

How to write a press release

About: This guide outlines the steps you need to take when producing and submitting a press release to the media.

Who is this guide intended for: Sports Development Teams, County Sports Partnerships and sports clubs

What is press release: A press release is written communication that is issued to the news media. It is usually a one or two page document (approx 400 words), which aims to provide information or draw attention to something specific such as an event.

1. Define the purpose of the press release

Determine why you are writing a press release.

Is it to:

1. Promote a particular event or initiative?
2. Report on a particular event?
3. Introduce a new product or service?

2. Identify the target audience

Think about the types of people who would be interested in your story.

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What age are they?
2. Are they male or female?
3. Where do they live?
4. Are they likely to read local press or visit particular websites?

3. Select appropriate media channel

Which media would best reach these people? Local papers, specialised websites and magazines all have different readers.

If your story is about a local resident, club or organisation, your best chance of getting into print or on the radio is to use local media.

For an extensive list of local media in your area check out www.mediauk.com.

Tip: Find out the names of relevant journalists who specialise in sports, leisure, and health or community issues.

4. Write a headline

This needs to be as compelling as possible to grab the journalist's attention. Ask yourself what is the most exciting part of the event or initiative.

'Sport for young people to benefit from new Government strategy'

'Step into sport conferences coming to a town near you!'

Tip: Start the page with MEDIA RELEASE and include your organisation or club name, logo and date.

5. Write the first paragraph

The essential information needs to be stated in the first few sentences in an interesting and clear manner. Early on make sure you cover the five W's (who, what, when, where and why). Make sure you mention your organisation as early as possible so journalists understand the point of the event or initiative.

'Former England rugby captain Phil de Glanville will join local school children in the South West's largest tag rugby event. Wesport have joined forces with the RFU to organise the event, and it will give children in the area a unique opportunity to pick up tips from a sporting champion.'

Tip: Newspapers have narrow columns, so keep your sentences short.

6. Write the second paragraph

Use the second paragraph to expand on the event or initiative. Explain the benefits of why there is a need for it. Use facts and figures to illustrate your point.

Research has found that participation rates in sport and physical activity for disabled adults is 24% lower than the participation rate for non-disabled adults. (Source: Adults with a disability and sport – national survey 2000-2001).

7. Include quotes

This adds colour and helps journalists to understand the importance of your story.

The quote could come from either a sporting champion or a representative from your organisation.

8. Include photographs

Photos can add a great deal to the story. This is particularly true when you are reporting on an event. Photos can add a 'feel good' factor to the story.

Tip: Ensure the names and descriptions of supplied photographs are correct.

9. Include notes to journalist

Provide the following background information underneath your story:

- Your contact details
- What type of organisation you are
- How your organisation is funded
- Your organisation's website address
- Details of any images or photo opportunities, including time and place
- Word count

Tip: Under the last line of the release (but before 'Notes to journalist'), type the word 'ENDS'.

10. Follow up

Try to build relationships with local journalists instead of just sending press releases.

Make follow up phone calls and ask if they require any further information. If they are too busy to cover a particular event, send them photos after the event for them to publish.

Check List

1	What is the purpose of your press release?	
2	Who is your target audience?	
3	What media will you use?	
4	What is your headline?	
5	Does your first/second paragraph include the five W's of your story?	
6	Does your first paragraph mention the name of your organisation?	
7	Have you included a quote?	
8	Have you provided additional information for the journalist?	
9	Have you followed up with the journalist?	

Case Studies

For examples of sports club, County Sports Partnership and Sport Development Team press releases visit the **How to use the media** section of this site.
