



Media Guide

How to speak to the media

The press can be a great way to help promote your work and recruit new Local Group members. Using the right channels and providing the right information will maximise your chances of your story being published.

Below are some lines that you might find helpful when speaking to a journalist. If you are contacted by a national newspaper or outlet, please let us know.

Useful lines

Living Streets is the UK charity for everyday walking. As a Local Group with Living Streets, our focus is to make walking the **natural choice for everyday local journeys** and achieve a better walking environment in our area.

Regular walking can reduce a person's risk of developing heart disease, stroke, and certain cancers, as well as improving fitness in the long run¹. Research shows people who are active through walking report **higher levels of mental wellbeing** and feel happier and less anxious.

Direct NHS savings from an increase in urban walking and cycling have been estimated at **£17bn over 20 years**.²

Pavement parking is dangerous – forcing people with wheelchairs and families with buggies into the road and into oncoming traffic. Living Streets' research found that **87% of parents** have been forced into the road because of vehicles blocking pavements.³

Safe streets are crucial for everyone. When a person is hit at 30mph, they are around

¹ A [University of Cambridge study from 2023](#) found that a daily walk can prevent one in 10 early deaths, as well as improving fitness, sleep and heart health in the long run. A fast-paced short walk is enough to reduce the risk of developing heart disease and stroke by 17% and cancer by 7%, the findings suggest.

² **Effect of increasing active travel in urban England and Wales on costs to the National Health Service** ([source](#))

³ YouGov polling for Living Streets, 2021

five times more likely to be killed than if they were hit at 20mph.⁴

Air pollution is one of the greatest environmental and health challenges in our time – it contributes to **43,000 premature deaths** each year in the UK.⁵

Press release

A press release is issued to print/web-based publications, promoting something new, i.e. an event or publication. This should:

- Be no more than a page and a half of A4 in length.
- Include the most important and interesting information at the beginning.
- Use the full name of the group throughout.
- Use a clear, concise heading e.g. ‘Local campaigners call for new crossing to reduce road deaths’, this should also be the Subject of your email.
- Include a Notes to Editor section at the end with your contact details and information about the group and Living Streets.
- Be sent via email to a journalist or outlet, either as an attachment or pasted into the body of the email.

Unless you’re emailing a lot of journalists/outlets, then send individual emails and personalise them, e.g. ‘I see from your article on X September that you’re interested in road safety, I thought this press release might be of interest to you and your readers’.

If you’re emailing multiple journalists, make sure you enter their email addresses in the BCC section, so that you’re not sharing data.

If photos are available, either attach them or paste them into the email. If you would like to invite outlets to photograph an event, add a ‘Photo call’ to the Notes to Editor section.

[Press Release Template](#)

Photo call

A photo call can also be issued independently to a press release.

This is a short paragraph with the key details of an event and a request for a photographer to attend at a date/time and location. If the outlet has a photo editor, send it direct to them with ‘Photo call’ and the requested date in the email Subject.

[Photo Call Template](#)

Comments / Letters to editors

Comments are usually written in response to a news story. If the communication references a specific article, this would be issued as a Letter to that publication.

⁴ Edinburgh Napier University ([source](#))

⁵ HECC report ([source](#))

Letters to editors should include a contact telephone number and postal address to confirm you are local. While a journalist might call to verify that the letter is from you, they would never publish the contact details.

[Letter to Editor Example](#)

Broadcast

Radio and television interviews can be nerve-wracking, but they often have a bigger audience.

If you're invited to interview by a public broadcaster, you will often be up against someone with opposing views so that they have balance, while local radio stations are likely to be more relaxed. It can be a good opportunity to recruit new volunteers/group members, so make sure you give the group's contact details.

If an interview is pre-recorded, bear in mind they can edit what you say to a brief statement, so try to be as concise as possible. Preparing a short sound bite can help ensure you get the crucial points across.

Media contacts

If you want us to search for media contacts for newspapers, radio and specific journalists in your area, email aisha.hannibal@livingstreets.org.uk. Try and give one week's notice. If you're pressed for time, newspapers generally have contact details on their website.

Please request templates and examples if you need any of the following:

- [Press release template](#)
- [Letter to editor example](#)
- [Photo call example](#)

Inclusive Language – Top Tips

Walking and wheeling

Living Streets represents all pedestrians and uses the term 'walking' to include people using wheelchairs or mobility aids, or you can use walking and wheeling. Eg 'walking and wheeling (people who use wheelchairs and mobility aids)'.

Use people focussed **language** – it can be de-humanising to define people by their disability, illness, age, or other label. E.g. use 'a person with epilepsy' not 'epileptic'.

Use:

- 'Disabled people' - not 'people with disabilities' and never 'handicapped'
- 'Non-disabled' or 'not disabled' – not 'able-bodied'
- 'Wheelchair user' or 'person using a wheelchair' – not 'wheelchair bound'
- 'Negative mental health' or 'mental health problems' - not 'mentally ill'

'Deaf' with a capital D when embracing the cultural norms, beliefs, and values of the Deaf community, but lower-case d when describing a lack of sense of hearing.

Don't mention details that are irrelevant – doing so implies this is not the norm, e.g. use 'volunteer', not 'older volunteer', 'disabled volunteer' etc. Is the person or group's protected characteristic relevant to what you're writing about? If the answer is no, don't include it.

Don't use stereotypes – stereotypes are widely held but fixed and oversimplified images or ideas of a particular type of person or thing. They are limiting terms that reduce people to problematic assumptions and can have many negative consequences.

Don't make assumptions about what 'normal' is – there are a lot of us living in the UK, and we have a diverse range of identities and experiences.

Be mindful of othering people – Othering is where we consciously or subconsciously attribute negative characteristics to people. It's an "us vs them" way of thinking about human connections and relationships – looking at others and saying, "they are not like me".

Don't use adjectives as collective terms – Use 'Disabled people' not 'the disabled', Use 'gay people' or 'gay community' not 'gays'.

If you'd like more detailed information or guidance on how to use inclusive language, please contact commsteam@livingstreets.org.uk