

MEDIA GUIDE

WHY BOTHER DOING PRESS WORK?

Only 12% of media stories about young people are positive, almost half the articles about young people are crime related and only one in ten stories about young people actually bothers to quote a young person (Ipsos Mori 2005). Want to do something about it?

Getting your story or comment covered in the press will raise awareness of specific issues as well as making sure everyone knows about the great work you are up to as an MYP. By working with the media you can reach a huge audience who may never have heard of you or what you are campaigning about. Getting your story covered in the media means you are getting your message across to thousands of people.

You can start by challenging negative stories in the press by contacting newspapers and radio stations when they put out negative, unbalanced reports about young people.

Tell them about all the work you are doing and make them sit up and take notice!

You can also get positive stories into the press. Use some of the hints on these pages and let the UKYP Press Team know what you are up to in your area. If it is a good story we can help you get it in the local, regional or even national press.

REMEMBER! The media is an incredibly powerful tool for getting your message over. From local campaigns, to regional events, to commenting on national news stories, you can make a huge difference!

STOP THE PRESS! HOW TO GET YOUR NEWS IN THE NEWS

How to make news newsy

If you have two or more of the below there is a good chance you have a 'news story'.

- New figures or statistics
- You can link your story to a national announcement/ breaking news story

- Something TOTALLY original
- Something that will affect thousands of people
- Something local
- A story that will make people mad, sad or glad (last one is the least important!)
- A celebrity (!)

Take notice of stories that make the headlines. What was it about those stories that caught the eye of the journalist? Before you write a press release or pick up the phone you need to be honest about whether or not a journalist would be interested in your story and come up with all the arguments as to why they should be!

How to write a press release

Journalists get hundreds, if not thousands, of press releases every week. If you are sending out a press release make it really exciting, keep it short and ALWAYS call a journalist afterwards to check they have received it (and not just pressed delete!) and answer any questions they may have.

- Never send a press release as an attachment – always put it in the main body of an email
- Write the date at the top
- Write an attention grabbing headline – think about the sort of headline you see in



newspapers

- Answer who (is doing it), what (is happening), where (it has, or is happening), when (it is happening) and why (it is happening!) in your first paragraph

So,

9 out of 10 young people in Birmingham want better youth clubs, according to new figures out today. The research, conducted by the UK Youth Parliament, shows that....'

Is much stronger than,

The UK Youth Parliament is releasing figures today that show that 9 out of 10 young people in Birmingham want...'

- Write a press release as if you are a journalist writing a story NOT as if you are a press officer!
- Include one or two short quotes from MYPs or other interesting people
- Write ENDS underneath your quotes
- Underneath ENDS, write Notes to Editors. In this section, put contact details (talk to your youth worker about who you should list) and some information about UKYP

Sell, sell, sell!

- Calling a journalist and telling them about your story is called 'selling in'.
- 'So what?' is what most journalists will say (or at least think!) when you call to tell them about your story. You need to think about how to pass the 'so what?' test by showing how newsworthy your story is. Practise selling in your story with friends – get them to keep asking you 'so what?' and make sure you can answer!
- Think about how your story will make the readers/listeners/viewers sit up and pay attention – it needs to be something new, original and exciting.
- Imagine you have 30 seconds to sell your story to a journalist. What three key messages would you want to get across? Have these messages ready when you call.
- Make sure you have all the information you need to hand. If the journalist is interested in your story they might have some questions for you so make sure you are ready to answer anything tricky that might come up. If they ask

a question you really don't know the answer to then say you will find out and come straight back to them.

REMEMBER! Keep your press release exciting, original and short. ALWAYS call a journalist to sell in your story and be ready to pass the 'so what?' test!

LIGHTS. CAMERA. ACTION. BEING INTERVIEWED

It is really important to prepare for an interview so you are ready for what a journalist might ask you. Sometimes interviews can be at VERY short notice but if you use the tips below you will be sorted!

Before the interview you need to write down **THREE key points** you want to get across to the reader, listener or viewer. Make these short, sharp and simple with loads of impact. You might have a lot to say on the issue but the people reading, listening or watching will only remember a bit. You should be able to use these key points to help you answer most questions in the interview. Never speak to a journalist without preparing.

If a journalist calls you up unexpectedly or approaches you at an event, say you will get back to them in ten minutes and use that time to get together your **THREE KEY POINTS!**

If you are being interviewed for...



A NEWSPAPER – Try and get hold of a copy of the newspaper you are being interviewed for. This will give you an idea of the sort of things the journalist might ask you or might be looking for from you. For example, a journalist from The Sun will be looking for a totally different angle to a journalist on The Guardian and whilst a journalist on your local paper might pick up on a national story they will always want a local angle to it...

You might be interviewed face



to face, over the phone or via email but mostly it will be over the phone. Make sure you are in a quiet place where you can concentrate and have your three key points to hand!

It may seem as if you are just having a chat with the journalist but remember that anything you say might end up in the paper. Take your time to answer any questions and if you don't want to answer something just say so. The UKYP Press Team can arrange to be on the phone with you if that would make you feel more comfortable.

If you are being interviewed for a local paper then remember to

mention things going on in your area as well as any national UKYP work.



THE RADIO – If you aren't familiar with the radio station, then try and have a listen. It

should give you some clues as to the sort of people who listen to the station and what sort of an interview you might have. The UKYP Press Team will be able to provide you with information and support and should be able to answer any questions you may have about the radio station or presenters.

A radio interview can be live or pre-recorded. If it is live then whatever you are saying will be broadcast as you are speaking. This might sound scary but it can be a really good thing as it means you are able to put your view across and you know it won't be edited. As long as you have prepared your three key points, take your time (and never swear!) you will be absolutely fine. On the other hand, the good thing about doing a pre-recorded interview is that if you make a mistake they can take it out as it won't be aired straight away. Phew!

SPEAK SLOWLY! This is the most important advice for a radio interview. When you are speaking on the radio you need to speak very, very, very slowly. Radio listeners can't see your facial expressions and if you speak quickly it is very hard to make out what you are saying. It also makes you

sound MUCH more important when you speak slowly. After the interviewer has asked a question, pause, think about what you want to say and then answer the question SLOWLY!



TELEVISION – Try and watch the programme you are being interviewed for. This will make you feel much more comfortable and will help you in preparing your **THREE KEY POINTS**. You will be able to watch most programmes over the internet but please call the UKYP Press Team for any advice.

Television is usually pretty fast paced and you will often only get a minute or two at the most on screen. This means it

is even more important to have prepared three short, sharp, simple messages and make sure you get them over!

Wear clothes that you feel comfortable in. Keep it simple and dress your age – they are interviewing you as a young person so you don't need to look like a middle aged politician! The only thing to

avoid wearing is anything with a brand or logo on it or tops with stripes or patterns.

When you are being interviewed, look at the person interviewing you as if you are having a conversation – don't look at the cameras! Sit right back in the chair, make sure you're comfortable and the camera angle will look better.

It's as simple as ABC!

Answer – Start with 'yes', 'no', 'perhaps', 'not really' etc and then expand on this. If it seems the journalist is asking a very basic or very challenging question don't worry! They are just trying to help the audience fully understand the issue.

Bridge – If you don't know how to answer a question or you get asked a question that isn't quite right for one of your 3 key points then you 'bridge'. This means that you briefly answer the question and then say something like 'but the really important thing is...' or 'picking up on what you said earlier...' and then make your point. Genius!

Control – Eeeek! Don't panic and say something you regret. Never rush to answer a question. Take your time, think about what you want to say and speak slowly.

TOP IDEAS FOR GETTING YOUR MEDIA CAREER STARTED!

How to get into your local press

1 Do your research! Read copies of your local and regional papers, listen to your local radio stations and watch local and regional news. Find out what journalists write about which issues so you know who to call or send a press release to when the time comes.

2 Spot an opportunity! Look out for articles or comments on young people or specific issues in your local press. This provides you with a great opportunity to respond by calling/ emailing your local paper/radio station/TV station and getting across the UK Youth Parliament's key points.

3 Find out the best person to talk to on your paper/ radio station/online forum. Ask for the journalist who has written an article if you have seen one or ask to speak to the person covering the particular issue you want to talk about. If

you need contacts then try <http://www.mediauk.com/> or call UKYP's Press and Publicity Officer (020 7553 9894) who can provide you with details for your area.

4 A telephone call is the best way to get through. You can start by saying,

'Hi, my name is ___ and I am the local Member of Youth Parliament for ___. I am calling about X or recent coverage (in ___ on this date ___ by this person ___) and I would like to comment. Could you let me know who I should talk to?'

5 It may take a few attempts to get through to the right person. Don't give up. You may need to explain a little more about the UK Youth Parliament and what you do. Keep it simple! Something along the lines of, 'The UK Youth Parliament gives young people throughout the UK a voice. I have been elected to represent young people in ___ and young people in this area are saying ___'

6 Explain to the journalist why you are calling and go through three key points

you want to get across. Keep it simple and to the point – it will have far more impact.

7 Keep it local and newsworthy. Try and talk about things that are going on in your area – positive work as well as information such as statistics or figures.

8 If you can get hold of local or regional statistics to support your story that is very powerful. For example, if you have run a survey you might be able to say, 'In this area 80% of young people think that...'

9 Use examples as this will strengthen your case so, 'The young people I talk to in this area tell me that...!' or 'I know of a young person who...!' – remember not to give away any identifying details about specific people!

10 **FINALLY!** Don't forget to mention the UK Youth Parliament (don't say UKYP because no-one will understand!) and work you are doing locally, regionally and nationally. It shows how important it is that young people are part

of the solution.

REMEMBER! When you are representing the UK Youth Parliament you need to represent the views and opinions of young people in your area (not just your personal opinion).

FINALLY...

The UKYP Press Team are always around to give you advice and support on anything to do with the media. Pick up the phone, email or visit!

Email: press@ukyouthparliament.org.uk

Tel: 020 7553 9894

