

# Writing a Press Release: short & sweet

The PR is a notification to journalists that you're up to something. Many PRs are overwritten: the PR is a heads up, not a textbook. If it's any longer than seven or eight paragraphs it won't get read. And what's the point of that?

See a sample press release to the right for an idea of length and the ideas outline below.

## Title

Just like a news story, the key to a good PR is the title. The title determines whether you read a story in the paper - and it's the same with journalists and their emails. Picture your story in the local paper. How would the headline read?

Once you've decided, also include it in the 'subject' box of your PR's email, so the whole thing will read, for example: "Press Release: Activists drill for gas in central Keynesham"

## Writing the body

Next up: what, where, when, who, why. In that order.

**What:** what's happening;

**Where & when:** obviously important info: if it's happening on the other side of the world it's irrelevant to UK readers (news editors think);

**Who:** who are you? Good idea also to include a quote: "local activist Guy McClintock said....";

**Why:** an explanation of why you're on the street today. Can also be included in the above quote.

## Contacts

Give an email address, and if possible a phone number: journalists like to have someone to chat to if necessary.

## Notes for Editors

This section is a traditional method of passing on info to editors & writers if they want more details. Give a few links to relevant stories which back up claims you've made in the text body. Don't forget to reference any factual claims you make.

## Pictures

Often the deciding factor in whether or not a story appears in the press is the images associated with it. For more, take a look at our handout 'Images, the heart of the story!'. Upload your images to Picasa or flickr - then send a link to these images along with your PR email.

## BRIGHTON ANTI-FRACTIVISTS UNVEIL HUGE BANNER AT CITY STATION

28/2/12, 3pm, For immediate release

On Wednesday afternoon anti-fracking activists will unveil a bus-sized banner at Brighton Station. The huge banner – twenty two square metres - will draw attention to the controversial process of hydraulic fracturing.

The banner will be seen by tens of thousands of tourists and commuters using the busy London to Brighton, raising awareness about the issue of fracking in the south east.

Frack Off, the group behind the banner came to national prominence after placing a banner on Blackpool Tower in August 2011. In October 2011 they occupied Cuadrilla's drilling rig at Presse Hall, Lancashire.

The group have been given permission to temporarily use the billboard by a local property developer until June when the site is developed.

Campaigner Gary Gardiner said, "Cuadrilla hope to drill 800 wells in Lancashire over the next 15 years. They are obviously looking to do something similar in the south. There are a whole host of environmental issues associated with fracking including water pollution, air pollution, traffic pollution and earthquakes. This is totally unacceptable."

"Earthquake firm" Cuadrilla have plans for hydraulic fracturing throughout the area. They have fracked a well in Kent and have permission to frack in Balcombe, five miles north of Haywards Heath. The company is about to apply for drilling at Lingfield in Surrey. Cuadrilla admits to causing a 2.3 Richter scale earthquake after similar operations in Lancashire.

For more information call on Ben Johns on 07789645454 or email [info@frack-off.org](mailto:info@frack-off.org). Erecting the banner will begin at 1pm at the drop off roundabout behind Brighton Station.

More info: [www.frack-off.org](http://www.frack-off.org)

### Notes to editors

Hydraulic fracturing or fracking is a means of natural gas extraction employed in deep natural gas well drilling. Once a well is drilled, millions of gallons of water, sand and proprietary chemicals are injected, under high pressure, into a well. The pressure fractures the shale and props open fissures that enable natural gas to flow more freely out of the well. [1]

In the U.S, fracking has been connected to a wide range of environmental issues including drinking water pollution. In Germany, benzene in waste water from fracking has been blamed for an increase in rare cancers, with 10 families affected in a community of only 27 households. [2]

In Balcombe, 5 miles from Haywards Heath, fracking company Cuadrilla have already controversially obtained planning permission to explore for oil and gas at an existing well. Over 300 local residents and campaigners attended a heated public meeting in Balcombe in January in which Cuadrilla's CEO Mark Miller failed to assuage the fears of locals, the vast majority of whom feel that the company did not make their intentions clear to the parish council when they applied for planning permission in January 2010. [3]

Cuadrilla hit the headlines in September last year when they announced a find of 200 trillion cubic feet (cf) of natural gas in the Bowland Shale beneath Lancashire. However, the British Geographical Survey (BGS) estimates the amount to be 4.7 trillion cubic feet, only a small percentage of which is recoverable. [5]

Fracking operations in Lancashire were suspended last year after Cuadrilla admitted to causing 2 earthquakes registering 1.4 and 2.3 on the Richter scale. [6] Fracking has been connected to dozens of larger earthquakes in the U.S. where the shale gas industry has been in full scale production for over 5 years. 40,000 wells have been drilled during this period with hundreds more being drilled every week.

Coastal Oil and gas have planning permission to explore sites near Dover and Woodnesborough. Another company – Magellan Petroleum – is currently exploring in north West Sussex.

### REFERENCES

[1] <http://www.gasandthemovie.com/whats-fracking>

[2] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGtqn1eUDRI>

[3] <http://bit.ly/xGqsLW>

[4] <http://frack-off.org.uk/bad-guys/locations/>

[5] <http://bit.ly/wwSzal>

[6] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-15550458>

[7] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U01EK76Sy4A>

[www.frack-off.org.uk](http://www.frack-off.org.uk)

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