

Regional Media Guidance

Working with the press release toolkit

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CANCER RESEARCH UK

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About this toolkit

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Introduction

This presentation is designed to provide you with some simple information and template press releases to generate **good quality local media coverage** for Relay For Life.

We're aware that some committees are very experienced in this area, while others may be new to working with the media – so we aim to 'cover all bases'.

Key points for getting started



Why: Generating good quality media coverage will help boost awareness of your Relay and could encourage people to sign-up, fundraise or attend on the day.

Which media: You will be targeting local newspapers that cover the area where your Relay is taking place. Please do not target national media or regional TV.

Your role: Remember to describe yourself as a *volunteer* for Relay For Life. We want to avoid confusion with Cancer Research UK's regional press officers, who could be liaising with the same media.

Tone of voice: As a charity, Cancer Research UK has a specific way of communicating with people, including the media.

Key things to remember



- The press release templates provided are written in Cancer Research UK's tone of voice, so using them should make communicating with reporters straightforward.

- Always refer to the charity as **Cancer Research UK**, and never 'CRUK' or 'Cancer Research'. The UK at the end of our name is very important. It distinguishes us from a number of other charities.

- Please try to avoid using words like 'victim', 'sufferer' or 'gruelling' when referring to people who have, or are being treated for, cancer.

Ways of Working

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Working with your Relationship Manager



- Certain kinds of story opportunity need to be flagged up with your Cancer Research UK Relationship Manager **BEFORE** you start work on them, so they can advise on how to proceed.

- This is because some stories about cancer can be very complex.

- Also, although the press release toolkit is based on sharing survivors' stories, other people may get in touch about publicity - such as MPs or local celebrities. Other teams at Cancer Research UK may already be working with them, so it's important to have a co-ordinated approach.

When to contact your Relationship Manager

Patients and some survivor stories

For example:

- People currently undergoing cancer treatment
- Children
- People living with incurable cancer
- Hereditary cancers

Scientists

For example:

- Any story involving scientists or research (unless you've been provided with signed-off paragraphs on local research)

Celebrities/ Influencers

For example:
Committees are asked not to make approaches to celebrities or influencers, but people such as the following could sign up of their own accord:

- Sportspeople, actors, musicians, presenters and journalists
- Social media influencers: 2k followers or more on social media platforms
- Industry experts: Exercise, beauty, science, nutrition

MPs / Politicians

For example:

- If MPs, Peers in the House of Lords, Members of the Senedd (Welsh Parliament), MSPs or MLAs have signed up of their own accord. Committees are asked not to make approaches to people in politics.

Getting ‘sign off’



Committees also need to contact their Relationship Manager to ‘sign off’ survivor/participant stories, because sharing these with local media means sharing personal information.

Getting permission or ‘sign-off’ on the information you supply to the media is an essential part of working with Relay For Life supporters, because we need to ensure we are following **data protection laws (GDPR).**

We are highlighting this under ways of working, because it’s a key responsibility for media chairs. **There is more detail on the specifics of how to get sign-off on slide 20.**

What local press want

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What do local press want

- Stories from their ‘patch’
- Human interest stories - **stories of those who have survived cancer make compelling reading, highlighting why it’s important to raise money for research and inspiring others to sign up**
- Specific, accurate information
- The story ‘on a plate’
- To be able to contact you or the person featured in the story for more information (by email and mobile)
- Good pictures

What do you need to know?

- How to provide them with **good stories and pictures** using the templates
- The **area** they cover (look at the paper or online)
- Their **deadlines**
- A **named contact** (the names of reporters are often published in the paper or online)
- To be prepared and **know all about the story** before you call

Remember that news is competitive and local media are not obligated to feature your story. Only paid advertising guarantees space in the paper or online. Editorial coverage, like you are trying to achieve, is free and is gained on merit.

Reporters do not give copy approval.

This means that you can't control exactly what is written. However, often you can influence it by providing an accurate press release with **all the elements** that the reporter wants.

What makes a good press picture?



Good pictures:

- Tell the story without words
- Capture attention
- Are animated
- Have colour
- Have a good composition

“A picture paints a thousand words”

Bad pictures:

- Have no clear connection to the story
- Aren’t interesting (e.g. media don’t like cheque photos)
- Have a bad composition (e.g. everyone standing in a line)
- No branding

Local press don’t like lots of branding, but a simple Relay For Life t-shirt tells the reader what the event is or, for example, a supporter wearing a purple t-shirt will bring to life a story on the Lap of Honour.

Using the press release templates

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What is a press release template?



A press release is your opportunity to ‘sell’ your story to a local reporter, in writing. It should contain all the key information the reporter needs, served up ‘on a plate’, so it’s easy to use.

Why use the template press releases provided?

- **To make life easy!**
- They have been created by Cancer Research UK’s Media Relations team to help you generate good quality coverage
- They are written specifically to appeal to regional journalists
- The templates contain Cancer Research UK approved information and are written in the charity’s style and tone of voice

What do the template press releases cover?



- Team recruitment and fundraising ‘call to action’
- Survivor recruitment – with story
- A Candle of Hope ‘call to action’
- Post-event amount raised

How to access the templates:

- **Committees can request the Relay For Life press release toolkit from their Cancer Research UK Relationship Manager.**
- **They are also available via the Relay Resources web page.**

How to use the press release templates

- **Getting started:** First, contact your Relationship Manager to let them know what you are planning to do. This will help to avoid clashes with other Cancer Research UK activity and alert them to any sensitive stories.
- **Filling in the template:** Replace the **red text** in the template with the relevant details for your Relay, including your contact details.
- **Turning the text to black:** Once the template is completed, turn all the text back to black. Make sure no red or blue is visible and delete the title of the template and any instructions at the top of the press release.
- **Sign off:** If you are issuing a press release about a cancer survivor or participant, it is very important to:
    - Ensure they agree or 'sign off' the press release, pictures and media targets - **via email** - before you issue to the media **(see slide 20).**
    - Send any press releases featuring cancer survivors to your Relationship Manager for approval, before sending to the media.
    - Sign off any new press releases you generate - that are not based on the templates – with your Relationship Manager.

In general, it's a good idea to share any final press releases with your Relationship Manager **BEFORE** sending them to media, so they are aware of your plans, can advise on the best timings and flag any potential issues

Taking pictures

If using existing or stock Relay For Life images, please make sure the correct permissions are in place (check with your Relationship Manager if unsure). If working on a new story you may need to take your own pictures.

Here are some top tips:

- Composition – how are you going to set it up?
- Remember a maximum of three people is ideal if working with a group - a group shot needs creativity, try not to line people up like a football team.
- Consider what is in the background. It should be uncluttered.
- Location – outside often looks much better and the light is better.
- Make sure you include a Relay For Life t-shirt to get the branding in.
- Take a variety of shots – portrait and landscape.
- Get permissions **before you take the pictures and afterwards – see slide 20.**
- Make sure everyone is looking at the camera and smiling.
- Use a flash, where needed, to make sure the image is bright and clear.
- Check your settings to make sure you're taking hi-res pictures **around 1-2MB in file-size is best, you can also re-size images later if they're very large.**
- On event day it's a good idea to capture a range of natural and candid shots too, to help capture the spirit of the event.

How to get ‘sign-off’



When talking to someone about whether they would like to share their story, it’s important to be clear and transparent about what it will involve, which media you will contact and to check they are happy for photos of them to be used.

Once you have completed a press release on a survivor/participant, they need to agree – or ‘sign-off’ - **what you have written in the release**, **the pictures** you are planning to use to accompany it and **the media outlets** you are sending to.

It’s best to ask this **via email:**

- When requested, it’s important to make any changes, delete any pictures they are not comfortable with and amend the list of media titles you plan to target
- You should then re-send the release, picture and media targets to the participant/supporter again, so everything is clear and transparent

Once you have final confirmation by email that they are:

- Happy with the release
- Have given permission for the pictures to be used
- Are comfortable with the selected media titles

Then - please save and file their response securely, in line with your Relay's data protection processes.

Please note: The contact details you share via the press release should be your own, as media chair. You should only give out a survivor's/participant’s details if you have express permission to do so.

E.g. If a reporter receives your press release and gets in touch for an interview, it’s best to explain the media opportunity to the survivor/participant first, what it will involve, then ask if they are happy for their contact details to be shared with the reporter.

How to send a press release to the media

Once you have a final signed off press release and pictures:

- Copy and paste the headline of the press release into the subject box of an email. This is what the reporter will see in their inbox. Most of the templates have a space for the name of the town or the area in the headline, so they will know as soon as they see it that it is relevant to their 'press patch'.
- Then copy and paste the press release into the **main body of the email.** Do not send the press release as an attachment. Journalists are short on time and are unlikely to open an attachment.
- Attach hi-res pictures to the email:
    - Make sure each picture is clearly labelled with who is in it left to right- e.g. **L to R Joe Bloggs and John Doe Relay For Life Eastbourne 01**
    - Jpeg format is best and each image should be around **1-2 MB** in size.
    - It's often a good idea to send a couple of photos. Quality is better than quantity, so send no more than two or three of your best images.
    - Try to send **a mixture of landscape and portrait shots.**
- If you are sending to more than one media outlet remember to 'bcc' all the recipients. No media outlet likes to think they're at the end of a long list.

Spreading the word

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Other communication channels



There are lots of other ways you can help to spread the word and raise awareness about your Relay For Life, such as:

- Social media – use your official Relay account (if you have one or your personal account, if not) and ask supporters to highlight your event through their own accounts too. Remember to use the correct handles and hashtags and that the same principles apply as with liaising with local press - i.e. **it's important to use Cancer Research UK's tone of voice.**
- Council newspapers or 'what's on' listings and websites.
- Hyperlocal/community websites.
- Think about the letters page of the local paper, if you're struggling to get coverage on the news pages.

And finally...



If in doubt about anything press-related, GDPR or data privacy, please speak to your Relationship Manager and they can advise accordingly.

Thank you!

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