

PUBLICISING YOUR GRANT PAGE 1

Congratulations, you've received a grant from the Scottish Community Foundation, but what next? You know how you're going to spend the money, but how can you tell people in your community about all of your hard work, and success securing funding? What follows next is a tool kit to help you get coverage in your local paper.

Speak to your local paper

Local papers are looking for 'news' that affects their readership. If you are, for example, holding a community event, or tackling an issue that is of concern to local people, then chances are the local media will be interested in covering your story.

The key thing in securing coverage is providing 'news'. News is something unusual, interesting, inspiring, dramatic, or fun. Just think of the stories you like reading. You want a story that grabs your interest and brings something new to your attention.

When contacting your local paper or radio station, make sure you focus on the news. It helps to use newsy words and phrases, like, *cash injection*, *saved from closure* and providing a *vital local service*.

Example

Molly's Day Care is a fictional nursery for children with special needs in Dingwall. They were on the brink of closure, but after receiving a grant from the Scottish Community Foundation, and doing some of their own fundraising, they have secured their future for the next 12 months.

The manager of the day care was keen for the local paper to cover the story. When she spoke to the journalist about how the funding would cover the rent and running costs for the next 12 months, he didn't seem that interested. However - when she said funding meant the day care had been *saved from closure*, and without this *vital local service*, the children would have to travel to Inverness everyday for care – it helped the journalist to see the 'news' in the story.

Writing the perfect press release

Most local papers will be happy to speak to you, but if you have lots of local media you want to contact, a press release is a good way to distribute your story.

Your press release (also known as a news release or media release) should be short, simple and full of interesting facts. The most important part of a press release is the first paragraph because journalists often only read this to decide if it's a story they're interested in covering.

Your opening paragraph should answer the following questions: **Who? What? Why? Where? When? How?**

Example

Today, Molly's Day Care in Dingwall was delighted to announce it had been saved from closure by a £5,000 cash injection from the Scottish Community Foundation. Local businesses generated an additional £2,500 for the community group by generously donating raffle prizes. The £7,500 cash boost will cover Molly's running costs for a year, and ensure that children in the area with special needs could remain cared for locally.

The following paragraphs should include:

- useful background information
- facts and figures
- quotes from key people

Example

Molly's Day Care was established in 2006 when owner Ruth Farquharson couldn't find suitable care for her daughter Molly, who has Down's syndrome. With other parents of children with special needs in the area, the day care was established with the support of the local authority. The day care is running at a maximum capacity of 12, and has a waiting list of six.

Gillian Bailey, chair of the Molly's Day Care Committee, said: 'We're delighted that we've managed to secure the future of day care for another year. Our staff costs are covered by the local authority, but we have to cover our running costs. The £5,000 award from the Scottish Community Foundation, and £2,500 generated by local fundraising, will cover our rent, tutor costs and help us buy some new equipment.'

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Your press release should also include:

- the date it is issued
- a contact name and telephone number

If you have additional information, for example, an exact breakdown of what your grant will cover, you can include this in a section called Notes to Editors.

It's good practice to submit typed/word processed press releases. It's common now for press releases to be distributed by email. Paste the press release into the email rather than attaching it. Like other organisations, attachments may be blocked. Call the newspaper/radio station to find out who you should send the press release to, and their email address.

Use the following link to see an [example of a press release](#). It includes an opening paragraph that sets out the story; it has useful additional information, and a quote from a key figure.

Arranging a photocall

Another way to secure coverage of your endeavours is to arrange a photocall. A photograph with local people in it helps to sell papers, so don't underestimate the power of a good photo.

How many times have you seen a typical 'good cause' photo of a group of people holding a giant cheque? Papers have grown tired of printing these photos, and would much prefer to see your project in action. For example:

- If you run a children's football club, a great photo would be of your children trying to score penalties against your chairman.
- If you run a project for the elderly, set up some photos of your members taking part in an activity.

The photographer from your local paper will have their own ideas, but to get them along in the first place, you have to offer something that will make an interesting picture.

Important notes

- The first thing you should do to try and secure coverage in your local paper is to speak to them. Give them the details of your story, and remember to highlight what the 'news' is.
- Take the name and contact details of the journalist who will cover your story, once you have this information, you can make sure they've received your press release, and follow-up to see if your story will be used.
- Perhaps the most important thing is finding out their deadlines. Most local papers will have a weekly deadline. If you're publicising an event, make sure they have the information well in plenty of time, especially if you are relying on publicity for ticket sales.
- Avoid using industry jargon, for example: NEET or CIC because it can alienate journalists if they don't immediately understand what you're talking about. Remember, they probably have a few other stories vying for the spot you want! Use plain English, and explain the acronyms and abbreviations you use.

Referring to the Scottish Community Foundation

You are of course not obliged to include information about us in your press release, but as most of the money we distribute comes from private individuals and companies, it's useful for us to raise our profile through the wonderful projects we support on their behalf.

You are welcome to use the following information about us, and the quote from our CE in your press release. If you would like a quote specifically about your project, please contact Nadine Urquhart on 0131 524 0304, or email nadine@scottishcf.org

About us

- By matching the philanthropic goals of individuals, companies and charitable trusts to local charities and projects, the Scottish Community Foundation has awarded almost £18 million in grants, ranging from £500 to £250,000, in every region of Scotland.

About us (cont.)

- The Scottish Community Foundation is a registered charity, but like Comic Relief and Children in Need, it raises money to distribute to other not-for profit organisations. On average, the Foundation awards £4 million annually to local charities and community groups in Scotland.

A useful quote from our chief executive

Scottish Community Foundation chief executive, Giles Ruck said:

'In Scotland, 91% of income raised in the voluntary sector goes to just 5% of registered charities. We are aiming to redress this by awarding grants to Scotland's smaller charities and community groups. Understandably, people tend to support the higher profile charities, but there are so many good local initiatives, like **[insert your charity/community group's name]**. Their work is invaluable, so we strive to support as many of these projects as we can.'