



Association of
Pharmacy
Technicians (UK)

Media Policy

Oct 2007

Introduction

1. Effective communications with the Media are important to the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK) in carrying out its role supporting pharmacy technicians across the UK. This policy should be read in conjunction with the APTUK Communications Policy.

Scope of Application

2. This policy applies to all APTUK National Officers and Branch Officers

Defining 'The Media'

3. The Media can be interpreted in many ways, however, for the purpose of this policy it should be regarded as any mechanism which can be used to communicate any information about APTUK. This may include, but is not limited to, newspapers, magazines, journals, books, radio, TV and the internet (including websites, Chat forums or e-mail).

Benefits of Effective Media Relations

4. APTUK can gain a lot from working with the media, these benefits include:
 - 4.1 Informing members, the wider pharmacy profession and the public about our role
 - 4.2 Promoting APTUK's achievements, activities, and events
 - 4.3 Expanding the general visibility of APTUK
 - 4.4 Ensuring that accurate information is conveyed to Branches, members and other stakeholders regarding incidents and issues of a controversial or sensitive nature
 - 4.5 Communicating key messages to Branches, members and other stakeholders during times of major change within pharmacy

Proactive Use of the Media

5. Proactive use of the Media can take the form of regular communications such as the Pharmacy Technician Journal and the APTUK website. There are also times when APTUK desire or need to communicate on an ad-hoc basis as situations dictate. The benefit of using the media proactively is that we can do so in a planned and constructive way, imparting information as positively as possible.

- 6 All officers should constantly review proactive use of the Media and look for opportunities to raise the profile of APTUK in a positive way.

Reactive Use of the Media

7. From time to time, information will be released to the media, by other organisations, which could have implications for APTUK. In these circumstances, the following principles apply.

7.1 It is important that, as far as possible, all APTUK Officers monitor pharmacy specific media. This will help maintain awareness of the pharmacy national agenda.

7.2 When information is identified that could have a potential impact on APTUK, it is important that this is circulated by the recipient to all APTUK National Officers as quickly as possible so that discussions can be started and any required action initiated.

7.3 Under certain circumstances, timelines, sensitivity and confidentiality may preclude full distribution of information, under these circumstances the President or, in cases of unavailability, the Vice President should take executive decisions about the distribution of information.

7.4 All responses to published information/correspondence should be approved by the President or, in cases of unavailability, the Vice-president.

Responding to Requests from the Media

8. Occasionally, the media may approach individual officers seeking information about APTUK, should this occur, the guidelines below should be followed wherever possible:

8.1 APTUK officers may respond directly to requests from the media regarding their own area of responsibility providing they are certain that the information provided: is accurate; corresponds with APTUK policy and is not controversial or sensitive.

8.2 In all other cases these requests should be passed to the President or Vice President for consideration

8.3 All information provided to the media should be circulated to National Officers for information

9. When approached by the media for comments or information, follow the principles set out below:
 - a. Discover and record the name of the person calling, the media organisation they represent and the anticipated release date of any information provided
 - b. The best approach with the media is to be prompt, helpful and honest
 - c. Ensure that you fully understand the question before providing any answers
 - d. Be prepared to say that you need to seek advice before answering questions
 - e. Do not offer speculation or gossip or reply 'no comment'
 - f. Ensure that the contact fully understands your response

- g. Remember that when responding you are seen as representing APTUK
- h. Do not discuss legal, personnel or ethical issues

Principles Guiding the Release of Information to the Media

10. The credibility of APTUK can hang on the quality of information released to the media, therefore, the following principles should be adhered to:

9.1 Information should be: accurate, as brief as possible, clear and unambiguous

9.2 Every effort should be made to ensure written information is grammatically correct.

9.3 Ensure that information is in step with APTUK policy and direction

9.4 Avoid speculation and rumours

9.5 Be very careful when commenting on other organisations

9.6 Refer to the President or Vice President if you are in any way unsure about the content of any information or the process of communication.

Potential Pitfalls

11. Dealing with the media can be a mixture of opportunity, challenge, excitement and threat. It is important to understand that information can accidentally or deliberately be manipulated to present a view that is not in line with APTUK policies. Careful handling of information and applying the principles contained in this policy document will help avoid such situations. A number of other mechanisms can also help. These are:

10.1 Ensure that you have an opportunity to review any verbal, visual or written communication before release and use this to make necessary amendments. Be firm and ensure that any mixed or inappropriate messages are removed before release

10.2 Place written conditions on electronic media and published information ensuring that other organisations cannot publish articles or extracts of APTUK owned information without express permission.

10.3 Do not agree to the use of any published information including the APTUK logo without consulting the President or Vice President.