

Try to compose Press Releases on headed paper – including your logo and address.

## Press Release

Issued: 28-Jul-09

**Always state very clearly** that this is a Press Release to distinguish it from advertisements or letters. **Date your press release** – this makes it easier for journalists to work out if it fits with their deadlines. If your press release **refers to a specific event** ensure that the event date is also made clear.

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[TYPE HEADLINE HERE in bold]

The role of the headline is to inform the reporter of what your story is about – be concise and to the point. Don't worry about being witty or using puns sub-editors usually create headlines.

[ Type body text here ]

PARAGAPHS: Summarise the **key points** of your story or event in the first few paragraphs, including dates, times and venues/location/place. Often journalists will not read beyond the first few paragraphs, so this tactic will enable the journalist to assess the newsworthiness of the release quickly. **Sub-editors often cut stories from the bottom up** –all indispensable information must be near the start of your release.

STYLE: All releases should be written in the **third person**, except when you are quoting someone. Keep sentences **short and snappy**, ensure regular paragraph breaks and try not to exceed 3 or 4 sentences per paragraph. Make sure the release is upbeat, lively and interesting, using **active tense constructions** (i.e. *'the event delighted audiences'*). Journalists and readers are interested in the **human element** of a story; what exciting things can people do at your new arts centre, what fun things are people doing to fundraise for your new initiative.

To bear in mind...

- Avoid **clichés** completely.
- **Exclamation marks** are rarely used in newspapers and magazines.
- Avoid **exaggeration** or **extravagant claims** – they'll be edited out, attract cynical editorial comment, or raise unrealistic expectations.
- Don't **underline** anything – this can be mistaken for an instruction to italicise text.
- Avoid **jargon**, long words and 'art-speak', especially when submitting a release to a non-specialist media source.
- When using **acronyms** or **abbreviations** be sure to include the full organisation name the first time you mention it and put the abbreviation into brackets, you can then use the abbreviation throughout the rest of the release i.e. *Scottish Arts Council (SAC)*.

FORMAT: A press release should run no longer than **two-sides of A4**, one-side is preferable. Try not to exceed **300 words** in the main release. You can always attach additional information as background reading. Use one clear typeface and paragraphs should be double spaced.

Indicate if the release runs onto a second page

**MORE**

“QUOTATIONS”: Short and to the point, using a **maximum of 3 quotes** can bring a press release to life, adding an additional ‘voice’ to the release. Clearly **annotate with quotation marks** and the name of speaker should be given, along with the organisation they represent or any other relevant information of how they relate to the story. **Dedicate a paragraph** to each quotation so they can be clearly located.

**~ ENDS ~**

At the end of your release you must type ‘ENDS’.

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For further information contact Sian Jamieson, HI-Arts on 01463 717091 / email [sian@hi-arts.co.uk](mailto:sian@hi-arts.co.uk)

**[ Type contact details and additional information here ]**

This **must** include contact details (name, direct telephone number, email) of someone who is able to give more detailed information if requested.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: **General information** about your organization or details that will not appear in the story should go at the end of your release.

Long lists (i.e. tour dates), pictures and logos should be **relegated to an attachment**.

PHOTOGRAPHS: A compelling image can often be the **deciding factor** in whether or not a media organisation will run your story, it can help your story stand out. Source a high-quality photo, high resolution - 300dpi (dots per inch), the larger the better. Images can be sent on CD-rom or memory chip but sending them by email can be more appropriate.

To bear in mind...

- Images taken from **websites** will not be of a sufficient resolution for printed media's.
- Consider how your image will look when it's **reduced in size**.
- The **best photos** are action oriented, provocative or include a celebrity.
- Offer a **choice of photo** i.e. landscape- and portrait-shaped – newspapers often print photos according to the space they have left on the page.
- **Caption** all photo's clearly – who is in the photo, what it relates to, and credit the photographer if necessary.
- If an appropriate **photo opportunity** can be offered to the press make this offer at the end of the release.