“Public relations is about reputation - the result of what you do, what you say and what others say about you.”

“Public relations is the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics.”

Chartered Institute of Public Relations

Congratulations on being appointed your club or county PRO!

The club/county PRO (Public Relation Officer) is an integral part of the club/county committee with responsibility for the perception of the YFCU within the club and beyond. The PRO communicates with the general public on behalf of the club/county. You are in a position to present, in an attractive manner, a good image of YFC. The level and quality of publicity given to the club depends a good deal on the PRO.

It is important for the future of the YFCU that the Association is seen as an attractive, active, progressive and positive organisation. You are the team leader in fostering and harnessing all communication methods at your disposal and gaining coverage for your club. Good coverage for your club boosts the morale of officers and clubs, and in turn helps to increase membership within your club.

We have produced this booklet to help you perform in your role and portray the best image of YFCU to the general public. What you do as a PRO will help to build awareness of the Association in your local area and contribute to the reputation of Ulster’s best rural youth organisation!
Establish a good relationship with your local paper. They are always looking for good stories and content to fill their pages. Get to know them and they may consider running larger feature style interviews with club members for certain events/club milestones. Some newspapers may still have their own photographer so invite them to high profile club meetings such as Parents evening, new members night and any anniversary events. This will ensure guaranteed coverage for your club. Remember to follow up with a report, list of prize winners etc...

Get into a routine of sending articles and pictures to the papers regularly. Remember to be careful of deadline dates when trying to promote events.

Keep records of all press clippings in either a scrapbook or a lever arch file. This will make it easy when it comes to gathering information and photos for club anniversaries and other high profile events.

Be creative! With your photos and with content. Got an exchange coming to stay with one of your fellow club members? Get them to talk to the local paper about their experience in Northern Ireland. Got a set of triplets in your club? Use them in photos to launch new members night or other fun club events.

Work as a member of the team with the other club officers. Good internal communication will help deliver strong external communication.

As PRO you will need to look after photographers/journalists, guest and sponsors at club events, organise PR for specific events, such as fundraisers, competitions, recruitment initiatives, community activities etc and work as part of a team to ensure county initiatives are successful.

For club PROs, don’t forget to assist in County recruitment campaign for example at agricultural shows during the summer. Make sure your club is profiled as your club could benefit from new members.

For county PROs, make sure you engage with all club PROs in the design and implementation of the County recruitment campaign at local agricultural shows and other high profile events you may be asked to deal with e.g. Open Farm Weekend.

Be as professional as you can be. Always include a contact number when emailing journalists so they can call you directly and remember, you are promoting the YFCU as well as your club so make sure you are courteous and polite at all times and don’t be afraid to be passionate about YFCU!

Enjoy the role!
A big part of your role as PRO will be writing press releases informing newspapers of your club activities both upcoming and those that have taken place. These are essentially reports that you are releasing to the press to tell them about your club. Here are some tips on how to write the best press releases:

At the top of your page put in bold
Issued on behalf of ............... (insert club name) YFC

Date

HEADLINE – this is essential and needs to sum up the essence of the release in one line. It should be centred and capture the journalist’s attention.

If your press release is more than one page in length then put [more...] at the bottom of each page.

On the final page of the press release put [ENDS] on the line below the main body of the text.

Contact details: Insert your contact details after [ENDS]

E.g.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES: For further information please contact ........ of ........ Young Farmers’ Club on 07..........

• Write in the third person. Do not use “you”, “I”, “we” and “us”.
• Stick to the facts and keep it concise.
• Do not use personal opinions (unless they are incorporated into a person’s quotes).
• Refrain from using text slang language, remember to write clearly and check your release for spelling and grammar. Sometimes the computer can be wrong and doesn’t pick up on misspelling of certain words e.g. where/were, there/their, our/are etc.
• Create a catchy headline: keep the headline short and simple. The headline should sum up the essence of the release in one or two lines.
• Opening paragraph: this needs to summarise the story – Who, What, When, Where and Why.
• Additional paragraphs: these should include all extra information and quotes from the main spokesperson e.g. club leader or club secretary.
• Final paragraph: include contact details for parents/potential members to get in touch and list any social media the club keeps up to date.
• Why not get someone to read over your release before you hit ‘SEND’ to make sure it all makes sense.
• Invest a bit of time to make sure the information is correct, interesting and informative.
• Keep your releases on file for future PROs. This is useful for annual events such as AGM so you just have to input new names for committee. Also for parents evenings, if you have the list of club cups, it will save you time typing them all in again.

Do not refer to your press release as an ad. Press releases don’t cost anything and will be published so long as the content is well written and sent in the format the paper requires. If you amend a picture to include text, the paper will view it as an advert and they may charge you to publish it.
Here is an example of a release sent from YFCU HQ

**Sample Press Release**

**County Down Clubs YFCU 2013 Machinery Handling Title**

County Down members Neil Patterson and Keith Dickson, both from Spa YFC, were celebrating after winning the YFCU Machinery Handling competition held in association with long term sponsor Johnston Cipin & Co.

In a change of venue for one year only, the competition was held at CAPRE Crewe Hall during the N. Ireland Young Farmers’ Conference. Each county, represented by two members, were timed driving through a slalomed course with the County booking the fastest time, minus any penalties, taking the title.

Using John Deere 6115 tractors with Fleming double axle trailers attached, competitors had to complete a series of challenges designed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSENI). As well as pressure from the stopwatch, competitors completed the course under the watch of a camera crew filming for the upcoming YFCU series to air on YouTube.

Points were awarded for successfully making it through the course, however teams were penalised for a variety of reasons including if they did not comply with safety regulations, touching markers and unnecessary damage to the ground. This competition was designed to test the drivers’ sector skills and safety knowledge.

YFCU would like to thank Robbie Hewitt and Glenn Ewers from Johnston Cipin for their continued sponsorship and support of this event. YFCU would also like to thank HSENI especially Sean Leach for designing the course and Camilla Mackey and David Love for conducting the assessments during the final.

**Photo Captions**

**YFCU Finals 25**

Pictured receiving their first place prize in the 2013 YFCU Machinery Handling competition are Co Down members Neil Patterson and Keith Dickson with YFCU President Mary Beattie and Health and Safety Executive representatives Camilla Mackey and David Love who designed the course. The event is kindly sponsored by Johnston Cipin & Co Ltd.

[more...]

**YFCU Finals 22, 24, 25**

Tractors from sponsor Johnston Cipin Co Ltd were used in the 2013 YFCU Machinery Handling Final whilst the Health and Safety Executive N. designed the course staged at Crewe Hall.

(ENDS)

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES: **For more information please contact Rebecca McConnell at the Young Farmers’ Clubs of Ulster on 028 9037 0713.
To help you in your role, here is a list of all the regional newspapers across Northern Ireland. Please note that email addresses are subject to change so call your local paper, using the number provided here, to confirm the correct email address to send your content to.

The Farming Life run ‘The Young Farmer’ pages every Wednesday and Saturday whilst Farm Week has a dedicated ‘Rural Youth Zone’. Make sure you send content to Farming Life & Farm Week as well as your local newspaper.
**PRESS CONTACTS – REGIONAL WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS**

**FARMING PRESS**

**Farm Week**  
Chris McCullough  
028 90 334495  
c.mccullough@farmweek.com  
Copy deadline: Mon 12pm

**Farming Life**  
Darryl Armitage  
028 38 393939  
yfc@farminglife.com  
Fri 5pm for Wed  
Copy deadline: Wed 5pm for Sat

**CO. ANTRIM NEWSPAPERS**

**Antrim Guardian**  
028 9446 2624  
editor@antrimguardian.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Mon 4:30pm

**Antrim Times**  
028 2565 3300  
dessie.blackadder@jpress.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Fri

**Ballymoney Chronicle**  
028 2766 2354  
ballymoney.news@thechronicle.uk.com  
Copy deadline: Mon

**Ballymoney & Moyle Times**  
028 27666216  
Lyle.mcmullan@jpress.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Friday

**Ballycastle Chronicle**  
028 20761282  
Ballycastle.news@thechronicle.uk.com  
Copy deadline: Mon 5pm

**Carrick Advertiser**  
028 9336 3651  
editor@carrickadvertiser.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Mon 4:30pm

**Carrick Times**  
028 93351992  
news@carricktimes.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Tue 2pm

**Ballyclare Gazette**  
028 93352967  
newsdesk@ballyclaregazette.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Mon 4:30pm

**Larne Gazette**  
028 28277450  
news@larnegazette.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Mon 12pm

**Larne & East Antrim Times**  
028 28272303  
news@larnetimes.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Tue 2pm

**Newtownabbey Times**  
028 90843621  
news@newtownabbeytimes.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm
PRESS CONTACTS – REGIONAL WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Ulster Star
028 92679111
news@ulsterstar.co.uk
Copy deadline: Wed 1pm

Portadown Times
028 38336111
Alistair.bushe@portadowntimes.co.uk
Copy deadline: Wed 11am

Lisburn Echo
028 92679111
david.armstrong@jpress.co.uk
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

Craigavon Echo
028 38336111
david.armstrong@jpress.co.uk
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

Andersonstown News
028 90619000
eicobushe@observernewspapersni.com
Copy deadline: Wed 12pm

The Cross Examiner
028 30868500
eicobushe@observernewspapersni.com
Copy deadline: Friday 5pm

North Belfast News
028 90584444
m.mccourt@belfastmediagroup.com
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

Ulster Gazette
028 3752 2639
eicobushe@observernewspapersni.com
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

CO. DOWN NEWSPAPERS

Banbridge Chronicle
028 40662322
eicobushe@observernewspapersni.com
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

Banbridge Leader
028 40662745
eicobushe@observernewspapersni.com
Copy deadline: Mon 1pm

County Down Spectator
028 91270270
news@spectatornewspapers.co.uk
Copy deadline: Wed 12pm

Newtownards Spectator
028 91270270
news@spectatornewspapers.co.uk
Copy deadline: Wed 12pm

Down Recorder
028 44613711
eicobushe@observernewspapersni.com
Copy deadline: Mon 5.30pm

CO. ARMAGH NEWSPAPERS

Armagh & Down Observer
Lurgan & Portadown Examiner
028 8772 2557
eicobushe@observernewspapersni.com
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

Lurgan Mail
028 3832 7777
eicobushe@observernewspapersni.com
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

Shankill Mirror
028 90729002
news@shankillmirror.com
Copy deadline: 4pm preceding Tue
PRESS CONTACTS – REGIONAL WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Mourne Observer
028 4372 2666
news@mourneobserver.com
Copy deadline: Mon 5pm

Newry Democrat
028 3025 1250
editor@newrydemocrat.com
Copy deadline: Friday 5.30pm

Newry Reporter
028 3026 7633
editor@newryreporter.com
Copy deadline: Tue 1pm

Newtownabbey Times
028 9084 3621
news@newtownabbeytimes.co.uk
Copy deadline: Tues 12pm

Newtownards Chronicle
028 9181 3333
news@ardschronicle.co.uk
Copy deadline: Wed 12pm

The Outlook
028 40630202
news@outlooknews.co.uk
Copy deadline: Mon 12pm

Newry Democrat
028 30251250
ing_editor@newrydemocrat.com
Copy deadline: Fri 12pm

CO. FERMANAGH NEWSPAPERS

Fermanagh Herald
028 66322066
m.kennedy@fermanaghherald.com
Copy deadline: Tue 10am

Fermanagh News
028 87722557
editor@observernewspapersni.com
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

Fermanagh Advertiser
028 82250798
Copy deadline: fermanaghad@btconnect.com

Impartial Reporter
028 66324422
dmcdaniel@impartialreporter.com
Copy deadline: Tue 1pm

CO. LONDONDERRY NEWSPAPERS

Northern Constitution
028 70343344
editor@northernconstitution.co.uk
Copy deadline: Mon 5pm

Coleraine Chronicle
028 7034 3344
editor@thechronicle.uk.com
Copy deadline: Mon 5pm

Coleraine Times
028 70357610
news@colerainetimes.co.uk
Copy deadline: Mon 12pm

Coleraine Leader
028 70343344
news@thel_leader.uk.com
Copy deadline: Wed 5pm

Roe Valley Sentinel
028 71348889
Eamon.sweeney@jpress.co.uk
Copy deadline: Mon 12pm
Londonderry Sentinel  
028 71348889  
william.allen@jpress.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Mon 3pm

Derry Journal  
028 7127 2200  
editorial@derryjournal.com  
Copy deadline: Wed 4pm

Northern Constitution  
(also Limavady Chronicle)  
028 77762130  
editor@northernconstitution.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Wed 12pm

Northern Constitution  
028 79632686  
editor@northernconstitution.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Wed 12pm

Mid-Ulster Mail  
South Derry Edition  
028 86762288  
peter.bayne@jpress.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

Derry News  
028 71296600  
editor@derrynews.com  
Mon Ed: Fri 11am  
Copy deadline: Thurs Ed: Tue 12pm

Strabane Chronicle  
028 82243444  
editor@strabanechronicle.com  
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

Strabane Weekly News  
028 8224 2721  
news@strabaneweekly.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

Tyrone Constitution  
028 8224 2721  
news@tyronecon.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

Tyrone Courier / Dungannon News  
028 87722271  
newsdesk@tyronecourier.uk.com  
Copy deadline: Mon 2pm

Tyrone Times  
028 8775 2801  
peter.bayne@jpress.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Wed 12pm

Dungannon Observer  
028 87722557  
editor@observernewspapersni.com  
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

Mid Ulster Observer  
028 87722557  
editor@observernewspapersni.com  
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

Mid Ulster Mail / Echo  
028 8676228  
peter.bayne@jpress.co.uk  
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm

Ulster Herald  
028 8224 3444  
editor@ulsterherald.com  
Copy deadline: Tue 12pm
SOCIAL MEDIA is the term commonly given to Internet and mobile-based channels and tools that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks and encouraging participation and engagement.

Facebook and Twitter can be a great, free promotional tool for clubs to use to attract and retain new members. Don’t forget that a social media presence becomes part of a brand legacy. Posts, pictures, images, tweets, status updates (content in general) can stay online forever. Think about what message to share via social media channels.

Here are some helpful tips for Facebook and Twitter:

**FACEBOOK**
- Do update regularly and post relevant content.
- Update your cover photo regularly and remember to reposition so that heads aren’t cut off.
- Do include contact details, even first name and mobile, so parents can call someone if they have a query.
- Like the YFCU page and share links/pics/status updates that are relevant e.g. if someone from your club wins a competition, share this to your followers.
- Remember the YFCU policy on no alcoholic drinks to be photographed at any YFCU event including BBQs and discos.
- Keep in mind you are representing your club and YFCU so do not like and share content/pages that could embarrass or damage the image/reputation of either party.

**TWITTER**
- Do update regularly and make sure tweets make sense – 140 characters isn’t much room to work with so make it snappy!
- Use your account name @XXYFC on all press releases so people can follow the clubs activities
- Follow @YFCU president
- Use #yfcu on all tweets, this is so we can build up the Twitter community amongst YFCU members and who knows, get YFCU trending some day!
- Search to see if your local newspaper is online and remember to follow @farm_week and @farminglifeNI as they post links up and may be worth retweeting (RT) to your followers
- Keep in mind you are representing your club and YFCU so do not RT content or follow accounts that could embarrass or damage the image/reputation of either party.
- Update your background pic regularly to reflect club activities and events.

Scan here to see the YFCU Facebook site
Scan here to see the YFCU Twitter site
photographs & captions

Always have good quality, clear photos to go along with your press release. Photos should be taken on a digital camera, not on your mobile phone, and labelled Photo 1, Photo 2 etc. Ensure you include all photo captions in the press release and that they correspond to the right photo.

photography tips

• It can be difficult to get large group photos taken but when you are taking them, ensure you can see everyone and break up groups using two or three lines, with front row kneeling etc.
• When having a visiting speaker, take a picture of them with club leader/secretary/office bearer and use some of their literature as props to brighten up the photo.
• Try and think of a creative way of promoting club and fundraising events. For best impact, limit the amount of people to 3 or 4 as too many people make it cumbersome. Create a nice tight shot with lots of colourful props where possible.
• Be aware of your background in pics! Avoid toilet and other signs, get as clear a background as you possibly can. If this isn’t possible, you may crop down the image once downloaded. You may have to ask people to move to get the best photo but it will be worth it.
• Be aware of lights in the background of pictures as these will distort the image.
• Always take more than one picture especially were group photographs are concerned! People blink and tend to look away so it is best to always take a few photos so you can choose the best one when you download them onto your computer.
• Edit if you can! Most computers and cameras have a remove red eye function so take time to use if you had too many red eyes.
• Get captions for everyone in the picture and write caption left to right and label back row/front row when there are a lot of people in the picture.
• Remember the YFCU policy on no alcoholic drinks to be photographed at any YFCU event including BBQs and discos.
• Bear in mind: The better photographs you can take of your club, the better they will look in print and the better the image YFCU will build across Northern Ireland!
Some examples of photos to inspire and guide you in your role
**Rural Dispatch**

Issues are published in March, June and October. Every YFCU member/family receives a copy in the post. It is ideal to publicise any large fundraising event your club may be hosting just be aware of the publish dates and get your info in on time. The editor is the PR, Communications & Marketing Officer at HQ and you should email copy and pics to communications@yfcu.org before the deadline date. There is no guarantee that the info will be published depending on space available. Do keep reports to 200 words and include one or two high res images with captions detailing who is in the picture. Because this is a print publication, photos will look best taken on a digital camera rather than a mobile phone.

**Promotional Materials**

A range of promotional materials are available from YFCU HQ to help you recruit new members and to use in any events your club are organising for the public. Leaflets on YFCU membership (Juniors, Seniors & Associates) and posters that can be personalised to promote new members evenings etc can be ordered free of charge.

There is a small charge for pens, pencils, USB flash drives, travel mugs and other YFCU branded items that are held in stock. Contact the PR, Communications & Marketing Officer at HQ for more information (communications@yfcu.org).

**Free Resources**

**Paid for Resources**
Recognition of the role of PRO
YFCU recognises the work of PROs annually with the Guild of Agricultural Journalists Trophy. PROs are interviewed at club level and their scrapbooks, emails to press, photographs and correspondence judged. If successful, PROs are invited to County level judging and the best from each County are interviewed prior to the AGM where the winner of the trophy is announced. So make sure you keep good records, spread the word about your club and enjoy the role of PRO for your club!

Sara Baxter, Cappagh YFC received the Top PRO & the Guild of Agricultural Journalists Trophy from YFCU President Martyn Blair at the 2012 AGM & Conference.

YFCU Website
YFCU staff are responsible for updating www.yfcu.org If you have an event you wish to include in the events section, email copy including date, time, title, and contact details and a good photograph and caption to communications@yfcu.org Please note the YFCU Facebook page does not actively promote individual club events but feel free to link the events page to your own club’s social networking pages.

Handover
Remember to spend some time with the incoming PRO to brief them through the role. Talk them through this booklet and familiarize them with your local newspaper contacts. Pass on all passwords and usernames for the clubs social media and show them how to update the sites especially if they have not used the sites before.

Put a selection of press releases on a memory disc for them so they can see what has been sent before. Pass on CDs of images for club records too. It is worth spending some time training new PROs up so they know what they have to do and will promote your club and ensure its future success.
And finally...

We hope you have found this booklet useful in your role as PRO. If you need assistance during the year, remember there is a PR, Communications & Marketing Officer at HQ who is there to help with any issues you may have. Contact 028 9037 0713 or email communications@yfcu.org to speak with them.

Interested in a career in PR?
The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) has more information online if you wish to pursue a career in Public Relations.

Find out more information on their website www.cipr.co.uk