

# Tips on engaging your local media

## A brief guide on how to make the most of local media opportunities and share the Fairtrade story in your community this Fairtrade Fortnight.

Local journalists are always looking for engaging stories that capture people's attention. Getting coverage in local or regional media is an ideal way to raise Fairtrade's profile in your community, raise awareness of your Fairtrade Fortnight events and encourage local people to get involved.

Whether you invite your local paper to attend an event or send a press release to your local radio station, every piece of news coverage you can get helps us spread the word about Fairtrade.

### How to get your local media's attention

Firstly, contact your local press to explain what your story is: what's happening, why it's interesting/newsworthy, and any key dates/details about it. For instance, you can send them a press release, invite them to an event or arrange an interview with a relevant local person.

A press release is often the easiest way to communicate your story to the media. The main role of a press release is to summarise your story and persuade journalists to either cover it or interview someone involved in it. It brings together all the key information about your story, campaign or event and demonstrates to journalists why they should share it with their listeners or readers.

Local papers and radio stations often get inundated with press releases, so the more exciting and relevant (i.e. 'newsworthy') yours is, the better the chances of it standing out.

### Tips for preparing your release

- Local papers always need great photographs that tell a story. If you can send any photos that highlight your event or campaign, you'll increase your chances of it being covered.
- Put the most important and newsworthy content at the start and add extra details later on: you need to grab a journalist's attention with the most interesting information.
- Explain why this campaign/your activity matters and why it is relevant to local community.
- Remember, newspapers will often publish content that's taken directly from your press release. So keep your paragraphs short and simple: don't make it too long or complex.
- Press releases are stronger when they focus on people. Consider including the story of someone involved in your campaign, or a quote from either them or a Fairtrade farmer.
- Always provide your contact details at the end.
- Email your press release to any local media you hope will cover your story (a local paper or a local BBC radio station, for example). You can also publish content from the press release on your own channels, such as your website, social media and community newsletters.
- If you're sending a press release ahead of an event, make sure you send it a week beforehand, to give the journalists time to follow up. If you're sending it afterwards, try to send it as soon as possible after the activity has taken place, so that it's still 'new'.



If you have time, you can follow up with a phone call to ask if they want any additional content, such as photos or an interview with a representative of your group/community.

**And don't forget to [download our template press release](#), to help get you started.**

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## Doing a press interview: top tips

After you've promoted your local Fairtrade event or campaign activity in the press, they may invite you to give an interview or provide a comment 'on the record'. Here, we share a few tips on how to make the most of an interview with your local media:

### Before the interview

- Confirm the main details with the journalist: date, timings, format, length, theme.
- Identify who in your Fairtrade group/community will act as a spokesperson.
- Remember, once you are named as a spokesperson, the journalist/interviewer will assume you are speaking as a representative of Fairtrade Foundation.
- If you can, find out what topics the journalist wants to discuss. They may not give you the questions in advance, but any general details they provide will help you prepare.
- Know what you want to achieve through the interview. To help with this, plan out the three main points that you want to get across in the interview (i.e. your 'key messages').
- Be prepared. Plan ahead and familiarise yourself with some background facts and stats about the current campaign and the issues you are focusing on.
- If you have time, practice answering some questions in advance. But don't memorise your answers: it's best if you sound as unrehearsed and as natural as possible.

### During the interview

- Try to sound as relaxed as you can, speaking as slowly and as clearly as possible.
- Keep your answers short and to the point, especially for radio interviews.
- Try to bring your answers back to your key messages, weaving them into your responses.
- Find ways to make your answers relevant to the local community, showing the link between their actions, the food they buy and the livelihoods of farmers overseas.
- Include a 'call to action': what one thing do you want listeners/readers to do, when they hear your interview? Attend your event, sign a petition, buy Fairtrade products?
- If you're unable to answer any questions, feel free to say: 'That's a really good question. I'll have to look into it/take it back to the Fairtrade Foundation and come back to you on that.'
- Relax! Remember, you are the expert, and the journalist is interviewing you because they want their readers/listeners to hear the story you're sharing.
- If there is time, please mention the Fairtrade Fortnight webpage, so that listeners/readers know where to go for more information: [www.fairtrade.org.uk/fortnight](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/fortnight)

### After the interview

- Contact the journalist to see if they want any images to accompany the piece.
- Let the Fairtrade campaigns team know when it will be published, so we can share it.
- Share any interview links on your social media, to spread the word. Please tag us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).
- Treat yourself to your favourite Fairtrade product, to celebrate!