What is it?

A press release is a written statement that is sent to the media to gain regional, national or international coverage of on an issue or event. Your press release should not take the form of a feature article or a pitch: it is a formal announcement that should encourage journalists to want to write about your organisation’s World Meningitis Day activities. Journalists have to filter through hundreds of press-releases, so to help you get your story published, we have put together some tips that will help you write a successful press release.

What is needed for a successful World Meningitis Day Press Release?

- A short, powerful headline.
- Facts and data on meningitis that is specific to your country or region.
- The key campaign messages and details of any events you are organising for World Meningitis Day.
- A quote from either a high ranking member of your organisation or a health care professional.
- Your name and contact details.
- A release date.
- A place of issue.

Format

- Start with an eye-catching headline. It should tell the whole story but also be punchy.
- The opening paragraph should summarise the key message, containing who, why, where, and what the press release is communicating.
- The remaining text should reinforce the main message and key information to support it.
- Journalists are busy people so, where possible, try to limit the text to a single page.

Distributing the Release

- Brainstorm a list of the publications and radio/TV stations that your target audiences are most likely to read, watch, or listen to.
- Get the contact details for the most appropriate journalists; remember to use your own contacts wherever you can. Do you have a friend who works in the media sector?
- Copy the body text of the press release into the email that you send to the journalists (they don’t like attachments), and include a photo if you can.
- Send your release to a named journalist and if possible, call them to see if they received it and offer any additional info they might need.
Why All Meningitis Matters in [insert your country’s/state’s name].
(Including information about your activity in the title is even better, but remember to keep it short and interesting!)

In [insert your country’s/state’s name], meningitis affects [insert the number of those who get meningitis]: of these, [insert percentage] lose their lives to the disease and [insert percentage] sustain permanent life-changing disabilities.

This year, to mark World Meningitis Day, [insert your organisation’s name], is planning to [insert activity here]. [Insert more information about your activity here – keep it short and to the point, adding key information such as timings, entrance fee and dress code.]

This year’s World Meningitis Day theme will focus on raising awareness of the different types and strains of meningitis. Meningitis can be caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites. [Insert information on the type or strain of meningitis that your organisation focuses on – for example, “Because there are many different types of bacteria that can cause meningitis, there are a variety of vaccines that are needed to protect against it, such as MenACWY, MenB, PCV13 and Hib. It is a common misconception that there is one ‘universal meningitis vaccine’.”]

Raising awareness of this is vital – [Insert a quote that shows why raising awareness of the different causes, and types is key – for example, “Patti Wukovits, founder of the Kimberly Coffey Foundation said “I’m a nurse and I didn’t know that the meningococcal vaccine Kim had did not protect her against all of the meningitis serogroups”. Kim died of meningococcal B meningitis aged just 16.]

Through our [insert the name of your event here], we will be able to raise awareness of meningitis and the devastating effects that it can have.

NOTES TO EDITOR:
1. [Insert more information on the people who provided the quotes]
2. In [insert name of your country], [insert names of available vaccine(s)] is/are currently recommended for [insert category of people here] as part of the national immunisation programme. [insert names of privately available vaccine(s)] is also available privately and recommended for [insert category of people here].
3. [Insert any additional information on vaccines that you think is important – for example: Many people are not aware that vaccines exist to protect against bacterial meningitis, for others these vaccines are not currently available to them.]

ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION:
- [Insert a short description of your organisation]