

Girlguiding LaSER PRAs Cheat Sheet

Top tips

- Become friendly with your local media, most websites will have contact details for the relevant journalists or a general enquiry email. Some news rooms or journalists look after various newspapers so make sure you're not sending multiple emails to the same person.
- If you're unsure of your local media outlets you can use sites like [Hold the Front Page](#), [Newspapersoc.org.uk](#), [Archant.co.uk](#), [Radio-locator.com](#), [Radiofeeds.co.uk](#). Make a list of useful contacts on a programme like excel and update it a few times a year.
- Remember it's not just about the papers, research local radio stations and websites. Even local Facebook and Twitter pages can be good for general promotion and Mumsnet Local sites will occasionally do free or cheap advertising.
- Give them as much information as possible, but keep it brief and clear. Journalists are busy people and usually won't have time to chase up little details or to check the branding is correct. The best way to do this is creating a Media Pack or using a press release template which has a boilerplate of additional information and correct branding so you won't waste space in the article.
- If a journalist gives you a deadline make sure you meet it, preferably with time to spare in case corrections need to be made. Be aware that sometimes articles can be dropped if they need space for breaking news.
- The kinds of opportunities to let the press know about should be fun and exciting ways of showing off Girlguiding's key messages. Things like units or individuals achieving badges or awards of significance, fundraising, trips or visits, visits from someone either of importance or teaching skills like firemen or an inspiring story from one of our members. Make sure anything you send has a solid local angle for local coverage.
- If a journalist wants to speak to you remember you are representing Girlguiding so have the facts ready and try not to get side tracked, [here's](#) some stock answers for answering journalists questions.
- In the event of a crisis do not respond to any media enquiries instead get their details and pass them over to HQ either via (in hours) 020 75921733 or (out of hours) 07990 553 940.
- Most importantly remember you and your article representing Girlguiding so make sure you are on brand and showing Good Guiding.

Writing a press release

- When writing an article or press release remember Why, Where, Who, What, When, How, this is a good way to make sure you get all the points you want to get across in.
- Articles that are original, serve a purpose of public interest or are quirky are most likely to get coverage. It's important to have a nose for news and be able to convince someone why your story is important. For local press make sure you include a local angle usually the local members involved or how it impacts the community.
- Make sure to be brief and clear. Using a press release template is the best way to get all your points across with all the facts they need, the standard boilerplate and correct branding of the press release will mean you won't have to waste article space. Never send a press release that is longer than two pages, ideally keep to one where possible.
- Press releases or forward planning notices are usually the best way to contact a journalist about stories. Make the opening paragraph about the most important aspect of the story, and then sum up the story in a nut shell to grab a journalist's attention. The press release should be in descending order of importance and each new paragraph should introduce a new fact or bit of interest.
- Don't try to fit in additional information within the body of the press release save that for additional notes or the boilerplate.
- Good headlines can grab people's attention, to do this make it sharp and sum up the story in a few words. For example 'bake sale to raise money for Girlguiding' or 'Girlguiding attempts to make the queens face out of cake'. Try to use buzz words and keep it short.
- Quotes are essential to any article and a great way to fit in some key Girlguiding messages. Remember we are a girl led charity so wherever possible get quotes from members to highlight how great an event or initiative is. Attribute quotes with full name, role and where they are from, for example Jane Smith member of the 1st anywhere Senior Section, aged 22 said "I love when press releases have quotes".
- Make sure to get images, they can be the difference between something going in and something not. The best photos are action shots instead of posed photos, as they will catch the reader's attention and show off how fun guiding is. Attach a horizontal and/or portrait image of good quality, with the correct names and details of those in the image left to right. Most modern smart phones will have a good camera to do this with.
- Send press releases to weekly papers 8 to 10 days in advance, daily papers 4 to 7 days in advance, radio 4 to 7 days in advance, and TV two weeks prior to event or announcement. However make sure to include any embargos!
- Remember not everyone understands every aspect of Girlguiding, so try to avoid using jargon and ask friends outside of Girlguiding to have a quick read. Boilerplates and additional information should have some information about the charity alongside a short summary of things like the different sections or what people's roles are to avoid confusion or incorrect branding.
- Always add END at the end of the main body of the press release before notes to editor.

- Always add notes to editor, boilerplate, your contact details and include that they can speak to a spokesperson and that you have images.

Jargon/Terms

Boilerplate: Generally a short "about" section, providing background information on Girlguiding and Girlguiding LaSER, you can find the Boiler plate for Girlguiding [here](#).

Media Pack: A pack used when first interacting with a new media outlet to explain who Girlguiding are or when press is being invited to a big event. The pack will contain a press release, background on Girlguiding and Girlguiding LaSER, information on the event, useful facts and stats.

Press Release: A press release provides a one page overview about either an upcoming or past event or story from Girlguiding. It contains a short article of all the important information along with details and additional notes about the story and charity.

Forward planning notice/Press notice: This is a simple tool to let media know about an event that is coming up that you would like them to attend. It's shorter than a press release and contains key information such as event title, when and where it is, who will be there, brief description of what will happen, who they can interview and contact details.

Embargos: A press embargo is a request by Girlguiding or yourself that the information or news provided will not be published until a certain date.

Notes to Editor: These come under the main body of the release. It is used to put in further information which may not be an interesting part of the story, but provides key background information.

Facts

- Always refer to us as Girlguiding LaSER or Girlguiding London and South East England, never just LaSER
- Never refer to Girlguiding as Girl Guides, we are Girlguiding or Rainbows, Brownies, Guides or The Senior Section
- If you are talking about your County make sure you always use County at the end, for example Girlguiding London North East County, not just London North East or Girlguiding London North East

If you have any questions about the above or would like further advice please contact sallyrose@girlguidinglaser.org.uk

Example of a good press article

Relevant title linking to current events or exciting stories that would interest those outside of Girlguiding. Be careful when referencing the section as we regularly see "Guides help with parade", but it's actually about Brownies.

Guide looks forward to speaking out on gender equality

Localising a national story by providing information on the girl/unit helps make it of local interest, therefore more likely to get published

A teenager from Deal will be speaking out on issues affecting girls and young women at a national Girlguiding panel.

Imogen Bowit, 14, travelled to Girlguiding HQ in London for her first meeting last month.

As an advocate, Imogen, along with 18 other girls will represent Girlguiding which has more than half a million members and is the UK's leading charity for girls and young women.

She said: "I applied to be an advocate because I want to make a difference with gender equality and help to give a voice to those who don't feel like they have one."

Advocates represent Girlguiding on a national platform, speaking to MPs at events in the House of Commons and party conferences. They have also launched a campaign calling on schools to tackle sexual harassment, in line with recommendations from the recent Women and Equalities select committee inquiry.

Girlguiding research shows that 59% of girls have experienced sexual harassment at school and 75% say anxiety about experiencing sexual harassment negatively affects their lives in some way, including making them think



Great clear picture of young member

Girlguiding advocate Imogen Bowit

twice about raising their hand in class.

Imogen, who is a member of South Goodwin Senior Section and a Young Leader with 1st Walmer Guides, said: "I'm really looking forward to working on new campaigns and going to conferences to promote important issues." Girlguiding's Advocate panel

is a group of 18 members aged from 14 to 25 from across the UK.

They meet throughout the year to talk about issues that are important to them, such as body confidence, representation of girls and women in the media, access to better relationships education and role models for girls.

Make sure to use correct branding and explanation of what certain Girlguiding jargon is so that an outsider understands.

Referring to research or projects by Girlguiding, which is relevant to the news helps to enhance the story and shout out about what Girlguiding do and make it news worthy.

Using a good quote from the girl/unit to add interest and drive Girlguiding's message that we are girl led