This brief gives a short guide for reps, branches and regions on using local media in Post Office campaigns. If you are contacted by any national media please refer them immediately to the HQ press office.

Liam Young  
CWU Press Officer  
020 8971 7267 or 07732 649 309  
lyoung@cwu.org

LOCAL MEDIA
Local media can be a huge asset in campaigning. There is a strong track record of local media supporting campaigns to keep Post Offices open – even leading the campaign themselves in some places.

Local media covers:
- Newspapers – daily, weekly, freesheets
- Radio – BBC, commercial and charity / community stations
- TV – local / regional TV news

CONTENT – SPOKESPEOPLE AND KEY MESSAGES
The following guidelines will help you liaise with the local media in an effective way:

- Firstly, when doing media work, keep people in the loop. Where relevant make sure people in your branch / area / territory / region are happy with the content.
- Have agreed local spokespeople (TR, AR, branch etc). Try to have one or two named spokespeople for the office / region so that the media can identify with that name.
- Be consistent with messages coming from HQ and / or other relevant parts of CWU.
- Use key messages – you can always use quotes and information from national press releases and then tweak or re-name to fit a local angle.
- Local info is king – make reference to the Post Office(s) with the address / town / region. How many people work there? Combined length of service? Local jobs and services. Make links with local campaign issues such as other closures on the High St. This helps to build interest in local-angle stories which media can run with.
- Journalists love numbers so good stats are a real help. It also makes you sound convincing and that you know what you're talking about.
- Who, what, when, where, why and how – you should have the answer to all these questions.
CONTACTING LOCAL MEDIA

Now that you know who is responsible for contacting local media and what your story is you need to get in contact with journalists. Don’t be afraid of doing this as most local journalists will be very keen to learn information from you. You’re the expert on this after all! These are some of the different ways in which you can make contact.

- Identify contacts by reading the paper / listening / watching local news. Take note of the name of journalists covering similar stories (business or consumer affairs correspondents often). It’s not rocket science but it works.

A good place to start is the newsdesk. You can call the main switchboard and ask for the newsdesk (this is the same for newspapers, radio and TV). The newsdesk is responsible for dealing with news stories and allocating coverage, so either you’ll be speaking to the right person or they will put you in touch with the appropriate journalist.

- Press releases are the best way of sending information to a number of media contacts. The information is written with clear information and quotes (you’re less likely to be misquoted this way!). Use quotes, stats and maybe a case study.

- Many local papers have a vibrant letters page which can be a great way of securing some publicity for your argument. They can be written from a single person or on behalf of a group (CWU branch, the employees of Summer Post Office, etc). Try to keep it snappy (max 300 words) and remember it can be edited down.

- Photo opportunities can help to secure media coverage. This could be with local politicians and staff outside the Post Office with placards / petition / balloons. Be creative! A gimmick or stunt can help give a focus to the activity and a reason for media to cover it.

DEALING WITH BROADCAST MEDIA

Broadcast media – radio or TV – is an important news format but it can be stressful and you may have to deal with some difficult questions. Make sure you have one or two spokespeople who are prepared to do interviews.

There are two forms of interviews: live or pre-recorded, make sure you know which sort you’re doing.

You may have a direct interview with the presenter, or you may be in a debate with other speakers, for example the Post Office or local politicians. You should always be told in advance if there is more than one interviewee.

Be prepared. Try to talk through the main areas of interest with the producer / researcher before you do the interview so that you can establish the sort of questions you will be facing.

Don’t be shy about asking ‘what are you looking for in the interview’ – this will help both you and them.

If you are doing radio you may want to have a sheet of key messages, statistics or other information. If you are on TV, you don’t want to be reading from a piece of paper!

Whatever the interview, remember that as a CWU rep you are the expert on Post Office issues.

Be calm and relaxed where possible and try not to get drawn into difficult or hostile areas of questioning.

In broadcast you don’t get very long to put your point across, normally 1 - 5 minutes, so try to ‘top-load’ your responses to get any key messages across.
CONTENT – SPOKESPEOPLE AND KEY MESSAGES
1. When doing media work, keep people in the loop
2. Have agreed local spokespeople
3. Be consistent and use key messages
4. Provide numbers, stats and local information
5. Know the answers to who, what, when, where, why and how

CONTACTING LOCAL MEDIA
1. Identify contacts
2. Send press releases and use quotes, stats and case studies
3. Send snappy letters to the letters page of local press
4. Create photo opportunities

DEALING WITH BROADCAST MEDIA
1. Be prepared
2. Have one or two spokespeople who are prepared to do interviews
3. Find out in advance if your interview is live or pre-recorded and how many people will interview you
4. Talk with the producer / researcher beforehand to establish the sort of questions you will be facing
5. For radio interviews, bring a sheet of key messages, statistics or other key information with you
6. Be calm, relaxed and try not to get drawn into difficult or hostile areas of questioning
7. ‘Top-load’ your responses to get any key messages across in the first 1 - 5 minutes