

M&M Get Started

Media and Messaging core services. This chapter gives an outline of movement communication info for XR UK groups to draw on. M&M (for short) is a working group in charge of promoting XR's work, actions and events, using social media and traditional media such as newspapers. M&M ensures that the messages and graphics used on various platforms are coherent and in-line with the strategy. It can feel overwhelming for small local groups to start a Media & Messaging working group as it involves a wide range of skills local Rebels may not necessarily have. Fear not! In the Toolkit you'll find many resources to help you get your team started and people to contact to answer your questions, but also to help you complete some tasks (for example: designing a leaflet).

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What is Media & Messaging?

Messaging

A message is a clear, easy-to-understand sentence that sums up what you're trying to achieve with your action. The M&M team makes sure this message is consistent on all platforms and media used.

Media

Media are communications channels we use to spread news and our messages. In XR, we work with:

- traditional media (aka **press**): newspaper, TV, radio
- **social media**: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, Tiktok, Youtube
- **messaging apps**: Mattermost, Signal, Telegram, Whatsapp
- emails and newsletter (with **Action Network**)

☐ Press

Traditional media use various mediums to propagate news: printed (newspaper), video (TV), audio (radio)... but also digital supports (website, social media).

Most local and regional media are happy to run our stories, that's why it's important to learn **how to write a press release**.

☐ Social Media

Many people get their info from **social media**, especially in the younger generations. Social media platforms are free to use and easy to access (from your computer and/or smartphone).

That said, they can be time-consuming to use as they require you to post regularly to build your audience on your chosen platform(s), and keep it. Social media platforms are not reliable for propagating your news to all your followers at all times but they offer a simple, visible and searchable approach, from which new members can find you and contact you.

☐ Messaging apps

Messaging apps are mostly used for internal communication within your local group, working group, community group etc.

Some groups also choose to set up a broadcast on one of these apps, which is a one-way channel where messages can only be posted by the admins to inform their audience. You decide who can access your broadcast by sharing a link to it: members of your group only or anyone.

☐☐ Emails & Newsletter

This is probably the most reliable way we have to share our news with people who want to hear about us. We use **Action Network** to send our emails.

Emails that are short, to the point and include a call to action (for example: "register to join our meeting", "sign our petition") tend to work better than long emails full of information.

Movement Communication - Make your group visible

For XR to be successful it needs good communication; across the movement and to the public. When communication is consistent in language, formatting and platform, it is easier to understand and disseminate. It becomes instantly recognisable as the XR voice and it fits within the wider context of the movement.

M&M Support

M&M can offer communications support with the following (where capacity allows):

- Guidance on drawing up a communication plan for your action/event
- Checking communications are accessible and inclusive
- Editing, formatting and proofreading of XRUK team documents and messages
- Advice on managing secure channels and chats for your project
- Open Calls - structuring, tech support, BSL sign language
- Sending communications through [UK Channels](#): Broadcasts (Rebellion, Movement and M&M), Mattermost, Email, Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), Youtube, Tiktok), Website, Press & Spokes (fill the [UK Comms Request form](#))

Group visibility

Does the movement know your group exists and what you do?

- Local Groups- make sure you are on the [Local Group Map](#), and that your contact details and social media links are up to date.
- Community Groups- make sure your group is listed on the [Community Groups page](#).
- [XR Organism](#) - ensuring your Group is on The Hub, and your contact information is up to date, makes it easier for other groups to find you. [Contact the Tech Team for support adding or updating Hub groups](#).
- [Join Us](#) - ensuring your Local or Community Group's information is up to date on the website means people who want to join can easily find you.

Share what you're doing

Join the [Live Action Content chat](#) on Telegram to share with the rest of the movement your latest news (with a selection of your best photos and videos).

Contact the XR UK M&M team

☐☐ Media & Messaging [Mattermost Reception](#)

☐☐ Social Media: xruksocialmedia@protonmail.com

☐☐ Email / Newsletter [Mattermost Reception](#)

☐☐ Press: press@extinctionrebellion.uk

☐☐ Video: xrvideo@protonmail.com

Planning your communications

This page is about all the things you should consider whenever you're planning your comms for an event, an action or even to advertise your group to the rest of the world.

We also turned those steps into a [check list](#) spreadsheet so you can tick the boxes out (it's satisfying isn't it? ☐). Go to "file" then "make a copy" to adapt the list to your needs.

For more detailed advice on planning the media for, and during, an action (including working with the press, briefing photographers, and effectively using spokespeople, [see this page](#).

1. Get organised

☐ Roles

Who will be in charge of what?

Very often, local groups don't have the luxury of having multiple people to do each job that's needed, but if you're lucky to have more than one person to deal with the communication tasks, make sure:

- at least one of you is in touch with the rest of the action/event planners
- you're able to check your emails and/or the chat(s) your LG selected

☐ 3 questions to get started

Whether you're a team of one or more, you'll need to plan your comms ahead. Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

☐ do you need to advertise your event beforehand (eg a movie screening, a welcome meeting...) or do you want to keep it a surprise (eg a sticky action in Barclays)

☐ on what media would you like your action/event to be publicised? Press, social media, newsletter.

☐ based on your previous answers: what can you do yourself, and where do you need some support (if at all)?

2. Planning your comms step-by-step

☐ What do you want to achieve?

This is probably the most important question, as everything else will follow from there.

A few examples:

- talk to the workers of a specific company to get them to engage from the inside (eg insurers, bankers...)
- get more people to attend a specific event (eg your LG's next meeting)
- close a company for a day

☐ What's your call to action?

Once your action/event has started, what's the next step for the non XR people you meet?

- read the leaflet you handed them
- visit a specific website to switch banks
- subscribe to your newsletter

It's best to pick only one call to action to keep things simple.

☐ Pick a date, time & location

You can check the [XR UK Calendar](#) to verify there isn't already something planned on the same day that would prevent people from attending your event (for example it wouldn't be the best idea to schedule a local group meeting the same day as Restore Nature Now).

☐ Pick a name

Make sure it's clear and engaging, for example:

- ☐ Climate Choir
- ☒ Wyre Forest Climate Choir Rehearsal

☐ Do you need visuals?

This could be a banner for a Facebook event or an email, graphics for social media, a leaflet etc.

Note that photos and videos are usually more successful on social media than graphics with text, which is good news if you're not a graphic designer!

Otherwise, you can use [Aktivisda](#) an easy-to-use design tool that has the right colours and fonts for XR graphics.

Start advertising

Unless it's a secret event, you might want to start advertising ahead of time, which could include:

- creating a [Facebook event](#)
- posting on [social media](#)
- writing a [press release](#)
- sending a [newsletter](#)
- talking to your regional group about it so other local groups in your area are aware of it

Get your event on the map

All the events happening in the UK can be found on [this map](#) (unless they are top secret actions of course!). To add yours, either ask your regional team for help or fill in the [UK Comms Request Form](#).

3. Break the news

All these steps are optional and completely depend on the nature of your action/event. For example, a Climate Cafe event needs to be advertised beforehand but doesn't need a follow-up, whether a theatrical action will provide you with amazing photos and videos that will be successful on social media.

☐ Share your best photos and videos to the [Live Action Content Telegram](#) chat. When you join the chat, please familiarise yourself with its rules by reading the pinned message there.

☐ Post on social media

☐ Send your press release if you have one

4. Follow-up

Again, these steps are optional but you might want to include them.

☐ Sending an email out to your mailing list to:

- either thank everyone who was involved in the action and announce the next steps (if you already have this information)
- or welcome people who recently subscribed to your mailing list as a consequence of your action (and maybe invite them to an in-person or online meeting)

☐ Posting more photos and/or videos of the action on social media to use the momentum and get more people to follow your account(s) and engage with your posts.

How to get your content promoted by XR UK

Disclaimer: for practical reasons, promoting every event on all Extinction Rebellion UK's platforms is impossible. Each platform has its criteria described on this chapter's different pages.

How to get your content promoted by XR UK

UK Comms Request Form

This is the path to get your content on XR UK channels. Please fill [this form](#) with as many details as possible.

For more info about our channels, please read the following pages:

- [Broadcasts](#)
- [Social Media](#)
- [Movement Calendar](#)
- [Emails](#)

How to get your content promoted by XR UK

Broadcasts

Our broadcasts

REBELLION BROADCAST

Key info on UK actions, strategy and Rebellion updates.

- Telegram: <https://t.me/rebellionbroadcast>
- Mattermost: [click here](#)

MOVEMENT BROADCAST


UK-wide events & training.

- Telegram: <https://t.me/MovementBroadcast>
- Mattermost: [click here](#)

XR UK M&M

Press releases, design assets, training sessions and general M&M news.

- Telegram: <https://t.me/xrukmm>
- Mattermost: [click here](#)

 Note: These channels can be accessed either through Telegram and Mattermost, as they're synced up! You don't need to join via both platforms!

Consider unmuting the Rebellion Broadcast, both for yourself and for others to stay tuned in and not to miss important announcements.

Creating your own Broadcast Channel

Many Local Groups find it useful to have their own Broadcast channel for rebels who feel overwhelmed by the large amount of messages that often happen in other channels.

For tips about creating your own channel, see the [Online Group Chats pages](#).

Ask for your event to be shared via the UK broadcasts

Only send your request directly to broadcast if it's already been agreed by Action Circle/Operations or to share your talk, event or training on the Movement Broadcast.

You can do this via one of the following routes:

- Fill in the [M&M Comms Request Form](#)
- Telegram/MM chat (for EC's or Comms Leads of UK circles only)
- Otherwise, send a message on XR UK M&M Comms requests reception on [Mattermost Broadcast Comms](#)

See the full [Broadcast process](#) for further info.

Key reminders:

- Keep messages short and link out to further information.
- Leave time for your message to land. It can sometimes take weeks for a message to reach Local Group channels. Last minute messaging can be counterproductive.
- Make language accessible and clear. See these [inclusivity resources](#).
- Encourage your group to follow and check the broadcast channels. Limit cascading information through chats as it leads to overwhelm.
- Another way of sharing a message is by sharing the LINK to a Telegram message, rather than the whole message. Right-click on the post in the broadcast channel and 'Copy Link', then post this link in your chat. This saves time and steers folks to the main broadcast channels.
- Don't share messages before they've gone out on the main broadcast. The Telegram broadcasts are synced up with Mattermost, so people can see the messages on either channel.

Movement Calendar

📅 View the [Calendar](#) and [Events Map](#) on the XRUK Website.

📅 [Click here](#) to access the calendar on TeamUp.

📅 [Click here](#) to access all the resources regarding the calendar and event map on the Rebel Toolkit.

Got something to add?

You can submit entries to the Movement Calendar [here](#) - or you go via your area's calendar admin (it could be your regional Gardener or coordinator). Alternatively, you could learn [how to use the Calendar](#) and add events to it yourself.

Please make sure details are accurate to avoid publishing wrong info. It is the responsibility of the group/person submitting the form to make sure that any changes are updated in the calendar directly and quickly communicated to the email team if it relates to a UK action/event where the change of info might impact other teams via: [Mattermost Reception](#) | Email: mov.comms@extinctionrebellion.uk

Navigate the calendar

The calendar is divided into sub-calendars. View these by opening the link then click on the left-hand drop-down to reveal colour bars representing:

- **Actions - UK wide / UK significance** (*A UK-wide action or campaign*): This needs to be agreed with Action Circle and have UK-wide locations and/or media impact. Eg. Dirty Water, The Big One.
- **Actions - National/Regional/Local** (*Regional, Local, National actions*): The majority of Actions will fall into this category. Coordinated by Local Groups, Communities or temporary Action teams. E.g. March on the Mine, Wales
- **Actions - Non-XRUK** (*Non-XR action*): These are actions supported by XR and take the form of collaborative, allied organisation and/or Sister Movement actions. E.g. Fossil Free London, Housing Rebellion. NB: Make sure the organisation has given consent to publish on XR's calendar.
- **Key Dates - XR** (*Key XR Internal Dates*): E.g. Rebellion dates, Open Calls
- **Key Dates - External**: Eg. World Cup Final, Local/National Election
- **Talks, Trainings & workshops**

- **Meetings - Local**

The calendar also uses [emojicons](#) to differentiate each type of event. .

You can view the whole calendar or any part(s) of it. As well as the sub-calendars detailed above, there are various filters available to help you find an event, for example, by region or action support role. Check [this chapter](#) to learn more about using the calendar.

Please note that secret events are not included in the public view.

How to get your content promoted by XR UK

Social Media

XR UK Social Media Channels

We're @XRebellionUK on all channels

- [Instagram](#)
- [Twitter/X](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- [Facebook](#)

We can promote your event on UK Social Media platforms.

Please use the [Comms Form](#) to get in touch and give **at least** 1 week notice.

NB: The social media team decides when to schedule the message and if it's appropriate to send out/that it meets criteria.

Facebook events

You can send a co-host request to XRebellionUK, XRUK Talks & Trainings, Nations & Regions or other local groups, depending how relevant your event is to these groups (for example, XR UK only accept co-host requests for national events, XR Midlands for Midlands based events etc.)

If needed, you can read the [Movement Comms Style guidelines](#) here.

Organise Media & Messaging for your group

Do you want to make your group, event or action more visible and reach more people? Check this chapter out to get started with the Media and Messaging side of the organisation. In this chapter, you'll find a summary of what you need to do and links to relevant resources in the Toolkit and elsewhere.

Media & Messaging Check List

Media & Messaging is a very important job when planning an action. If you don't talk about what you're doing and let people know what you're up to, the whole message of your action will be lost.

This check list will lead you through all the tasks you need to consider before, during and after your action. Disclaimer: not all these tasks will be relevant to every action.

How to use the check list?

[Click here](#) to access the spreadsheet.

Go to "file" (to left-hand side corner) then click "make a copy" and rename it however you want.

You can then edit your own version of the check list!

Updates

We update the checklist regularly but if you spot something out of date or you have a relevant resource we should link there, please message @lucielc on Mattermost.

How to do media for an action

Press

Press responsibilities and dealing directly with the media can seem daunting to many, but once you get your head around the role you'll find it's nothing to be feared! We encourage you to be confident and friendly and aim at building relationships with journalists at every opportunity. Here are some useful tips and info to help in your role:

Collect information for press releases

Collecting information for press releases is a really important part of the role and it's really vital that all the information collected is correct. It's definitely a part of the role that can create loads of extra unnecessary work if the details aren't right. When collecting information, please think about the following:

- What is the action? (be as specific as possible)
- Why are you doing this action? What is it highlighting? Key messaging? (Please link to any useful information and research that is relevant)
- Where and when is the action?
- Who will be doing the action and how many people?
- Is it arrestable?
- If you're using banners, wearing printed tshirts etc, what do they say? (specifics!)

Please see [How to write a press release](#) for more and [How to design messaging for an action](#) for more.

Liasing with press before an action

It's a great idea to begin building a press list and telling your local press about your upcoming actions. This could also involve pitching stories about specific performances, personal stories etc. The idea is that we want to get these journalists warmed up and interested!

- Call the media! Call/email media in advance of an action - ideally even before sending the press release to pitch an exclusive.

- Contact your main local newspaper, your local TV stations (ITN/ITV/BBC) and radio stations (BBC usually best as this works perfect as part of a call in show).
- Prepare a list of News desks in advance and save in your phone.
- Get in touch with journalists you have personal contacts with and 'tip them off' to actions - amount of detail according to trust level, just enough to get them excited enough to come.

Check out the [Media List page](#) to find contacts.

Liaise with media on the ground during actions

If you see journalists and camera crews walking around, go over and say hello!

- Introduce yourself, tell them who you are, ask if they need help with anything.
- Take their card and ask for their contact details to add to a journalist WhatsApp chat (if you have one). Or save them to your phone.
- It's really important that we help media get to our trained spokespeople at every opportunity. Obviously, this isn't always possible, but we should aim to have well prepared people in front of camera as much as we can. Keep an eye out!

Spokesperson

A lot of press work involves coaching spokespeople and booking them in for media appearances. Things to be aware of:

- Identify people in your local/regional teams who would be good spokespeople.
- Train people using talking points for action specific messaging.
- Hold sessions for trainee and experienced spokespeople to practise answering commonly asked questions from the heart.
- Communicate urgent talking points with spokespeople (for example if something controversial just happened they will need to know what "line" XR will take on it).
- Ensure you have spokespeople who are available to take calls & make TV/radio appearances on the day of the action, and potentially the day before (if you have sent a press release in advance) and after.

Check out our [Spokesperson resources](#) for more.

Social media

Always be sure your social media teams are prepped and ready for your action with the following:

- Timings - when is the action taking place? If it's a public action, being sure teams are posting before and during the action. If it's secret, be sure they know this and when exactly to start posting.
- Relevant messaging - what's the topline message? Are any slogans being used? What's the Call To Action (CTA)?
- Tags and Hashtags - Do you need to tag any important people or organisations? Are any specific hashtags being used on the day? Always be sure to use one or two of the well known XR hashtags ie. #ExtinctionRebellion #RebelForTruth
- Any useful content - are there any videos, images, news stories or infographics you want posted that day? Be sure your teams have them ready to go! Be sure to also have a quick and simple way of getting video and images from the action to your social media teams for posting.

If you want your content to be shared on XR UK or global channels, be sure to fill out the content form [here](#) and provide as much information, and as much advanced warning, as possible.

Make sure you have a livestreamer lined up for the day! You can also see the [Livestreaming section](#) for more tips.

Photographers

Make sure you have at least one dedicated photographer lined up for the day. It is very likely that in your local group, you will have some very talented amateurs, and probably at least a couple of experienced photographers. As well as people who can shoot on DSLR, consider having people to capture high-quality mobile content, that can be instantly shared.

Keeping photographers briefed

Photographers are free to shoot in whatever style they work in. All content is welcome. A few things to consider:

- If the media attend your actions they won't rely on you to get images. In case they don't, make sure to provide them with a few great shots.
- Consider also what content we can produce that the media would not have access to. The behind the scenes of the action is as interesting as the action itself.
- Think about how the content will be useful on your platforms and on the XRUK social media channels. Again, how can we think beyond just showing what happened? Is there a deeper, richer story to be told through our images?
- We are trying to put storytelling front and centre. To platform diverse voices. Photographers might be interested in capturing both images and words - a quote from a subject as to why they are there.

Check out our photographers briefing [here](#).

How to design messaging

Public relations isn't just about "publicising" yourself. It's about building a relationship with your "publics." What is a "public"? Basically the people impacted by/involved in the issue you are talking about and who might do something about it.

Clearly in terms of the climate and ecological emergency, that's everyone. So does that mean we need to message everyone? No. We need to message the people most likely to join the Rebellion. Or those with the power to make decisions that will help deal with the emergency. Follow these steps to create a basic messaging strategy for an action, event or story.

Step 1. Who needs to know what?

Ask yourself what you are trying to achieve overall. More rebels? More people understanding that the climate and ecological emergency is important? What's your call to action? Be really clear.

Also be really clear who you are seeking this reaction from. There is no such thing as "the general public." You need to decide, at least in broad terms, which group of people this message is aimed at and why.

Your message is not simply information about the news story or that an action is happening. Your message is what you want your target group to know, and what they should do with that knowledge now they have it. The news angle or action is the vehicle you will use to get the message across.

Step 2. How do they need to get the info?

What do you know about your target group? Is that fact, or assumption? Do some research and check your facts. People regularly waste a lot of time making assumptions about target groups.

Who do they respect/listen to? Do they know about XR? Do they trust XR (if not, target a third party they do trust to deliver the message instead).

What issues do they care about? What makes them happy, angry, sad? What language and imagery do your target group use? You need to be using the same ones.

Notice that we tend to use the term "target group" as opposed to "target audiences." This is because an audience implies passive receiving/watching. This is all about encouraging people to respond.

Step 3. What's the best way to reach a target group?

Direct meetings? Events, online content, news media? What does this group of people read, watch, listen to?

Focus on the channel that will reach your target group. Don't waste time sending press releases to every outlet or doing a video that isn't done in a style that appeals to your target group.

Remember: they are unlikely to like what you like. So you may need to put out content you personally dislike or don't connect with. That is important, unless you are only speaking to people like yourself.

Step 4. Check the strategic fit.

Check the messaging fits your strategy and "brand."

Does your message align with delivering the overall strategic goals of the Movement? You can check the strategy out [on this page](#).

Have you considered whether your message could be misinterpreted and cause a problem with another target group? If so, can you re-word it?

Step 5. Did it work?

Think about how you will gauge whether your message had the right impact on your target group?

You need to consider a communications plan as a two way conversation with the target group.

- What feedback have you received?
- Who has engaged with you?
- How will you respond?

Don't keep sending the same message without solid evidence that it's working to achieve what you want. Keep adapting and refining it until you have evidence that it is.

Using Email Lists

Action Network

XRUK uses a network of email lists, via a software system called 'Action Network'. In simple terms the UK list comprises of Nation/Region lists which in turn comprise of Local Groups. All new sign ups within this system flow 'up' to the UK list which can then reach everyone around the movement.

This makes the [XR UK list](#) a powerful way to communicate, engage and mobilise people with a wide variety of 'asks'; from donating money, to signing up to open calls or roles fayres, or to mobilise towards large actions. These emails are coordinated by a UK email team who connect to all the other UK-wide teams.

Although Local Groups are autonomous, it's highly advised to be part of this network. Action Network Local Group lists are advertised via 'Join Group' buttons on our [Local Group map on the UK website](#) and also now the [Global website map too](#). Also when someone joins the UK email list on the UK website, then get a welcome email encouraging them to sign up to a Local Group list via the map.

You can get access to and use your part of the system e.g a Nation/Region or Local Group list. Email lists are also available to help coordinate work for other parts of the movement such as Rebel Ringers or Stewards teams.

Benefits and uses of our email lists

Emails tend to generate a good-sized response for an event, training, survey, talk or action- usually much better than messaging channels or social media. You can also use 'forms' to help you sign people up to events.

For information and support:

- Read [the Action Network for XR book](#) on the Rebel Toolkit
- or message the [Action Network Reception on Mattermost](#)
- or email: datateam@extinctionrebellion.uk

Chat Apps

Chats are at the heart of planning your event or organising your group.

Read [this page](#) for the information about choosing a chat app.

Telegram is used by XR UK for broadcasts

Is an encrypted messaging service similar to Whatsapp but with greater flexibility and features. You can edit and pin messages, see the chat history, locate media and each chat can hold a large number of people. It's also accessible on nearly any device. A limit on message wordcount can impact broadcast posts.

Mattermost is XR's main messaging app for working groups

It functions on its own server making it particularly secure. It is accessible on any device, and has tons of flexible features and ways of storing and searching for information. The drawback is that it can be overwhelming in layout and content and requires time to master. It's more similar to Slack or Discord.

Signal is used by action planning groups

It's the most secure encrypted chat, with a disappearing message function. It's also visually clean and crisp. However, it's not possible to edit, pin or thread messages, making it less useful for mass communications.

Whatsapp

Whatsapp is widely used by people outside of XR, but it is not secure and is limited in its functionalities so M&M does not advise using it for organising. It also doesn't sync up with Mattermost or other XR broadcasts.

Documents Management

We can all agree there are too many documents lying around! Hopefully, these tips will help us all be less overwhelmed by being more organised.

Add Document Specs (aim, date and origin of the doc) at the top of your documents. It makes clear to everyone reading what the doc seeks to achieve and prevents docs being circulated that spread misinformation.

For important documents that will be circulated publicly, please use the [Style Guide](#) for guidance on formatting, sizing of graphic design visuals etc. Please note that Karla is the preferred sans serif font for XR UK documents.

Working on Google Docs enables you to share information in a fluid and integrated way with others by taking comments and suggestions. However, it is not secure for sharing sensitive information, and there are concerns about how much of the content on Google Docs may be being harvested. Remember to make final versions switched to View Only so they can't be changed.

For docs with **sensitive info or spicy actions** work in [Cryptpad](#) with password protection in place.