



Tips for press releases

Press releases are a great way to get your story out there for free. Send them to the local or national press. You may have a good story of how your work has improved someone's life or an area or you have a campaign with a quirky edge. Think about what would interest the press or ties in with current affairs or recent trends. Have a look through the papers – what stories or images catch your eye? Think about this when drafting yours

Who to send your press release to

It's worth doing some research into who it is best to contact to send your press release to. Have a look on the publications website to see who covers your area or who is particularly interested in community stories. See our Press contacts factsheet for more. It is good to send your email to a named person and try and build a relationship with them. Remember they need articles.

When and how

Emails are the best way to send a press release. Don't write press release in the subject of the title but write a catchy title something that will catch the journalists eye. They are busy people and you need to catch their attention. Find out when the deadlines are for publications (more in our press contacts factsheet) – make sure your piece reaches them at the right time. You need to convey in your piece that it needs to be published soon – an event, a call to action, a campaign.

It is best to send your press release as text within the body of an email rather than as an attached document. It is more likely to get read as people don't have to open a document and is also less likely to end up in the junk mail. It is worth giving the paper a ring a day or two after your email just to check they have received it and if they want any further information.

Content

Try and give it a human story – focus on a person and use quotes. It is good to talk about the impact of your work. People like stories of how something has been improved – a person's life an area, attitudes, etc. Make sure any details you do use are correct – get names, ages, places right – double check. Make sure the person you add as a contact knows about the article and all the facts.

Images

A story may have very little text and be all about the image. If you have a great image, send that in with a brief story. Also if you have an event or you know you will be doing something with good photo opportunities ring the paper to ask for a photographer to attend – once they have taken a photo they need to use it so it's a good way in.

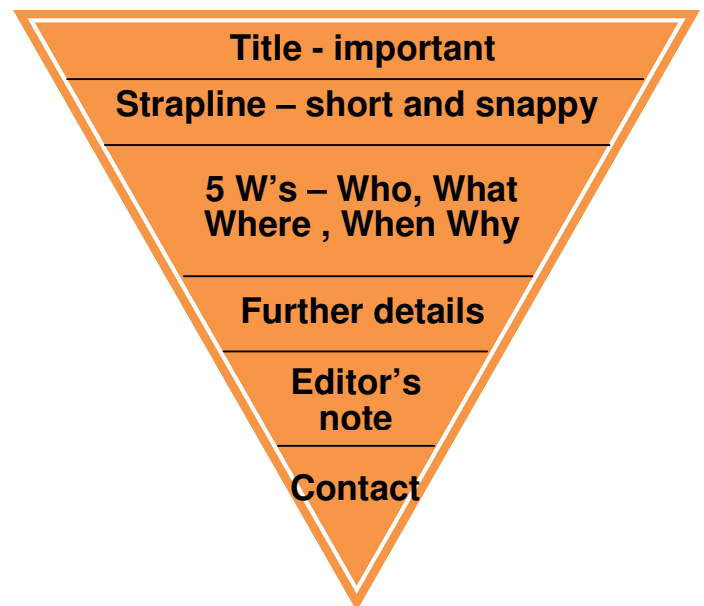


Eight top tips to what makes a good story:

1. **Start with a bang** and aim to make an impact.
2. Use **simple, snappy language** that is easy for everyone to understand.
3. **Keep It Short and Simple (or 'KISS'!)** - a press release only needs to be the length of one sheet of A4.
4. **Personalise your story** - think about the human interest and use characters to express the reality of your story. You could also try personalising any facts and include named quotes in your press release.
5. **Pictures** - A good picture is worth a thousand words. Always try and think about a photo to illustrate your story. Be creative and make it catchy.
6. **A hook** - You will need something that will draw people's attention. What makes your story special or news worthy? Do you have a local angle on a national story, for instance, are you reaching a significant milestone (such as the 100th volunteer or an anniversary)?
7. Try and work with **three main points** that you want people to remember – no more.
8. **Action** - What do you want out of the story? Do you want people to sign up to something, attend your event, or visit your website? Always remember to put your contact details and website at the end for more information.

The upside down triangle is a useful tool for press releases. The width of the triangle represents the importance. If the first two boxes catch a journalist's attention then you should be fine. The title is important, if you can write a short provocative title that tells some of the story, that's great.

The Editor's note contains details like a link to a website for further information, photos, are available and a pack. Contact details - don't ever forget these. Preferably give two contacts in case the journalist can't get hold of your main contact.



Further Help

Manchester Community Central – contact us on 0333 321 3021, or email: info@mcrcommunitycentral.org, or visit: www.manchestercommunitycentral.org