Ymddiriedolaeth Ddiwylliannol Cultural Trust

Awen Cultural Trust

Crisis Communications Plan

3rd edition, October 2024

Contents

Crisis and Communications 3
Crisis Response Team 4
Authorised Media Spokespeople 4
Incident Response Flow Chart 5
Roles and Responsibilities 6
Timetable to prepare for and follow in the event of a crisis 8
Crisis Template 13
Pre-Prepared Media Statements 15

Crisis and Communications

A crisis is defined as any event that can cause harm to Awen's reputation. If an incident occurs that could generate media interest, this crisis communications plan will ensure that staff can alert appropriate colleagues, agree a position statement and key messages, and follow all media protocols.

The types of crises that could be covered by this plan include health and safety incidents, building failures, financial irregularities or a cyber-attack. The plan aims to reduce the risks to the charity, to inform external and internal stakeholders as required and to evaluate and learn from the incident; maintaining the confidence of public, staff and stakeholders is critical.

Consistent and effective communication will be an essential element of Awen's response to a crisis or disruptive event. Irrespective of the cause of the incident Awen may need to warn and inform the public, staff, trustees and other stakeholders of the hazards or service disruption that may occur.

An organisation of Awen's size is more vulnerable to the effects of an emergency or disaster than a bigger company so it is critical that we are prepared just in case the worst does happen. Evidence from other organisations' responses to crises demonstrates that there are certain features which are common to those companies who have successfully navigated a crisis situation. Accepting responsibility (if appropriate) is key, as is apologising, both in word and deed. Clearly the problem needs to be fixed and, longer term, changes need to be implemented to ensure the crisis doesn't reoccur. Furthermore, the response should be personal (press releases, for example, should always be attributed to a named individual and never a 'spokesperson'), consistent and should be delivered via the most appropriate channel(s).

Principles of crisis communications (applying equally to both external and internal communications):

- Speed and scale: get information out as soon and as widely as possible.
- Stick to the facts – don't speculate.
- Identify your audience and tailor your message to be relevant to them.
- Make sure you are using the correct communications channel to reach your target audience.
- Coordinate messages with partner agencies to ensure they are consistent.
- Communicate with compassion and emphasise concern for those affected.

Crisis Response Team

Name: Richard Hughes
Job Title: Chief Executive
Phone nos. (inc. out of hours): (01656) 754825 or 07725997891
Email: richard.hughes@awen-wales.com

Name: Toni Cosson
Job Title: Head of Marketing and Communications
Phone nos. (inc. out of hours): 07808782877
Email: toni.cosson@awen-wales.com

Name: Richard Bellinger
Job Title: Director of Operations
Phone nos. (inc. out of hours): (01656) 754825 or 0777323869
Email: richard.bellinger@awen-wales.com

Name: Ceri Evans
Job Title: Director of Business Development and Partnerships
Phone nos. (inc. out of hours): 07846901540
Email: ceri.evans@awen-wales.com

Name: Steve Dimmick
Job Title: Commercial Director
Phone nos. (inc. out of hours): 07732 901742
Email: steve.dimmick@awen-wales.com

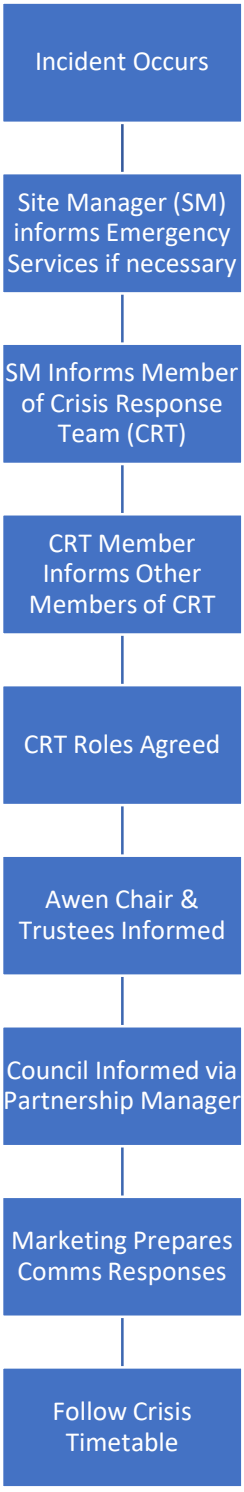
Authorised Media Spokespeople

Name: Richard Hughes
Job Title: Chief Executive
Phone nos. (inc. out of hours): (01656) 754825 or 07725997891
Email: richard.hughes@awen-wales.com

Name: Toni Cosson
Job Title: Head of Marketing and Communications
Phone nos. (inc. out of hours): 07808782877
Email: toni.cosson@awen-wales.com

Name: Ceri Evans
Job Title: Director of Business Development and Partnerships
Phone nos. (inc. out of hours): 07846901540
Email: ceri.evans@awen-wales.com

Incident Response Flow Chart



Chief Executive (or Directors)

Role

The Chief Executive, or in his absence the Director of Operations, the Director of Business Development or the Commercial Director, is responsible for Awen's response to any major incident and will direct the overall strategy.

Responsibilities:

- Formally activate Awen's crisis response.
- Maintain an overview of the incident to determine Awen's strategic response and allocate responsibilities to colleagues.
- Strategic liaison with council partners, where required, and with other partners.
- Work with the Head of Marketing and Communications to set and agree the communication strategy.
- Act as the named representative of Awen in press releases, social media posts etc. and be the face and voice of Awen in TV/radio interviews.
- Perform the role of Media Spokesperson (joint responsibility with Head of Marketing and Communications), communicating facts and information about what is being done about the crisis and conveying key messages that Awen wishes to disseminate.
- Horizon scan and identify the likely service disruptions.
- Risk assess decisions and response strategies and identify alternative options.
- Identify staff to participate in implementing any emergency measures as necessary.
- Inform the Chair and Board of Trustees and advise on whether the incident should be reported to the Charities Commission.
- In consultation with the Chair, ensure ongoing communications with the Board and call an emergency Board meeting as necessary to maintain strategic governance.
- Log all actions and decisions for inclusion in the final incident report.
- Speak in person to those closely involved e.g. family, colleagues.

Head of Marketing and Communications

Role

To liaise with Awen colleagues at all levels who are responding to the incident or emergency and ensure that their communications needs are effectively addressed.

Responsibilities:

- Liaise with the Executive Leadership Team/Crisis Response Team.
- Develop and implement the communications strategy.
- Advise all relevant colleagues on communications related matters.
- Develop key media lines (statements, press releases, interviews and media visits as appropriate).

- Perform the role of Media Spokesperson (joint responsibility with Chief Executive), communicating facts and information about what is being done about the crisis and conveying key messages that Awen wishes to disseminate.
- Ensure that all media enquiries relating to the incident are logged and actioned as necessary.
- Ensure that internal and external media/social media are managed and monitored.
- Update digital channels (website/social media) to warn, inform and reassure staff, the public and other stakeholders as necessary.
- Directing and monitoring the ongoing communications once the immediate situation has passed.

Timetable to prepare for and follow in the event of a crisis

Actions prior to a crisis		
Action	**Actioned by**	**Completed (please date)**
Template media statements prepared for possible crisis communications situations	Head of Marketing and Communications	Revision completed 01.10.24
Set up media and social media monitoring systems	Head of Marketing and Communications	Completed 01.10.24 (part of Awen's Hootsuite package)
A Crisis Response Team appointed, comprising of CEO and senior managers, to make key decisions in the event of a crisis	Chief Executive	Completed
Out of hours contact details for crisis response team recorded	As per plan	Completed
Media spokespeople agreed and out of hours contact details recorded	As per plan	Completed
Provide copies of crisis communications plan and other relevant protocols and policies to all members of the Crisis Response Team and ensure they are familiar with contents	Copy of plan to be circulated to all staff for information and shared on Workplace and Cezanne	Updated plan to be circulated by 31.12.24
Create a checklist of every stakeholder group who must receive agreed communications messages in a crisis. Establish text, email and social media distribution lists and distribution systems for these groups, with details of who is responsible for contacting these stakeholders.	Head of Marketing and Communications	To be completed by 31.3.25
Media spokespeople trained in how to deal with the media and crisis situations	To be arranged as required – Chief Executive and Head of Marketing and Communications	To be completed by 31.3.25

	trained within this area	
All staff briefed to let their managers and Marketing team know immediately of any potential crisis situations	Staff to be reminded of this protocol within Directorate and Team meetings	Reminder on Workplace and all staff email by 31.12.24
All staff and volunteers to be briefed not to talk to media but to refer to a member of the Marketing team	Staff to be reminded of this protocol within Directorate and Team meetings	As above.
Immediate actions once a crisis has taken place		
Action	**Actioned by**	**Completed (please date)**
The first person to discover an incident will alert Crisis Response Team and Marketing team and any other people who have key roles to play		
Crisis Response Team to meet within one hour of story breaking or coming to attention, to determine current known facts, position and key messages *(use crisis template below*)		
Prepare and issue holding statement to media within [if necessary] and agree social media responses/approach		
Communicate with key external and internal stakeholders, using distribution systems		
Put together full response within 24 hours or sooner if appropriate		
Inform Chair and Board of trustees and advise them not to speak to press etc		
Notify next of kin, if appropriate		

Inform council via Partnership Manager if appropriate		
Liaise with third parties e.g. event organiser, emergency services, and report back to senior management team and Marketing team		
Begin detailed recording of actions in response to crisis		
Begin to monitor media output and respond promptly to misinformation		
Organise shift system/rota for staff involved in managing crisis i.e. Marketing team and Crisis Response Team		
Ensure adequate breaks and refreshments for staff managing crisis		
Explain to media limitations to information that can be provided. Be honest		
Arrange media briefings and notify media of times/venues		
Brief and rehearse with Awen's media spokespeople before interviews/briefings, agreeing information to be released and feeding in expected media questions and angles		
If appropriate, make arrangements with local radio to broadcast public information		
Internal communication		
Action	**Actioned by**	**Completed (please date)**
Ensure staff are briefed on what is happening, how it is being handled and Awen's position, and let them know to refer any media interest to		

communications team – keep them continually updated		
Provide briefing information for staff manning telephones so they know what information is in the public domain		
Call an emergency Board meeting if necessary and maintain ongoing communications with Chair & Board		
Third parties		
Action	**Actioned by**	**Completed (please date)**
Establish links with communications personnel at key agencies involved in the crisis (e.g. health, police, fire, event organiser)		
Ensure they have immediate copies of anything Awen releases and vice versa		
Share names of Awen's key spokespeople		
Media monitoring		
Action	**Actioned by**	**Completed (please date)**
Ensure access to a TV and radio to record coverage		
Take notes of main points made in broadcast coverage and record press & online coverage including social media		
Feed media intelligence (i.e. how the crisis is being covered) to crisis response team		
Record keeping		
Action	**Actioned by**	**Completed (please date)**

Keep chronological record of information released to media and date/time of release		
Keep log of key decisions made and reasons for them		
Log all media questions and answers provided		
Log media attending Awen's site/office and media briefings		
Keep up-to-date file of media coverage		
Keep log of staff hours		
Actions after the event		
Action	**Actioned by**	**Completed (please date)**
Obtain feedback from other parties for subsequent review of handling of crisis		
Evaluation meeting to review the event and lessons learnt, and evaluate the crisis communications plan as well as relevant policies such as the social media policy		
Plan ahead regarding future dates related to the incident (e.g. inquests, inquiries, anniversaries)		
Thank all who have assisted/cooperated, either publicly or privately as appropriate, including possibly the media		
Ensure that ongoing support mechanisms for staff etc affected by the event are in place		

Crisis Template

In the event of a crisis, complete the following information:

Incident:

Date:

Headline facts

Unconfirmed information

Stakeholders: [e.g. next of kin, media, police, staff]	
Likely questions (include difficult questions)	
Possible answers	
Who to contact	
Method of contact	
Comment (stakeholder specific remarks that are essential)	

Pre-Prepared Media Statements

The following statements should be used as a starting point only. Before release these should be agreed by the Chief Executive or Director and the Head of Marketing and Communications.

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

Where appropriate quotes should be attributed to a named senior individual and not to a 'spokesperson'.

Below are samples of initial statements which may be suitable:

Supplier issue:

"Awen Cultural Trust is aware of issues with [name of supplier]. We are working closely with [name] in order to rectify this situation. Our priority is to ensure [service etc] is maintained at all times."

Health and safety issue:

"Awen Cultural Trust is working closely with partners to ensure an integrated response to the [brief description of incident]. The safety of visitors [trainees, library users, etc, as appropriate] is our absolute priority."

Major incident/building failure:

"Awen Cultural Trust is working closely with emergency services and other partners to ensure an integrated response to the [brief description of incident]. The safety of [local people/visitors/staff] is our absolute priority."

Procurement issue:

"Awen Cultural Trust is currently working with [name of provider] to overcome difficulties associated with [brief description of issue]."

Trainee/safeguarding issue:

"Awen Cultural Trust is working closely with partners to ensure an integrated response to the [brief description of incident]. The safety of trainees [visitors, library users, etc, as appropriate] is our absolute priority."

Financial irregularities:

What we say would be dependent on the nature of the allegation and how it arose, but we would confirm that we are cooperating with the necessary agencies etc.

Cyber security incident/significant breach of sensitive or personal data:

We would need to establish whether to disclose, what to disclose (e.g. is there a regulatory requirement and can the data subject mitigate any further damage) and when to disclose (as quickly as possible and first-hand) but we would accept responsibility as custodians of the data,

identify ways the data subject can protect themselves (e.g. changing passwords), and not blaming others or downplaying the breach.