



Writing a news release

Format and style

Use A4 letterhead and an agreed format, double-spacing, all on one page, or two at the most. 'News release' and date in large print at the top.

Include the name and title of the person for whose attention the release is.

The style throughout must be concise, journalistic, as catchy and intriguing as possible. Imagine you know nothing about your organisation. Does this story stand out? Is it clearly of interest to readers/viewers? In short, is it tempting to an editor deluged with news releases?

Heading

This should be a catchy, short title giving a sense of the story in very few words. Use headings for subsequent paragraphs if appropriate although they are not essential.

First paragraph

It is absolutely vital that this is short, to the point and newsworthy. It must clearly state the 'five w's': who, what, where, when and why (in any order). This paragraph must be able to stand on its own as a concise piece of information.

Second paragraph

This should provide the next piece of information: either more details about the above, or new information.

Third paragraph/additional paragraphs

Use these only if you have more new information. This paragraph could be a quote from someone involved who is willing to talk to the press if requested. The quote must add a new dimension, such as the personal side of the story. Alternatively it could be a quote from your spokesperson explaining the importance of the story in strong, authoritative language, e.g.:

"There are now 350 young people living rough in this borough, a vast increase since this time last year", said Janine Pearce of Trentby Youth Housing Help. "Such figures dispel once and for all the myth that there are no homeless people in our area. They have nowhere to turn and urgently need our support."

Contact details

Your name, title, telephone number and home or mobile phone should be included in clear, bold print at the bottom of the document. Provide a contact number for when you are out of the office. This can make the difference between your story being covered or not.

Additional information for editors

Include the word count. Describe your charity in a few words. Give any relevant basic information and statistics. Include your website address if you have one.