

Press Release Information

If you wish prior publicity for your event then send a press release to every local and regional newspaper, local radio and news organisation in your area. Try to send your press release out early - up to four weeks before your event date. After the event make contact again to see if they would like to do a follow-up story and run a photograph - it's the perfect excuse to tell the world how it went and how much you raised.

If your press release is to get post-event publicity only then try to make contact as soon as possible after the event as old news is no news!

Unless you have contacted a newspaper by telephone and spoken with a particular reporter your press release ought to be sent by email to the 'News Editor' or to 'Forward Planning' at radio and TV stations.

Do not be afraid to telephone the recipient of the e-mail to ensure that it has arrived and to ask if they are interested in covering the story and if they wish further details. Be persistent and be prepared to re-send your e-mail if requested as many press releases get lost or just go unread.

Writing a Press Release may seem a daunting process but it is actually quite straightforward. The key is to keep the text brief but informative and to try to ensure that the story is presented in a way which will attract and retain the reader's interest.

Most Press Releases follow a set structure

1. The text is headed - PRESS RELEASE
2. Issue Date is given
3. State if the story is 'For Immediate Release' or 'Embargoed Until' a set date
4. Title - make it brief and attention-grabbing
5. Introduction - The first sentence should be a summary of the story. Get your key points across to catch the journalist's attention or they may not read further. Answer all the important questions like who, what, where, when, why & how
6. Second Paragraph - Expand on the details in the second paragraph. Remember the journalist will want to know what is unique or new about your story and why it will appeal to their readers
7. Following paragraphs - back up any claims made with facts and statistics and illustrate your story with quotes, "*A quote, written in italics, from a key person, helps bring a story to life*". As well as quotes, you could use bullet points to highlight points about your story

8. End story with details such as dates, times, how to order or how to make contact – this only needs to be brief, and should be the details you would wish to see in print. Fuller details can go in ‘Notes to Editors’ section.
9. The story part of the Press Release is marked with `##Ends##`
10. Notes to Editor – contains background information in numbered sections
 - a. Contact details for more information - include your mobile, landline and email if possible
 - b. Also include short background information on your group, when it was launched, achievements, etc
 - c. Give opening hours, prices, venues, dates as appropriate to your story.
 - d. You should also state whether you have photos available
 - e. Background Facts

Example Press Release

PRESS RELEASE

Issued: 25th June 2012

For Immediate Release

Three Generations collect for ME

Grandmother, daughter and grand-daughter, Mary Wilson, Martha Thomson and Bethany Thomson (all from Cults) joined twenty other supporters of ME Research UK yesterday at Waddell's supermarket Aberdeen to pack shoppers' bags and collect much needed funds for medical research into ME/CFS.

Mary's daughter, Anne, has suffered from ME/CFS for ten years and all the family were determined to get involved. It was the first time that Cults ME Society had attempted an all-day event and after frantic bag packing they collected £750 and, more importantly, raised awareness of this illness which affects up to 240,000 people in the UK alone. Anne was at hand in the morning to talk to shoppers and to hand out leaflets explaining more about ME/CFS and the work of ME Research UK.

The cause of ME/CFS is still unknown, but Anne (like around 50% of sufferers) became ill after an infection, and has been unwell for a decade. As her symptoms of muscle pain and mental exhaustion progressed, she found that she was unable to continue working full-time as a primary school teacher. Although no cure or effective treatment has yet been found she is hopeful of eventually returning to work, part-time at first, if possible.

As Mary said "*Relatively little research has been carried out into the causes of ME/CFS – we need to change this*". Talking to shoppers she was struck with the number of customers who had friends or family affected. "*ME/CFS can strike anyone regardless of sex, age or background but slowly, through ME Research UK, this neglected area of science is being tackled*"

Perth based ME Research UK is one of the most active funders of research into this condition in the world. Dr Neil Abbot, Operations Director, said, "*In over a decade we have funded over 32 projects and given grants totalling over £770,000. We rely on the efforts of supporters such as Mary and are grateful to her, the other helpers and all the shoppers in Aberdeen for their generosity*".

Contact: Mary Wilson, 43 Millar Drive, Cults, Chair of Cults ME Society – Tel 07897867641 – 2pm to 7pm

##Ends##

Notes to editors

1. For more information on the illness and research contact

Dr Neil C. Abbot
Operations Director
ME Research UK
The Gateway
North Methven St
Perth PH1 5PP, UK
01738-451234
meruk@pkavs.org.uk
<http://www.meresearch.org.uk/index.html>

2. Cults ME Society founded in 2007 by a small group of dedicated ME/CFs sufferers, friends and relations, aims to provide practical support to those affected by this illness in the Cults area. Meeting on a monthly basis at Cults Academy (first Monday in each month 7 – 9pm) the group also raises funds for research and have raised over £10,000 thus far.

Contact Thomas Evans, 19 High Street, Cults (Membership Secretary) 01224 656565. E-mail T-Evans@hotmail.com. Web page www.MECults.org.uk

3. Photographs showing group collecting at checkouts, Mary and family with Anne and other highlights available - contact Mary Wilson

4. Background Facts

A) MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS/CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME (otherwise ME/CFS)

- ME/CFS is a real, often relapsing, debilitating illness, affecting up to 240,000 people in the UK (Chief Medical Officer figures), with similar rates of incidence in Europe, USA, New Zealand and Australia.
- ME also affects children and in the UK alone there is estimated to be 20,000 children and young people with the illness - the incidence appears to be growing, and in some areas, two-thirds of the children who have Home Tuition have ME/CFS.
- Characteristic symptoms include a) muscle pain with physical and mental exhaustion following normal activities; quite different from what is normally experienced by healthy people; b) Unique to ME/CFS is the delayed recovery after physical or intellectual effort – recovery can take up to 72 hours; c) Cognitive difficulties (e.g., inability to concentrate, think or speak correctly).
- ME is classified as a neurological illness by the World Health Organisation, and recognized to be a serious, chronic condition (report to the Chief Medical Officer of England 2002).
- Studies have shown that most sufferers are unable to work to full capacity, and that 10-25% are severely disabled with some house/bed bound
- ME has a huge impact on the lives of families and carers, but little, if any, support is available to them

- The cause of ME is still unknown, but around 50% of sufferers report an infectious onset
- No cure or effective treatment has yet been found. Most research resources have gone into non-curative psychological "management" strategies designed to help manage the symptoms, but the campaigning charities in the UK recognize that only biomedical research can resolve this physical illness.

B) ME RESEARCH UK

ME Research UK (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation – Charity Number SC036942) has the principal aim of commissioning and funding scientific (biomedical) investigation into the causes, consequences and treatment of myalgic encephalomyelitis, or ME/CFS. It also has a mission to "Energise ME Research", and its in-house team: identifies potentially important biomedical projects; produces high-quality professional reviews and reports; hosts conferences; presents research at meetings and conferences; and facilitates research applications by established researchers to grant-awarding bodies. A complete list of the research that the charity has funded can be found at <http://www.meresearch.org.uk/research/studies/index.html>