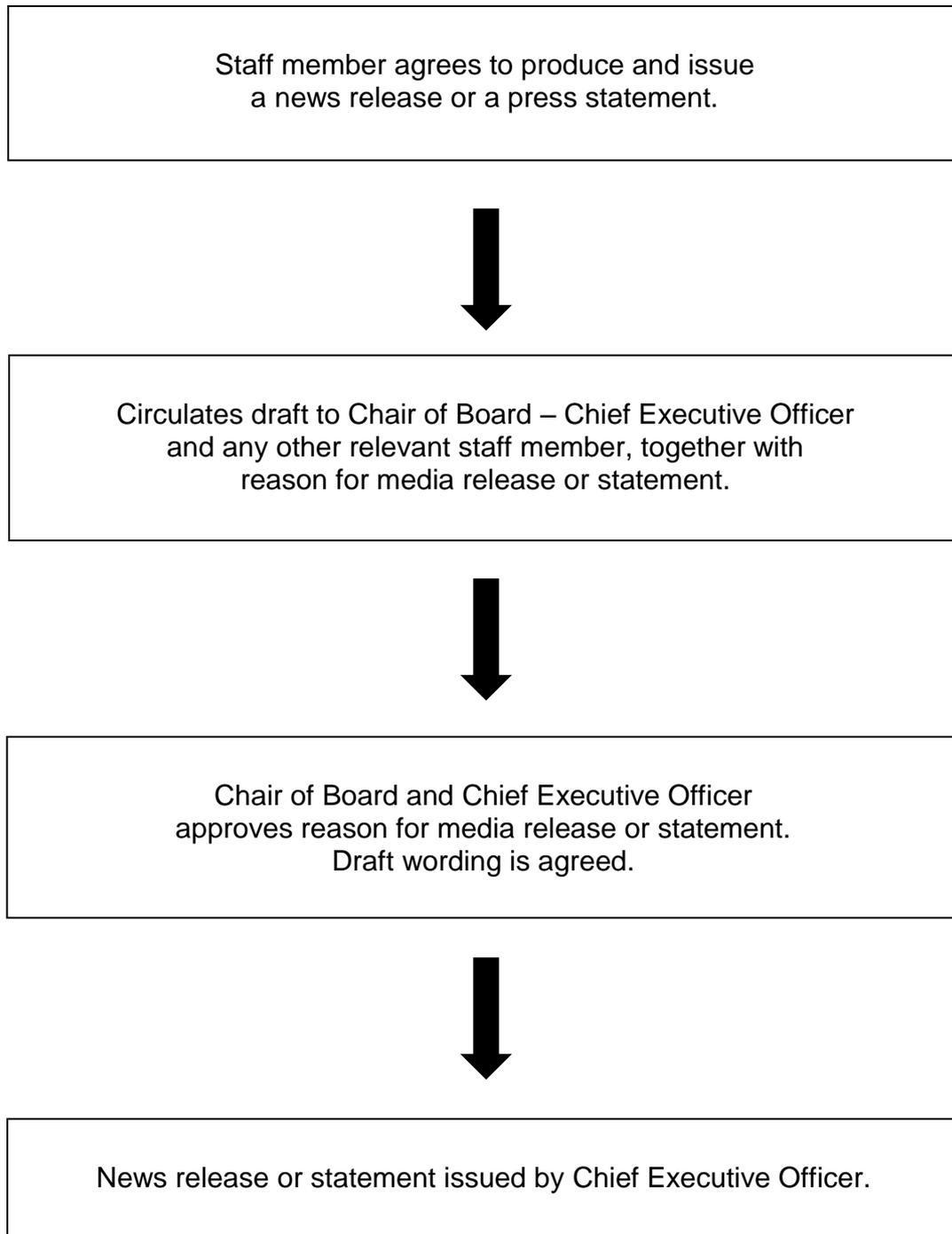
Patients or the next-of-kin should be informed immediately if there has been media interest in their treatment or contact with SELDOC.

Any responses to the media on complaints, claims or litigation must be discussed with the Chair of Board and obtain their authorisation prior to release.

Media Handling Flow Diagram



News Release Clearance Procedure



Media Contact Sheet

Date and time of call	
Name of caller	
Where were they from (i.e. which paper/TV/Radio station)	
Contact numbers (Tel/Fax/Email/Mobile)	
What do they want? (i.e. nature of enquiry)	
Was a statement provided at the time of call (should not)? What was provided/said? And by whom?	
Name of person taking call	
Any deadline given	
Chief Executive Officer notified?	Yes No
Which director contacted	
Who is dealing with enquiry?	
Statement/release authorised?	Yes No Date
Follow up? Yes No	