

How to work with the media

About: This guide outlines how to work with the media as a promotional tool. This includes how to identify a news worthy story, and tips for working with journalists.

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

Why use the media: The media offers you a cost effective method to promote your organisation, club, or a service or event you are running. If you have a story which is newsworthy and relevant to the community, the media will allow you to promote this for free to a large audience.

1. Identifying a good news stories

The first step is to identify what is 'newsworthy' (likely to interest a journalist). The list below gives just a few examples of news that may be worth shouting about:

- New investment or funding
- Facility openings
- New appointments
- Interesting human interest stories
- Important events

This list is not exhaustive, and often what may seem at first to be fairly dry or uninteresting, may appeal to a particular journalist or publication.

2. Writing a press release

Once you have chosen your good news story, you need to write a press release. This will tell journalists what is going on in your organisation, why it is important and why it is relevant to local people.

Check out the ***How to write a press release*** guide with in this toolkit. This section also includes a good selection of press release examples from different organisations and clubs.

3. Sending out your press release

Once your press release has been drafted, proof-read and approved by the relevant people within your organisation, you need to identify who you want to send it to.

The website www.newspapersoc.org lists all major regional publications, and is a good place to start – however, people within your organisation may already have contacts with key journalists in the area. This is worth asking about, as ‘selling in’ a news story is always easier if the journalist you are speaking to has already had contact with your organisation and knows about the work you do.

If you have photos to accompany your press release, send them to the journalist as well. Check out the image library within this toolkit for hundreds of free-to-download photos.

4. Top tips for dealing with journalists

Do:

- Do email press releases to journalists within the body of your email and not as an attachment
- Do put the press headline (or a summary of it) in the subject box of your email
- Do follow up press releases with a telephone call to the individual emailed
- Do observe journalists' busy times of the day/deadlines

4. Top tips for dealing with journalists

Don't:

- Don't phone a journalist before you have fully thought through the idea or story you want to discuss
- Don't use email to 'sell-in' a story; use the phone and follow up with an email
- Don't assume journalists will read your email. Always follow up by telephone
- Don't talk to daily morning newspaper journalists after lunch unless it is absolutely critical (e.g. informing them of a significant change in detail to your story)
- Don't talk to daily afternoon newspaper journalists in the morning. They are likely to be on deadline from first thing until lunchtime.

Check List

1	Is the story you have identified newsworthy and relevant in the community?	
2	Have you compiled a list of local newspapers, radio and TV stations, and the journalists within these organisations?	
3	Have you contacted journalists when you have fully thought your idea of a story?	
4	Have you included the press release in the body of the email (not attachment) when sent to journalist?	
5	Have you made follow up phone call?	