



the brain injury association

How to Write a News Release

There are two main reasons why you may want to write a news release publicising your fundraising event. Firstly, you may wish to drum up support in your local area and appeal for more sponsorship money. This type of release will need to be issued a few weeks, possibly even a month, before your event.

Top tip: In this type of release remember to include details of how people can sponsor you and where the event is taking place in case they want to come and support you.

Secondly, a post-event release highlighting what you've done, why you did it and how much money you raised is the perfect opportunity to raise the profile of Headway in your local area.

Top tip: With post-event releases, a good action photo can make the difference between the story being used or ignored.

Who, what, when, where, why?

These are the questions every good press release should answer. Remember, **news is people!**

If you're writing about someone doing a sponsored bike ride, here are the questions you need to answer in your release:

1. Who is doing the activity?
2. What are they doing?
3. When are they doing it?
4. Why are they doing it? For example, do they or a member of their family have a brain injury?
5. If they are a solicitor/doctor/nurse/social worker, what is their connection to brain injury?



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How to Write a News Release cont.

For example

An Ipswich woman is preparing to cycle from Lands End to John O'Groats in order to raise money for Headway - the brain injury association.

Sue Smith, whose daughter Sarah suffered a brain injury following a car accident in 2005, is hoping to raise more than £2,000 for the charity as well as increasing the public's awareness of the devastating effects brain injury can have.

The above example immediately says who, what and why. You can then add more detail, such as a quotation from Sue in the following paragraphs.

Quotes

Quotes can be very powerful and help the reader identify with the story. For example:

“The ride will be the toughest challenge I have ever faced,” said Sue, “but I'm determined to do it for the sake of my daughter and I know she'll be cheering me on with every mile I ride.”

The above quote is emotional and personal and will allow the reader to identify with the reasons behind the event.

The rest of the release

The “Who, What, When, Where, Why” philosophy basically means you've told the whole story in the first one or two sentences. Everything else is just adding detail.

Remember, a press release is a tool to grab a newsroom's attention – it doesn't have to be a whole life story or go into all the detail. Keep it brief. If the journalist needs to ask any more questions they can phone you. A long release might put people off.



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How to Write a News Release cont.

The rest of the release should just be everything else you feel the journalist needs to know – elaborating on the first two paragraphs.

Remember to add a call to action at the end of the release, if appropriate. For example:

Anyone wishing to sponsor Sue on her bike ride can do so by calling xxxx xxxxxxxx or visiting www.xxxxxxxx.co.uk.

Notes to editors

These are important. They give the journalists extra information, like when people are available for interview or photographs, the specifics of your event – what time it starts, where it is. It also allows you to give background and context to the subject matter.

Start your notes to editors with information on how and when journalists can get hold of the people mentioned in the release in order to interview them or get a photo. Also reiterate when the event will be taking place.

Then attach your supplementary information. We would like to encourage you to use the current key facts about Headway which you can find in the **'Information for Fundraisers'** document, thank you.

Finally...

If you're ever in any doubt, feel free to pick up the phone and call the Headway UK Communications Team for advice.

Luke Griggs
Communications Manager

T: 020 8545 9644 M: 07912 668551

E: comms.manager@headway.org.uk



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Press Release

Contact: *(Your name)*

Tel: *(Your telephone number)*

Email: *(Your email address)*

(Insert date here)

Ipswich woman preparing for challenge of a lifetime

An Ipswich woman is preparing to cycle from Land End to John O'Groats in order to raise money for Headway – the brain injury association.

Sue Smith, 42, will take on the daunting 874-mile ride in June and is hoping to raise more than £2,000 for the charity as a thank-you for helping her daughter rebuild her life after suffering a brain injury.

In 2001, Sue's daughter Sarah was involved in a horrific car crash that left her in a coma for weeks.

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When she came round, Sarah and her family had to come to terms with the fact that her life would now be very different.

“Sarah’s brain injury affects her in a number of ways,” said Sue Smith. “She has a very poor short-term memory and can’t concentrate for more than a few minutes without getting tired, making it impossible to hold down a job. She also suffers from a balance problem, which has affected her self-confidence.”

“Organisations like Headway make a huge difference to the lives of people with brain injuries. We certainly appreciate the help we’ve been given and I hope my bike ride will provide valuable funds as well as raise awareness of brain injury.”

-ENDS-

About Headway

Headway – the UK’s leading brain injury charity – provides support, services and information to brain injury survivors, their families and carers, as well as to professionals in the health and legal fields. It has more than 100 groups and branches throughout the UK.

Note to editors: To arrange an interview with Sue Smith, please call her on xxxxx xxxxx

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Key facts

- It is estimated that across the UK there are well over 500,000 people of working age living with permanent disabilities as a result of head injury
- Each year, around 1.4 million people attend hospital A&E in the UK following head injury
- Approximately half of deaths in people under 40 are due to head injury
- Head injury accounts for about 30 per cent of traumatic deaths and a higher proportion of long-term disability
- Men are two or three times more likely to have a brain injury than women. This increases to five times more likely in the 15-29 age range
- The major causes of head injury are road traffic accidents, falls and accidents at home or at work

To find out more about Headway, please visit

www.headway.org.uk

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