

## Responding to case study requests: issues for third-sector organisations

- Recognise that the media is not homogeneous – they are not all ‘good’ or all ‘bad’.
- Know the media: read the papers, listen to radio, watch television – and not just favourite, familiar and sympathetic outlets.
- When considering a media request, check out the track record of the journalist. (A good source for finding out more about journalists and what they write about is the Media Trust’s Journalisted website: [www.journalisted.com](http://www.journalisted.com)).
- Check out the newspaper/radio station/television or film company – look at what they have done and their approach/stance.
- Find out what story they are trying to do and how they want to do it. For example, what’s the angle? What do they want case studies for?
- Consider the type of opportunity. In the press, feature articles often present more possibilities than news pieces, because they can cover issues in more detail and at greater length, and include extensive accounts of people’s views and experiences. Radio can present individuals’ stories without the complication of images. Television can be very powerful and may reach very large audiences.
- Build ongoing, long-term relationships with the media. Know how journalists work and what they want, and brief them about how to approach the case studies.
- Be discerning. It might be better to get good coverage from time to time, rather than frequent coverage of low quality and little influence.
- Carefully consider what consent is likely to be needed and how informed it might be. This is especially important if children or vulnerable adults are to be involved.
- Always be ready to refuse requests; resist oppressive requests.
- Aim for an honest and respectful treatment of people and issues.
- The emphasis should be on getting a strong message across, not just on promoting the organisation.
- Think through all the implications for case study individuals and, as far as possible, support them through the whole process. Encouragement to participate is acceptable; persuasion is not.