

Dated September 2016

**THE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH INVESTIGATORS LIMITED**

---

**PR GUIDELINES**

---



The Association of British Investigators (ABI) has achieved a significant amount of positive media attention in recent years; however, it is important for any organization, especially one which is quoted, to carefully manage its relationship with the media.

The continued success of the Associations relationship with the media is key to ABI maintaining its position as the leading organization representing private sector investigation in the UK.

Below are some simple guidelines about engaging with the media.

If you have any concerns or doubts about these guidelines or any queries about dealing with the media at all, please contact either:

**ABI Secretariat**

T: +44 (0) 208 191 7500

E: [Secretariat@theABI.org.uk](mailto:Secretariat@theABI.org.uk)

**ABI Governing Council**

E: [TheGC@theABI.org.uk](mailto:TheGC@theABI.org.uk)

Wherever possible always inform the Governing Council or ABI Secretariat of significant communications with the media. This allows us to control any message more effectively.

**Before speaking to any journalist, please bear in mind the following:**

1. Are you clear what the journalist is going to talk to you about?
2. Do you have clear key messages that you want to communicate?
3. Have ground rules been established? For example, are your comments being taken on or off the record or can you access questions ahead of an interview or edit any direct quotes to be used?
4. If you are speaking to a journalist about a particular case or associating ABI with a particular matter/engagement, consider any confidentiality or other sensitive issues.

**General advice when talking to journalists:**

1. Be precise and succinct
2. Treat 'off the record' requests from journalists with extreme caution and refer requests to the ABI GC
3. Demonstrate industry expertise; be prepared to outline the Associations history and track record
4. Be yourself but be on guard for throw away comments or questions which could be taken out of context
5. Be truthful
6. Avoid corporate jargon and excessive detail
7. Clarify incorrect assumptions
8. Avoid and decline to comment on speculation
9. Be confident in declining to comment on matters outside of your focus

10. Defer answers if you are unsure
11. Be responsive: check deadlines and ensure someone contacts the journalist ahead of time to confirm whether or not you can assist their enquiries, even if it is to say that you cannot disclose the information due to confidentiality obligations

**Specifically when talking to journalists avoid the following:**

1. Try not to criticise – avoid getting involved in a debate or providing comment which could be interpreted as being critical of regulators such as the ICO, either directly or indirectly.
2. Do not provide media comment on any confidential aspects of cases/assignments.
3. Do not speculate on the financial health, performance, or reputation of specific companies, and/or individuals.
4. Do not directly criticise a competitor firm or trade Association – criticism of direct competitors is not good practice and should be avoided.
5. Do not disclose or give any comment to the media or any third party regarding the Associations financial position, performance outlook, or strategy. Financial information or otherwise sensitive information which might be disclosed on an ABI closed user group, or at Branch or Annual meetings is not for public consumption.
6. Do not comment on any situation where the ABI is currently involved in ongoing legal action.
7. Do not make any comment which could be perceived as being critical of the ABI.
8. Avoid any direct or indirect criticism of companies or individuals who are no longer members of the Association.

The above is not exhaustive and is provided to give guidance. Common sense is the best guide: never be drawn into situations you are not comfortable with. The GC can assist in ascertaining journalists' angles ahead of calls as appropriate.

Any contact with national print or broadcast media should be highlighted in advance to the ABI Governing Council.