

SAFEGUARDING

What you will learn

In this resource you will learn why it is important to take safeguarding seriously when sharing lived experience stories with the media. The resource guides you through how to put good boundaries in place with journalists and ensure anyone being interviewed understands the risks involved. It also covers how to speak to journalists anonymously, work effectively with news crews and support interviewees throughout the entire process.

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Safeguarding Storytellers

While raising the voices of lived experience of refugee and asylum issues should always be prioritised when working with the media, it's **absolutely essential** that you understand the need to safeguard and set boundaries **before** arranging any interviews.

Once an interview is published or broadcast, it's very hard to get it removed, so you need to prepare interviewees in advance and make sure they are giving their **informed consent**.

By this we mean that every interviewee is **fully aware** of everything that is involved with speaking to the media, and **any possible** ramifications this may have on their life. People in this position will have already experienced trauma, so **creating a relationship of clarity and trust is crucial**.

With **informed consent** and **strong boundary setting** in place, speaking to the media can be both **empowering** for the interviewee and give the audience a **powerful human insight** into the issues faced by those who have experienced the UK asylum system.

This **training guide** will equip you with some **practical tools** you can use to ensure that people with lived experience of refugee and asylum issues feel **supported, confident and comfortable** when working with the media.

We recommend anyone who is still waiting on their asylum claim stays anonymous until they have refugee status.

The IMIX Safeguarding Checklist

- Are you happy to speak to a journalist from **X organisation**?
- Do you understand what '**on the record**' means?
- Do you understand that once a media piece is published, it is **not possible to take it down**?
- Do you understand you can **stop the interview** at any point?
- Do you have **legal status** in the UK? (If not, discuss the option of being anonymous).
- What do **you want** to get out of the interview?
- Would you be willing to be **named and pictured**?
- Is there anything you **definitely don't** want to be asked about?
- Are there any **sensitive personal details** that could put you, a family member or friend at risk?
- Are you aware that this interview may go online and could be read **outside the UK**?
- Anything in the news attracts social media comments, including some **from trolls**. We generally advise people to ignore these, but not everyone can. Does this change how you feel about doing the interview?
- Is there **anything else we should know** before putting you in touch with a journalist?

Use these questions as the basis of a safeguarding chat with potential media interviewees, and make sure you give them plenty of time to discuss. Afterwards, ideally give them a day to reflect on the impact that working with the media may have on their life before they agree.

What you might keep private

Things to consider:

- Family members
- Speaking in a work/professional vs personal capacity
- Details about your health, lifestyle and relationships
- Any traumatic moments you could be asked about and are not in a position to talk about.



**Remember! It's OK to say that some things are off limits!
You are in charge of your own story!**

Things you could say to set boundaries:

- 'Before the interview begins, I want to make it clear that I can't talk about my family for **security reasons.**'
- 'An important condition of the interview is that the interviewee **must be kept anonymous.**'
- 'I'd like to speak **off the record** about my boundaries. This is **not for publication.**'
- 'I don't want to talk about that as it's very **traumatic.**'
- 'I made it clear what **my boundaries** were, and I will **end this interview** if they are not respected.'

Journalist Jargon

They say:	This means:
'On the record'	I am writing down everything you are saying for publication
'Off the record'	Not for publication
'On the background' or 'Unattributed'	You can use this information but don't let it be traced back to me
'Source'	An anonymous interviewee
'On air'	We are recording and broadcasting live

It's important that interviewees fully understand that their words will be recorded and publicly shared.

Working with TV Crews

Assigning a dedicated person on your team to chaperone TV crews filming at your organisation is essential. Not only will it be less stressful during an event with multiple things going on, it will also ensure:

- They're respecting any safeguarding boundaries that have been set
- If the interviewee wishes to remain anonymous, that the camera crew have taken this into consideration and carefully planned the shots
- No one is compromised by them being there
- They get what they need for their report
- There's a clear line of communication between the crew and your organisation.



Suggestions for capturing people anonymously:

Filming from behind

Focusing on hands gesturing/typing/drinking coffee etc

Bringing background scenery into focus

Speaking Anonymously

If you are still in the asylum system or have another reason to remain anonymous, you can still tell your story safely:

- ✓ Choose a **different name** for the reporter to use
- ✓ If it's for online/print supply a creative **anonymous photograph** they can use
- ✓ If it's for radio – do you have a **distinctive voice**? Ask for an actor to record your answers
- ✓ If it's for TV ask **how they will take steps to protect your identity** when filming and interviewing
- ✓ Think about **the details** you share in your story – could it reveal your identity indirectly?

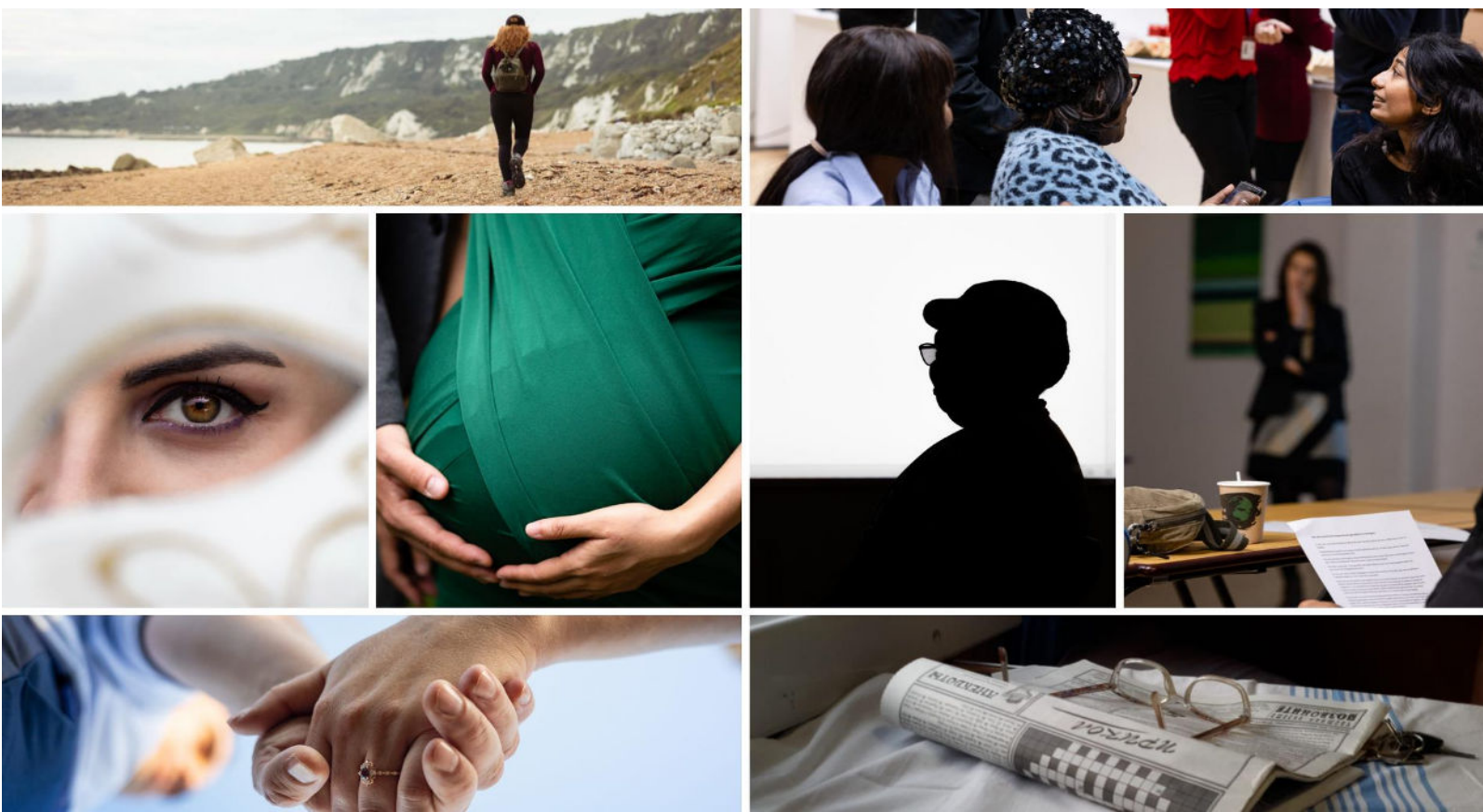


Creating positive anonymous images

Most journalists need original images to get a readership online, so it can be frustrating for them if the person at the heart of the story must remain anonymous.

However, images that hide your identity don't have to dehumanise but can instead be an opportunity to be creative and reflect someone's personality.

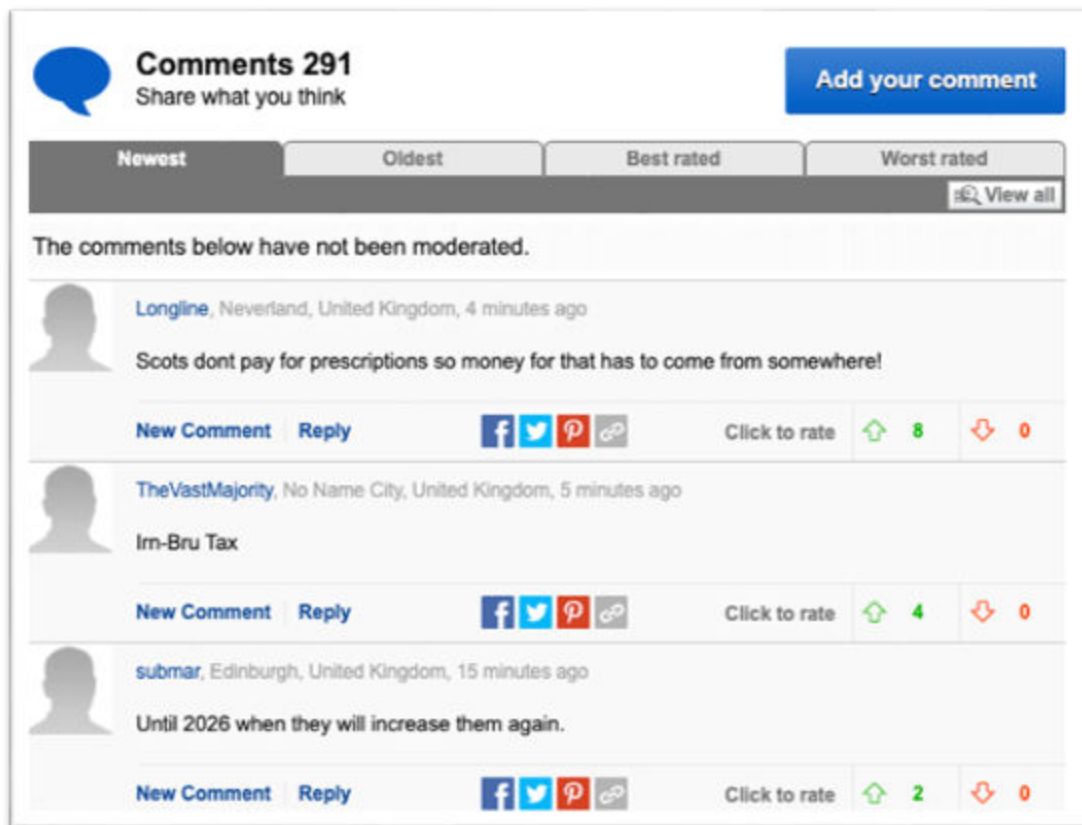
Taking the pictures yourself gives you extra control as you own the copyright to those images and can withdraw consent at any time.



Get top tips on taking powerful images that allow you to tell your story without revealing your identity from professional photographer Nastia Nizalova.

Social Media Safeguarding

- Make sure the interviewee knows there may be negative comments **before** they do the interview
- Ask the journalist to **turn off comments** under the article if possible, as these are often the nastiest
- **Monitor comments on behalf of** the interviewee rather than encouraging them to read them directly
- You can **flag comments** to social media platforms and **report** those inciting hatred to police



It's helpful to remember – the key audience is the thousands or millions of silent readers or viewers, not one or two nasty commentators.

After the interview

Firstly, congratulate the interviewee for having the courage to put themselves in the hotseat. Make them a nice hot drink and...

- **DO have a debrief chat** – what went well? What could have gone better?
- **DON'T look at social media** – there are always a few trolls who like to bring the mood down
- **DO ask them if they need support** from your organisation if it made them feel traumatised or uncomfortable
- **DO let the journalist know** if the interviewee would like to be contacted again.



If you enjoyed working with the journalist, it's worth keeping in touch with them and building a rapport. This is mutually beneficial as the journalist will always be hungry for story content, while your organisation will benefit from the coverage.

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