M&M Get Started

This book gives an overview of how to do media and messaging for an XR group

- What is Media & Messaging?
- Support from your nation/region/XRUK M&M teams
- How to do messaging and media for an action

What is Media & Messaging?

Do you want to make your group, event or action more visible and reach more people?

M&M (for short) is all about public comms: promoting XR's work, actions and events, using social media and traditional media such as newspapers. It's about raising awareness of XR with your target audience - particularly in your local area; it's about presenting a narrative of XR that people will find compelling

Even though we all say "Media and Messaging", it's really the other way round. "Messaging" comes first, then you put that message out on various "media" channels...

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's job is to come up with this message, and then communicate it consistently on all media platforms.

There's a book about Messaging with all the details.

Media

Media are the communication channels we use to spread our messages. They break down into traditional media (press) and social media.

□□ 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.

Read more about press.

□□ 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.

Read more about social media

Other channels

XR also uses email and messaging apps to spread its message. These blur the line between "internal" and "public" comms (everything you put out on any channel will be read by existing rebels *and* members of the public!).

Read more about using email and messaging apps (Mattermost, Signal, Telegram, Whatsapp), including "broadcast channels", in the Internal Comms book.

Support from your nation/region/XRUK M&M teams

It can feel overwhelming for small local groups to start a Media & Messaging working group as it involves a wide range of skills that your rebels may not have. Fear not! As well as the resources in this shelf of the Toolkit, there are experienced rebels in your national/regional team as well as in XRUK's M&M team who can answer your questions and support you with your work.

XRUK support to help communicate your action/event.

For spicy actions - please don't fill in the form - contact Action Circle directly: actions@extinctionrebellion.uk.

Use the Request XRUK Support Form to submit your event listing or for support from the following:

- **Movement Calendar and Events Map**: if you're organising an action, get it added to the calendar and map. This is the best way for everybody - existing rebels and members of the public - to find your action (the XRUK website directs people to the map). As well as submitting via the form, you can also speak directly to your national/regional calendar admin, or even learn how to add stuff directly. Find out more on the Movement Calendar and Events Map page.
- **Rebellion Broadcast**: Our Rebellion Broadcast Telegram channel is for key info on UK-wide actions, strategy and other updates. Telegram, Mattermost.
- **Movement Broadcast**: This is a second Telegram broadcast channel, for UK-wide events and training . Telegram, Mattermost
- **Press**: The XRUK press team publish press releases on the website and contact journalists to it picked up by media outlets
- **Social Media**: Instagram, Bluesky, Faceook, TikTok, etc.
- **Email**: if suitable to the whole XRUK mailing list. See 'What makes a good XRUK email' policy.
- **Website**: get your action promoted on the XRUK website
- **Livestream**: Events can be livestreamed on e.g. YouTube

- **Rebel Toolkit**: Usually for more complex actions

Additional support you can request through the form

- Spokespeople
- Photographers
- Videographers
- Digital Rebellion (who can support with digital accompaniments to your action)

More detail about working directly with some XRUK teams

Working with XRUK M&M

If you are getting support from XRUK M&M (Media and Messaging) to promote your action, be aware this may lengthen the process as they will need to integrate your action into their existing work. So link up with them as early as possible to find out deadlines.

M&M will advise you on your action's messaging in order to make it fit well with their existing messaging and comms plans - so it’s best to be prepared to compromise so you can reach an agreement as quickly as possible. And get this sorted before progressing with any of your design work and creative assets.

Bottom line: if you are getting XRUK M&M support, you need XRUK M&M linked into your action team ASAP.

Working with XRUK Broadcast

If you are getting support from XRUK Rebellion Broadcast, draft a message - keep messages short and link out to further information. Consider the graphics, links, supporting documents and formatting. Read this style guide. The Broadcast team can offer support with this if needed.

Share your final copy via Broadcast Comms Telegram channel.

Give 2 weeks lead time, or more if possible, for your message to land. It can sometimes take weeks for a message to reach Local Group channels. Last minute messaging can be counterproductive.

Messages are checked and edited by the Broadcast Comms team for consistency and accessibility. The rep who brought the final post is tagged in the Broadcast Comms Telegram channel and a thumbs up must be given before the message is signed off.

POSTED! The message is broadcast and can then be shared further.

Do not share messages before they've been broadcast. The messages need to be checked for accuracy and accessibility and it confuses people to see different versions of the same message doing the rounds.

The Telegram broadcasts are usually synced up with Mattermost, so people can see the messages on either channel - and cascade it further from there, if needed.

(To request a message for the Movement Broadcast share it to the XRUK Comms requests reception channel on Mattermost, or submit it through the Comms Requests Form.

Working with the XRUK Website Team

If the XRUK website team want to promote your action, here's some guidelines for collaborating:

Spec: the content of the page will need to be provided in a google doc, with the headings, content, videos, making sure that any bullets are formatted, any links to other pages already defined. Graphics with the following specs can be within the document or can be provided separately. If they are not in the doc, please mark in the document where graphics to be placed

Hero image will provide a main page heading that will overlay the hero image, so you do not need the hero image to contain any text. The hero image spec for this to cater for all display sizes is 2048x850, ideally with the important image info in the top third of the image (or it'll get cut off on various display sizes). Then make the filename for the image something like [name-of-the-campaign].jpg share it with the website team.

Featured image: For campaigns pages we will require featured images so that when the page is shared it is image branded. Ideal featured images should have dimensions in the ratio 1.91:1, with bitmaps of 1200x630 which is a pretty optimal image size. This could be done either by delivering another 2048x850 hero image with file name [name-of-the-campaign]-featured-image.jpg and then webteam would use a graphics tool to crop a copy of that down to 1200x630 and then add it to the page. Or, ask a designer to supply a separate featured image file with above name and dimensions.

The XRUK M&M Broadcast

The XRUK M&M team maintain a "M&M Broadcast" channel, for M&M organisers throughout the movement, where the XRUK social media team share a round up of key posts so you can make sure you don't miss the most important moments. You can join it here.

Contacting XRUK M&M

□□ Media & Messaging: Mattermost Reception

Social Media: xruksocialmedia@protonmail.com

Press: press@extinctionrebellion.uk

Video: xrvideo@protonmail.com

National/Regional M&M Teams

Bristol

- Email: mediacoordination.xrbristol@protonmail.com
- Linktr.ee
- Website
- Broadcast
- Facebook
- Twitter/X: XRBristol
- Instagram: xrbristol
- Youtube

Cymru Wales

- Email
- Linktr.ee
- Website
- Broadcast
- Facebook
- Twitter/X: xr_cymru
- Instagram: xr_cymru_wales
- Youtube

East of England

- Email
- Linktr.ee
- Website
- Broadcast

- Facebook
- Twitter/X: XR_EoE
- Instagram: xr.eoe
- Youtube

London

- Email: london+media@extinctionrebellion.uk
- Linktr.ee
- Website
- Broadcast
- Facebook
- Twitter/X: XRLondon
- Instagram: xrlondonuk
- Youtube

Midlands

- Email: xrmidlandsmedia@protonmail.com
- Linktr.ee
- Website
- Broadcast
- Facebook
- Twitter/X: MidlandsXR
- Instagram: xrmidlands
- Youtube

North (NW & York)

- Email
- Linktr.ee
- Website
- Broadcast
- Facebook

- Twitter/X: Rebellion_North
- Instagram: xrnorth
- Youtube

North East & Cumbria

- Email: xrne.media@protonmail.com
- Linktr.ee
- Website
- Broadcast
- Facebook
- Twitter/X: XRNE_UK
- Instagram: xrne_uk
- Youtube

Northern Ireland

- Email
- Linktr.ee
- Website
- Broadcast
- Facebook
- Twitter/X: xr__ni
- Instagram: xr__ni
- Youtube

Scotland

- Email
- Linktr.ee
- Website
- Broadcast
- Facebook
- Twitter/X: ScotlandXr

- Instagram: xrscotland
- Youtube

How to do messaging and media for an action

This page contains detailed advice on planning the messaging and public media for an action, including working with the press, briefing photographers, and effectively using spokespeople. It links out to lots of other pages in the toolkit, where more detailed guidance can be found

In addition, you'll need an ("internal") comms plan to make sure your members and supporters know what's going on. More on that in the Actions shelf, here.

There's also checklist spreadsheet so you can tick the boxes off as you go (it's satisfying isn't it? □□).

M&M for an action: Checklist

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.

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

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.

□ 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 planners.

Initial Action Design

Read initial action design for detailed guidance.

This covers:

- **The outcome** - what do you want to happen as a result of your action?
- **The audience(s)** - who do you want to hear your message? The audience(s) may be different from the action's target
- **The message** - what is the central thing you want to communicate to your audience - e.g. what would you write on a banner for the action?
- **The tactics** - what is the target of your action and what is the delivery mechanism for your message?
- **The basic plan** - location, date, start time, and the "how"

And pick a clear, descriptive name

Visuals

Read Vibe and creatives elements for detailed guidance.

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!

Messaging

Read the full guidance on how to design your message here

It's very, very important to consider how your action will come across and prepare your public messaging. The messaging for your action will be conveyed through different means and needs to take different formats such as banners, flyers, press releases, social media posts, and interviews. It will dictate the visual design of the action - banners, placards, etc (more on that in Vibe and Creatives). It will also inform the tactics (eg people with noose around their necks standing on a block of melting ice is self explanatory).

If your action has a demand or a "call to action", this will need to be central to your message. Sometimes we deal with complex issues which we only just about understand ourselves. Think about the message if you were to show it to your parents or a neighbour. Would they get it - *without* you explaining? From this you can start to boil down your key message in as few words as possible. For example “Stop Rosebank” or “Unite to Survive”. You can refine it further as you go.

It can be useful to create a ‘Key Messaging & Factsheet’ document around an action. Do your best to ensure the activists who are going to be present at the action understand what to say if approached by the media for an interview/quote - or who the press liaison on the ground is.

Media

- Posting on social media
- Writing a press release

This section contains detailed guidance on:

- Press
- Spokesperson
- Social media
- Photographers & livestream

Press

Read How to write a press release for more detailed guidance.

Dealing 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.

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. When collecting information, think about:

- 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!)

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!

- Prepare a list of News desks in advance and save in your phone.

- 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).
- 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

Read the Spokesperson page for detailed guidance.

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 begood 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.

Social media

Read the Social Media book for detailed guidance.

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.

Photographers and Livestream

Read the Photography and Livestream books for detailed guidance.

Make sure you have at least one dedicated photographer lined up for the day and they've been briefed.

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, which can be instantly shared.