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# Working WITH THE Media

A GUIDE FOR LOCAL MUSLIM GROUPS



مؤسسة قرطبة  
*The Cordoba Foundation*

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Anas Altikriti CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
NS Mueen AUTHOR  
Abdullah Faliq MANAGING EDITOR  
Alaistair Orr SUB EDITOR  
Syed Nuh ART EDITOR

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TheMuslimNews



The MuslimWeekly



# Foreword

**M**ANY MOSQUES, associations and local groups up and down this country have a story to tell. These accounts are usually inspiring and ground-breaking, providing examples of how local Muslims are benefiting not only their co-religionists but also the community at large.

Sadly, their good news rarely gets out: airtime and column inches would rather, perhaps understandably, seek salacious stories that conform to the stereotype that Muslims are somehow foreign, alien and give nothing back to British society. But it would be wrong to blame journalists alone. Working under tight deadlines, devoid of positive stories, it is up to British Muslim associations – and indeed individuals – to tell and push their account of how they are contributing to a cohesive, dynamic and vibrant multi-faith Britain.

This guide, 'Working with the Media' aims to offer some pointers for local associations, groups and individuals to positively engage with the media. It offers guidelines and good practise examples for telling their own story, and provides some tools to engage with journalists and the media.

'Working with the Media' has been compiled by The Cordoba Foundation, which is piloting the Muslim Media Empowerment Project (MMEP) – an initiative supported by leading Muslim media outlets and organisations as well as a cross-section of bodies, namely, London Muslim Centre, The Muslim Council of Britain, The Muslim News, The Islam Channel, Islamic Forum of Europe, and The Muslim Weekly.

In addition to the media guide, the MMEP also organises professional media courses for young Muslims. Individuals trained through these courses are expected to help local organisations (mosques, charities and campaigns) by offering media guidance and liaison. The Cordoba Foundation wishes to thank NS Mueen for the independent authorship and for the compilation of this timely guide.



**Anas Altikriti**  
Chief Executive  
The Cordoba Foundation



**Abdullah Faliq**  
Head of Research  
The Cordoba Foundation

# CULTURES IN DIALOGUE

Founded in 2005, The Cordoba Foundation (TCF) is an independent Public Relations, Research and Training unit, which promotes dialogue and the culture of peaceful and positive coexistence among civilisations, ideas and people. We do this by working with decision-making circles, researchers, religious leaders, the media, and a host of other stakeholders of society for better understanding and clearer comprehension of inter-communal and inter-religious issues in Britain and beyond.

Our activities include:

- Structured consultation and advisory services
- Face-to-face interaction with decision-makers and figures of authority
- In-house research
- Workshops, seminars and debates on pertinent issues
- Training and capacity-building
- Periodicals and journals
- Resourceful website



مؤسسة قرطبة

*The Cordoba Foundation*

Westgate House, Level 7  
Westgate Road, Ealing  
London W5 1YY  
Tel 020 8991 3372  
Fax 020 8991 3373  
info@thecordobafoundation.com  
www.thecordobafoundation.com

# Executive Summary

'Working with the Media – A Guide for Local Muslim Groups' is designed to help individuals and local groups understand and better meet their media and communications needs. The Guide produced by The Cordoba Foundation aims to introduce the media, outlines how journalists operate and offers practical advice for spearheading a proactive public relations (PR) strategy.

The Guide is written for local Muslim groups and Mosques who are unfamiliar with working and dealing with the media. With an understanding of their unique needs and an awareness of the difficult media terrain in which they operate, this Guide aims to address the challenges faced by such organisations.

The Guide will offer advice on developing a long-term media strategy and suggest a response mechanism when media enquiries come. In addition, this comprehensive Guide offers practical ideas for promoting your organisation and your initiative. It contains sample press releases, and rehearses situations where members of your association will have to deal with the media.

Finally, the Guide offers guidance on how to counter Islamophobia in the media through good news stories and how to raise complaints about reporting and misrepresentation.

This Guide is by no means exhaustive. But it does give an overview of how local groups can interact with the media and share their positive work with the wider community.

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# Section One

## Your Media Strategy

### Why your organisation needs a media strategy

Many local bodies such as yours do not always consider the implications the media may have on your work. Whether you are a mosque, a voluntary organisation or a service provider, you might rightly think that your first duty is towards your users and your stakeholders. They are the ones who make your organisation what it is, and it is towards them that your energy is directed. Whatever media coverage you may get for your good work is an added bonus, but that should not detract you from your core work.

Yet, however large or small your organisation is, the media can help or hinder your good work. Fundraising, public support and reputation are all affected by media coverage. In today's media environment your organisation will attract particular attention, especially if you have a faith or ethnic background.

The first, harsh lesson of this media guide is that bad news sells. Many journalists are always on the lookout for scandal and it is important that Muslim and other groups are prepared for this.

But the story out there is not always so bleak. Your organisation's good news has a place in the media jungle as well. But selling good news to the media is much harder than selling bad news for any group, large or small. Persistence, good organisation and a fluent understanding of the media can help you to sell those good stories.

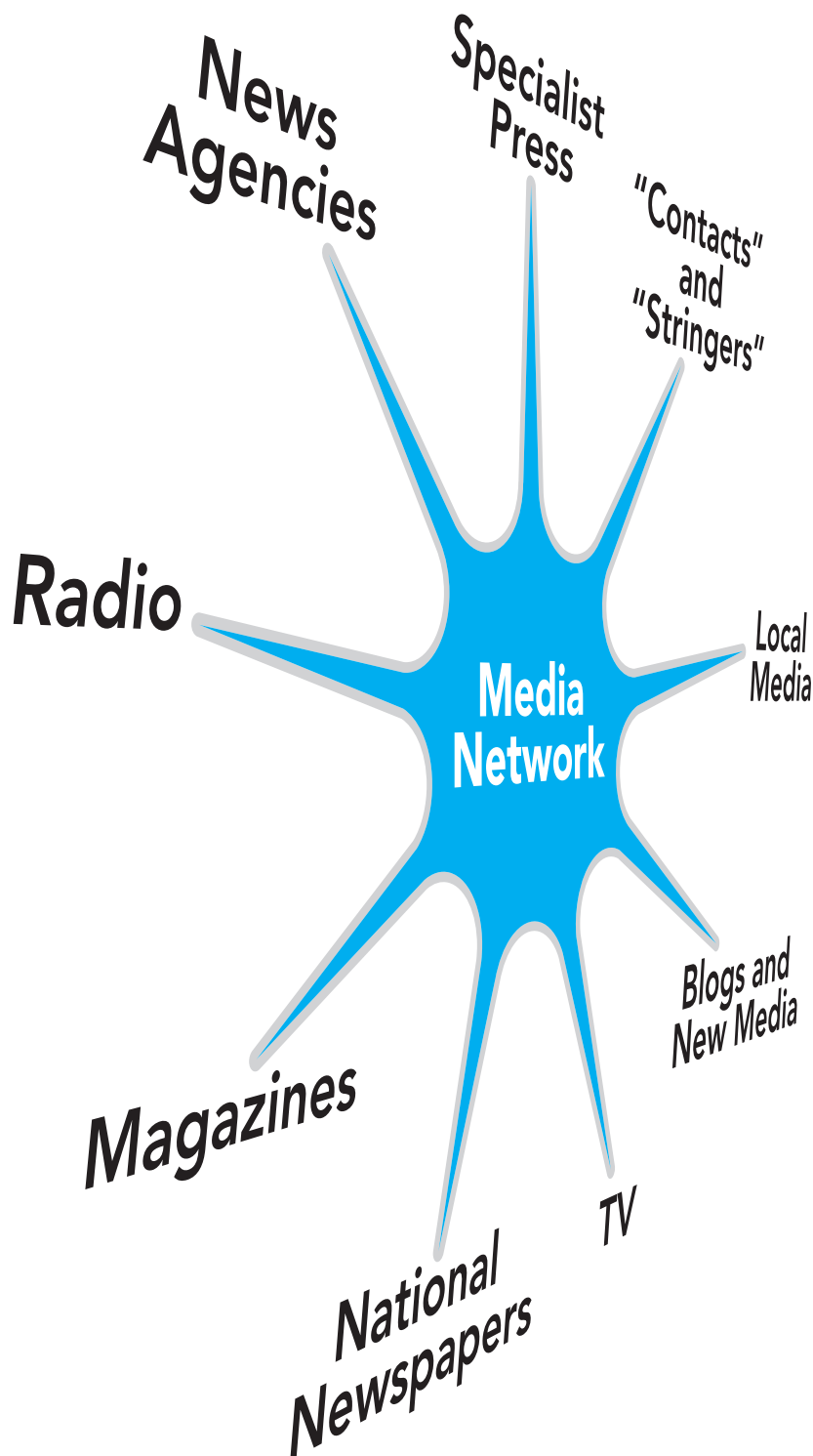
### The first few questions to ask are:

- Is your organisation prepared and equipped to handle the media?
- Is your leadership aware of the importance of the media and has it devoted enough resources?

This guide will help you through the process by drawing from the best sources – recounting experiences from journalists and experienced organisations.

## The Media Landscape

Before we begin, it is important to understand who we are dealing with. The British media industry operates in is one of the most competitive markets in the world. There are thousands of local media outlets and though there are a few dozen national newspapers and broadcasters, the advent of the internet and 24-hour news means that there is intense competition to attract you, the news consumer.



## What is News?

News is anything which is

- New
- Informative or
- Innovative

News is an account of what is happening around us. It may involve current events, public figures, or ongoing projects or issues. The media publish and broadcast more than just the news of the day. They also provide background analysis, opinions, and human-interest stories.

News is a precious commodity, not because of its scarcity – there is plenty of it in print, broadcast, internet and now mobile phones and ‘blogs’. News is precious because, with all these ways of consuming the news, audiences are now much more selective about what they actually read and watch. They are also much more selective about what they believe.

Media outlets have to cater to their audiences, and they compete with one another to provide what they think their ‘customers’ want. Competition can certainly lead to very good honest and factual news reporting. But it can also mean shorter, more exciting stories; flashy, or shocking images; crime, death, disaster, tragedy; confrontation, violence, controversy; or anything else that might attract viewers or readers. When taken to extremes (as in some tabloid newspapers or television shows), ‘news’ can become just another type of sensational entertainment.

In the next section we will explore further what news is and how you can make your story newsworthy.

## The 5 Ws (and H)

*Every news story tries to answer the 5 Ws*

**Who? What?  
Where? When?  
Why? How?**

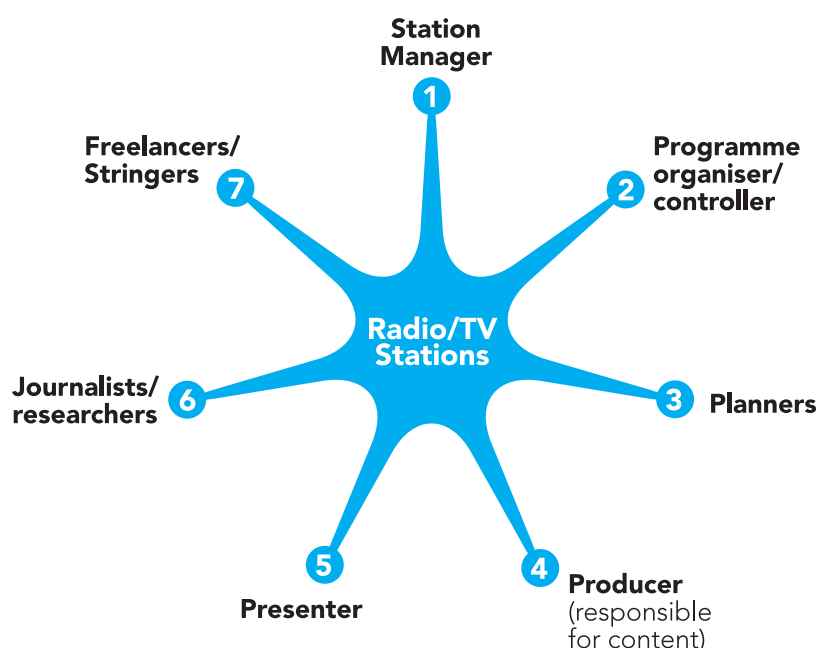
*I keep six honest serving-men:  
(They taught me all I knew)  
“Their names are **What** and **Where** and **When**  
And **How** and **Why** and **Who**”.*

*From  
"The Elephant's Child"  
by Rudyard Kipling*

## The Media Players

Large news organisations have several employees who perform many specialised jobs. There are producers and sub-editors, researchers and feature writers, 'stringers' and bureau chiefs. But when it comes to increasing your visibility in the media, the key contacts you need to establish are with reporters and editors.

The reporters and editors determine what is newsworthy. They are the ones who choose from the flood of information and events happening in their community and around the world. Stories are normally selected because of their importance (globally, nationally or locally), timeliness and potential impact (on individuals or society at large). Stories can also be written because a reporter has a personal or professional interest in bringing an issue into the public eye.



## Reporters

Reporters are responsible for coming up with story ideas, researching them, carrying out interviews and writing the stories in an interesting way. They are often assigned a field or subject on which to report, such as Politics, Entertainment or Health. In local media, such as local newspapers, there will be one or two news reporters whose remit is much broader.

In most newsrooms, reporters are given story ideas by their assigning editors. They're expected to follow up the idea by identifying and contacting sources and doing background research.

Reporters are also open to suggestions for story ideas from readers, viewers or other sources. Journalists always want to beat other news outlets to a good story so they're particularly interested in new ideas or unexplored angles.

## Editors

Editors are the 'gatekeepers' who have the power to decide which stories are newsworthy and which are not.

Editors oversee reporters and they are responsible for the content of the newspaper or news show. It's their job to keep track of what's being covered and how.

Most radio and television stations, newspapers and magazines have assigning editors who assign story ideas to reporters. They often determine what angle reporters should take and even who they should interview.

Editors also evaluate what their reporters write and have the power to approve it before it gets published or goes on the air.

## The Demands on Journalists

In helping you deal with and engage with the media, it is important that you understand the demands that are placed on the journalist. If you are responding to their enquiries, you must understand the multiple objectives they have to fulfil. If you are trying to get journalists to tell your story, you must also understand the avalanche of information that lands in their inbox.

## Information overload

News reporters are often on the lookout for good stories. But that does not mean that they always go through the many thousands of press releases and PR initiatives they receive on a daily basis. One BBC journalist recounts how their main fax machine is placed right next to the recycling bin, full of unread press releases.

Nowadays the internet means that information is readily available in huge quantities. A good journalist can always spot a good story from the avalanche of data that comes their way.

## The Tyranny of Deadlines

Tight deadlines are a fact of life in journalism since newspapers and news shows are generally distributed or aired daily. A TV or radio reporter may be handed a story idea (or two) at 9am, which must be ready to be aired for that day's newscast at 6pm.

Journalists must interview their sources and write their stories by mid-afternoon to allow time to review and edit their taped interviews/footage into a story. Newspaper deadlines are a little longer since many newspapers are now printed overnight. Reporters may have until 11pm to hand in their stories. Of course that too is becoming a luxury as more newspaper articles go on websites before they go to print.

For this reason, voluntary organisations with little or no staff often find it difficult to handle reporters who are on a tight deadline. Journalists require a response as soon as possible. If you are not ready to respond to them quickly, your side of the story will not be heard.

Of course, not all stories are written and produced in the course of a single working day. Features are in-depth pieces that cover an issue or event from different angles and can take days or even weeks to research, write, record, edit and produce.

Features also offer journalists the opportunity to spend more time exploring issues and to present them in a thoughtful way.

# WHAT THE MEDIA LOOK FOR

*An Insight by Channel 4's Samira Ahmed*



There are two kinds of stories that affect most people: organisations ask how can we get our events on the news, and the other is when news happens, and people and organisations get bombarded with media calls asking for reaction or interviews. When it comes to the former, you have to think hard about whether your event is really going to be of interest to a news programme; other than a local outlet.

More often, I think it's useful to plan for when news happens to you and be ready to grab the opportunity or manage the attention. After Damilola Taylor was murdered in Peckham, I was one of many reporters who suddenly descended looking for an inside angle of what was going on among young teenagers on the estate. Two charities, Boys II Men and Kids' Company, who have been working with troubled young people in the neighbourhood were quick to provide information and filming opportunities within a couple of hours. The result: a good news story about the positive work that was being done.

Be able to say yes or no to a request quickly. Journalists appreciate their time not being wasted. Have suitable interviewees or case studies (see pages 30–34 for press releases and media coverage) that you can call up at short notice. Equally I do tell organisations, if you're suspicious about the real angle of the story, then ask questions about how your interview will be used. If you're not comfortable, be prepared to say no. Sometimes you can tell that there's little in it for you. After 7/7 a friend of mine arranged for a TV crew to film at her community's suburban Mosque, but it was dropped. I pointed out that the producer hadn't established the "story" purpose for filming, and when it's vague to start with, there's more risk that things fall through. On the other hand, The East London Mosque invited all the world's news media in the day after 7/7 to film Friday prayers, and because of its size and location, it was a good gesture of openness that got them on the news, at a difficult time.

Only one or two bites of a news interview ever get used; so don't feel bad about ten minutes turning into 30 seconds. You must watch news outlets and read the papers, and get a sense of how they treat the stories that affect you; who are the reliable reporters. Then remember that when they ask you for an interview. Offer exclusives or first refusal to individual journalists you trust. But you have to accept that news agendas change, and sometimes stories get dropped. Good reporters cultivate relationships with reliable interviewees/organisations and come back to them in the future. Many of our studio discussions on Channel 4 News involve good interviewees we met in the past and remember when the relevant story comes up.



*Samira Ahmed is a presenter and reporter for Channel 4 News.*

*Educated at Oxford University, she began her career as a BBC News Trainee; reporting for Newsnight and BBC Radio and TV News, including a spell as Los Angeles Correspondent, when she covered the civil trial of OJ Simpson. She has worked as an anchor on BBC World, News 24 and for Deutsche Welle TV in Berlin before joining Channel 4 News in 2000.*

## Your Media Strategy

*This section will offer guidance in:*

- Developing a long-term media strategy
- Ideas for telling your story
- How to access journalists
- Developing a response strategy if and when you are approached by the media



# Section Two

## The Media and You

### Developing a long-term PR Strategy for your organisation

This section will explore the long-term steps that need to be taken by the leadership of your organisation. As mentioned in Section One, the work of your organisation can be either helped or hindered by the media.

You will need to put in place systems in your organisation to ensure that you not only respond to the media effectively but can also influence them and convey your key message.

A media strategy is a useful tool that can support an approach to media communications that is consistent with the stated aims and position of the organisation. Whether your organisation intends to actively seek media coverage, respond to media requests for information or just respond to media coverage, it is worth taking the time to put together a media strategy.

The following are suggested steps your organisation should take to help you be prepared to respond to the media and enable you to have your story aired.

### Determine your vision

Most good organisations are governed by a well thought-out vision statement. This identifies what the organisation is about, where it is coming from and where it wants to go. It determines the nature of its work, its output and its relationship with the outside world.

Determining your vision statement and, subsequently, your organisational strategy is not in the remit of this guide. Suffice it to say that your long-term organisational strategy should be guided by your vision statement and should include a media strategy.

### Outline the organisation's plan and goals for working with the media

What will be the extent of your organisation's involvement with the media? Will it actively seek coverage, respond to requests for information or comment? What are the key messages the organisation wants to communicate through the media? What are the areas of expertise that the organisation will offer to the media?

## The Media Strategy Questionnaire

In determining your media strategy, ask yourselves the following questions:

### **STRATEGIC**

#### **What are your 'unique selling points' as an organisation?**

Get volunteers, trustees, users and employees to say why your group is important, what impact it has, why they chose to volunteer/join, and what is so special about the organisation.

#### **How can you improve your media profile?**

Develop a clear idea of how you would like your organisation to appear in the public eye. What activities would you particularly like the public to associate with you? Look at the coverage you have had so far. Was the publicised information what you wanted it to be? Did you get any enquiries as a result of the media coverage, whether it be ticket sales or new volunteers?

#### **Are there vulnerabilities in your organisation that can be exploited?**

Bad news comes in many forms. Sometimes this may be generated by your own organisation. This could be in the form of unguarded comments made by you or your staff/volunteers. More probably, journalists will be attracted by the potential for bad news generated by your organisation. This is particularly the case for Muslim organisations.

Be prepared for this by creating worst-case scenarios. What is the most negative way the media could present your organisation or its activities? Talk through areas where you think there are issues and make positive changes to remedy them.

#### **What human resources are devoted towards your media strategy?**

Find out from staff/volunteers what systems are already in place for dealing with the media. You might find that (depending on your resources) there is more than one role, for example, someone producing the publicity and someone dealing with the media.

Is there someone responsible for liaising with the press? What is his or her brief? How are staff trained to deal with media enquiries? If no-one is undertaking this role, then select one or two people to be responsible for this. They will plan publicity, produce press releases and posters etc, and gather press cuttings/recordings of media coverage about your organisation. Seek training where appropriate.

#### **What happens if you lose key staff/volunteers?**

You need to have made contingency plans in case those you have trained to deal with the media leave your organisation. This could include having in place a media training budget, or ensuring that a number of staff/volunteers are trained regularly.

#### **Learn from others**

Liaise with other organisations to find out how they handle media attention.

Keep in touch with opinion makers in the wider community. Find out how your organisation appears in their eyes.

Keep tabs on coverage of voluntary organisations in the media. What gets covered and how? What mistakes do organisations make, and how might these be avoided? Bring in news clippings to board meetings, watch taped coverage and discuss with your colleagues.

## **PRACTICAL**

### **Is there a budget for publicity?**

Even a small budget, so you can photocopy posters and flyers, is better than none. When planning an event, ensure you build publicity costs into the budget.

### **How good is your IT?**

Do people have the skills they need to use the software you have? Can you invest in new software like desktop publishing? Can you share technology with other charities?

### **How much media coverage has your organisation had in the past year? And what form did it take?**

Consider radio, press cuttings, TV and online. You should assemble a 'press cuttings' portfolio. You should check to see if your key messages are being put across and rate every cutting on whether it was good coverage, bad coverage or neutral coverage.

### **Who do you normally contact in the media?**

Are you targeting the correct audience for your message? Aim to create and develop your own media contacts database.

### **Who can take publicity photos for your organisation?**

Get them to work with the publicity 'team'. Remember – a picture is worth a thousand words. If you are having a big event that you think is newsworthy you should think about hiring a professional photographer.

### **Where can you get 'good news stories' and case studies from?**

Everyone in your organisation should be encouraged to suggest ideas for stories, especially positive ones about your charity/group.

### **Developing your new agenda: Telling your own story**

Before you even contact the media it's a good idea to think about what kind of message you wish to project about your organisation and how you say your story.

## **SORT OUT YOUR LONG-TERM MESSAGE**

### **1. Develop your narrative**

The first step in planning your strategy for working with the media is to identify the message (or messages) you want to communicate. This message (or messages) should be clearly stated and will form the basis of any communication with the media. How do you want your organisation and your work to be described? Are you a 'Muslim' organisation or a community organisation, or both? Do you work locally or nationally, and is it with a certain section of people?

This can be conveyed through existing mission statements or through straplines. If your organisation does not have these, now is the time to develop them. This will add clarity and purpose to your work.

## 2. Making your narrative relevant

Many mosques and Muslim organisations are reluctant to engage with the media because they think the media are not interested in what they have to say or do.

Nothing could be further from the truth. It is up to you to make yourself heard and make yourself relevant. The work of your organisation affects the lives of many people and has indirect implications for many others.

Churches, synagogues and various other community groups regularly appear in the media. Muslim institutions need to develop the confidence to project their voices too. The first part of the challenge is finding something to say that will be relevant to others. The second part is making sure your message is heard and that the right people get to hear it.

The points above should inform your press releases and any other information that you send to the media. It could take the form of a simple strapline at the end of press releases:

“Organisation X has been providing such and such services to the local Bethnal Green community since 1994. Its aim is to improve the lives of local residents from all backgrounds”.

In the next section, we will provide templates for press releases and advisories. It is important that all of your subsequent material is driven by the objectives identified here.

## 3. Develop your media response strategy

You won't always be selling your story. Often you might have to respond to media enquiries or issues (particularly if you are a Muslim organisation). You will need a strategy to respond to the media.

### **ACCESSING THE MEDIA: WHO TO TELL YOUR STORY TO**

Now that you have determined your long-term message, it is important to consider who you tell that story to.

First, think of the outlets. Here, it is important to place your story into a category.

Stories tend to fall into three categories: News, Features and 'What's On'.

News stories can become features but, on the whole, news stories are shorter in terms of space (newspapers) or airtime (radio). As a consequence they are also less detailed. A news story can be more powerful if you can get someone to share their personal experience.

Sometimes, it is more important to be placed in the 'What's On' section of a newspaper before the event, than it is to be in the news section after the event.

### **NEWS**

"News is people. It is people talking and doing. Committees and Cabinets and Courts are people; so are fires, accidents and planning decisions. They are only news because they involve and affect people". — Harold Evans, former editor of the *Sunday Times*

In some respects press, radio and television look for different things in their coverage of news (see 'Getting to know the media' section) as they serve different audiences (e.g. age or location) but they all look for 'people' stories.

## FEATURES

These are usually longer stories designed to update the consumer on the facts behind a news item. It could be a human interest feature – a personal story, a family's experience, or how someone (or a group of people) has triumphed over tragedy or done something amazing. This might take the form of an opinion piece where someone explains how your charity has helped them or a profile of one of your volunteers.

It could also be a behind the – headlines – feature which gives the background to a story that has been making the news pages and might include statistics and research. For example, 'Life as a young Muslim woman in Tower Hamlets' might cover how many young Muslim women are living in the borough, what benefits or help they are given and what transferable skills they have, as well as personal testimonies.

And finally there can be an update feature that recounts what has happened to a person or group six months after they hit the headlines.

# LOOKING FOR A GOOD BRITISH MUSLIM NEWS STORY

## *Muslim News Editor Ahmed Versi Explains*

NATIONAL READERSHIP 140,000 PLUS OVER 1.5 MILLION ONLINE HITS.



“As the British Muslim community is so large and diverse, it is difficult to simply list the many initiatives of local Muslim groups. But I am always on the lookout for good local Muslim news stories, and my criteria include:

**1 Newsworthiness** – will it be of interest nationally?

**2 Can the community benefit?** For example, news of an innovative project in Tower Hamlets will certainly benefit my readers in Leeds who may wish to emulate their initiative

**3 Is it significant to the British Muslim community and the rest of the country?**

For example, recently I included a story about the Mufti of Kosovo visiting and speaking at The East London Mosque. This was important because of who the person is and what he represents”.



### *The Muslim News*

*Ahmed Versi is the publisher and editor of The Muslim News. Versi has interviewed world leaders from the late President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovic, to the late President Aslan Maskhadov of Chechnya, to Tony Blair. During the first Gulf War, he was part of a British Muslim delegation to Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia mediating for the release of British hostages.*

## Target your approach

As illustrated earlier in the Guide, the media is a complex network of organisations that have different audiences and objectives. You are more likely to be successful in gaining coverage for your story if you identify specific media outlets and target your approach to them. Issues to consider when targeting your approach include:

- Identify the audience you are hoping to reach. Find the publications, programmes or organisations which will give the right access to your audience.
- Plan the angle you wish to accentuate. Try to adjust this to suit the target audience.
- Consider the language you use. This will vary depending on the media professional you are dealing with, e.g. a specialist health reporter may be more familiar with mental health terminology than a general news reporter.
- Plan how you will approach the media for coverage – telephone, email, face-to-face etc.
- Consider whether you are able to provide pictures or opportunities for video footage or audio.
- Sometimes it is worth approaching more than one media outlet with your story. At other times it may be beneficial to give exclusive rights to a single organisation.

The key people to contact and requirements for stories to be covered will vary between different types of media (print, television and radio) and the type of programme they offer (e.g. news versus documentary). When you contact an organisation, you should always ask exactly what information they want and what their deadlines are.

The following tables give examples of how to target your approach.



Section	Key contacts	Type of stories	Requirements/ Constraints	Target Audience
News	Producers Specialist Reporters General Journalists/ Reporters Researchers	Brief news items and grabs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short deadlines mean that a quick response is required, sometimes within a matter of minutes, or at most a few hours.</li> <li>• Comments and grabs must be brief.</li> <li>• Spokespeople may need to be available early in the morning (from 5.30 or 6am) for breaking news of the day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most radio stations target a broad audience.</li> <li>• However, each station is usually focused on a particular demographic such as a younger or older audience which influences the content and music selection.</li> </ul>
TV Shows?	Programme Director Programme Producers Specialist programme hosts (e.g. health programmes)	Current affairs programmes Talk-back programmes Specialist health or medical programmes	<p>It may be possible to pre-record interviews if you are unavailable for live interviews.</p> <p>For talk-back programmes a spokesperson will usually talk 'live on air' to the presenter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some radio stations (especially community radio) may target specific cultural, language or religious groups.</li> </ul>



Section	Key contacts	Type of stories	Requirements/ Constraints	Target audience
News	Producers General Journalists/ Reporters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief news pieces read by the presenter or reporter accompanying footage and/or interviews.</li> <li>• Usually recorded on the same day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News stories are usually 30 seconds to two minutes depending on whether interesting footage is available.</li> <li>• Spokespeople must be able to communicate their key messages succinctly and without using jargon.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Television aims to produce programmes that appeal to a wide audience, with most people having access to television in UK.</li> <li>• However, specific programs are usually targeted at particular demographics.</li> </ul>
Current affairs	Programme Director Programme Producers Specialist programme hosts (e.g. health programmes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longer pieces (10 minutes to an hour) that may provide the opportunity for a number of interviews and varied footage of people, places and events.</li> <li>• Often recorded in advance – with more preparation time than news.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The journalist may require a number of different people for interview.</li> <li>• Additional background information and facts related to the issue may also be required.</li> <li>• The programmes will generally have a particular 'angle'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Television is a visual medium, so footage and interviews are necessary.</li> </ul>



Section	Key contacts	Type of stories	Requirements/ Constraints	Target audience
News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Editor/Deputy Editor</li> <li>• Journalists (general and those covering health, medical and political stories)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different types of news stories – from local to national and international.</li> <li>• Generally shorter in length than features and predominantly report facts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suburban and regional papers tend to prioritise local stories, while national or metropolitan papers are more likely to carry state, national and international stories.</li> <li>• Newspapers require fresh news or a different angle on issues currently in the news.</li> <li>• Pictures and names may be required to accompany the piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some newspapers have a broad target audience, with a state-wide or national focus, while others are focused predominantly on local issues.</li> <li>• Magazines tend to have more targeted audiences than newspapers in a particular age, gender or other demographic – e.g. young single women with high disposable income.</li> </ul>
Current affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekend Editor</li> <li>• Features Editor</li> <li>• Features Reporter</li> <li>• Pull-out Editors</li> </ul> <p>(Example The Guide in Saturday's Guardian)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer an opportunity to explore issues in more depth – with an opportunity for editorial comments.</li> <li>• Weekend papers often contain more feature stories, supplements and lift-outs compared to daily newspapers.</li> <li>• Magazines may include features about a person, event or issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Features will usually need to relate to current news, topical issues or an area of particular concern or interest to the public.</li> <li>• Additional background information and a number of interviews may be required in a short time frame.</li> <li>• Pictures will usually be required to accompany the piece for both newspaper and magazine.</li> </ul>	

### Who do I contact?

This Guide will not give you the names and phone numbers of journalists – there are far too many. It will, however, provide general contact details of the main key outlets for local, London and national media.

More importantly the following will give you a greater understanding of who to contact, and how.

### Develop rapport with media professionals

If you are going to actively seek coverage it is a good idea to identify a mix of local media and specialist media and develop regular contact with them. You may wish to compile a list of media contacts.

The first step is to identify who it would be most useful to work with. Call the switchboard of each media organisation you identify and ask for personnel who specialise in your area of work.

To identify media professionals you may want to work with, you should look at past work by these individuals. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Is their work fair and accurate?
- Are they in a position to cover your issues?
- Does their style appeal to you and your organisation?
- Alternatively, there are 'media guides' and databases that list media organisations and those who work within them. These guides are available by subscription online or alternatively are often held in public libraries. Organisations with media units are likely to have already identified contacts. Work with your fellow organisations to pool information on media contacts.

### **When working to develop media contacts, keep in mind the following:**

- Build relationships based on trust and some level of compromise.
- Establish yourself as a reliable contact by providing regular accurate information.
- Be available – journalists often work to short deadlines.
- Be persistent and don't be discouraged if your story doesn't get coverage. There are many factors that influence whether a particular story is included, many of which are not specifically related to the story itself, so keep trying.
- It may also be useful to find a local 'champion'. This may be a journalist or media personality who has a particular interest in your issues.

### **Plan how you will make contact**

The way you make contact will depend on the nature of your story and the relationship you have with people in the media.

The most common way to pitch a story is to prepare a media/press release. This involves writing a short piece about your story which includes the most important points, usually the 5 W's - 'who', 'what' 'when', 'where' and 'why' (see Section One).

Journalists are inundated with media releases every day. Yours will need to be done well in order to stand out. Tips for preparing effective media releases can be found in the Media Toolkit section. Once a media release has been sent, either by email or fax, the sender should telephone to offer further information or a spokesperson for interview or photo opportunities.

If you have formed a relationship with people in the media you may be able to call them directly to discuss a potential story. Alternatively, telephone the media outlet and ask what would be their preferred way of receiving information about a potential story.

## Media Response – Proactive vs Reactive

You won't always be selling your story. Often you might have to respond to media enquiries or issues (particularly if you are a Muslim organisation). You will need a strategy to respond to the media.

Be aware of how a story develops and be prepared to contribute at each stage. If a story about your organisation is not instigated by you, you can help contribute to the story at an early stage.

*The diagram (right) outlines the key stages in the development of a media story. As can be seen there are many opportunities in this process to support responsible reporting.*

### For these occasions you should:

- Have plenty of information about your organisation already written up and ready to distribute
- Have key messages ready for an initiative or event you are undertaking about which you are being contacted
- Have articulate spokespeople ready

Further practical information is available in the next section.

### Long-term

It is important that the media know who you are and what you do. If you want to be able to respond to media enquiries, you need to prepare information about your organisation and the areas you are able to comment on and circulate these with contact details at regular intervals. These details should be circulated at least six-monthly or as soon as details change. You might also want to re-send them following a relevant event that may spark a story.

- Proactive opportunities
- Proactive opportunities



A top-down view of a collection of various tools and equipment scattered on a light-colored surface. The items include a camera with a lens, several lenses, a flashlight, pens, batteries, and other miscellaneous tools. A semi-transparent dark grey box is overlaid on the top left, containing text and a list. The word 'three' is written in large white letters at the bottom.

## Your media toolkit

*This section will offer guidance in:*

- Publicising your organisation and initiative in the media
- Writing press releases
- Responding and being accessible to the media

# three

# Section Three

## Your Media Toolkit

### Plan your media coverage

You now know what your long-term PR strategy should be. You have an understanding of how the media operates which should enable you to make the most of this and create coverage for your organisation. At this stage, you have understood the importance of organising and planning to ensure you maximise the control of your news agenda.

### Step One: Complete your pre-planning check-list

- Is your story about people?

(For local media, it must involve or be of interest to people in your locality)

- Is it linked to a specific date?
- Is it a one off event?
- Is it about new research?

(And does it have relevance to people living in Tower Hamlets?)

- Is the story about a new facility opening, or one closing?
- Have you got a celebrity involved in your charity or endorsing something you are doing?
- Has someone won an award or achieved something special or unusual?
- Is it about an issue or problem affecting your users and clients?

### Step Two: Determine your news outlet

If you are organising an event, you might find that it is more important to be in the 'What's On' section of newspapers. This would then require you to make calls to the relevant media personnel and have relevant and succinct information at the ready.

### Step Three: Consider your language and approach

Identify media outlets – As discussed in the previous section. You might want to focus on London radio stations;

**ANGLE** – What will you say to bring interest? You might want to emphasise characteristics specifically suited to the audience, such as young people;

**LANGUAGE** – Make sure your language is simple and consider the merits of using formal language (good for broadsheets) versus informal language (good for tabloids);

**SPOKESPERSON** – If you are asked to comment about the story (especially in broadcast) you need to ensure you project the right image e.g. a young person and/or youth worker can talk authoritatively about a youth project.

## Write your media release

A media or press release is the most common way to pitch a story to the media. An effective media release will include key messages and alert the media to a story, raising enough interest for them to want to find out more. Journalists are on tight deadlines, so the less work they have to do to turn your news release into a news story, the more likely it is that they will be interested. When you are writing your press release you should ask yourself if you were a journalist writing a story, what information you would want and how you would like it to be arranged.

## Press releases should be:

**SHORT** – Most news stories are only a few hundred words long. Your press release should be an outline of facts and opinions.

**SHARP** – Use clear, strong everyday language. Keep sentences brief – one idea per sentence. Use short paragraphs – one or two sentences. Avoid jargon.

**TO THE POINT** – Don't get lost in the detail. You don't have to explain everything. If the journalist wants to know more, they will ask. But you must explain anything that the uninformed reader won't understand.

Use A4 notepaper, headed if you have it. Type, double spaced, with wide margins on one side of the paper – the journalist will want to make notes. Make it fit on one page, or two at the most. If you do use more than one, avoid running sentences or paragraphs from one sheet to the next.

Write 'Press Release' or 'For Immediate Release' and the date in large print at the top. Include the name and title of the person for whose attention the release is.

Short quotes give life to your message, but they must be attributed to someone. Avoid jargon, clichés, unexplained abbreviations, confusing or misleading statistics, and any facts you're not sure of.

Make sure you proofread your press release before it is sent.

## Embargo *See Appendix 2 about the need for good writing*

An embargo alerts the media that a story is coming so that they can be ready for it, but it requests that they do not publish any information until a time of your specification. Only issue an embargo if the story really needs it. For example Adam Abdullah is to be presented with an award at 12 noon, but she won't find out she's won until the event itself. The media should understand why the embargo is needed, but you can only request that they respect it. If you fear the press will spoil the surprise look at issuing two press releases – the first to tease the story and tempt journalists into covering it, and the second to be issued when the award has been presented.

## Heading – KISS: Keep it Short and Simple

Your heading should be a catchy, short title that sums up the story in a few words. Is it tempting to an editor deluged with news releases? Will it stand out in the editor's email inbox?

## First paragraph

Make sure your sentences cover Who, What, Where, When, Why (and how, if appropriate) in your first paragraph. For example:

Members of Tower Hamlets' Women's Forum . . . . . **WHO**  
will occupy . . . . . **WHAT**  
the city council chamber . . . . . **WHERE**  
tomorrow (THURSDAY) afternoon . . . . . **WHEN**

**WHY** can then follow in the second sentence:

"Members of Tower Hamlets' Women's Forum will occupy the city council chamber tomorrow (THURSDAY) afternoon. Their action follows the council's refusal to give women the vote in Tower Hamlets."

## Second paragraph

This should provide more information about the above.

## Third paragraph/additional paragraphs

This paragraph could be a quote from someone involved who is willing to talk to the press if requested. The quote must add a new dimension, such as the personal side of the story. Alternatively it could be a quote from your spokesperson explaining the importance of the story in strong, authoritative language, e.g.:

"There are now 350 young people living rough in this borough, a vast increase since this time last year", said Ayesha Mann of Stepney Youth Housing Help. "Such figures dispel once and for all the myth that there are no homeless people in our area. They have nowhere to turn and urgently need our support."

## [ENDS]

Write "[ENDS]" at the bottom of your press release.

## Contact Details

Your name, title, telephone number and home or mobile phone should be included in clear, bold print at the bottom of the press release. Provide a contact number for when you are out of the office.

This can make the difference between your story being covered or not. Make sure you are going to be available when you send out the press release. There's nothing more annoying for a reporter than to be told "our spokesperson is away".

## Additional Information for Editors

Describe your charity in a few words if this hasn't been covered in the press release above. Include your website address if you have one.

## Other tips for writing a press release

Avoid the temptation to put your organisation's name in the first sentence of the press release; instead, concentrate on the issue and how it affects the reader, viewer or listener. Where appropriate use phrases like "the first ever", "youngest", "oldest" or "biggest". Remember the media get hundreds of press releases each day so yours needs to stand out.

You could also try to 'sell' the story to a reporter in advance, and let them know when you are going to issue a press release.

## Distribution – sending your press release

It's really important to make sure the release goes to the right person. Make sure when you fax the release that it has a name clearly printed on the cover sheet. If you are unsure where to send it, find out the name of the news editor and send it to them.

If you are sending your press release by email, remember that many journalists block attachments from their in-boxes. If you have pictures or other information you want to show the journalist, you should say so in the information for editors.

## When to send your press release

Timing can be the difference between success and failure. Think about times of the day when news is thin and you are likely to get more attention. For example, early mornings are a good time to contact daily newspapers. Try to avoid Friday afternoons or the day before public holidays. You should scan the media to see what events are coming up. You probably won't get any coverage in your local paper if you send your release on the day the local election results come in.

## Build a relationship with the press

The best way to get attention is to build relationships with the local or national journalists you are trying to attract. Get in touch before you send your first press release, and offer to meet them, or talk to them about your story. Nurture your contacts so when you do send a press release, it gets a good reception. To any organisation with a media strategy, the media is as much a stakeholder as the board of governors and the people who use its services.

## Follow up with a phone call

This is crucial. You may have spent a lot of time crafting the perfect press release only to find it gets buried on a busy news desk. By calling up and checking your release has been received, you will bring it to the attention of the journalist who might otherwise have missed it. If your story doesn't appear within the next few days, call up and ask why, so that you can learn how to improve your press release for next time.

## Press Release Sample with Annotation

Church Street, Stepney, London, E1, United Kingdom



**NAME AND LOGO:**  
State clearly name of organisation and insert company logo

### PRESS RELEASE

03 May 2007

**DATE OF RELEASE:**  
State clearly correct date

## SOMALI CHILDREN FROM MOGADISHU JOIN MOSQUE CELEBRATIONS IN STEPNEY

A group of Somali children who are part of an acclaimed singing group will be joining the celebrations of a 40-year-old East End mosque.

**4/5 W: Address the Who, What, Where, When and Why.**

The group will be flown in from Mogadishu, Somalia and will be performing a programme of Islamic traditional songs at the London mosque, one of Tower Hamlets' historic places of worship. The event will take place on Friday 5th May at 7.30pm. Admission is free.

**2<sup>ND</sup> PARAGRAPH(S):**  
Provide concise and important details.

Earlier in the day group members will visit the Town Hall where they will be received by members of the Somali community and the chair of the Somali London Council, Mr. Abdi Abdullahi.

Mr Abdi said: "This is an exciting opportunity for locals to listen to authentic Somalian songs and celebrate the anniversary of this historic British, Muslim institution."

**QUOTE:** Add a quote from someone connected or relevant to the story or issue.

[ENDS]

**CLOSURE MARK:**  
This signals the official closure of the press release.

### NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Stepney Grange Mosque is Stepney's oldest Muslim institution and has a diverse Muslim community who regularly attend this place of worship.

2. For further information contact- Abdullah Adil, telephone: 020 7567 8905 Email: imam@stepneymosque.org.uk

**NOTES:** Provide contact details and any additional information not included in the press release

## Utilising 'What's On' guides

Your 'What's On' listing needs to be submitted in writing to the media. Make sure you do this two weeks ahead of the event as these lists are usually compiled in advance. Last minute requests for publicity may be unsuccessful.

### Checklist for a 'What's On'

- Date of event
- Time of event
- Where is it being held?
- What's it for (e.g. to raise money for cancer research)?
- How much does it cost?
- Where can you buy tickets?
- Is there parking?
- Is there disabled access?
- Name and telephone number of person to contact for more information

(if you don't want your name and telephone number printed, please state 'not for publication' when you fill in this box)

### Post-Event Publicity

Don't neglect this opportunity for publicity. People like to know how an event went, and how much was raised. If you want to increase your chances of press coverage after the event then why not take a photo at the event itself.

### How to get the media to use your photo

When you send a press release it's a good idea to include a photo if you can.

Some publications are happy to print your photos with a story; others prefer to send their own photographer.

Obviously out-of-focus and dark pictures won't get used. Think about the tips below:

- When you take a photo try to make sure it 'tells the story'
- A picture of one or two people may be better than a large group
- Try to make sure you get as close as possible
- An informal picture can be more interesting than a posed photo
- Get your logo in, whether it be on a sign in the background or on your branded t-shirt
- Say who is in the photo (from left to right) and spell their names correctly
- Make sure you supply high-resolution images.

Remember, you must have the permission of those whom you are photographing. The most effective way is by issuing consent forms to be signed by those being photographed.



British heavyweight and former Commonwealth boxing champion, Danny Williams interviewed in Hayaa Fitness, following the launch of the premier health and fitness centre which attracted media attention.

## Using alternative media to promote your work

Remember, in the digital age of the internet and email, press releases are not the only sources of information from which the media write their stories.

### Email newsletter (e-newsletter)

An emailed newsletter serves much the same purpose as a traditional newsletter. Think of it as a short newspaper that relates to your charity or voluntary group.

It can be circulated round your organisation if you set up a group email, or you could try to get a wider audience by offering it to people who visit your website through a free subscription service.

Through your newsletter, you will be able to build up a steady stream of media contacts.

### Website

Your website should be your central source of information. Any press release that is sent out should automatically have an accompanying web address. This is where a journalist will assess your credibility.

The website might just be a single page explaining, for example, that the support group meets monthly at a certain location, giving a contact address and telephone number. Or it might run to several pages with pictures, case studies, events, reports and news.

### Print newsletters and posters

All of these will help you build your brand as an organisation.

## ORGANISE A MEDIA EVENT

### Small Media Events

You might want to consider proactively sharing your work with the media by inviting journalists to your organisation. Mosques might want to organise iftars during Ramadan and invite non-Muslims and get the media to cover the event.

If you are inviting the media it's worth thinking how you can make the event more media-friendly. Obviously good talkers are essential, but what can the TV cameras film and where can photos be taken?

Can you get your logo in the picture?

No matter how much effort you put in to making your event media-friendly, there is no guarantee they will turn up. There might be another big story breaking on the day, so the best advice is to have a backup plan for getting your story covered.

## **Big Media Events**

Sometimes your story will be so important it merits you calling a press conference or a public meeting – for example if your organisation has just got some new funding or is about to start a major project. Only organise a press conference if you think it will add value to your story.

Ask yourself what the journalist will get from attending that they couldn't get either by talking to you on the phone or reading a press release.

Once at the media event, press reporters will be happy to ask questions from the audience, but both TV and radio will want to record individual interviews with your key speakers.

A press conference is not ideal picture material for TV. After they've filmed the panel, the press, the logo or report, and interviewed one or two people they'll still be looking for more pictures.

It's important you talk to the reporters in advance to see what they need; you may be able to supply some video, or perhaps they can pre-film a certain element of the story.

Think also about where you hold the media event, what time it happens, what else is happening on that day that may divert or distract journalists from attending your event. Stick to the timetable, making sure you start and finish on time.

Produce a media pack with your press releases, case studies (where appropriate) and fact sheets. These can also be useful to send to reporters who didn't attend.

## **Working with the media – organising your response**

Muslim organisations and initiatives are under a lot of scrutiny in the UK at the moment. Journalists are under pressure to find the most exciting and scandalous stories. Muslim groups can find themselves being targeted for the next lurid tabloid scoop so it is important for you to have a plan to deal with bad publicity. Before you respond to the media you should refer to this strategy and be as sure of the facts as you can be.

When dealing with the media in such situations, Muslim organisations might also seek to gain the support of third party groups who will provide support and testimonials. These may include another faith group you work with, such as a local church, or an NGO, such as a youth centre.

## **When the media calls, be calm**

Be aware of what is making the news as you may be asked to comment on a national story, or to provide a local perspective on a story.

Respond promptly to press enquiries; the speed and manner in which you deal with them will affect the media's perception of you and your organisation, and therefore the kind of coverage you get.

Don't be rushed – You are under no obligation to give an interview there and then. Don't start an interview over the phone until you have found out:

- Who is calling?
- What paper / station?
- What they want and what sort of questions they'll ask?
- Why they are calling you and are they talking to anyone else on the subject?
- How long the interview will be?
- What else it will be used for?

### **Off the Cuff' – Don't Do it!**

Get their telephone number and say you'll ring back in 5 to 10 minutes:

"I've got someone with me at the moment..."

"I'm in a meeting..."

"I want to gather my thoughts..."

### **Plan the Interview**

Think it over, or better still, talk it over with someone else. Always assume that anything you say might be used against you – once your quote or press release is out in the public domain, anyone can use it for their own purposes.

Unless you have definite reasons not to talk to the press, prepare what you are going to say by writing down a few bullet points – you don't want to sound like you are reading.

Identify one or two main points that are important to you and find ways to say them simply and positively. Can you give any examples? People love stories so identify any examples or anecdotes you could use during the interview.

Always return to these points if the journalist asks you a difficult or uncomfortable question. A journalist can only print or broadcast what you say. It is much better to repeat yourself than to say something you might regret.

Think what questions you may be asked. Don't spend ages worrying what the 'surprise' question might be. Remember, you are the expert on the subject, not the journalist.

If you can't respond in full by the journalist's deadline, give them a holding statement, as this will be better than making no comment at all.

### **Return the Call / Do the Interview**

Adopt a conversational style (using anecdotes where appropriate), have confidence in your knowledge and avoid jargon and acronyms.

Avoid yes/no answers – use words like "What I would say is that..."

A good journalist will want to check the points you have made. But if they keep coming to the same point 3 or 4 times they may well be fishing for an unguarded remark.

### **Don't Answer Leading Questions**

NEVER answer hypothetical questions. NEVER give the journalist more information than they have asked for. Don't be led off into areas you don't want to talk about. Be polite but firm, and stand by what you have said.

# PREPARING FOR GOOD RADIO INTERVIEWS



## Tips from Jenni Murray

When preparing for a radio interview you will have nothing to help you apart from the quality of your voice and the pictures you paint with the words you use. Listeners can't see a twinkle in your eye or an explanatory hand gesture, but any insincerity will be transmitted loud and clear as will warmth and humour. The best advice I was ever given as a young trainee was this, 'Jenni, just before the microphone opens, smile, the audience will hear it.'

Make sure you know something about the programme you've been invited to appear on: the Today programme is unlikely to offer more than three or four minutes for a controversial and heated debate. Woman's Hour might expect you to sustain a discussion lasting 8 or 9 minutes, but may well be equally challenging.

Remember that statistics and complex detail will cause an audience to switch off — what will keep them hooked are human examples — stories which illustrate the points you are trying to make.

Don't be afraid to speak to a producer about the nature of the debate in which you are being invited to take part. No presenter worth his or her salt will be prepared to give you the questions you may be asked, but it is perfectly acceptable to pin down the subject areas that you may be expected to cover. If you feel uncomfortable, you are within your rights to say no.

A radio studio is an intimate environment. You will be close to the interviewer and any other guests involved unless you or another contributor are in a distant studio. It's only under these circumstances that you will need to wear headphones. Be as relaxed as possible in the studio, listen to what you are asked and to what any other contributor is saying and respond accordingly.

I honestly can't think of any rules that would apply differently to a Muslim, a Catholic, a Sikh or an atheist. My purpose as a radio journalist is to look at the culture and politics of our time and enable those in the know to communicate those ideas to the general population in a fair, challenging, informative and entertaining way. And, of these, it is crucial to remember 'entertaining'. If an audience is not entertained, it will not pay attention.



**BBC  
RADIO**

*Jenni Murray has been working for the BBC mostly as a presenter since 1973, in particular Radio Bristol, BBC TV's South Today, BBC Newsnight, Radio 4 (Today programme), and Women's Hour. Murray writes regularly for various newspapers and magazines, and authored several books including The Woman's Hour: A History of Women Since World War II. Murray was nominated Radio Broadcaster of the Year in 1998; awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours (1999) for radio broadcasting; became a member of the Radio Academy Hall of Fame in 2007 and recently received a lifetime achievement award by the Media Society.*

## Don't Make "Off the Record" Comments

There is no such thing as off the record. Never say or write anything that you would not want to come into the public domain.

## Cut It Short If You Are Unhappy

"I'm sorry to cut this short but I've given you everything I can on this, and I've got someone waiting to see me/ I've got to get back to my meeting/ I've got another call waiting. Thank you, goodbye".

## In Summary:

- be clear
- be polite
- be upbeat
- give examples to illustrate
- avoid jargon
- concentrate on your key message

## Radio Interviews

Radio interviews can be live or pre-recorded. The key to a good interview is to treat it as if you are just talking to one person (the presenter or reporter), and not to all the listeners. If you have time to do the interview live in the studio you may find it easier as you will have eye contact with the presenter and they will chat to you before you go on air to relax you a bit. The microphone will be fairly close to you but don't look at it, focus on the interviewer's face instead.

Remember, if an interview is pre-recorded, it will be edited before broadcast. If you say something you don't like, say something like "can we do that again?" and they'll have to edit out your mistake.

Don't be afraid to ask as everyone gets his or her words mixed up from time to time! Presenters on a live show may use the time you take to answer their questions to line up the next piece of music. They are listening to what you are saying so don't stop talking if you lose eye contact!

Make sure you ask before you go on air if anyone else is taking part in the interview. Radio stations sometimes like to get both sides of a story on at the same time. Your interview may also be part of a 'phone-in' where you'll be expected to answer questions from listeners who call in. If it is a phone-in, make a note of the caller's name so you can respond using their name.

### Types of live radio interview

**PHONE** – Radio stations usually like to call you. If you are worried that your phone line might be engaged, then give them a mobile telephone number as a back up. You may be told that the interview is at 10.45am but don't panic if the call isn't made promptly.

Programme running orders have to be flexible, and it may be that the previous item is over-running. If you have another appointment and can only do the interview at that exact time tell the radio station when they book the interview.

**RADIO CAR** – Radio cars are specially adapted vehicles with a mast and are often used on outside broadcasts, for example from if you are having an event in a park or field.

**STUDIO AND OUTSIDE STUDIO** – If you come into the station to do an interview you won't be rushed straight into the studio.

Someone will take you through to the presenter and you should have time for a quick chat (off air) before the interview begins.

If you want a recording of yourself, please ask before you start the broadcast as it's easy to put a cassette on to record and you can pick it up as you leave.

BBC local radio stations often have small 'studios' scattered around the county. These are usually not staffed and you have to collect a key and let yourself in. The equipment is very simple and all you should have to do is put some headphones on and sit near the microphone.

### TV Interviews

Most TV interviews are pre-recorded as timing on programmes is very tight and your interview will be edited. If it goes wrong ask the reporter if you can do it again.

On the rare occasions where you are asked to talk live on TV, remember time will be limited so make sure you get what you want to say across early.

If you are doing an interview on TV make sure you are comfortable. Sit with your bottom in the back of the chair and use your hands to communicate (see more TV tips overleaf).

## Tips for Appearing on TV

01. Ask yourself "am I the best person to give this interview?" It might be that a colleague is better placed.
02. Always check the context of your interview. How long will it be? What other items will form part of the package and so on.
03. Once you are in the studio, or for that matter in front of the camera, you are performing. Never let the camera catch you unawares.
04. Know why you are there. What is the message or messages you are trying to get across?
05. We see people before we hear them; remember your appearance is crucial.
06. Remember you are talking to people in their own homes – you have to grab their attention.
07. Language is crucial. Avoid jargon (make a note of your own professional language and then find an 'English' equivalent).
08. Wherever possible use examples and pictures; try to avoid statistics.
09. Always prepare for any interview, no matter how thoroughly you think you know the subject. It is imperative not to enter into an interview without having given it careful thought and consideration.
10. Do arrive at the studio or location in more than good time; nothing is more likely to prejudice your own performance than being late.
11. Do watch the programme that you are likely to be appearing on beforehand to get some idea of the style and pace.
12. Do record, watch and discuss your appearances afterwards – we all learn from practice.
13. Do ask for a glass of still water, as both a means of refreshing yourself and as a prop in emergencies.
14. Do accept offers of make-up; not only will it help your appearance but the five minutes in the make-up room are a useful time for you to recap and revise what you are going to say.
15. Do feel free to ask your interviewer to cover specific points, although he or she is under no obligation to do so.
16. Don't be overfriendly with your interviewer. He or she is the viewers' friend, not yours.
17. Conversely, don't get into an argument with the interviewer. He or she will always appear to have won. But don't passively accept rudeness or aggression – you have as much right to respect as they do.
18. Don't take notes into the TV studio with you; they will distract you and the rustle of paper will distract the viewer.
19. Don't assume the viewer or even the interviewer knows a great deal about your subject; always explain and give background information that will be helpful.
20. Don't give monosyllabic answers; on the other hand do not ramble on at great length.
21. Don't look at the camera, always talk to the interviewer.

## Newspaper Interviews

Newspaper and magazine interviews are either done over the phone or face to face. Adopt the same approach as you would for radio or TV, but remember you are relying on the journalist's shorthand to take down your quotes. If you are given a little bit of notice, for example if you are being interviewed for a feature, you are entitled to ask for an outline of the article and the sort of questions you will be asked.

If you are in any doubt about whether they are going to quote you accurately, ask them to read their notes back, and clarify if you need to.

Also be aware of questions like "would you agree that..." or "do you think..." as a yes/no answer can be turned into a quote. These sorts of questions are part of everyday speech so don't be alarmed if you hear them. On the whole the media are not there to catch you out; they want to get the story across to their readers, listeners or viewers.

Newspapers often write the story from the press release only. They may call just to get a little more information and if they send a photographer he/she may check people's names for the photo caption.

## Getting training

Practical training is provided by scores of organisations willing to help voluntary groups. They help individuals deal with interviews. The publisher of this report, The Cordoba Foundation, is offering a series of training events in your locality.

## Dealing with bad news after the event – how to seek redress

Many groups and individuals are left scrambling after a news item has been published or broadcast about them.

This section will outline the difficulties mosques and Muslim associations face with the media. Many stories have appeared in the media that either misrepresent a group, or are happy to make outright lies.

Here are a few steps you can take if your organisation has specifically been misrepresented.

## Letters

Write to complain about the article and seek correction, presenting your side of the story. Some newspapers will print your complaint, and might even publish a correction.

### For your complaint to be effective, you should ensure the following:

- a) Be Brief. Make sure you state the inaccuracy and quickly follow it up with your truth
- b) Be Polite. Do not be abusive; be respectful and reasonable.
- c) Be Quick. If you or your organisation have been wronged, do not let it linger. Make sure you respond as soon as possible while the story is still topical, or else the news will have moved on and the paper won't publish your letter.
- d) Follow-up. Do everything you can to ensure that your letter is received. Send via email, post and fax. Then call up the letters editor to check if they have received your letter and ask them if they will publish it. Leave a phone number in case they want to call you back.

## Follow-up with the reporter

It may be hard to believe, but some reporters do take pride in their work and will have an open mind, welcoming feedback on their stories and correcting mistakes should there be reasonable cause.

Again, make sure you follow the principles above, and appeal to the editor if necessary.

## Seeking redress from regulators

If you have no success with the media outlet, you can seek adjudication from third parties. Page 49 [designer to check page number in final layout] of the following section tells you how.

## Taking legal action

Media reporting has become so serious that it may be possible to take legal action against a media outlet. If you are convinced that you have been defamed, you can seek legal advice. There are some legal firms which operate on a 'no win, no fee' basis, and if successful, will seek costs from the media company concerned.

However, before pursuing legal action, you must be absolutely certain that you have been wronged and provide water-tight evidence that false information has been made public about you.

# WRITING IN THE PRESS



## Nick Ryan's Practical Advice

When considering writing for the press, it is essential that you know your market, establish whom you are trying to reach (not simply "everyone") and choosing and picking your media targets accordingly. Have a message and have three to four points in-hand that you want to make – and make sure

you make them! This is particularly true for comment and opinion pieces (in print or online) or when being interviewed by any media outlet.

- Consider a training course in journalism skills.
- Joining a trade union can be very helpful – e.g. National Union of Journalists ([www.nuj.org.uk](http://www.nuj.org.uk))
- Become known as a specialist and reliable source of information on specific issues.
- Try to pitch an idea to a 'named' person – e.g. news and features editors. Names can be found by trawling carefully through the websites of the individual media outlets.
- Consider blogging. Many newspapers and magazines offer work experience shifts or internships e.g. [www.opendemocracy.net](http://www.opendemocracy.net)
- Newspapers such as the Guardian operate 'Comment is Free' blog sites; many local and regional newspaper groups also operate citizen media pages now. Whilst not paying much, these sites/areas can offer opportunities otherwise unavailable to the new journalist.
- Remember to summarise the importance of your story, or comment, \*fast\* near the top of your pitch. Why is it important? What are you going to say, and why is it only \*You\* can say this (and not anyone else)?
- Contact making is essential, so get to know those you wish to pitch ideas to.
- Don't make the mistake of going into the media environment looking for glamour or self-aggrandisement.



*Nick Ryan spent six years amongst an international network of far-right extremists for his acclaimed book, **Homeland**. As a freelance journalist, he has acted as a consultant producer on a variety of TV projects, including **Sky One** series "**Ross Kemp on Gangs**". Ryan was awarded a **Special Commendation** from the **International Federation of Journalists** (1999) and longlisted for the **Paul Foot Award for Campaigning Journalism** (2005), sponsored by **Private Eye** magazine and **The Guardian**.*



# The Ten Commandments of a Press Officer

- 1 Be accessible. Return calls as soon as possible. Reporters attach an importance to this that is hard to comprehend for those outside the profession.
- 2 Be helpful. If you cannot help, sound helpful. The trick is to leave the reporter in good humour, even when you can tell them nothing.
- 3 Be friendly, but recognise the limits of friendship.
- 4 Do not waffle. If you do not know the answer, or cannot give it, just say so. It will rarely be held against you. Never say, “No comment”, as this will only serve to stimulate speculation.
- 5 Do not lie. Your credibility will be destroyed for good. If you mislead inadvertently, try to correct the story before it goes out. If you are too late, make a clean breast to the reporter and, if necessary, explain to their editor that you are responsible for their getting it wrong.
- 6 Do not have favourites. The disfavoured will get even with you sooner or later.
- 7 Take journalists seriously. Keep in mind the tyranny of the deadline and the insatiable appetite of editors for fresh copy.
- 8 If you want coverage, make news. If you cannot make news, make irresistible phrases.
- 9 Do not waste time remonstrating with reporters when they have failed to write a story as you would have wished. Only gross acts of bad faith, inaccuracy and unfairness merit a complaint.
- 10 Always ensure that the basis on which you are briefing is understood and agreed. Your assumption should be that everything you say will be reported.

Source: Sir Christopher Meyer. Currently chair of the Press Complaints Commission; formerly Press Secretary for Prime Minister John Major

## Islam, Muslims and the Media

*This section will offer guidance in:*

- How to counter Islamophobia in the media through good news stories
- How to raise complaints about reporting and misrepresentation

four



# Section Four

## Islam, Muslims and the Media

### The prevailing narrative: the state of Islam and Muslims vis-a-vis the Western and British media

For many in the Muslim community, the media appears to be determined to portray a negative image of Islam and Muslims. This is particularly the case after the tragic terrorist events of 11 September 2001 and 7 July 2005. In turn, this has led to negative perceptions of Muslims and their faith by fellow Britons. In November 2007, a poll by YouGov found at least 35% of Londoners held Islam responsible for the 7/7 attacks. Coverage about Muslims is likely to provoke and increase feelings of suspicion and anxiety amongst non-Muslims. At the same time, such coverage incites feelings of insecurity, vulnerability and alienation amongst Muslims, and could undermine measures to reduce and prevent extremism.

A study into the media by the Greater London Authority in 2007 documented how Muslims in Britain are depicted as a threat to traditional British customs, values and ways of life. It demonstrated how in the media facts are frequently distorted, exaggerated or oversimplified. The tone of language is frequently emotive, immoderate, alarmist or abusive.

### Focusing on good stories

Despite such a hostile media, there are media outlets and journalists who avoid such a cynical agenda. Some are receptive to 'good news', and each organisation is responsible for promoting those news stories.

It is important that your group considers how your work can benefit not only your constituents but also those around you. This could include:

- Opening up your mosque or centre to non-Muslims
- Organising events that are open to all
- Having regular joint events with other faith groups
- Charity work that benefits a large cross section of people
- Seeking common cause, using Muslim stories that you can share with others.

As a Muslim organisation, there are several occasions in the religious calendar on which you can organise events, share with others and get the media involved as well. These include:

**Ramadan** – organising iftar events with local dignitaries

**Eid** – Inviting others and telling the media how Muslims celebrate this joyous occasion

**Hajj** – You might want to organise a local group which is about to go to the pilgrimage.

Examples of press advisories/releases are found in the Appendix.

## Dealing with Islamophobia in the media

It is a big responsibility to help ensure a true portrayal of Islam and Muslims. This will mean engaging with the media in a robust but constructive way. If you feel there has been an instance of Islamophobia, you can address it in the following manner:

### STEP 1

Note the title of the programme/ radio show and the date and time of broadcast. Make a list of your objections and comments.

### STEP 2

Phone your regional TV authority/radio station and lodge a complaint with the duty officer. Please note the name of the person to whom you are talking, the date and time of your call and the contents of your conversation.

### STEP 3

Finally, it is advisable to write to the relevant company stating the programme/show title, date, time and the reason for the complaint and also to state the name of the person you spoke to if you lodged the complaint over the phone. (See following pages for addresses and emails).

Get in touch with the relevant newspaper or broadcaster immediately by letter, phone or email if you have positive feedback or a complaint. Keep your comments concise. Include your address and contact details.

Details of the media outlet are found in the Directory section.

If you are not satisfied with the response, raise your complaint with the following Adjudication Bodies:

- Press Complaints Commission 020 7353 3732 [complaints@pcc.org.uk](mailto:complaints@pcc.org.uk)
- OFCOM 0845 456 3000 [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

For maximum effectiveness, refer to the adjudicators' respective Code of Practice when formulating your complaint. Send a copy to national monitoring bodies such as the Muslim Council of Britain who will be able to generate a strategic response.

## Directory

*This section will offer guidance in:*

- Details of mainstream media organisations in London and Tower Hamlets, as well as the national media
- Details of national Muslim media
- How to run a Ramadan media campaign
- The importance of using good language

five

# Section Five

## Directory

### The UK Media landscape

This section will outline the UK's media organisations beginning with London and Tower Hamlets. This is your first constituency. In the toolkit in the next section we provide a directory.

### London

#### TELEVISION

Local programming, including news, is provided by the regional services of the main networks: e.g., BBC London (BBC One) and ITV London (ITV1).

#### RADIO

There is a huge choice of radio stations available in London. Local city-wide stations include BBC London, LBC 97.3 and LBC News 1152. Of course, there are many radio stations that appear during the month of Ramadan including Muslim Community Radio which operates from the East London Mosque.

#### NEWSPAPERS

London has four city-wide daily newspaper titles – the Evening Standard, plus three free titles: Metro, London Lite (published by the Evening Standard) and thelondonpaper, all of which are available at London tube and railway stations. The independent weekly listings guide Time Out Magazine has been providing concert, film, theatre and arts information since 1968. There are a vast number of local newspapers in the London area, often covering a small section of the city.

Local newspapers in East London include the Council-run East End Life, the East London Advertiser and the Barking and Dagenham Recorder. All are listed in our Directory.

## TOWER HAMLETS

### East London Advertiser

#### East London Newspapers

138 Cambridge Heath Road  
London, E1 5QJ  
020 7790 8822 (Switchboard)  
020 7791 7799 (News desk)

### East End Life

Tel: 020 7364 3179  
eastendlife.news@towerhamlets.gov.uk

## UK & NATIONAL MEDIA

### Daily Express

020 7928 8000

### Daily Mail

020 7938 6000

### Daily Mirror

020 7293 3000

### Daily Telegraph

020 7538 5000

### Metro

mail@ukmetro.co.uk

### The Guardian

020 7278 2332

### The Independent

020 7005 2000

### The Times

020 7782 5000

### The Sun

020 7782 5000

### The Scotsman

0131 620 8620

### The Herald

0141 302 7000

## BROADCAST

### BBC

0870 010 0222

### ITV

0870 600 6766

### Channel 4

020 7306 8333

## MUSLIM & ETHNIC MEDIA

There are many Muslim media outlets. In television, Islam Channel has become the most active and watched across the country and in Europe. Channel S, Bangla TV, Al-Hiwar TV (Arabic), Press TV, and ARY Digitals are some of the ethnic broadcasters that have a large following in London and beyond.

In traditional newspapers, the Muslim News is the largest national paper, in London The Muslim Weekly and The Islamic Times are widely read. Amongst the many Muslim magazines, the lifestyle magazine Emel has an influential readership and in 2007 made headlines in the mainstream national press following an interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

### The Muslim News

PO Box 380, Harrow,  
Middlesex HA2 6LL,  
Tel: 020 8863 8586  
Mobile: 07768 241325  
Fax: 020 8863 9370  
E-mail: info@muslimnews.co.uk

### The Muslim Weekly

117 Whitechapel Road  
London E1 1DT  
info@themuslimweekly.com

### Islamic Times

PO Box 103  
Manchester  
M21 0YF  
T: 0870 443 8005

### Islam Channel

119 Cleveland Street  
London  
W1T 6PU  
T: 020 7374 4511  
F: 020 7374 4602  
pr@islamchannel.tv

### **ARY Digital**

65 North Acton Road  
Park Royal  
London NW10 6PJ  
Tel: 020 8838 6300  
Fax: 020 8838 6122  
fayaz@arydigital.tv

### **Channel S**

Prestige House  
26 Clifford Road  
London E17 4JE  
Tel: 0901 890 5884  
Fax: 08452 26 26 05  
info@chsuk.tv

### **Bangla TV**

Warton House  
3rd Floor  
150 High Street  
London E15 2NE  
Tel: 0870 005 6778  
Fax: 0208 536 2751  
info@banglatv.co.uk

### **Press TV**

[www.presstv.com](http://www.presstv.com)

### **Al Hiwar TV**

[www.alhiwar.tv](http://www.alhiwar.tv)

### **Aljazeera English (TV)**

<http://english.aljazeera.net>

### **Muslim Community Radio (MCR)**

[www.mcrlive.net](http://www.mcrlive.net)

### **Useful URLs**

[www.journalism.co.uk](http://www.journalism.co.uk)

[www.guardian.co.uk/media](http://www.guardian.co.uk/media)

[www.salaam.co.uk](http://www.salaam.co.uk)

[www.islamonline.net](http://www.islamonline.net)

[www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

[www.muslimdirectory.co.uk](http://www.muslimdirectory.co.uk)

[www.blog.islamicforumeurope.com](http://www.blog.islamicforumeurope.com)



Appendix

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Six

# Section Six – Appendix

## APPENDIX 1

### How to do a Ramadan Media Campaign

During the month of Ramadan, you can inform the local media about how your community is observing this time.

The following examples could be utilised to raise awareness in the media and subsequently, in your local community:

#### Newspapers

1. Feature article on Muslim community – contact either the Feature Editor and/or Religion Editor where available
2. Food section article on Ramadan recipes – contact Food Editor where available
3. List items on open day and Eid prayers – contact 'What's On' or 'Events Editor'
4. Letters to the editor about true image of British Muslims – contact 'Letters Editor'
5. Opinion articles about stereotyping of Muslims – contact 'Editorial Page Editor'
6. Photograph of Eid prayers and/or Eid bazaar – contact 'Features Editor', 'News Editor' and 'Photo Editor'

#### Television

1. News package (approx. 1.5 minutes in length) about local Muslim community and Ramadan – contact 'News Assignment/Planning Editor'
2. 30 second video item on Eid prayers/open evening/bazaar – contact 'Planning Editor' or 'Producers'.
3. Announcements at beginning of Ramadan and time of sunset each day – contact 'Weather Editors'.

#### Radio

1. Talk show appearances by community leaders discussing Ramadan – contact 'Show Producer'.
2. News of Eid Prayer or iftar for homeless – contact 'Producer'/'Researcher'.

#### STEPS TO TAKE

1. Form a local committee to handle publicity for Ramadan activities. Make sure the committee has representatives from all local groups. Do not waste time and energy setting up a formal structure. Just choose a co-ordinator and include people who are willing to do the work. Decide who will do what, and make sure that you are sticking to realistic targets within the budget of your community.

2. Decide which activities your community will undertake. Some suggestions are:

- Moon-sighting event
- Ramadan 'Taste of Islam' open day at the Islamic Centre
- Eid Bazaar
- Public lectures on Ramadan and Islamic solutions for societal problems
- School presentations by students, parents and visitors from local Muslim groups
- Iftars for the homeless
- Eid treats for non-Muslim classmates

3. To publicise these events, modify the materials for your own organisation's use. To find the phone and fax numbers for these people, just call the media outlet in question and ask. Also refer to the Directory section for further information about national and Muslim news agencies. Advertise in places like the MCB's website.

4. **TIMING** – Call/fax/email the media now! Events editors need at least two weeks lead time to publish an item. Feature editors and others need at least that long to develop and schedule stories. Public announcements also need time to be approved and scheduled. Make

initial contact as soon as you can and then follow up with phone calls to the same people a couple of days before each activity. When you make calls close to the day of any event, focus on the television news assignment editors and newspaper society and photo editors.

## Press Release Sample

Church Street, Stepney, London, E1, United Kingdom



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1 September 2008

## MUSLIM FAST OF RAMADAN BEGINS

Ramadan fast offers opportunity to learn more about Islam and Muslims

On 1 September 2008, Muslims in Tower Hamlets will join fellow followers around the world in commencing the month-long fast of Ramadan. Ramadan is the month in the Islamic lunar calendar during which Muslims abstain from food, drink and sensual pleasures from the break of dawn to sunset.

The fast is performed to learn discipline, self-restraint and generosity, while obeying God's commandments. Fasting (along with the declaration of faith, daily prayers, charity and pilgrimage to Mecca) is one of the "five pillars" of Islam. Because the Islamic calendar is based on the lunar system, Ramadan begins about eleven days earlier each year. The end of Ramadan will be marked by communal prayers and "Eid ul-Fitr," the Feast of the Fast-Breaking, on 29 September 2008.

"Ramadan is a time to ponder more on the virtues of tolerance, patience and sincerity. Given the current circumstances, it is also a great opportunity for people of other faiths to learn more about the Islamic way of life, and it is up to us as Muslims to correct the distorted image of Islam by setting good examples," said Jamil Aslam of Stepney Grange Mosque.

The Stepney Grange Mosque will be opening its doors to all on the evening of 13 September and will invite the local community to partake in the meal to break the day-long fast.

Demographers say Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in this country and around the world. There are an estimated 2 million Muslims in Britain and some 1.2 billion worldwide.

**[ENDS]**

### NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. There are an estimated 50,000 Muslims in Stepney.
2. Stepney Grange Mosque is Stepney's oldest Muslim institution and has a diverse Muslim community who regularly attend this place of Muslim worship.
3. For further information contact- Abdullah Adil, telephone: 020 7567 8905 Email: imam@stepneymosque.org.uk

## EXAMPLE OF HOW TO GENERATE GREATER MEDIA AWARENESS AROUND RAMADAN

### RAMADAN FACTS

#### WHO MUST FAST?

Fasting is compulsory for those who are mentally and physically fit, past the age of puberty, in a settled situation (not travelling), and are sure fasting is unlikely to cause real physical or mental injury.

#### SPECIAL ACTIVITIES & EVENTS IN RAMADAN

- Special prayers, called Taraweeh, are performed after the daily night time prayer.
- Lailat ul-Qadr ('Night of Power' or 'Night of Destiny') marks the anniversary of the night on which the Prophet Muhammad first began receiving revelations from God, through the angel Gabriel. Muslims believe Lailat ul-Qadr is one of the last odd-numbered nights of Ramadan.

#### TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

- Breaking the daily fast with dates and milk or water
- Reading the entire Quran during Ramadan
- Social visits, communal and festive iftars (breaking of fast meals) are encouraged.

#### EID UL-FITR ("FESTIVAL OF FAST-BREAKING") AT THE END OF RAMADAN

- Eid begins with special morning prayers on the first day of Shawwal, the month following Ramadan on the Islamic lunar calendar.
- It is forbidden to perform an optional fast during Eid because it is a time for relaxation.
- During Eid Muslims greet each other with the phrase "Eid Mubarak" (eed-moo-bar-ak), meaning "Blessed Eid".

### RAMADAN Q&A

#### Q: How did the fast during Ramadan become obligatory for Muslims?

**A** The revelations from God to the Prophet Muhammad that would eventually be compiled as the Qur'an began to be revealed during Ramadan in the year 610, but the fast of Ramadan did not become a religious obligation for Muslims until the year 624. The obligation to fast is explained in the second chapter of the Quran: "O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint... Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Quran, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting..." (Qur'an 2:183-185).

#### Q: What are the benefits of fasting?

**A** Muslims abstain from worldly comforts during Ramadan, and this increases compassion for those in need of the necessities of life. The purpose of this is to show gratitude and appreciation to The Creator, pursue reflection and self-purification and find time for renewed focus on spirituality. Muslims also appreciate the feeling of togetherness shared by family and friends throughout the month. Perhaps the greatest practical benefit is the yearly lesson in self-restraint and discipline that can carry forward to other aspects of a Muslim's life such as work and education. Ramadan is seen as a blessing as it is an opportunity for forgiveness of past sins. Fasting also has many health benefits – our stomachs work 24 hours a day all year, so Ramadan is a time to give not only the soul, but the body also, a rest – and to 're-charge' the human battery for the rest of the year.

### **Q: Why does Ramadan begin on a different day each year?**

**A** The Islamic calendar is based on lunar months, and therefore, Ramadan begins about eleven days earlier each year. Throughout a Muslim's lifetime, Ramadan will fall both during winter months, when the days are short, and summer months, when the days are long and the fast is more difficult. In this way, the difficulty of the fast is evenly distributed between Muslims living in the northern and southern hemispheres.

### **Q: What is Laylatul-Qadr?**

**A** Laylatul-Qadr ("Night of Power") marks the anniversary of the night on which the Prophet Muhammad first began receiving revelations from God, through the angel Gabriel. An entire chapter in the Quran deals with this night: "We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of Power: and what will explain to thee what the Night of Power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. Therein come down the angels and the Spirit by God's permission, on every errand. Peace! ... This until the rise of morn." (Chapter 97). Muslims believe Laylatul-Qadr is one of the last odd-numbered nights of Ramadan.

### **Q: Is it difficult to perform the fast in Britain?**

**A** In many ways, fasting in British society is easier than fasting in areas where the climate is extremely hot. This year at least, the number of daylight hours will be less than when Ramadan occurs during the spring or summer. In Muslim countries, most people are observing the fast, so there are fewer temptations such as luncheon meetings, daytime celebrations and offers of food from friends. Many British Muslims would prefer a daytime work shift during Ramadan so that they may break the fast with their families and attend evening prayers.

### **Q: How can non-Muslim co-workers and friends help someone who is fasting?**

**A** Employers, co-workers and teachers can help by understanding the

significance of Ramadan and by showing a willingness to make minor allowances for its physical demands. Special consideration can be given to such things as requests for vacation time, the need for flexible early morning or evening work schedules and lighter homework assignments. It is also very important that Muslim workers and students be given time to attend Eid prayers at the end of Ramadan. Eid is as important to Muslims as Christmas and Yom Kippur are to Christians and Jews respectively. A small token such as a card (there are Eid cards available from Muslim bookstores) or baked goods given to a Muslim co-worker during Eid ul-Fitr would also be greatly appreciated. Hospital workers should be aware that injections and oral medications might break the fast. Patients should be given the opportunity to decide whether or not their condition exempts them from fasting.

### **Q: Do people normally lose weight during Ramadan?**

**A** Some people do lose weight, but others may not. It is recommended that meals eaten during Ramadan be light, but most people can't resist sampling special sweets and foods associated with Ramadan.

### **Q: What is the significance of Eid al Fitr, and how do Muslims celebrate it?**

**A** Eid marks the completion of Ramadan, when it is compulsory on all Muslims to eat and break their fasts. It is a day of reward, and Muslims offer Eid prayers and give money (Zakat al Fitr) to the poor in their locality, to ensure that everyone eats and celebrates at least on this day. Eid is a happy, joyous occasion and Muslims enjoy great festivities on this day. The day begins when Muslims beautify themselves by wearing new/clean clothes and perfume and go to the Mosque early in the morning for traditional Eid prayers. After this, family and friends pay visits to each other, exchanging gifts and warm wishes. It is an opportunity for a new beginning.

## APPENDIX 2

### The importance of using the right language

Here are a few gems to remind you of the importance of language. Whatever you deliver in written form, make sure you pay particular attention to the quality of the writing. At the best of times, it means you should always strive to keep things simple. Remember to keep your text engaging, devoid of abusive or antagonistic language, and never forget – always proofread your work!



#### GEORGE ORWELL'S 5 RULES FOR WRITERS

- 1 Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
- 2 Never use a long word where a short one will do.
- 3 If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
- 4 Never use the passive where you can use the active.
- 5 Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.

Break any of these rules sooner than say anything barbarous.

From 'Politics and the English Language' 1946

## APPENDIX 3

### Suggested Reading and Resources

#### Media 08: The Essential Guide to the Changing Media Landscape

By Janine Gibson  
Guardian Newspapers Ltd  
*This is an essential handbook for media professionals, journalists and students featuring MediaGuardian's unrivalled industry analysis – plus more than 13,000 up-to-date key contacts including email addresses.*

#### My Trade: A Short History of British Journalism

By Andrew Marr  
Pan Books (2005)  
*An extremely readable and utterly unique modern social history of British journalism, with all its odd glamour, smashed hopes and future possibility.*

#### Flat Earth News: An Award-winning Reporter Exposes Falsehood, Distortion and Propaganda in the Global Media

By Nick Davies  
Chatto and Windus (2005)  
*A hard-edged, alternative insight into the news and media industry.*

#### British Muslims Media Guide

By Ehsan Masood  
*A good guide about British Muslims for the media*

#### Writers' & Artists' Yearbook website

Comprehensive lists of UK media outlets  
[www.writersandartists.co.uk](http://www.writersandartists.co.uk)





مؤسسة قرطبة

*The Cordoba Foundation*

Westgate House, Level 7, Westgate Road, Ealing, London W5 1YY

TEL 020 8991 3372 FAX 020 8991 3373 EMAIL [info@thecordobafoundation.com](mailto:info@thecordobafoundation.com)

[www.thecordobafoundation.com](http://www.thecordobafoundation.com)