

A14 – Issues that may arise

As you spread the word about the fantastic offer for most parents, carers and grandparents, it is rare but possible that the information may land at a sensitive time for someone. For example a general leaflet drop in one area was received by someone who was about to go for a surgical procedure that made the topic of being a parent sensitive. She rang the number on the leaflet to express her anger about receiving it at this time.

There are many other scenarios where it is a sensitive time in someone's life and they get a universal leaflet which relates to it in some way (e.g. stillbirth, cot death, child death from illness, child death from road accident etc.).

This type of incident is going to be very rare...we've been doing this now for a number of years and it has only happened once to our knowledge, as most people are unlikely to take it personally for a number of reasons.

Learning points

- **Give people a local contact point.**

In addition to listing the Solihull Approach HQ number (0121 296 4448) for 'technical help', any leaflets will also need a local number for 'any other queries'.

- **If someone gets in touch acknowledge the distress (containment) and thank them for taking the time to get in touch.**

The affected person's response may have more to do with their own emotional state in the present than with the reasonableness of a general campaign. It is important to respond sensitively, and give them time to fully express their views. The timing of your response is important and ideally should be within 24 hours.

Acknowledging the person's distress and letting them know that you have heard and understood them is a vital part of the process. However this does not mean you need to apologise for your campaign. The issue of saying sorry is a delicate one. For example saying sorry may not in itself necessarily communicate that you have really heard and understood the person. It may also be taken as an admission that you should not have put the information in front of them. You will need to use your own judgement about whether, and for what, you wish to apologise.

- **Consider a personal, written response.**

For example

Dear.... Thank you for phoning this morning. We really appreciate you taking the time to phone. Your feedback is helpful and will be used when future general awareness campaigns are planned. We wish you well in your recovery. Kind Regards, [Name of person in local area, job title].

It is important to remember that leaflet drops and general marketing campaigns are great ideas for a population based offer.