

## Guide to contacting the media

It is often helpful to gain media coverage for your campaign. This can help establish your campaign with the public, raise awareness of the issues, gain new supporters, influence local decision makers or a combination of all of these. You can call up your local newspaper's newsdesk and explain what you are doing, but a better way to gain editorial coverage is to send a press release. A press release is simply a document that provides the journalist with all the facts and information that they need to write a story. It will normally include a quote and is sent by email. A press release is short, one to two sides of A4, and must be timely, relevant and interesting.

### Writing a press release

Below is an example of how to lay out a press release.

**For immediate release**

**Or**

**Embargoed until 00:01**

**Day, date month**

*[An embargo means the journalist can see the story, but not print it until the embargo expires]*

**Add your headline here** *[don't spend too long on this, the newspaper will more than likely write their own, so just try to summarise your story in one short sentence]*

Your first sentence should be as short as possible but needs to include who, what, why, where and when.

Use the second paragraph to elaborate a little more. Remember, the main text of the press release must be factual, save opinion for the quotes.

Use the third paragraph to add any further detail. You may have some facts and figures you want to include here.

So and so, from wherever, said: "Use the quote to add some colour and opinion to your release. The quote should be no more than four or five sentences long. Keep it jargon and figure free. Read the quote back to yourself, does it sound like something someone would really say? Remember to finish your quote by closing the quotation marks after the full stop."

Use the final paragraph to summarise. What do you want to happen, what are you demanding? If you are asking people to do something, remind them how they do it here.

**ENDS**

**If you are having a photo call, add the details here. Don't forget to tell journalists what time the photo call is, who will be there, what they will be doing and where exactly it will take place.**

**For further information please contact Name Surname on daytime phone number or [name.surname@email.co.uk](mailto:name.surname@email.co.uk)**

## Notes to editors

1. **Explain who you are**
2. **Quote any sources for facts and figures you may have used**
3. **Use this space for any other information which adds to the story, but was not important enough to be included in the main body of the release.**

### ***Key things to remember!***

- Keep it brief
- Include a quote, it's your chance to get your side of the story across
- Make sure you add contact details in case the journalist needs more information and make sure you are available to answer any calls or reply to emails

## Who to send it to?

There are three groups of media - print, broadcast and online. More and more print and broadcast media also carry online content, think of the BBC website. Your story may be suitable for all three types, or it may be a print and online story only. Think about who you want to see your story what they read and listen to. Your local newspaper and local radio station are often the best places to start. Give them a ring and ask for the best email address to send press releases to. Whilst it may be nice to think of your story in the Guardian, this may not actually be the best audience for you. Remember, local people, including local councillors, read their local paper.

Timing is everything in the media. Old news is no news. Remember, daily newspapers go to print the night before and weeklies can go to print several days before they hit the newsstands. Monthly publications are written up to six months before the cover date. As part of your planning check with your target media to see when their deadlines are.

### ***Key things to remember!***

- Plan ahead, don't leave it till the last minute to let the media know
- Make sure you send the release in time for any media deadlines

## Sending your press release

Cut and paste the text of your press release into the body of an email. Do not add any attachments ever. Do not include logos as these are sometimes added as attachments at the other end. Newsdesks do not accept emails with attachments and many newspaper email systems automatically junk emails with attachments. If you want to send a photo with your press release you must upload it to a file sharing website first ([www.yousendit.com](http://www.yousendit.com) is one example) and then include a link in your press release. Alternatively if this is not possible, simply alert the newsdesk that photos are available and to contact you for copies.

Use the headline from your press release as the subject for your email. Add multiple email addresses to the Bcc box, that way the recipients will not know who else the email has gone to.

### ***Key things to remember!***

- Never send attachments
- Use the Bcc address box for multiple emails