



# **World Arthritis Day**

## **Guide to working with the media for national organisations of PARE**

This guide to working with the media can be used by national organisations of PARE to help raise awareness of World Arthritis Day activities and campaigns

It includes:

1. Reaching your target audience
2. Creating a news story for World Arthritis Day
3. Developing key messages
4. Communicating your news – writing a press release
5. Holding an event



# Guide to working with the media

## 1. Reaching your target audience

Getting your messages about World Arthritis Day into the media is one of the most effective ways of reaching people. Think about who you want to talk to:

- **People with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs)**
- **Doctors and health professionals**
- **Politicians and policy makers**
- **General public**

Think about what media they read/watch/listen to:

- **Print media** – newspapers (national and regional) and magazines
- **Broadcast media** – radio and television (national and regional)
- **Digital media** – the internet, social media, text messaging, email
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Make a list of the media you want to target and find out their contact details.

- **Use an Internet browser such as Google**
- **Most print media list their contact details in their publication**
- **Phone directories will list contact details for local media**

Create a table with all your target media details so you can keep a record of whenever you've made contact with them and what their response was.

- **Keep your media list regularly updated.**

### Top tips for maximum results

- If you have limited resources, it is better to contact a few key publications and programmes
- Do your groundwork - research what kind of stories your target media are interested in and what angle they take
- Get to know journalists by name
- Build a relationship with the journalist, so you become an information source for them



## 2. Creating a news story for World Arthritis Day

Health awareness days, like World Arthritis Day provide a focus for the media, but you will need to make specific reference to your organisation's activities and to highlight issues through personal stories to interest them.

To get the media's attention, you need to think about what is **new, different** or **interesting** about your story or campaign and how it will be relevant to readers, viewers or listeners.

### Think about:

- How is your activity different from other events?
- How does your activity affect people's lives - why is it important?
- Is it of national / regional / local interest?
- Does it have a human interest?
- Is there someone you can feature as a success story?
- Is it controversial?

**Try and find some significant facts or figures** that would provide an interesting news hook for the media:

- How many people are affected by RMDs in your country or region?
- What are the issues around RMDs in your area?

You may be able to gather these figures by conducting **desk top research**, or you could set up a simple **online survey** on your organisation's website (for example, Survey Monkey). For the Move to Improve campaign you could find out what is preventing people with RMDs from exercising

Illustrate your findings with **a case study**

- Look for people with RMDs who would be willing to talk to the media who have a strong story to tell.
- Are there people with RMDs who have found a form of physical activity that works for them?
- Is there a healthcare professional who has organised a new exercise programme for people with RMDs in your area?
- Are you holding any unusual fundraising events themed around RMDs and exercise, e.g. a giant exercise class?
- Are there any local celebrities who will give a quote to your press release or attend your event?



### 3. Developing key messages

Before you go out to the media you need to develop your key message or messages. You may need to develop different messages for different audiences.

Your key messages should be simple and clear so that people are simple and clear so that people will remember them.

When you are developing your key messages think about the following:

- What is the fact, problem or issue that you want to highlight?
  - For example, physical activity is good for people with RMDs and helps keep them independent, but...

#### 3.1 Developing key messages – Who / What / What

- WHO: Select a target audience
- WHAT does that audience currently know, think, feel, say or do about the problem or issue?
  - Write down what they might say, for example if your audience is people with RMDs they might say, *“I’m concerned about being more physically active because it might increase my pain and damage my joints...”*
- WHAT would you like your target audience to know, feel, think or do about the problem or issue?
  - Write down what you would like your audience to know, feel, think, say or do about the problem or issue? For example, *“Being physically active has really helped reduce my pain and joint stiffness. I am able to do more now and feel more positive and confident...”*
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Doing the Who / What / What exercise can help you develop your key messages. For example, key messages might include:

- Studies show that physical activity is beneficial and helps people with RMDs physically and psychologically [provide supporting clinical studies to support statements such as this]
- Staying physically active helps people with RMDs remain in education / work / independent longer
- To help more people with RMDs be physically active we need xxx...

**The call to action** is what you want your audience to think, feel, say or do differently



## 4. Communicating your news

The best way of communicating about your World Arthritis Day activities with the media is writing a press release.

### 4.1 Preparation

Before you write your release you need to think about:

- What is the **news angle**?
  - For example, the news might be the event that you are running or a local issue that you would like people to know about.
- What are your **key messages**?
  - The key messages for World Arthritis Day need to be included in the release.
- **Think about and include:**
  - WHO you are (your organisation or individuals)
  - WHAT you are doing or saying
  - WHY you are doing or saying it
  - WHEN you are doing or saying it
  - WHERE you are doing or saying it

### 4.2 Writing the release

In your release you need to include:

- The date you are sending it out
- Headline – this should be punchy to draw the reader’s attention
- The first paragraph should be short and to the point and explain the headline more clearly
- The second paragraph should explain the story in more detail
- You can add more information in further paragraphs
- Include a quote from a spokesperson to illustrate your points
- If you are including survey results, give them in bullet points
- Don’t forget to put on your contact details for further information
- The release should be clear, easy to read and no longer than two pages long

### Sample press release

This example template should give you an idea of how to structure a media release. The yellow highlighting refers to guidelines that should help you to write your own press release to promote your activities in advance of World Arthritis Day.



**SAMPLE**

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Insert logo of your organisation at the top

**PRESS RELEASE**

[Date]

Embargoed until 00.01 12 October 2011

**(Date the release will arrive or date of embargo if you choose to have one)**

[TITLE of your release]

for example

**[Name of country's] biggest exercise class held on World Arthritis Day  
(Headline should be attention grabbing and include words like new, first, biggest, to capture the attention of the journalist)**

**[Sub-heading / first paragraph example]**

Over 5,000 people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs) from across the country will be flexing their muscles on World Arthritis Day (12 October 2011) when they take part in the biggest exercise class in XXXX Park, City, to highlight this year's theme of physical activity and RMDs.

**(The first paragraph should be short and to the point, explaining to the journalist: WHO, WHAT, WHY, WHERE, WHEN and HOW )**

The participants plan to bend and stretch together for an hour using a programme of specially designed exercises for people with RMDs. Many people with RMDs currently don't exercise because they are concerned it will increase their pain or damage their joints. The mass exercise class aims to raise awareness of the benefits of exercise for people with RMDs, as well as providing fun ways of staying physically active.

**(The second paragraph should go into some of the supporting information, story line or comments.)**

Organiser [Name] of [Name of Organisation] said: "There are huge benefits in exercising for people with RMDs, but many are too afraid to try. Those that exercise have better joint mobility, less stiffness and a more positive outlook."

**(The rest of the release should contain background and quotes from spokespeople)**

Taking part in the XXXX Park workout will be celebrity chef [Name] from TV's [Name of programme] who was diagnosed with ankylosing spondylitis (AS) five years ago. He said: "Before I developed AS I was an active sportsman who loved tennis and squash. I was devastated to give it all up, but I've since found different kinds of exercise that work for me. I now enjoy swimming as the water supports my joints and to my wife's delight I've taken up salsa dancing. I'm very pleased to be supporting this World Arthritis Day event and showing that you can have an active life with arthritis."

*(Continued)*



*(Continued)*

[Name of organisation] recommends that anyone whose concerns about exercise are preventing them from taking up an activity should consult their doctor, specialist or physiotherapist.

For more information on RMDs and physical activity visit the World Arthritis Day website [www.worldarthritisday.org](http://www.worldarthritisday.org)

ENDS

For more information, to send a photographer or to organise an interview with [Name of spokesperson or spokespeople] contact:

[Name of contact in your organisation], [Job Title], [Name of you organisation]

Office Phone - XXXXXXXXX

Mobile phone - XXXXXX

Email - XXX@XXXXXXXX

**(Always include a contact person and include as many contact details as possible).**

#### **Notes to editors**

**(Add any supporting facts and figures that will help a journalist write their story. For example number of people with RMDs in your country etc.)**

### **4.3 Sending out the release**

Send your press release by email if you can. Send it in the main body of the email, as some journalists cannot open attachments. Otherwise fax it, or post it, but make sure it arrives the day you want the journalist to read it.

Follow-up with a phone call to the journalist to ensure that the information has been received. This is a chance to talk them through the key issues of the story and offer them more information, including details of any spokespeople who would be willing to be interviewed.

### **4.4 When to contact journalists**

You can telephone the contacts on your media list to find out exact deadlines. If you want your media coverage to be on World Arthritis Day itself you will need to send out your press release in advance.



#### **Daily newspapers** (national and regional)

- Send out the release and telephone the journalists on the morning of the day before you want the story printed (9am to 11am)
- Late afternoon is the worst time to contact daily journalists because they are on deadline

#### **Weekly newspapers**

- Local weekly papers often go to press two days before the paper comes out, so contact them a few days in advance of press day

#### **TV/Radio**

- For features programmes contact the researcher as early as possible
- For news programmes contact a week in advance or on the morning of the day before to offer spokespeople for interviews – they may film pre-recorded interviews or set up live interviews for World Arthritis Day itself

#### **Internet**

- Send the press release on the day to avoid them putting it up beforehand.

#### **Magazines**

- The deadlines for magazines can be as long as three to six months beforehand, so if you want to have features included about World Arthritis Day you will need to contact them as early as possible.

### **4.5 Tips for speaking to journalists**

- Before you call a journalist, visualise what the story would look like in its completed version and think about what information you need to provide to make that happen
- Prepare your key messages and make sure you include them when you are talking to the journalist
- Make it easy for the journalist to cover your story by providing as much relevant information as you can – make sure you have all the facts and figures to hand
- Always return calls or emails promptly and answer requests for more information as soon as you can
- Work to the journalist's deadlines – ask when they are and keep to them. If you are not sure how to answer a journalist's question or do not know the answer, be honest and tell them. If you think you can find out the answer tell them you will get back to them and respond as quickly as possible.
- Be open and honest with a journalist but do not tell them anything 'off the record' as there is no such thing!



#### 4.6 Selecting and training spokespeople for interviews

It will help your story if you have spokespeople available to be interviewed. They could give a more in-depth interview for a newspaper or magazine story, or a recorded or live interview on TV or radio.

**Spokespeople** could include:

- A senior manager from your organisation
- A person with an RMD who has overcome challenges or has excelled at a kind of physical activity or sport
- A healthcare professional

For print media you need to find people who have a good knowledge of the subject and whose expertise means they can answer a range of questions on the subject.

For broadcast media your spokespeople should be articulate and to the point. They need to be able to remain calm under the pressure of a live interview and not ramble.

If you are choosing a health professional to be a spokesperson make sure he or she can communicate using language that the average person watching or listening to the news can understand. Also, make sure they understand and will support your key messages.

If you are setting up an interview try to spend some time with your spokesperson rehearsing likely questions and answers and ensuring they are 'on message'.

#### Top tips for interviews

- Ensure you make your most important point first
- Stick to your key messages
- Once you have said what you want to say, stop!
- Use relevant examples and easy to understand anecdotes
- If you are having difficulty controlling an interview, try using bridging phrases to get you back on track. Briefly address the question the journalist is asking you and then use a bridging phrase to get back to your key message
- e.g. "That's an interesting point, but I think the key issue is that people with arthritis don't exercise because they fear the pain it might cause."



## 5. Holding an event

You may wish to hold an event to raise awareness around your theme for World Arthritis Day. You could ask the media to publicise your event beforehand to attract participants and/or invite them along to cover the actual event.

Here are some basic tips for organising an event which you might find helpful.

### Tips on organising your event

- Decide on what type of event you want to hold.
- Decide on a date
  - Make sure that key people you need are available
  - Ensure the date does not clash with other local or media events
- Work out a budget and stick to it
  - Think of everything you will need so that you don't find yourself with extra costs
- Find a venue and book it well in advance
  - Ensure the cost of the venue is within your budget
  - Check it is a reasonable size for the number of people you expect to attend
  - Ensure it is in a central location convenient for everyone to get to
  - Ensure it is accessible for everyone attending
- Write a checklist of all the things you need to do
- Check health and safety regulations for your activity
- Check whether you need insurance cover or any licenses (e.g. for music)
- Delegate – find out what skills people have and give them tasks
- Promote your activity with emails, flyers, posters, word-of-mouth
  - Use pre-publicity activities to get people to attend and generate excitement
- Give the media plenty of notice to attend.
  - If you are expecting TV and radio, discuss with them in advance the facilities they need.
  - Newspapers will often only send photographers, so send the details of your event to the picture desks as well as editorial desks.
  - If you have the budget, hire your own photographer so that you can send the photos out to the media afterwards if they aren't able to come along.