

A quick guide to writing press releases

A timely and relevant press release is a quick and cost-effective way of raising awareness about your activities.

But it's important to remember that journalists don't have to use your press releases. They can delete them without even reading them! The key to getting journalists to cover your story is to make your press release brief and easy to read.

The style

Use as few words as possible to make your point.

Try to keep each paragraph one or two sentences in length as this makes the whole thing more readable.

You may sometimes need to list a series of points, e.g. activities taking place as part of a new project. Bullet points (ideally three to five) are a good way to do this.

The structure

How to write a killer headline

- Make it snappy and draw people in
- Sum up your intro
- Try alliteration (when words start with the same letter or sound e.g. awesome / awful)
- Use statistics or data

Use the inverted pyramid

Put simply, this means putting the most important, interesting points first. The logic is that this makes it easier for editors and journalists to cut down your story.

Try to answer as many of the following questions in the first paragraph: Who? What? Where? When? Why?

Add a quote

Well-written quotes can bring a human element to your story. But there are few things to remember:

1. Quotes must feel real. Read your quote out loud, does it feel authentic?
2. Don't be delighted! Never start a quote with "We're delighted" – the phrase is overused and really bland.
3. Tell a story. Tell reader why the work you're doing matters, and back this up with statistics
4. Include a call to action. What do you want the reader to do?

Nuts and bolts to remember

- **Add the date**
- **Add your logo** if you have one
- **Always end your story with the word ENDS in bold**
- **Add contact details**, including a mobile phone number
- **Add an image or two.** A general rule of thumb when choosing images for a story is to prioritise (in no particular order) action, emotion, celebrities, children (with parental consent) and animals.
- **Add a picture captions. Choose your image and caption carefully. If an image needs more than a one-line explanation, it isn't strong enough.**
- **Add Notes to Editors.** This is where you can include background information which isn't part of the story, but useful all the same. You may want to add your social media accounts to this.