

How to get local media coverage for your fundraising event

However big or small your event, using local media is a great way to get publicity and sponsorship, and helps raise awareness of Guillain-Barré & Associated Inflammatory Neuropathies and the conditions at the same time.

1. Social Media Platforms

You might not think of Facebook in terms of local media coverage, but you should make this, as well as other social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram, your first port of call. Events posted in local Facebook groups or via Twitter and Instagram, will be picked up and shared way beyond your immediate friends and family.

Local TV news channels and radio stations will have a social media as well as an online presence, and some might even allow you to post charity events directly onto their page.

Whenever you post an event on a social media platform, make sure you use hashtags to maximise spread.

Example one - Twitter

Incorporate hashtag references into the body text as you are limited to 280 characters per tweet. Adding an image will make you post stand out more.



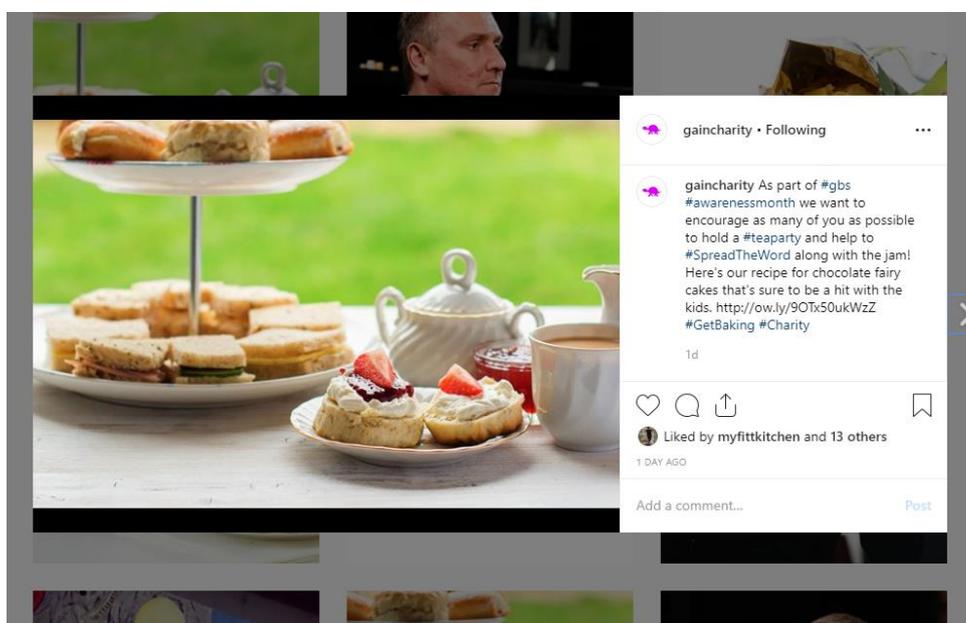
Example two – Facebook

You have more room here, but a simple post is more likely to be read than a long-winded one, so don't go overboard. Again, adding an image will make your post more eye-catching as your friends and family are scrolling through their feeds. The hashtags that have been incorporated into the message could be listed at the end if you prefer, to make the text more user-friendly.



Example three – Instagram

Instagram is all about photos and videos, so post a strong image, and add a few words



Press releases can be a valuable way for journalists to be let known about events and stories, but it's surprising how often the basics are forgotten. When writing a press release for a charity there are certain fundamentals that should be adhered to. The following advice comes from www.theBigGive.org.uk and is written by Celina Ribeiro, editor of Fundraising magazine and daily contributor to CivilSociety.co.uk;

- **Be honest** - Is your campaign really 'ground-breaking' or 'innovative'? These are some of the most over-used words in press releases. Don't over claim and you're more likely to be listened to
- **Date it** - It's patronising to say, but always put a date on press releases. Journalists receiving your release via email need to know when your release was released.
- **Don't be afraid to embargo** - Embargoes can be helpful in giving journalists time to do a story properly, so consider using these. Don't make the embargo too long, though, because it is possible, we'll forget all about it. Two to three weeks is probably about right but depending on the how often the publication goes to print, you may have to give longer than this.
- **Check our facts** - Make sure that you've got the names and publications right. Getting it wrong emphasises to the journalist/publication that you've sent your release everywhere, which doesn't make us feel we've potentially got a great story on our hands.
- **Free up your people** - Offering access to people within, or helped, by your organisation is really important. It gives publications a chance to get behind the story and so is likely to result in a better piece – for both the charity and the journalist.
- **Pictures help** - Don't send massive files. Some low-res versions of pictures with higher-res available is always great. We live on pictures. These are particularly important for local newspapers. Many publications are more and more interested in videos too, so if you have some of these available – and relevant – then send a link over.
- **Don't be spam** - We get literally dozens of emails before lunchtime. If your name or publication pops up every couple of days with a press release with tenuous relevance or news worthiness, you'll start to be ignored.
- **Provide quotes** - While allowing journalists to speak to your people is important, including good quotes from those same people in your release is also really important – and particularly helpful for journalists on tight deadlines. Use a couple of different people where possible and make them relevant – if it's a local paper you're sending it out to, try to get a local angle about how a project will impact on the region or why an issue is particularly important in that area.
- **Chase up?** - Avoid calling a journalist ahead of time just to let them know you will send a release. We're genuinely really busy and will just ask to see the release to judge whether it's of interest. There's nothing wrong with pinging an email over afterwards, though, to ask whether it was of interest or if they need any more information – it could work in reminding the journalist about something they might have glanced over.

In general, a press release definitely not go over two pages, but if it's a big issue you're covering then send some supporting info in a separate document or make it clear that more detail is available.

For beginners, a press release should typically be structured thus:

- Release or embargo date
- Headline
- Brief points/ explanation of the release
- Detail about the issue/event/campaign/etc
- Quotes
- Contact details

2. **Identify local media outlets in your area**

Include local papers, BBC and other local radio and TV stations and any magazines in the area. If you are not sure where to start, have a look online, either for websites or on social media, as just about all media outlets will have an online presence, with contact details listed such as an email address or phone number. You could also visit your local library for ideas as they will have copies of local publications.

3. **Draw up a press release**

Less is more, in fact the simpler the better and keep it to one page or two at the most. Make sure you include the essentials such as date, time and location, the reason for your event and why it is important to you, what you are looking for (do you want people to sponsor you or are you encouraging others to take part?), how people can sponsor you (via an online platform such as Wonderful.org or JustGiving.com) or how they can get involved. Include a couple of lines about GBS / CIDP and what the charity does so people understand what they are helping raise money for.

Don't forget to date it and include your contact details.

4. **Send the press release to your chosen media**

The easiest way is by email. Add the press release as an attachment if you like, but also paste it into the email, as an attachment may be missed. Make sure you put a title in the subject section. Bear in mind timings will vary depending on what sort of publication or broadcast it is. 1-2 weeks in advance is about right for a daily or weekly publication, but depending on what sort of publication it is, you might need to contact them much further in advance, so check timescales.

5. **Follow up every contact**

A follow-up email can be useful to check that they have seen the press release and might serve as a reminder to bring it back to top of the pile. If they haven't received it, offer to send it through again but use the opportunity to tell them a little more about the event.

6. **Invite and encourage the journalist/photographer to attend the event**

Let them know there is a picture opportunity and story! Tell them exactly what you are planning to do and why it would make a good photo for their paper.

7. **Photo call at the event**

Make a time when the reporter, photographer or TV crew should arrive to cover the story. A half an hour slot should be plenty. Photos are also useful if you are trying to drum up sponsorship before the event – perhaps a picture of you in training!

8. **Find your own good photographer to take pictures on the day.**

Newspaper are always looking for strong and exciting images so if a newspaper can't send a photographer they may still print the story afterwards if you send them some good images. As a rough guide you should make them imaginative and good quality (at least 1mb in size if you're using a digital camera or smart phone).

9. **Identify your spokesperson (if it is not you).** Make sure this person is well briefed about the event and its aims so that they can give an informed and entertaining interview to media. Ideally this person would be quoted in your press release.

10. **Let all participants know that there will be photography and publicity at the event.** This is particularly important if you have children taking part

3 June 2019 (date you are sending press release)

Abseiling for GAIN (Put this title in the subject box of the email as well)

Mr Joe Bloggs of Localtown in Countyshire is throwing himself off a cliff on Saturday 29 June 2019 at 1pm to raise money for Guillain-Barré & Associated Inflammatory Neuropathies (GAIN). He will be one of 12 brave people abseiling for charity at High Cliff near Othertown.

Mr Bloggs said “My wife was ventilated and in intensive care for 4 months last year, after being diagnosed with Guillain-Barré syndrome. During this time, GAIN helped me with the cost of travelling to and from the hospital every day. Now she’s back home, I wanted to do something to raise awareness, and help other families who are affected by this illness. I’ve never done anything like this before and am pretty nervous, but it will be worth it if I manage to raise the £1000 target I have set.”

If you would like to sponsor Joe, please visit <https://wonderful.org/fundraiser/teamgbscliffchallenge> to make an online donation.

About the charity and conditions

Guillain-Barré syndrome is a rare autoimmune condition affecting the peripheral nervous system, usually leading to temporary or long-term paralysis. Around 1,300 people are diagnosed with GBS each year in the UK. Around 80% of those with GBS will make a good recovery, but between 5-10% of people will not survive and the other 10-15% may be left with permanent disabilities. Chronic variants such as CIDP are similar but longer lasting, requiring ongoing treatment, and affecting approximately 3.5k people at any one time in the UK.

Guillain-Barré & Associated Inflammatory Neuropathies (GAIN) is a registered charity that supports people affected by GBS, CIDP and other related conditions in the UK and Ireland. The charity also promotes research into cause, prevention and treatment as well as advancing the education of the public and of the medical professions. For further information visit www.gaincharity.org.uk

ENDS.....

Notes for editors

- Further information for journalists – contact Joe Bloggs on 07123 456789
- Press photographers are invited to attend the jump
- Joe will be practicing by dangling from a rope attached to his garage roof on Thursday 27 June between 3-4pm - press photographers are welcome to take pictures
- GBS is an inflammatory disorder in which the body’s immune system attacks the peripheral nerves. Because the cause of GBS is unknown, there is no way to prevent the disease from occurring. It affects approx 1,300 people each year in the UK.
- Further information about the charity and conditions can be found on www.gaincharity.org.uk