Media Engagement and External Communications Policy

PRN-172: Media Engagement and External Communications Policy

CAREHOPES™

A subsidiary of AI Auto Tech Ltd

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1. Policy Statement

CAREHOPES™ is committed to ensuring that all communications with the media, journalists, broadcasters, researchers, public commentators, bloggers, influencers, regulatory bodies, and external organisations are accurate, lawful, professional, consistent, and authorised.

To protect:

- Service users
- Employees
- Families
- Organisational reputation
- Confidential information
- Safeguarding arrangements
- Legal interests

CAREHOPES™ maintains a controlled and authorised approach to media engagement.

No employee, volunteer, contractor, consultant, supervisor, manager, or third-party provider may speak on behalf of CAREHOPES™ unless formally authorised.

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2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Protect organisational reputation.
- Ensure accurate public communications.
- Protect service user confidentiality.
- Prevent unauthorised statements.
- Support legal compliance.
- Protect safeguarding information.
- Ensure consistency of organisational messaging.
- Manage reputational risk.

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3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Managers
- Supervisors
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Agency workers
- Consultants
- Third-party providers
- Temporary workers
- Students and trainees

This policy applies to:

- Television interviews
- Radio interviews
- Newspaper interviews
- Online news platforms
- Podcasts
- Blogs

- YouTube channels
- Social media platforms
- Public speaking engagements
- Industry events
- Press conferences
- Regulatory enquiries
- Public statements
- Digital publications

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4. Official CAREHOPES™ Representatives

Only individuals formally authorised by:

- The Board of Directors
- The Chairman
- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

may officially represent CAREHOPES™ in media or public communication matters.

Authorisation must be:

- Purpose-specific
- Time-limited
- Clearly communicated
- Properly documented where appropriate

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5. Unauthorised Media Engagement

Employees must not:

- Give media interviews on behalf of CAREHOPES™.
- Speak as a representative of CAREHOPES™.
- Comment on organisational matters.
- Comment on service users.
- Comment on investigations.

- Comment on complaints.
- Comment on safeguarding incidents.
- Comment on organisational strategy.
- Comment on internal governance matters.
- Issue press statements.
- Participate in media discussions as a company spokesperson.

This applies regardless of:

- Seniority
- Personal opinion
- Length of service
- Good intention
- Previous experience

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6. Referral of Media Enquiries

If approached by:

- Journalists
- News organisations
- Researchers
- Broadcasters
- Documentary producers
- Social media influencers
- Public commentators

employees must politely decline comment and direct enquiries to:

Designated Media Officer

or

CAREHOPES™ Legal Adviser

or

Any individual specifically authorised by the CEO or Board

Employees must notify management of significant media enquiries as soon as reasonably practicable.

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7. Personal Opinions

CAREHOPES™ recognises employees' rights to personal opinions.

However, employees must not:

- Present personal views as company positions.
- Misrepresent organisational policies.
- Suggest they are speaking for CAREHOPES™.
- Use organisational branding to support personal opinions.
- Create confusion regarding official company positions.

Where employees discuss matters publicly, they must ensure it is clear they are expressing personal views only.

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8. Social Media and Online Communications

Employees must not:

- Issue company announcements.
- Provide organisational updates.
- Respond to media requests.
- Comment on confidential matters.
- Discuss service users.
- Discuss complaints.
- Discuss safeguarding concerns.
- Discuss investigations.
- Discuss disciplinary matters.
- Release internal information.

Only authorised individuals may publish official organisational statements.

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9. Confidentiality Requirements

Employees must protect:

- Service user information
- Family information
- Employee information
- Governance information
- Safeguarding information
- Commercial information
- Legal information

Confidentiality obligations continue:

- During employment
- During volunteering
- During placements
- After leaving CAREHOPES™

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10. Safeguarding Considerations

Media engagement must never compromise:

- Service user safety
- Confidentiality
- Privacy
- Ongoing investigations
- Safeguarding enquiries
- Legal proceedings

Safeguarding responsibilities always take priority over public disclosure.

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11. Crisis Communications

During:

- Serious incidents
- Safeguarding concerns

- Major investigations
- Emergencies
- Regulatory investigations
- High-profile complaints

employees must not make public statements.

All communication must be coordinated through authorised organisational representatives.

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12. Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors must:

- Promote compliance with this policy.
- Escalate media enquiries immediately.
- Prevent unauthorised disclosures.
- Support employees who receive media approaches.
- Monitor reputational risks.

Supervisors must never authorise media engagement unless specifically delegated by the CEO or Board.

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13. Third-Party Provider Responsibilities

Third-party providers must:

- Respect confidentiality.
- Avoid unauthorised representation.
- Direct media enquiries appropriately.
- Follow contractual communication requirements.

Third-party providers must not represent CAREHOPES™ publicly unless formally authorised in writing.

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14. Reporting Concerns

Employees should report:

- Unauthorised media activity.
- Misrepresentation.
- Confidentiality breaches.
- Reputational risks.
- Unauthorised public statements.

Reports may be made through:

- Supervisors
- Senior management
- Governance leads
- Whistleblowing channels

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15. Breach of Policy

Breaches may result in:

- Additional training
- Corrective action plans
- Formal warnings
- Suspension
- Dismissal
- Contract termination
- Legal action
- Regulatory referral where appropriate

Unauthorised representation of CAREHOPES™, disclosure of confidential information, or unauthorised media engagement may constitute **gross misconduct**.

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16. Related Policies

- Fraud, Misrepresentation and Theft Awareness Policy
- Information Governance and Data Security Policy
- Confidentiality Policy

- Cyber Security and Internet Fraud Awareness Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Abuse of Power, Position, Authority and Privilege Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy

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17. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually
- Following significant incidents
- Following media-related complaints
- Following legal updates
- Following governance reviews