

How to write and distribute a press release

The most effective way of getting your news into the media is to write a news release and then follow up with a phone call. Keep in mind why you are writing the release – what do you want to achieve and who do you want to reach?

News editors receive many news releases, too many to use and you need to get their attention. Local media want local stories so you need to tell them about yourself and what motivates you to do what you're doing.

How to write a news release

Structure

Type News Release at the top, next line, the date; then in bold a short headline; then text; the word “ends” at the end of the text; notes to editors for extra information; contact details for further information and a note to say if photos are available.

Where to start

Focus on these key points: who, what, where, why, when and how

Build your news release around those main points

Include a quote to add colour and life to your news release

Remember

- Keep sentences and paragraphs **short** – 1 or 2 sentences per paragraph; 25 words per sentence
- Keep vocabulary **simple** – straightforward and concise
- Keep your news release to one page
- You can keep the News Release short by writing background information in the Notes to Editors
- Font size –minimum 11
- Font type – Arial is good (not comic sans)
- Line space between paragraphs
- Keep in mind the **purpose** of your news release
- Don't assume the journalist knows what you're talking about – and don't use jargon or unusual acronyms. If you must use an acronym, write it in full the first time with the acronym in brackets. Eg Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW)
- Don't assume others will be interested in your subject – you have to make it interesting by finding an unusual angle

Sending your news release

Email your news release to the editor of the media you are targetting. Newsdesks' spam filters reject attachments so put your press release as text in the body of an email and don't attach as a Word doc. Type the words News Release: followed by

your headline, in the subject field. (So the headline must be brief!) Follow up with a phone call to the newsdesk.

Your press release might look like this

News Release

Date

Headline in bold

Text

Ends

For further information and photos contact:

Notes to editors

- (for example) The EAPPI is....
- Approximately 23,000 people attend Quaker Meetings for Worship in Great Britain.
- Quakers are known formally as the Religious Society of Friends