

# Guide to conducting media interviews

## Part 2. Conducting media interviews

### 3. Tips for managing press interviews

Print interviews can take place **in person** or, commonly, **by telephone**. They normally take longer than other types of interview.



#### Telephone interviews

**Telephone interviews** are more difficult to manage as you cannot see and assess the interviewer's reaction. Speak slowly and clearly, ask the journalist if they understand what you are saying and do not be afraid to repeat your key messages.

- **Your expression and mood will be reflected through your voice**, so if you are confident or smiling, or anxious or defensive, this will come through to the person you are talking to

#### Before you agree to an interview

##### Check the following:

- **Find out who is calling and what newspaper or publication they work for** - remember that calls can be from anyone
- If in any doubt, check their identity by telephoning back on the main landline of the newspaper or publication offices. They could be a freelance journalist working for a number of publications

- Ask them to email the query from their work email address
- If you are not ready to take the call, tell them that you are currently busy and organise another time for the call. Be firm!

- **Find out what has triggered their call**
  - Why have they contacted you?
  - Who have they already spoken to?
- **What is the journalist's level of knowledge about the story?**
- **What** information does he/she have that he/she can email or fax to you?
- **Who** will be reading the article?
- **If it is a telephone interview, find somewhere quiet to speak** without interruption
- **Write down in advance key points** you wish to convey during the interview
- **Agree how long you are available** and stick to it

# Guide to conducting media interviews

## Part 2. Conducting media interviews

### 3. Tips for managing press interviews continued...



#### During the interview

- **Take notes** on what they require and what they think they know, but never offer a comment or opinion
- Remember to use the interview as an opportunity to convey your **key messages**. It may be useful to have them written down in front of you
- **Do not wander away from the subject**. Keep the key points in front of you
- Try to **identify the source of any third party information** by gentle questioning
- The journalist may be **recording what you say**, so never go 'off-message'
- **You can also record the interview or any conversation** you have with the media. If you cannot, then take notes on the questions asked and your replies for your records



#### Face-to-face interview

Remember you are representing your organisation **so consider what you will wear and what perception this will give the journalist.**

- **Remain friendly, but professional at all times** and do not be lulled into a false sense of security where you might be tempted to say something off the record
- **Build a rapport with key journalists** who you could contact in the future