

MY TIME.

MY SPACE.

MY LIBRARY.

Libraries
Week

8-13
OCTOBER
2018

PR toolkit

Get media coverage this October

Introduction

Libraries Week is the annual showcase of the best that UK libraries of all kinds have to offer. From Monday 8 to Saturday 13 October everyone libraries will showcase how they bring communities together, combat loneliness, provide a space for reading and creativity and support people with their mental health and wellbeing.

The focus for Libraries Week 2018 is on 'wellbeing', with the message: 'My time. My space. My library.'

What this toolkit is for

This toolkit provides an introduction to getting the message out about your library and the activities you are running for Libraries Week to the media. Media coverage is an important way of reaching your community and raising awareness in the lead-up to and after your events.

The toolkit has **advice, tips and templates** to help you share your plans and Libraries Week news stories with your key local, community or sector press. It's a good idea to use this kit in conjunction with our Libraries Week marketing tips.

Working with the media is a conversation and we hope you use Libraries Week to grow and develop your press profile over the long-term.

#librariesweek

What about my organisation's communications team?

If you have a press team or communications department who usually manage the library's press activity or PR, please work with them and this toolkit will help you to understand how to get positive press coverage.

What kind of stories will interest my target media?

Your local, community or special interest media are a key channel for getting news out and are keen to cover local, topical and colourful news – especially when it's about people and places in the community, special events, or involving important figures.

Generally, local press love to cover positive stories featuring local children, families, places, big names, community events and anything interesting, fun or unusual that is taking place.

If you work in a library service that is not open to the public then there are many trade press outlets, special interest sites, pages and online groups that will be interested in what you do and the same principles apply.

Identifying and reaching your target media

Search online, print and broadcast media outlets to find out who the relevant journalists or influencers are and what interests or areas of specialism they have – many local news teams have named journalists covering specific regions of a county, local current affairs or particular topics.

Their names and contact details are generally published meaning that you can tell them about your upcoming plans, news or events. Contact numbers can usually be found within the papers or online (visit mediauk.com or BT.com if individual titles don't have their own websites).

With local press, there are often generic email addresses provided for their news or picture desks that you could send a press release or a great photo to as well as sending directly to named staff where possible.

When and how to contact the press

You have two main opportunities to reach out and tell the media and your community about your events: before and after your event. Press releases supply the media with all the information they need to run a story about what you're doing without having to gather the information themselves.

If you have your plans with details of who will be present, what will be taking place, key background information and ideally photos of the key people or activity, it's a good idea to issue a press release a couple of weeks prior to the event.

Another thing you can do around a week before your event is to invite your target journalists to come and see for themselves by sharing the time and venue through a diary note or photo call .

It's very common to send a press release immediately after an event, because you should have the full story with interesting details, who attended, facts, quotes and hopefully interesting pictures or video to be sent alongside your text. This should be drafted and sent ASAP after the event, i.e. on the same day or the next day.

Whether you release details to your target media before or after really depends on what you've got planned and how much time and effort you can invest – if you have a strong event with lots of interest points, it's worth covering all angles. If you don't have enough information beforehand, it's better to send out a good release with all the key points immediately after.

You can also follow up by phone with your target media. The idea is to make sure they have received and seen your press release and to pitch your story to the journalist or influencer. Here you're highlighting the key points about your story and why your target media should be interested.

We have **tips for writing a press release and two template press releases at the end of this kit**. They show the expected structure and kind of information that can be included.

Photo calls and diary notes

If you are planning a visually exciting event, i.e. having a community choir sing in the library or a visit from a high profile person, it is worth sending out a photo call to invite your target media's journalists or a photographer to come and get their own professional shots of the event in action.

A photo call can be issued alongside a press release or sent as a stand-alone diary notice to picture desks or individuals if you have the right person's contact details.

A diary note can be issued to local broadcast station planning teams when you have available spokespeople who are prepared to be interviewed about the event or activity taking place - either in a studio or recorded 'down the line' (on the phone). In some instances, broadcast journalists may wish to attend to capture audio, interviews and vox pops with those attending.

The photo call /diary note alert should include concise information about the specific activities taking place (based on a summary of the information from your press release) and highlight details of key people attending your event, e.g. local figures, relevant groups etc.

A template photo call/diary note is provided on page 11

Photos

Wherever possible, press releases and media approaches are best accompanied by eye-catching photography that really helps bring the story to life for the readers of your target media outlets. Your story is much more likely to be picked up if it's accompanied by interesting, decent quality pictures that will display clearly on their news websites or in print.

To be high enough quality for print use, pictures would need to be shot on a good camera or taken by a professional. However for web use (e.g. online news), high resolution photos taken via mobile phone may be fine, as long as they are clear, well lit and not blurry.

If you have alerted the press about the event via a diary notice or photo call, hopefully they will attend and capture their own shots – but always try to get your own too.

Good shots are worth getting but if you don't have the equipment or skills, invite someone in from your community who can take photos for you and ask them to send you the top two or three best shots straight after so that you can include with your press release. Photos are an investment in your service because you can always use good visual material in flyers, on social media and across your marketing and storytelling.

As you'll know, with filming or photography involving children, permission has to be obtained from a parent or guardian before it can be used. It's also good to inform members of the public so that they can give their consent or let you know if they would prefer not to be featured. There is a **template photography release form on page 11**.

When sending information and press releases to press, let them know what photography is available either via a note in the notes at the end of the release, or append them to your email as low-resolution attachments (if they are too high-resolution they might bounce back or clog up a journalist's inbox—they will ask for larger versions if they want to use them).

When sending pictures, include a caption which provides details of your event or activity and the location and names the people in the picture. e.g.

"Local television presenter [Jane Doe] with children from [our local primary school] taking part in the Libraries Week Minecraft challenge at [XX] Library."

[Inviting a key figure to your Libraries Week event](#)

Many library events are boosted by the participation of popular local figures or relevant high profile people taking part in main events as guests of honour, giving presentations and so on.

You can always aim high – if your MP is the person you most want to get to the library, you don't have to assume that they will be too busy to come along. MPs generally spend Fridays in their constituency, so most will naturally be at home at the end of the week. Even cabinet members and prime ministers have been known to take part in events in their local community.

There can be political sensitivities about libraries, but remember it's easier to engage and interest your MP, Mayor or councillor if the approach is positive and upbeat and if they are going to be part of a community celebration or showcase. They are busy people though, so if you are inviting them, make sure they have a specific role to play, e.g. making a brief announcement, formally opening an event and so on – then they are more likely to consider coming.

In general, most high profile people have websites or online biographies with details of how to contact them (or you might just catch them if you send them a message via twitter).

Get in touch with your chosen VIP as early as possible – their diaries will fill up quickly, even for weekends. Call their office first to ask for the appropriate contact information. Send your letter to their office via email, if you have not received a reply after a few days, give them a call.

If you succeed and they do attend, ask them on the day for a comment about your service which they are happy for you to use in your press release.

Find a **template invitation letter for inviting a political figure on page 9.**

Seven tips for a good press release

1. Come up with a catchy and concise headline for your release. This should be written in bold and in a larger font than the main body of the release. Sub-headings can also be used to highlight key aspects of your story, for example if a VIP guest is attending your event. These should again be in bold, but in a slightly smaller font than the headline.

2. The first paragraph should sum up your release in a couple of short sentences maximum, with the remainder of the release body elaborating on it. A good rule is to use the '5 W's': who, what, when, where, why. This allows journalists to quickly see what your story is about at a glance—the more interesting you can make the first paragraph the more likely they are to read to the end of the release.

3. The length of your press release should be a single page. Keep it clear, avoid using very long sentences and paragraphs, repetition, fancy language and jargon. Make sure the release is grammatically correct and doesn't contain any spelling mistakes.

4. Include a quote from your spokesperson and/or, if possible, a comment from any VIP guests scheduled to attend. This can be used to add colour to the story and allows busy journalists to complete an article without the need for a follow-up interview.

5. Insert a 'call to action' in the main body of the release—the information that you want the public to take away from any article they read, e.g. a webpage they can visit to find out more about your event, or a phone number to call to let you know they would like to attend.

6. The main body of your press release should be followed by a 'notes to editors' section, to include contact details and information about your library, and that of Libraries Week. If you have photography available, state that photos can be supplied on request. Contact details should include a name, telephone number (mobile optional) and email address for any enquiries relating to your story.

7. Use your headline for the subject field of your email. Where possible, do not post or fax across press information as this will likely go unopened and / or straight into the recycling bin!

You can **find example press releases on pages 7 and 8.**

Some tips for selling your story to your key media

1. Contact your local newspaper or radio station and ask to speak to someone on the news desk of the relevant publication or programme. Contact numbers can usually be found within the papers or online (visit mediauk.com or BT.com if individual titles don't have their own websites).
2. Be sure to ask for the name of the person you speak to or, if they refer you to someone else on the publication, that person's direct dial telephone number and email address. This will help you to get your story to the right person and means you can follow up directly with them after sending information out.
3. Give a concise pitch (30 seconds maximum) to explain who you are, where you are calling from and what the headline of the story is, e.g. *"October 8-13 is Libraries Week and to help families to discover how the library can help them with their health, we'll be running a community health clinic..." etc.*
4. Send journalists the press release pasted into the body of an email, and include one or two example pictures (in low resolution) of your event if applicable.
5. Be mindful of journalists' deadlines before making your call. People on evening papers will most likely be on deadline around late morning and won't have time to talk or will disregard what's being offered; likewise, reporters on daily morning titles will have little time to speak towards the end of the working day.
6. Even if members of your target press or political community have not responded to your notices or event invitations, don't be afraid to share an invite or link to your news or events with them via Twitter. All journalists and outlets now publish their twitter handles and by including their handle on your tweet, they may pick up your story.

Libraries Week 2018

Insert library logo here

TEMPLATE PRESS RELEASE

(Insert date here)

SINGING FOR THE BRAIN AT [XX] LIBRARY FOR LIBRARIES WEEK

- **Local [figure/ mayor etc/] [insert name] will join residents for the day**
- **[Summary of activity e.g. Special performance from local choir caps a week of wellbeing events]**

[XX] Library is holding a week of wellbeing events, including a visit from [insert VIP guest name as appropriate] during October 8-13 to celebrate Libraries Week. It will highlight the different ways the library can help people of all ages with their mental health and wellbeing.

Local [title (author/TV presenter etc.)] [Jane Doe] will be in the library taking part in our Singing For The Brain sessions with local schoolchildren on [insert date] from [insert times here].

On offer will be activities with a wellbeing focus for adults and children including colouring sessions, Knit and Natter conversation clubs and an introduction to self-help books. Members of [name] community choir will give a special performance in the library at [time] on [date] [time] to round off Libraries Week.

[XX] Library spokesperson [insert name] said, "We have a brilliant programme of activities during Libraries Week that we hope will bring the community together and find out more about all the ways we can help with your wellbeing. Everyone is welcome and the library is free to join. I'm delighted that [name] community choir will be filling the library with song on [date]."

[XX] Library has [xx wellbeing services] and runs [yy] sessions throughout the year. New visitors can join the library any time during opening hours.

Libraries Week is the annual showcase of the best that UK libraries of all kinds have to offer, encouraging everyone to discover their library on the second week of October.

For the latest news and updates, visit [insert your website/social media details here].

NOTES TO EDITORS

About [XX] Library

[Insert information here]

About Libraries Week

Libraries Week takes place between the 8–13 October to celebrate the nation's much-loved libraries. In 2018, with a focus on wellbeing, libraries across the country will showcase how they bring communities together, combat loneliness, provide a space for reading and creativity and support people with their mental health. www.librariesweek.org.uk @librariesweek #librariesweek

Press contact

For further information [insert your contact details here – name, phone number, email address]

[Photography available on request]

(Insert date here)

LOCAL [TITLE] [NAME] JOINED LIBRARIES WEEK EVENTS AT [XX] LIBRARY

[insert name], [political title] for [insert constituency or post] opened the launch of a [activity] day at [XX] Library as part of Libraries Week, a UK-wide celebration from 8-13 October.

[insert name and title] at [XX] Library, said: "It was very exciting to welcome [insert name] to launch our [name of event/activity] and for [them] to see the library in action and the different ways we are able to improve life in the community and help people with [health/wellbeing/literacy/employment/..]."

We have over [insert number] members and XX% are [local children etc /demographic]" said [insert name]. Our new most popular service is xx/xx and this is [a point about why is this interesting]."

Taking part in [XX] Library, [insert name] said, "A huge thanks to [insert name] and the staff at XX Library for a great day on [day] for Libraries Week. I met so many library users who told me just how useful the library is for them. The library is a brilliant community service and it's free and accessible to everyone. You just have to go in and take part in what's on offer."

Over half the UK population has a library card and nearly 10 million are active borrowers. Libraries Week is a showcase of the best that UK libraries of all kinds have to offer and encourages everyone to discover what their library can do for them.

Using the library is also good for our health, with regular users reporting better health that saves the NHS in England £27.5m a year and reporting higher life satisfaction, happiness and sense of purpose in life compared to non-users

[insert name] says "All of our services are designed for the community and there is so much on offer. Come down any time for a warm welcome and meet the staff, have a chat and check out the different things we do during the year."

To find out more about the any of [XX] Library's Libraries Week events, or any of the library's other services, please contact [insert contact details here].

NOTES TO EDITORS

Press contact

contact [name, phone number, email address]

[insert your website/social media details]

Note available photography if applicable

About [XX] Library

[Insert information here]

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Template Letter/email for contacting your local political leader

Dear [insert name here],

I am contacting you from [XX] Library in advance of Libraries Week, October 8-13, the UK-wide celebration of our much-loved libraries.

With a focus on wellbeing we are taking the opportunity of Libraries Week to encourage everyone in the community to discover what the library can do for them. I hope you might like to join us for an hour or two that week as part of an exciting programme of activities we are running to highlight our [which service].

[About the library, e.g. We have over [insert number] members, including [insert number] children and [adults] at XX Library. We make over [insert number] books available to readers in print and digital forms, and users visit us over [insert number] times a year for everything from [e.g. book borrowing homework clubs, employment clinics] to [e.g. baby rhyme time etc etc].

[We have a number of key services that target different community needs:

- Digital skills sessions, aimed at different groups – such as people looking to brush up on their job skills, or parent and toddler educational and e-safety iPad sessions
- Regular sessions with health visitors and health advice in partnership with [xx] where we are able to reach many more people with [xx] conditions
- hundreds of children and parents get their children's literacy and reading for pleasure off to a great start and get together with other families in the community through our weekly Rhyme Time and Story Time sessions *[etc. add/amend as appropriate]*

It would be a huge thing for everyone in the community if you could join us on [date] and help us to showcase [XX] Library, and launch our [name of activity] day.

Ours is just one of the thousands of libraries around the UK celebrating Libraries Week and we will promote our events and your visit widely and hope to attract a great mix of local people who you'll have the chance to meet. We would also like to invite the local media to cover our celebrations and your visit.

I hope you will be able to join us. Please do let me know if you have any questions, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Insert your contact details

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Template Diary Notice / Photo Alert for issuing to media

Who: [use this line to highlight event VIPs eg MP, author etc]

What: [XX] Library marks Libraries Week with a special XX showcase event

When: xx October 2018 from [insert time]

Where: [XX] Library, address

Background: To mark Libraries Week, 8-13 October, [XX] Library is holding a day of events and activities for [insert audience/demographic] to showcase library's [resources/most popular service/collection etc.]. There will be [flavour of what's happening], and local [insert MP, Mayor, celeb, author etc.] will be there to [insert activity].

The full schedule of events and activities is as follows:

[List events in time order, including names of people or organisations hosting, who it is aimed at (students, adults, children, elderly, jobseekers etc)]

AVAILABLE ON THE DAY:

Photography of:

- [insert name] declaring [XX] Library open for Libraries Week
- Photography of children and parents attending [insert event]
- Photography of [insert speaker/special figure name] [doing what]

Interviews with:

- [XX] Library spokesperson [insert name]
- Local figure [insert name/title]
- Local Author [insert name]

To confirm attendance or for further information:

[insert your contact details here: name, phone number, email address]

Photography/Video/Audio consent form

Insert library logo here

Event: [Insert name of event here eg Author/Academic talk, Rhyme Time, etc]

Location: [Insert address details here]

Date: [Insert date and time where applicable here]

I give my permission to be photographed and/or filmed by XXX. I understand that XXX will own the rights to the picture/video/audio file and consent to my image and/or voice being used by XXX.

[Explain how image/film will be used by your organisation, how they will be stored and for how long.]

I give permission for photography only

I give permission for photography and filming

-or-

I give permission for my child to be filmed/photographed for media purposes such as in local and national media outlets and [XX] Library's official website, social networking channels and internal communications.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Email: _____

[NB. Please ensure consent is obtained in compliance with your organisations privacy and data protection policy.]

Libraries Week

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