

FACT SHEET 2 : Press Releases

What is a good Press Release?

A Press Release notifies the media that something is either about to happen which they would be interested in, or has happened and they should know about it!

A Press Release tells the media everything they need to know.

Guide to Writing a Press Release

- **Headline** - In order to attract attention, a press release needs a good headline. Try and get a catchy headline as although in general people are told that the title won't be used – it actually often is! The headline shouldn't be too long. Aim to attract attention!
- **First Paragraph** – Should answer all the following questions: WHO? WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? And WHY? (The 5 W's.) Think of it this way - if the editor only used the first paragraph (and they often do) or the reader only read the first paragraph (and again, they often do) – would they have the basic information? They should.
- **Body** – the body of the Press Release should contain short paragraphs of no more than 2 or three sentences. They should expand on the initial paragraph and perhaps add some context or background.
- **Contacts** - There should be clear contact point/s included should the editor require further information (or the radio want an interviewee). Include no more than two names, their title and direct contact phone number (preferably). If an editor has gone this far they want to talk to you – not e-mail and wait for a response.
- **Deadlines** – Be aware when media deadlines occur – and meet them. There's no point sending in something that is too late for publication and make sure to cover all media fairly. You get no-where by being exclusive, only using radio or one paper for example.
- **Quotes** - The use of quotes can make the information more immediate. Try and use an interesting quote from a relevant person and format correctly i.e. in quotation marks.
- **Key points** – as with interviewing, stick to making a few key points. It's not a short story!
- **Keep it Short** - one page if possible, 1.5 spacing, short paragraphs. Don't use fancy typefaces or formatting. Stick to Times New Roman as this is the type face most newspapers use.

A GOOD HEADLINE IS....

Short and to the point

In vivid language

Active

Has human implications

In the present tense

Imaginable

KEEP IT SIMPLE!

The Key Questions Are:

What (is happening)?

Who (is involved)?

Where (is it happening)?

When?

Why?

PRESS RELEASE CHECKLIST...

- Is there a headline?
- Are the most important facts in the first paragraph?
- Have the 'W' questions been answered?
- (WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHO, WHY)
- Are the facts, spelling and grammar accurate?
- Has it been proof read by a second person?
- Is there a contact name and telephone number?
- Is the layout simple and clear?
- Does it make the deadline!

KEEP IT SHORT, TO THE POINT & GET IT IN ON TIME!!!

