

Writing a press release

A press release is a document written for journalists, containing all the facts and information about the news or 'story' and your key messages. It should include everything that a journalist will need to know to understand and be interested in your story or research.

By keeping the release interesting and making the journalist's job as easy as possible you are on the way to securing coverage for the client, campaign or project.

Remember:

- The headline is a summary of the content – make it interesting and relevant – you want the journalist to read the release, not put it straight in the bin.
- Put the whole story - *Who, what, where, when and why* - into the first paragraph, to show the journalist or editor the potential of the story at a glance.
- The following paragraphs expand on these, providing the necessary background information.
- Put the paragraphs in order of importance – the release will be edited from the bottom up.
- Use simple language and aim to write in a way that everyone can understand.
- Keep the content as clear and concise as possible; use short words rather than long ones.
- Include a quote to bring the release to life – if the journalist doesn't have time to get in contact, they have an authorised quote to use.
- Include definitions for any scientific terminology and full names for any acronyms.
- Use double line spacing or 1.5 line spacing – this leaves room for the journalist to make their own notes.
- If it is more than one page put MORE or CONTINUED at the bottom right hand corner of each page and number the pages – this will prevent pages being lost on busy desks or left behind on the fax machine.
- If you send the release out by email, paste it into the main body of your message rather than as an attachment, so that it isn't bounced back by firewalls.

- The word ENDS should appear after the final line.
- Include contact details – your name and telephone numbers so that they can reach you to ask more questions.
- Put the date on the release – if it is buried in a pile of other releases, the journalist will know when it was issued and that it's new and not out of date.