

After the Interview

What will happen afterwards?

It's normal at a distressing time to feel emotionally drained after an interview. Talking to a stranger about your feelings and concerns for the safety of your missing person may leave you feeling exhausted and upset.

- If possible, try to pace yourself so you can gather your strength and have some private recovery time in between. Your physical and mental resources are going to be limited right now and the fresher you feel during any dealings with the media, the more effective you will be.
- Do not hesitate to call the journalist if questions or concerns occur to you after the interview.
- Do keep the journalist informed of any new sightings or information.
- Prepare yourself for mixed and heightened emotions when the copy is read back to you or you see the article in print. Some people find this distressing as it confirms the reality of the situation.

A media spokesperson has approached me and offered their services. Should we accept his or her offer?

- There are several advantages in doing so. They will be very media savvy and have extensive contacts and established relationships within the press.
- It will save you the time you would otherwise spend trying to find out who to talk to on a newspaper or television station.
- Using a professional to act as your spokesperson will free you from dealing with journalists if you don't feel able to cope with it.
- Trust your instincts. Is the person someone you wish to have a lot of contact with at the moment? Do you like/feel you can trust them to act in your best interests? Are they genuinely sympathetic and supportive to your situation?
- It may be appropriate for the police to speak with any media spokesperson you are considering employing, in order to gauge whether this individual is appropriate to represent you.
- Consider asking if you can speak directly to anyone else they have helped in a similar situation before making a decision.
- Ask him or her to spell out clearly the terms on which they are offering to help, including any costs that are involved.

- Whilst some media spokespeople may offer their services for free in this situation, be aware that many others will expect to charge you a fee for helping you.
- The main disadvantage is that you may feel you are losing control of the situation. You may also not want someone who is not a family member or close friend and does not know your missing person speaking on your behalf.

Summary

Using the media may help you feel you are doing something positive to try and reach your missing person. However, dealing with the media may also feel exhausting and baffling. You may swing between surges of optimism and dejection whilst you are desperate to find your missing person and are waiting for the appeal to be publicised.

Using a media spokesperson can relieve a lot of these pressures but only if it is someone you feel you can trust and is genuinely going to act in your best interests. Find out as much as you can about their reputation, contacts, whether they have acted for anyone else in your situation and exactly what they are offering to do to help you and how they intend to go about it in order to be able to make an informed decision.

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For further information and guidance on the issues addressed in this guidance sheet, or for support relating to any aspect of someone going missing, call Missing People's free and confidential 24 hour helpline on **116 000** or email 116000@missingpeople.org.uk

Whilst this information has been provided in good faith, it should not be taken as legal advice. For information tailored to your circumstances, please contact your police force, solicitor or an advisory organisation as appropriate to your query.

Please let us know whether this guidance has been useful, either by answering a few short questions at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MissingPeopleGuidance> or by emailing your comments to policyandresearch@missingpeople.org.uk