



## Media Guide

# Ways to get in touch with the media

The local press can be a great way to help promote your work, messages, campaigns and to recruit new Local Group members.

Make sure that you are mentioning the full name of your local group in all communications. Not only does this mean that people listening know where to go for further information about who you are and what you do, but it will also ensure our media monitoring service picks up the coverage so we can celebrate your success in getting in the press.

Below are some of the main ways to go about getting media coverage. You might find that different approaches suit different stories better.

### **Press Release / broadcast cue**

A press release would usually be a proactive communication issued to print/web-based publications, promoting something new, i.e. an event, publication. The copy within a release could also form the basis of a broadcast cue which would be sent to radio/television outlets, offering interviews.

These do not have to provide too much detail; you should be aiming for no more than a page and a half of A4.

Journalists usually request to be communicated with via email. They will often be pressed for time and want all the key information up front. Make sure the heading of your press release is as clear and concise as possible e.g. 'Local campaigners call for new crossing to reduce road deaths', this should also be the Subject of your email.

The introductory paragraph should have a bit more information before leading into the main body of the release. Each line should make the reader want to read the next.

Copy and paste the press release into the body of the email. You can also attach it as a Word document with your group's logo on it. If you're emailing multiple journalists at once, make sure you are putting the addresses in the BCC section. If you're not emailing a lot of journalists, then it's worth sending them separate emails and personalising them. If there is a reason you're contacting them then put it up top, i.e. 'I see from your article on X September that you're interested in road safety, I thought this press release might be of interest to you and your readers'.

Press releases should include a Notes to Editor section at the end with details of where a journalist can get more information, along with information about the Group and its relation to Living Streets.

If there are photos available then either attach them or give details of where they can be requested from. If you would like to invite outlets down to photograph an event, add a 'Photo call' to the Notes to Editor section.

### **Photo Call**

A photo call can also be issued independently to a press release.

There would be just the key details with a request for a photographer to attend at a date/time and location.

If the outlet has a photo editor, send it direct to them with 'Photo call' and the date in the email Subject.

### **Comments / Letters to editors**

Comments would usually be reactive communications, written in response to a news story. If the communication references a specific article, then this would be issued as a Letter to that publication.

Letters to editors should include a contact telephone number and postal address. Editors will require this to know that you are local and would sometimes call you to verify that the letter is from you, they would not ever publish the contact details.

### **Broadcast – radio/television**

Broadcast interviews can be more nerve-racking than sending off a press release, however, the good thing about live interviews is that the outlet isn't able to take what you're saying out of context.

If you're invited to interview by a public broadcaster then you will often be up against someone with opposing views so that they have balance. Local radio stations are more likely to be interested in human interest stories and just hearing about what you're up to. It can be a good opportunity to recruit new volunteers to a group, so make sure that one of your key lines is follow up contact details for listeners.

If an interview is pre-recorded, bear in mind they can edit down what you say to a brief statement so try and be as concise as possible. Preparing a short sound bite ahead of time can help ensure you saying everything you want to.

### **Media Briefing**

Once called for interview, a media briefing would be issued to a spokesperson to make sure your key messages are communicated in the interview.

Think of the main information you want to cover and stick to no more than four or five key lines - any more and you risk overwhelming the spokesperson.

Try and have a few key statistics in there. And if the interview is likely to be tricky, some potential questions could be good so the spokesperson can prepare some answers.

### **Media Contacts**

If you want us to search for outlets and contacts in your area, email [aisha.hannibal@livingstreets.org.uk](mailto:aisha.hannibal@livingstreets.org.uk) and she can arrange for the media team to search our media database. Try and give as much notice, a minimum of one week's notice. If you're more pressed for time then newspapers will often have their contact details on their website.

### **Please request templates and examples if you need any of the following:**

- Press release template, including Living Streets boilerplate and Notes to Editors
- Photo call example
- Broadcast cue example
- Letter to editor example and coverage
- Comment example
- Media briefing example