

## Guidelines for working with external media

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These guidelines cover how you can raise awareness through the media. Our Communications Team is here to work with you, providing you with support, advice and help as you go.

### Working with your local media

This can be a great way to shout about your news, encourage support and engage with new audiences so you reach potential new volunteers.

The key is to provide them with 'a local story'. That means talking about something taking place in their area, featuring their listeners or readers and demonstrating how their community will benefit. You have all that – so now it's just a case of making them notice you.

### Local newspapers

Local newspapers love being provided with good stories, complete with quotes and photos. If you have a short video clip – no more than a minute – which they could use on their website, even better.

**For evening newspapers, send your press release mid-afternoon. For daily newspapers, contact them late morning and for weekly newspapers send your press release three days before they go on sale.**

Include as much information as you can and a call to action, which might be a web address or a telephone number to call for information, or the details of an event to go to.

Always include a photo if possible but make sure it's relevant and **has the right permissions in place.**

### Postcode publications

These are the news sheets, newsletters and magazines that are posted free through letterboxes and given away in hairdressers, cafes and local shops. The same tips apply as for local newspapers. The key difference is that they tend to work a few weeks in advance so let them know of launches, events etc as early as possible. You'll find contact details inside the publication or online.

### Local volunteer umbrella groups, councils etc

These often have newsletters distributed via email to their networks. Ask if they will include your story.

### Radio stations

Local radio stations are often really keen to cover local stories, particularly if you have someone who's happy to be interviewed. Search engines are your best friend for tracking down contacts.

## How to contact media outlets

**Email addresses** tend to be readily available on websites. Consider your subject line – it should give the recipient a steer on the content of the email and persuade them to open your email to find out more. So, it might be something like:

- Charity seeks volunteers to support people affected by MND in [name of town]
- Long service volunteer from [name of town] tells their story.

Some publications will have an **enquiry form** on their website. Paste the contents of your press release onto the form. Remember to include your contact information.

Use **social media** to contact the publication or reporter directly – tweet them using their @XName or message them via their Facebook page.

Of course you can call media outlets too – **phone numbers** are generally available on websites. Ask for the 'newsroom'.

Some have offices you can drop by, but do check opening times before you visit as some are limited.

## Press release tips

Here are some top tips for writing a press release:

- Make sure you include the date, contact details - including your name and location - and daytime and evening phone numbers.
- Write a clear, impactful headline.
- Put important information - who, what, where, why, when - at the beginning of the release. Put less crucial information in later paragraphs.
- Include a quote from a branch or group volunteer, case study, or someone involved in the event.
- Add a link to your branch or group website as well as the main website.
- Email a copy of your press release to **volunteering@mndassociation.org** – we might be able to feature your story on our website, in *The News* or our social media channels.

The **Communications Team** has put together some templated press releases. Please contact the Team if you would like a copy of these, or for any further help you require with your media activities.

## Useful contacts

Communications Team: [communications@mndassociation.org](mailto:communications@mndassociation.org)

Website: [www.mndassociation.org](http://www.mndassociation.org)

Tel: 01604 250505

Facebook: @MNDAssociation

Twitter: @MNDAssoc

Instagram: @MNDAssoc