

Tips from our Communications Team

Getting a newspaper, or a news programme on the TV or radio interested in your issue could be a fantastic way to let lots of other people know about it.

If you've got a 'call to action', i.e. something that you want people to do, having a story in the news could really help. For instance, you might want people to sign your petition or join a demonstration, and if they see or hear about it in the news, you'll be more likely to have an impact.

Here are some tips to help you.

Read the news

Pay attention to the news. Whether it's your local newspaper or a national TV or radio news programme, it's good to see how news stories are written or presented. It will help you to think about the different elements that make a good news story.

Think about where your story will go

Is the issue one that will only interest people in your area? If so, you might think your local paper is the best place for your story. If you think it might be of interest to more people, you might want to contact a national newspaper or tv/radio news programme too.

Perhaps it's not an issue that you really need to get in the news either. If, for instance, you want to reach a very particular group of people and you know exactly how to reach them (e.g. people who live on a particular street), it might be better for you to post a leaflet through their door.

Research

Look online to see if you can find similar stories to yours.

If the story or stories you find have a journalist's name next to them, they might be a good place to start. Because they've written about a similar issue before, it might make them more likely to take an interest in yours.

Getting the information across

Before you get in touch with a journalist, think about some of the information you'll need to give:

- Summarise your issue or story so that you get across the main points, but not in a long-winded or confusing way. You want them to be interested — they can always ask for more information if they need it.
- Is anything specific happening that they can use as a way to talk about the issue? For instance, you might have started a petition or you might have organized a demonstration.
- Who's involved in the issue?
- Will they be able to interview anyone who's involved? Always check with people that they're happy to be interviewed before you say 'yes' to the journalist.
- If you're talking to a TV news programme, will there be anything interesting for them to film? Think about how your story or issue might work on the television.

Being interviewed

- If you've agreed to be interviewed, think about the main points you'd like to get across and try to say them in the clearest, simplest and most concise way possible. Remember that your audience might know a lot less about the issue than you do.

After it's published

- Pretty much everything is online now, so after your story has been published, think about whether you could use it to share directly with people, e.g. through social media or email.