

Journalists get lots of requests, lots of press releases and work to deadlines. It is important to try to catch their attention, but also to make their work as easy as possible. The easier you make it, the better chance your story has of being published. But remember - the main thing any editor would ask is 'would my reader be interested in this?'. Make the news value or the human interest of your story crystal clear from the start.

Top Ten Tips:

- Remember that **personal contacts** with journalists work best, so call them to ask if they received the press release, if think they will use it, or if you can provide them with anything else.
- **One size does not fit all!** - You need to highlight different parts of the story in your press release to interest different target groups/ media.
- **Send it in a digital format** – include photos – no larger than 2MB – it makes it easy for the journalist to copy and paste.
- **Before you start** to write - **Ask yourself:** What story do you want to tell? What's your news? What is the aim of your message? Who is the target for your story? Why would a journalist publish your story?
- If you announce your activities **before** - you might arouse more interest and more people might attend your activities (fundraising events, advertising a performance or exhibition).
- If you contact media **during** - you could inform the journalists about the interesting parts of the project where they can potentially find a story to publish. (e.g. meeting the Mayor, or a fundraising event *etc.*)
- Or if you want to promote your activity **After** your project, you could invite the press for a more in-depth interview and article about your experiences or those of the group. You need to provide your own images.
- **Use logo's of your organisation** and also that of the **Youth in Action** programme (instructions on page 124 of Programme Guide)
- **Ask to have a look** at the article before it is published (if possible), to **check** if the journalist understood everything correctly, or if there are mistakes.
- **If you get published** – Make sure to get a copy- and then use it – put clippings in your Final report, post it on your website and make the most of the exposure, that's dissemination of the activity.

HANDS ON GUIDE

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Hands on guide to...

Building a “Press Kit” for your Youth in Action Project

Everyone likes good news, and your Youth in Action project is involving young people actively in trying to change the world a little bit, even if it's just your world. But why not think a little bigger!

You don't have to do it all yourself – the young people in your project could form a "Press Group" and make this an aspect of the project that they take control of themselves. Here are some steps to get you started:

- 1. What story do you have to tell?**
- 2. Target the right type of media**
- 3. Build a contact list of media – get personal**
- 4. Write a press release and fact sheet**
- 5. Make the work of the journalist easy**



PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

Headline Should Attract Interest, Keep It Snappy!

A summary paragraph is a little longer synopsis of the news, elaborating on the news in the headline in one to four sentences. The summary uses sentence case, with standard capitalisation and punctuation.

The lead sentence contains the most important information in 25 words or less. Grab your reader's attention here by simply stating the news you have to announce. Do not assume that your reader has read your headline or summary paragraph; the lead should stand on its own.

A Press Release, like a news story, keeps sentences and paragraphs short, about three or four lines per paragraph. The first couple of paragraphs should answer the **who, what, when, where, why and how questions**. It should tell journalists what they want to know in the first few lines. (What is in it for them, why should they write about it?)

The standard press release is **300 to 800** words and written in simple and clear language. Always check **spelling and grammar** and ask someone who is unconnected to the story to read it and see if it makes sense, is interesting etc. This template is 800 words

The rest of the press release **develops the story and the information provided in the lead paragraph**. You should include quotes from participants, parents or youth workers. It contains more details about the story you have to tell, remember your target group and what they will want to read. Is your story about something unique or controversial or does it involve a prominent person, place or thing. Also remember to state photo opportunities – or refer to **photos included**.

HANDS ON GUIDE TO BUILDING A "PRESS KIT" FOR YOUR YOUTH IN ACTION PROJECT

Remember to keep the text as objective as possible – a press release is **NOT an advertisement** - keep the tone neutral and factual. Avoid directly addressing the reader or your target audience. The use of "I," "we" and "you" outside of a direct quotation is a flag that your copy is an advertisement rather than a news release, and editors will avoid it.

It is often helpful before you begin with the practical aspects of a press release to **restate and summarise key points** of the press release – **reinforcing the key message** of your (project) story.

To finish, the final paragraph contains the least "newsworthy" material, but **important practical information** such additional information on the news that is the subject of this release, or websites for more information visit **www.myyouthclub.ie**. Very importantly you should also include **acknowledgment to the Youth in Action Programme** here.

Information about YOUR youth group/ organisation should follow the press release. Include a short background about the youth group or organisation or the newsworthy people before you list the contact person's name and phone number.

Contact:

**Mary Smith, director of public relations
My Youth Club
353 1 8871205 9am-5pm / mobile 086 555 555
www.myyouthclub.ie**

- always include the 3 "hash" symbols at the end – these indicate the end of your Press Release

