

# **MEDIA AND PRESS RELEASE GUIDE**

March 2022

## How to write a press release

Whether you call it a press release, news release or media release – this is the best way to share new information you want to get out to the media.

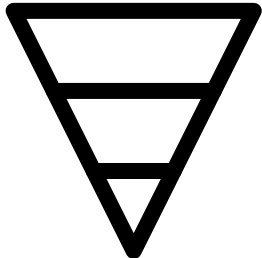
Take the information you want to share and think about how you can turn that into a story. Write '**Press Release**' at the top, then the date you're sending it out and whether it's for **immediate release** or under **embargo**.

Write a **headline** to grab the reader's attention with the strongest line from the story. You might also want to use this in the **email subject line** when you send out the release.

But also think about why you're telling the story now. What makes it new and newsworthy?

You could peg the release to new statistics, a report, a survey, new strong photos, an awareness week or a story around a person.

If you're sharing a person's real life story think about why they're telling their story now. What makes it new and newsworthy? If their story is linked to a news story it is sometimes referred to as '**a case study**'.



Think of the story as an inverted pyramid. The most newsworthy facts are at the top, followed by the main details and then the supporting information.

With a news story – keep in mind that the pyramid could be chopped from the bottom by the journalist if it's too long. So keep your important and newsworthy information towards the top.



Make sure you include a quote from someone relevant to the story. Remember to include the who, what, when, where, why and how of your story. Keep it clear and consistent and avoid jargon.

Think about the key messages you want to get across – but present the information in a newsworthy way.

Plan ahead to pick the best time to send out your story. And think about the publications you're targeting. You might need to refine the text for different outlets.

Write '**Ends**' after you've finished the story.

Then write '**Notes to editors**' to include background information and contact details.

Put the body of the text in an email – don't send the release as an attachment.

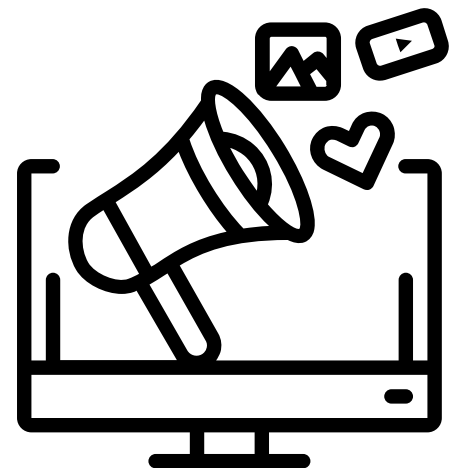
If you're including photos, send them as attachments. Make sure they're high res enough to be used without the journalist having to come back to you – but not too big that they won't get through on an email. You can always send a link to more photos or say more are available.

## Who to approach

If you think you have a story then look into where it could potentially run and who you should contact.

Would it work in print for a local or national newspaper, news websites, specialist titles, sector newsletters and intranet news platforms, or is it something you could send to bloggers or influencers? Would it work for radio or broadcast? Or does it sit best on your own website or social media?

Think about supplying good quality photos or setting up a photo opportunity and for TV think about what and who a camera crew could film.



## How to approach the media

If you think you have a story – research which publications and journalists could be interested.

It helps to have an understanding of the publication you're going to approach so that you know what type of stories they run. Think about whether your story could work for news or whether they have a specific section in the publication which would be suitable.



If it's for a local news title then make sure you highlight the local angle when writing your press release. Search online for contact details of the 'news desk' and then send the press release in an email and attach a relevant photo if you have one.

Also try to build a relationship with a specific reporter if you think they'd be interested in your stories or they cover your patch. You could message them to gauge their interest.

Keep in mind you might not hear back from a newspaper – your story might just appear. Or it might not be used. Although you think it's interesting there's no guarantee it will be used.

You could send a follow up email after a few days to check if your press release was of interest – to jog a journalist's memory or to make sure the release didn't get missed.

But it's really best not to try ringing a journalist unless you've already had contact with them and built up a relationship. Or drop them an email asking if they're free for a chat.

If you do need to ring a journalist – then always check if they're free to talk at that time in case they're on a deadline.

Follow journalists on Twitter to get a feel for the sorts of stories they might run. Some journalists don't mind being contacted via social media – but some prefer email.

Unpaid workers extending a boardwalk



# PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

YOUR LOGO

## PRESS RELEASE

**DATE:** The date you're sending it out

**RELEASE:** Put 'immediate' if it can be used straight away or if you want to delay put 'embargo' and a date it can be used from.

**Headline:** Sum up what the story is about with the strongest line.

**Body of press release:** Start with an 'intro' of one paragraph using the most newsworthy line in the story.

**Give more information:** Mostly making each sentence a stand alone paragraph.

**Include a quote from someone:** For example, Joe Bloggs, chief executive of Bloggs Town Council, said: "Quote quote quote quote quote."

**Ends:** put this at the bottom to show the press release info has finished.

---

**Notes to editors:** This information is generally not for publication – such as contact information. But it's also where you can include background info.

**For more information contact:** Put name, title, phone contact and email contact.

## **PRESS RELEASE (EXAMPLE)**

4 February 2022

Release: Immediate

### **TOP AUTHORS BOOKED FOR FREE ONLINE SOCIAL JUSTICE EVENT**

Best-selling writers Val McDermid and Lemn Sissay are amongst the line-up of celebrated authors appearing at a free online event discussing social justice and the vision of a better Scotland.

Other speakers include Professor Jo Sharp and Ely Percy, with host Byron Vincent, at the event organised by Community Justice Scotland.

The announcement of the event was made to mark National Storytelling Week. (30 January - 6 February, 2022)

'Imagine A Country' takes place online on Thursday 17 March 2022 from 3-4.30pm. It shares its title with the book compiled and edited by Val McDermid and Jo Sharp which collates ideas, dreams and ambitions, aiming to inspire change, hope and imagination for a better Scotland for all.

Karyn McCluskey, chief executive of Community Justice Scotland, said: "After the times we've been through, we need an opportunity to explore together what a fairer future, a more just society could look like and how it might happen.

"We've invited some talented creative minds to help us imagine what that might look like. We know it will be provocative, inspiring and fill us with hope."

Community Justice Scotland organises a national event each year to cover a range of themes. Influential and inspiring speakers in the past have included Sir Harry Burns, Father Gregory Boyle, people with real life experience of the justice world, Dr Dance, Robert Nilsson, Dr Kitty Stewart, Jason Leitch, Roza Salih and Mary Hepburn.

For this year's event the speakers come from the literary world and will bring a unique perspective on justice and social justice in the present and where Scotland could be in the future.

The concept of social justice promotes a fair system which looks at the needs of individuals, providing support in areas such as housing, wellbeing, health, addiction and education so that communities and people can thrive.

It highlights the support and tools needed to help people based on the best evidence such as what works to prevent offending, repair lives and make Scotland a safer place to live.

Best-selling author Val McDermid who's from Kirkcaldy, Fife, has sold more than 17 million books to date across the globe and her work has been translated into more than 40 languages.

She is best known for her Wire in the Blood series, featuring clinical psychologist Dr Tony Hill and DCI Carol Jordan, which was adapted for television starring Robson Green and Hermione Norris.

Val and partner Jo Sharp, who is a professor of geography at the University of St Andrews, worked together on compiling Imagine A Country.

BAFTA-nominated international prize-winning writer, broadcaster and speaker Lemn Sissay was the official poet for the 2012 London Olympics and penned the Sunday Times bestseller, My Name is Why which reflects on growing up in care and finding hope, determination and creativity.

Ely Percy is an award-winning writer best known for their novel 'Duck Feet' which won the Saltire Society's Book Of The Year in 2021. It's a coming-of-age tale of a working-class schoolgirl in Renfrewshire and uses humour to deal with hard-hitting issues such as drugs and bullying.

Event host Byron Vincent will be speaking to the guests about the experiences that inspired their books and how we can all affect positive change in society.

To book a free ticket go to <https://bit.ly/ImagineACountryCJS>

Ends

---

Notes to editors:

Community Justice Scotland (CJS) is a public body established on 1 April 2017.

It organises a national annual event which this year due to the pandemic will be online. The events aim to entertain as much as inform and inspire people to take action to be a positive force for good in society.

For more information or to request interviews contact Maria Croce, senior communications manager, Community Justice Scotland on [maria.croce@communityjustice.scot](mailto:maria.croce@communityjustice.scot) or 07990 965576.



First published 2022

Community Justice Scotland, R1 Spur, Saughton House, Edinburgh, EH11 3DX

Tel: 0300 244 8420

[www.communityjustice.scot](http://www.communityjustice.scot)

