

# Wolverhampton CCG (WCCG)

## Crisis Communications Plan

2015/16



<b>DOCUMENT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>Andy Smith, Emergency planning manager</b>
<b>DOCUMENT STATUS:</b>	<b>To be Approved /Approved</b>
<b>DATE ISSUED:</b>	
<b>DATE TO BE REVIEWED:</b>	

#### AMENDMENT HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	AMENDMENT HISTORY
V1	March 2015	Draft for approval
V2	April 2015	Draft for approval
V3	May 2015	Final draft for approval by Execs

#### REVIEWERS

This document has been reviewed by:

NAME	TITLE/RESPONSIBILITY	DATE	VERSION

#### APPROVALS

This document has been approved by:

GROUP/COMMITTEE	DATE	VERSION

#### DISTRIBUTION

This document has been distributed to:

Distributed To:	Distributed by/When	Paper or Electronic	Document Location

#### DOCUMENT STATUS

This is a controlled document. Whilst this document may be printed, the electronic version posted on the intranet is the controlled copy. Any printed copies of the document are not controlled.

#### RELATED DOCUMENTS

These documents will provide additional information:

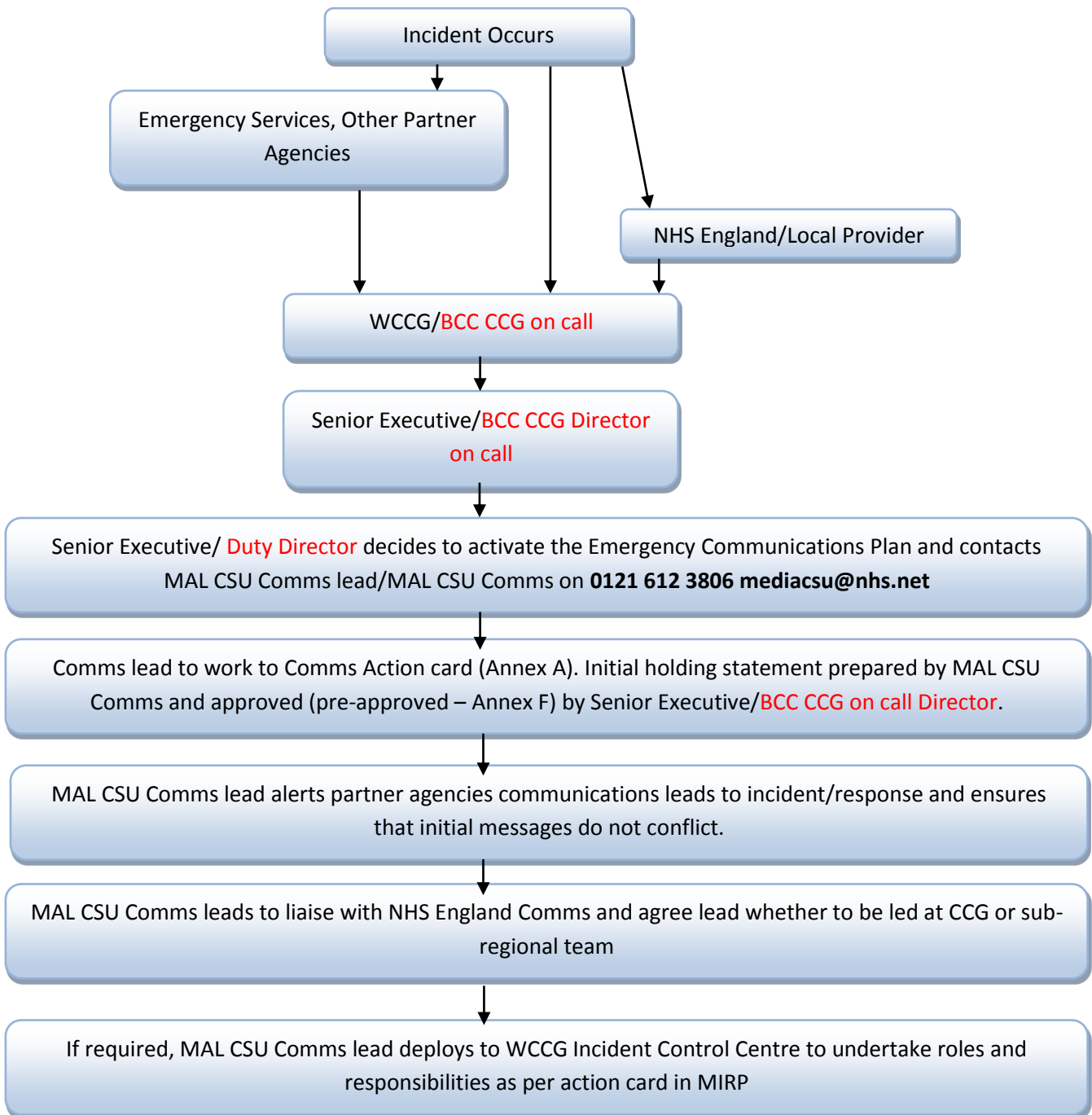
REF NUMBER	DOCUMENT REFERENCE NUMBER	TITLE	VERSION

**Wolverhampton City Council is acknowledged for the use of their Communications Plan template**

## Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>ACTIVATION FLOW CHART</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>PRINCIPLES OF CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
3.1	AIMS	
3.2	OBJECTIVES	
3.3	ACTIVATION	
<b>4.0</b>	<b>ROLES &amp; RESPONSIBILITIES</b> .....	<b>6</b>
4.1	WCCG DIRECTOR (IN HOURS) OR BCC ON-CALL DIRECTOR (OUT OF HOURS) (STRATEGIC LEAD)	
4.2	MAL CSU COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER	
4.3	MEDIA SPOKESPERSON	
4.4	MEDIA BRIEFING CENTRE OFFICER (MAL CSU COMMUNICATIONS TEAM)	
4.5	COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT OFFICER	
<b>5.0</b>	<b>MEDIA BRIEFING CENTRE</b> .....	<b>8</b>
5.1	BUILDING REQUIREMENTS	
5.2	POSSIBLE LOCATIONS AND ACTIVATION	
	<b><i>ANNEX A – COMMUNICATIONS ACTION CARD</i></b> .....	<b>9</b>
	<b><i>ANNEX B – AUDIENCE &amp; CHANNEL CHOOSING TOOL</i></b> .....	<b>10</b>
	<b><i>ANNEX C – EXAMPLE MESSAGE PLANNING WORKSHEET</i></b> .....	<b>12</b>
	<b><i>ANNEX D – BLANK MESSAGE PLANNING WORKSHEET</i></b> .....	<b>13</b>
	<b><i>ANNEX E – MEDIA ORGANISATIONS CONTACT DETAILS</i></b> .....	<b>14</b>
	<b><i>ANNEX F – PRE AGREED MEDIA STATEMENTS</i></b> .....	<b>15</b>

## 1.0 Activation Flow Chart



**NB: Text above **IN RED** denotes out of hours response**

## 2.0 Introduction

Effective communication is an essential element of WCCG's response to a major incident or disruptive event. Irrespective of the cause of an emergency WCCG will need to warn and inform the public, staff and other stakeholders of the hazards or service disruption that may occur. As the incident unfolds WCCG must also inform stakeholders about the NHS response and advise them of the steps they can take to access appropriate healthcare in the light of the event or incident.

## 3.0 Principles of Crisis Communications

- Speed and scale: get information out as soon and as widely as possible.
- Stick to the facts – don't speculate.
- Identify your audience and tailor your message to be relevant to them.
- Make sure you are using the correct communications channel to reach your target audience.
- Identify the lead agency for Communications and coordinate messages with partner agencies to make them consistent.
- Communicate with compassion and emphasise concern for those affected.
- Meet journalists' needs & timeframes and remain accessible for comment.

### 3.1 Aims

The aim of this communications plan is to maintain public and staff **confidence** by establishing an effective **capability** to communicate with our staff, the public and other stakeholders in the event of a significant disruptive event or major incident that requires a response from **WCCG**.

### 3.2 Objectives

- To ensure an effective, coordinated approach to communications before, during and after incidents or emergency situations.
- To ensure a joined-up approach with partner agencies involved in any response to avoid confusion that can result from different agencies sending mixed messages.
- To establish the roles that are needed to deliver the plan and outline their responsibilities.
- To describe the crisis communications process and provide tools to assist its utilisation.

### 3.3 Activation

**Office hours (8am to 6pm; Monday to Friday) – 0121 612 3806**

During office hours this plan is owned by the Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit (MAL CSU) Communications Officers allocated to WCCG who will activate it in response to a major incident, significant disruptive event or reputational issue affecting a commissioned service or the wider NHS. The team may learn of the incident or event from an internal or external source however, once notified of an incident, the designated MAL CSU communications lead will contact and brief a WCCG director and undertake the responsibilities described below.

**Out of hours (evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays) - 0121 612 3806 (answerphone will direct to on call officer)**

Out of hours this plan is owned by the MAL CSU Communications on call service who will activate it in response to a major incident, significant disruptive event or reputational issue affecting a WCCG commissioned service or the wider NHS. The on call MAL CSU communications officer will assess the incident, and potential impact, and contact and advise the Black Country Cluster CCG on call Director. When responding to incidents they assess to

be low risk the on call MAL CSU communications officer may decide to deal with the situation themselves, using a pre agreed statement, but when responding to an incident with significant media interest/real reputational risk the Black Country Cluster CCG on call Director **must** be contacted.

## 4.0 Roles & Responsibilities

### 4.1 WCCG Director (in hours) or BCC On-Call Director (out of hours) (Strategic Lead)

#### Role

A WCCG Director, or Black Country Cluster on call Director, is responsible for WCCG's response to any major incident and will direct the overall strategy.

#### Responsibilities

- Activate WCCG's incident response.
- Maintain an overview of the incident to determine WCCG's strategic response and allocate responsibilities to services via the Incident Control Centre.
- Strategic liaison with NHS England, where required, and with partner agencies.
- Work with the MAL CSU Communications Officer to set and agree the communication strategy.
- Perform the role of (or contact MAL CSU), Media Spokesperson out of hours. 0121 612 3806 or mediacsu@nhs.net
- Identify a suitable Media Spokesperson during office hours.
- Horizon scan and identify the likely service disruptions.
- Risk assess decisions and response strategies and identify alternative options.
- Identify staff to participate in the recovery working group where requested.
- Report to NHS England, according to incident level as required, on the conduct, planning and resolution of the major incident.
- Assess requests for financial assistance from commissioned providers where expenditure is above contract.
- Ensure a facility to track expenditure is established.
- Log all actions and decisions for inclusion in the final incident report.

### 4.2 MAL CSU Communications Officer

#### Role

To liaise with WCCG's officers responding to the incident or emergency and ensure that their communications needs are effectively addressed.

#### Responsibilities

- To develop and implement the communications strategy.
- To ensure close liaison/coordination with communications professionals from NHS England and other partner agencies.
- To attend the Incident Control Centre if established.
- To oversee the establishment of a media briefing centre as required.
- To advise the Incident Management Team on communications related matters.
- To develop key media lines.
- To prepare, support and brief the Media Spokesperson.

### 4.3 Media Spokesperson

#### Role

The Media Spokesperson represents WCCG in the public eye. They communicate facts and information about what is being done about the emergency and conveys key messages that WCCG wishes to disseminate.

#### Responsibilities

- To receive a situation report from the Incident Director before any communication with the media.
- To formulate any statement in conjunction with the MAL CSU Communications Officer.
- To prepare for the media encounter and seek to deliver a practiced and professional performance.
- To understand the scope of WCCG's responsibilities regarding the incident or emergency and comment on matters that WCCG are leading on.

### 4.4 Media Briefing Centre Officer (MAL CSU Communications Team) – 0121 612 3888

#### Role

To represent WCCG in the multi-agency Media Briefing Centre and liaise with the MAL CSU Communications Officer in order to ensure that key messages are passed when necessary. In the majority of cases this role will be performed by a MAL CSU Communications Officer.

#### Responsibilities

- To liaise with the Communications Officer in the WCCG Incident Control Centre and facilitate the flow of information to the media.

### 4.5 Communications Support Officer

#### Role

To undertake call handling, media and social media monitoring working closely with the MAL CSU Communications Officer and the Major Incident Critical Information Officer if established.

#### Responsibilities

- Take and log all media enquiries regarding the incident, working closely with the Communications Officer to respond.
- Provide regular media and social media monitoring reports.
- To feed into the tactical coordination process by alerting the Communications Officer and/or Critical Information Officer to significant emerging issues or risks as they happen.
- Update all digital channels (corporate website and social media) to warn, inform and reassure staff, the public and other stakeholders.



## 5.0 Media Briefing Centre

A Media Briefing Centre with accommodation for potentially a large number of journalists may be required to facilitate the orderly transmission of information from responders to members of the media. In most major incidents the police will lead interactions with the press however in the unlikely event of an incident only affecting the NHS, WCCG will need to identify a suitable venue.

The function of the briefing centre is to provide a regular flow of information to alleviate media speculation and reduce their interference with the NHS response.

### 5.1 Building requirements

Arrangements will need to be made to ensure that the centre is in the best possible location for the needs of the media but doesn't cause any disruption to on-going patient care.

When organising a centre, consideration should be given to following issues:

- Do mobile phones work there?
- Is there Wi-Fi available?
- Are there sufficient electrical points?
- Is there sufficient parking for journalists and camera crews?
- Is it close to public transport?
- Is there access to toilets and are there a sufficient number available?
- In a protracted incident it may be necessary to also consider catering for staff and the media.

### 5.2 Possible locations and activation

In the event of an incident requiring WCCG to establish a Media Briefing Centre if it cannot be established at WCCG HQ then requests for mutual aid should be directed to partner agencies within the City. The MAL CSU Communications Officer should establish a team to help to facilitate the media's arrival and set up requirements.



## Annex A – Communications Action Card

ACTION CARD 4		COMMUNICATIONS LEAD
Accountable to		Incident Director
<b>Responsible for:</b> Providing communication co-ordination, advice and support to the Incident Director		
Number	Action	Time Completed
1.	Attend the initial IMT meeting and commence personal log	
2.	Contact the provider (Level 1) or AT (Level 2) communications lead and agree, with CCG Incident Director, who will be leading on media communications on the incident.	
3.	Invoke <b>WCCG Crisis Communications Plan</b> and, with Incident Director approval, issue a holding statement or pre-arranged public health / safety messages in conjunction with Public Health England, if appropriate, as above.	
4.	If leading on the incident media communications assume responsibility for managing all public information and media communications. If provider or NHS England is agreed as communications lead then liaise and respond according, continually updating IMT. *If an SCG is established, and it is likely that a media cell will be established to lead on media and communication, then act as the conduit for IMT and SCG	
5.	If leading, rapidly formulate and implement an integrated media handling strategy on behalf of the local NHS response, and agree approach with IMT.	
6.	Deal with all media enquiries/draft statements/organise press conferences and interviews as agreed, with Incident Director, in media handling strategy. Identify and brief any “talking heads” and advise media (and stakeholders) on the regularity and timing of future media updates	
7.	Brief NHS 111 on the information / advice to be given to the public.	
8.	Identify communications officer/ cell (based on incident requirements) to: log media calls, monitor media and social media, update IMT, develop rolling question and answer brief, develop comms for staff and undertake on-going liaison with responding NHS comms leads and partners.	
9.	On stand down, ensure that all original documentation (including notes, flip charts, e-mails etc.) are kept. Close personal log.	
10.	Attend Hot and Formal debriefs.	
11.	Manage any on-going media interest in the NHS response, including social media.	

**N.B. MAL CSU holds Comms Officer details accessible on 0121 612 3806.**

### Annex B – Audience & Channel Choosing Tool

	Key Audience	Communication Channel	Responsibility
a.	<b>Local communities directly affected by incident.</b> Including residents, residents associations/panels, businesses, motorists, vulnerable groups & other community groups.	Broadcast Media	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director following liaison with NHS England Communications Officer
		BBC: Connecting in a Crisis arrangements via relevant radio station's managing editor <b>if nature of incident appropriate.</b>	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director following liaison with NHS England Communications Officer
		Printed Media	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director.
		Direct Mail/Leaflet	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director.
		WCCG Website	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director.
		Partner Agency Websites	Senior Communications Advisor to liaise with partner agencies' communications professionals.
		Public Meetings	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director. Possible role for WCCG Director or Clinical Lead.
		Social Media (Twitter, Facebook etc.).	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director
		Residents Associations	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director
b.	<b>Wider Wolverhampton Communities</b>	Email updates to existing databases.	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director
		Broadcast Media	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director following liaison with NHS England Communications Officer
		Printed Media	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with

	<b>Key Audience</b>	<b>Communication Channel</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
			Incident Director following liaison with NHS England Communications Officer
		Social Media (Twitter, Facebook etc.).	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director.
		WCCG Website	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director.
		Partner Agency Websites	Communications Officer to liaise with partner agencies' communications professionals.
<b>c.</b>	<b>Vulnerable particularly hard to reach groups.</b> None English speakers, the elderly, those with disabilities etc.	Support to Provider for enabling Direct contact through visits and phone calls, where required.	Communications strategy developed Communications Officer and Incident Director. Communications Officer to liaise with appropriate commissioning leads.
<b>e.</b>	<b>Key Stakeholder Groups.</b> Such as NHS England, Dept. of Health, Local MPs, Councillors and community leaders, Members of the Wolverhampton Resilience Forum.	Email	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director following liaison with NHS England Communications Officer
<b>f.</b>	<b>Staff involved in the response</b>	Major Incident Log/Email	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director.
	<b>Staff impacted by the incident</b>	Team meetings	Management
	<b>All other staff</b>	WCCG all staff emails	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director and Human Resources.
	<b>Unions &amp; staff associations</b>	Email	Communications Officer using key messages agreed with Incident Director and Human Resources.

### Annex C - Example Message Planning Worksheet

Event/Scenario - <i>Pandemic Influenza</i>			
Audience	Key Message	Supporting Facts	Communication Channel
Staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wash your hands frequently or use the alcohol based hand sanitizers available throughout the building.</li> <li>2. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or the crook of your elbow when you cough or sneeze.</li> <li>3. If you're experiencing flu like symptoms (fever, coughing, etc.), please stay home to avoid infecting others.</li> </ol>	<p>Hand washing reduces transmission of the virus from contaminated surfaces.</p> <p>The virus is spread in droplet form.</p> <p>Peak shedding occurs during the first 3 days of illness.</p>	<p>Flyers posted on employee bulletin boards, WCCG TV and restrooms.</p> <p>Briefing by managers at staff meetings.</p> <p>Email</p>
General Public	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of national media strategies (e.g. catch it, bin it, kill it)</li> <li>2. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or the crook of your elbow when you cough or sneeze.</li> <li>3. If you're experiencing flu like symptoms (fever, coughing, etc.), please stay home to avoid infecting others.</li> </ol>	<p>Following guidance reduces transmission of the virus</p> <p>The virus is spread in droplet form so using good cough etiquette helps reduce the spread of disease.</p> <p>You're contagious for as much as three days after you become ill.</p>	<p>Flyers posted in stores and other public places.</p> <p>Media interviews or advertisements in local newspaper</p> <p>Demonstration of proper hand washing and cough etiquette on WCCG external website or IP&amp;C staff demonstrating to care or rest homes.</p>

**Annex D – Blank Message Planning Worksheet**

<b>Message Planning Worksheet</b>			
<b>Incident Name</b> <b>Date</b> <b>Completing Officer</b>			
<b>Audience</b>	<b>Key Message</b>	<b>Supporting Facts</b>	<b>Communication Channel</b>

***Annex E – Media Organisations' contact details***

**Updated full list available 24/7 at Midlands and Lancashire CSU Media Team:**

**Tel: 0121 612 3888**

**Email: [Mediacsu@nhs.net](mailto:Mediacsu@nhs.net)**

## ***Annex F – Pre Agreed Media Statements***

The following statements should be used as a starting point only. Before release these should be agreed with the on call director and communications officer.

All incidents are different and all need to be treated according to the individual circumstances involved.

Below are samples of initial statements which may be suitable to respond to:

### **Provider issue:**

“Wolverhampton CCG is aware of issues with [name of provider]. The CCG is working closely with [name] in order to rectify this situation. Our priority is to ensure patient safety is maintained at all times.”

### **Primary Care issue:**

“Wolverhampton CCG is working closely with [name of practice] to ensure that all patients registered with the practice have access to high quality GP services.”

### **Physical disaster:**

“Wolverhampton CCG is working closely with all NHS organisations and other partners to ensure an integrated response to the [brief description of disaster]. The safety of local people is our absolute priority.”

### **Capacity issue:**

“Wolverhampton CCG is currently working closely with [name of affected organisation] to overcome current difficulties being experienced due to high demand on services. Patient safety is our absolute priority.”

### **Patient issue:**

“Wolverhampton CCG is aware of an issue relating to a patient [name of patient to be used only if already in the public domain]. We are currently working with [name of provider/other body] to ensure this matter is dealt with promptly. The welfare of all patients is our primary concern.

### **Public Health England issue:**

“Wolverhampton CCG is currently working with Public Health England to address [brief description of issue]. The health of local people is our priority.



**Major incident issue:**

“Wolverhampton CCG is working closely with all NHS organisations and other partners to ensure an integrated response to the [brief description of major incident]. The safety of local people is our absolute priority.”

**Procurement issue:**

“Wolverhampton CCG is currently working with [name of provider] to overcome difficulties associated with [brief description of issue].