



How do I write a press release for my Slum Survivor event?

This sheet gives you a step-by-step guide to writing an effective press release.

To start with...

Local newspapers, radio and television are keen to report local news and information. A simple, clear press release is a great way of letting them know what is happening with Soul Action and your Slum Survivor event locally.

The essentials

Research the facts

When you're drafting a press release it is essential that all the facts you use are correct. How often do you read a story in your local press and know that some of the information given, such as people's names and ages, is wrong?!

Use the five W's

Put important information in the first paragraph – remember that if you email the press release your local media will judge the release by the headline they see in the box. The first paragraph should include the 'Who', 'What', 'Why', 'Where' and 'When'. The rest of the press release can then explain the 'How'. Keep it short and simple, limiting it to one page if possible.

Include a quote

You will need to identify a spokesperson, should the local media want to interview someone about the story. It is useful to also include a quote in the press release. This allows the editor, if pushed for time, to use this quote and look like they have spoken to someone!

Date the release

Include the date the release is being sent out, so that the journalist can identify that they've got up-to-date news. Don't use jargon or acronyms. Don't include any charity or church jargon or acronyms in the press release.

Think about your headline

Try to summarize what the press release is about in the headline; you want to grab the attention of the journalist. However, try not to be too clever as the sub-editor will write the final headline. If the press release carries onto a second page make sure you include the headline again at the top of page two, so if the journalist prints it out they will know the pages belong together.

Add 'Notes to editors'

Put a 'Notes to editors' section at the end of your press release which contains contact details, so the

journalist knows who to contact if they are interested in further details, an interview or a photograph. Provide as much information as possible, such as a mobile number and email address. This is also the place to provide a bit of background about Soul Action – you can find up-to date information on the website www.soulaction.org. Remember to include the Soul Action website address as well.

Thinking it through

What makes the news?

- The biggest, longest, shortest, fastest or last of something makes the news.
- Anything topical – part of ongoing national or regional debates, stories or issues.
- Things with a strong local angle: what does this mean to people in your village or town, and why should they care?
- Local personalities.
- A good photograph – as a picture often tells the story.
- Read, watch and listen to your local media to familiarize yourself with what makes news. By doing this you can then target the press with the stories they'll be interested in.