

DIVEST FRACKING - MEDIA GUIDE

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Introduction

After long delays, the UK fracking industry is now poised to frack for gas for the first time in seven years. This is devastating for the community on the frontlines in Lancashire, where local democracy was overturned to make way for fracking - and they aren't giving up their fight. But our movement in the UK is also part of a bigger worldwide struggle.

Fracking is a global industry, having global impacts. From Australia to Argentina - fracking projects are threatening communities, destroying local landscapes, and fuelling climate change.

In the UK, big companies like BP and Shell care too much about their public image to get involved in fracking. But they have no problem getting their hands dirty in other countries.

Our local councils are investing in these companies - and by investing, they're supporting the fracking industry worldwide.

To stop fracking here and everywhere, we can't wait for drills to arrive on our doorsteps. We have to go on the offensive and hit the industry where it hurts – their public image and political support.

Lots of our councils already understand the threat that fracking poses to communities, and have rejected developments in their areas time and again. But we need local

councils to go further - publicly take a stand against fracking everywhere, and stop investing in the fossil fuel industry.

In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland fracking has been effectively halted, but local councils still manage pension funds investing heavily in fracking companies. This can't be right.

We're calling on councils across the UK to stand up to fracking and divest from the fossil fuel industry.

Key dates

3rd September – Reveal how much your council invests in fracking in your local media.

If you're planning on contacting local media let Emma (emma@platformlondon.org) know so we can give you your local data in advance and we don't duplicate efforts.

8th September – Join Rise! the global day of action against fossil fuels by holding your own action at your local council, demanding they divest.

Contact ellen@350.org or deirdre.duff@foe.co.uk for more details and check out the [Action Guide](#).

Local media matters

Local media is often overlooked in favour of national outlets, but when it comes to winning on divestment local outlets really matter. Local news is read by MPs, councillors and local residents. If you want to get the attention of local decision makers it can have real influence.

Check out the website here: gofossilfree.org/uk/divest-fracking

To get hold of the data on your local council, email emma@platformlondon.org.

Messaging

At the heart of media work is messaging; the essence of what you want to convey to your audience and lodge in their minds. Establish what you want to say and get this written down. That way you always have it to refer to. Then ensure that all your communications contain and reflect these messages. They can then shape your media advisories, press releases and be used in interviews.

- Keep your key messages short, punchy and few in number: 3 key messages is best.
 - You will want to generate your own messages specific to your locality, but here are a few example key messages:
 1. As the fossil fuel industry is poised to frack **for gas for the first time in 7 years in the UK**, it has been revealed that XXXX council is investing £XXXX public money in fracking companies.
 2. From Australia to Argentina - fracking projects are threatening communities, destroying local landscapes, and fuelling climate change.
 3. The dangerously high temperatures and fires this summer have brought home the impacts of climate change. Communities and the climate can't afford for the frackers to win.
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Getting media coverage - top tips

If you want to get your story covered by local media, there are some key things to remember:

- Research and compile a list of local media contacts ahead of time - don't forget to include different types of media; radio, newspapers, even local TV.
- If you have any trusted local contacts, contact them ahead of the release date to let them know about the story - you could also send them the press release ahead of time **under embargo** (agreement they won't publish until a certain date/time)

- Where relevant, find out what day your local papers go to print, and make sure to get them the release before the deadline. Send your press release first thing in the morning (think 8am) for the best chance of coverage.
 - Once you've sent your press release, follow it up with phone calls to key press contacts - rehearse your pitch and keep it clear and concise.
 - Journalists are much more likely to cover a story if they have one or two high quality, interesting photos. Do you have photos from previous divestment protests you can share with interested journalists?
 - Local media are usually under-resourced and overstretched; a journalist should be able to recycle the press release into an article without much extra work.
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Press release template

Below is a template press release for you to send to your local media contacts. Feel free to customise the release as much as you want. If you have any high profile allies, such as councillors, MPs or union officials, you could ask them for a quote for the release as well.

To get hold of the data on your local council, email emma@platformlondon.org. We can also check over your press release before you send it out, just email a draft over.

EMBARGOED: 00:01AM, 3rd SEPTEMBER 2018

CONTACT: NAME, EMAIL, NUMBER

NEW REPORT REVEALS ___ COUNCIL INVESTING £_ IN FRACKING INDUSTRY

[YOUR LOCATION], UK -- A national report released today has revealed that ___ council is investing ___ in fracking companies through their management of the council pension fund [1]. The news comes as the fracking industry is poised to drill for gas for the first time in seven years in the UK.

[Add info about which companies XXXX council are investing in. See report for background info on key companies]

Public support for fracking is consistently low in the UK [2]. Numerous councils have voted against fracking development in their areas, but council-run funds remain invested in the industry [3]. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland fracking has been effectively halted, but Councils there still oversee pension funds investing heavily in fracking companies.

NAME, local campaigner from GROUP commented:

“It’s shocking to see XXX council investing pension funds into the fracking industry. Fracking threatens communities, destroys local landscapes, and fuels climate change across the globe. As this industry tries to get a foothold in the UK, it’s crucial that our councils take a clear stand against fracking and divest from the companies responsible.”

Sakina Sheikh, Divestment Campaigner with Platform added:

“The devastating fires and record temperatures this summer have brought the impacts of climate change home. Neither local communities or our climate can afford for the fracking industry to win. Our councils are providing everyday support to the frackers, it’s time to stop. It’s time to divest from fossil fuels.”

The data is released by 350.org, Platform and Friends of the Earth. It ranks council-run pension funds by their investments in companies involved in fracking. Full divestment commitments have so far been made by two UK council pension funds, with a further five making partial commitments [4]. The campaign to divest local council pensions has received backing from Unison and the TUC [5].

CONTACT: NAME, EMAIL, PHONE

For national media enquiries - emma@platformlondon.org

NOTES

1. To view the full national data set and for more information, visit: gofossilfree.org/uk/divest-fracking
2. See information in recent Drill or Drop article: <https://drillordrop.com/2018/08/16/question-on-attitudes-to-fracking-dropped-from-government-survey/>
3. See Drill or Drop for summary of recent council decisions on onshore drilling applications: <https://drillordrop.com/rig-watch/>

4. Waltham Forest and Southwark Council Pension Funds have committed to phase out all fossil fuel investments from their portfolio. To see the full list of global divestment commitments, visit: gofossilfree.org/commitments
5. Read more on Unison's decision on Platform's blog. View the text of the TUC motion - adopted unanimously - on the Trade Unions for Energy Democracy website

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Broadcast media

There are two types of broadcast media to target; local radio stations and regional television news programmes. Contacting broadcast media can feel scary, but it's a really effective way of getting your message to a wide range of people.

If you're planning to pitch to broadcast media give Emma an email (emma@platformlondon.org). She can help you write your pitch, give you tips on how to do media interviews and do a practice interview with you if that feels helpful.

Making a pitch:

Who to? You pitch a story to a show producer. These can be found by ringing up a station switchboard and asking to talk to the producer of a particular show. If you can't get a phone number try and get an email address instead. Producer's are fairly junior staff members and they're always looking for stories. They will know much less about the topic than you, so don't be scared of them!

When? Try ringing the show on **Thursday 30th August**. Let the producer know the story is **embargoed for Monday 3rd September**. When you're on the phone ask for an email address and follow up the phone call with an email also containing the pitch. If you can't get through on the phone, send an email and chase with phone calls. Don't be afraid to call several times - producers are busy people and often welcome being reminded of a story they haven't got back to.

What to pitch – 4 key points:

1. Clearly identify what the story is and who the person you are pitching is.

“Susie Spangle, local resident and XXXX campaigner is available to speak on Monday 3rd September in response to the revelation that XXX council is investing in fracking

2. List the talking points.

Susie’s talking points include:

- As the fossil fuel industry is poised to frack for gas for the first time in 7 years in the UK, XXX council is supporting the frackers by investing XXX of public money into companies that frack.
- From Australia to Argentina - fracking projects are threatening communities, destroying local landscapes, and fuelling climate change.
- The dangerously high temperatures and fires this summer have brought home the impacts of climate change. Communities and the climate can’t afford for the frackers to win.

3. Any extra info and media experience.

Susie's media experience includes Radio Tunbury. Susie is unavailable from between 2 and 3 on Monday 3rd September, but flexible for the rest of the day.

4. **Seal the deal.** Get extra info from the producer about the format of the show, whether you will be on alone or in a debate. If you are in a debate who are you against. Ask them what the likely questions will be etc.

Social media

When we use it right, social media can be an important tool for campaigners. It's a free and (relatively) easy way to connect with lots of people, and demonstrate our power.

Hashtags: #DivestFracking #RiseforClimate #FossilFree

Accounts to follow:

- Facebook - [Fossil Free UK](#), [Platform](#), [Friends of the Earth EW&NI](#), [Friends of the Earth Scotland](#)
- Twitter - [@FossilFree_UK](#), [@PlatformLondon](#), [@friends_earth](#), [@FoEScot](#)

Making the most of your event

Before - using social media for promotion

- Create a Facebook event and invite your networks to join
 - Make sure you include all the necessary information in the event, and that you post regularly in it to keep people engaged
 - Encourage partners and allied groups to share the event and join
- Share content showing how you're preparing for your action to get people excited and show what it looks like to be involved
 - Examples: pictures of people painting banners, short videos of organisers in your group explaining what will happen on September 8th

During - live coverage on the day

- Assign a member of your group responsibility for documenting the event
- If you have someone taking photos and videos for social media, brief them on the kinds of things you want - make sure they take a mixture of posed and candid photos, close ups and group shots
- If you have the chance, encourage people at your event to talk about it on their own social media and point them to the hashtags.

After - reporting back and absorbing momentum

- Write a blog for the Fossil Free UK website about how it went

- Post your favourite photos or video clips from the action on your Facebook and Twitter, and send them to be included in our wrap up - email ellen@350.org
- Invite people that 'attended' your Facebook event to your next campaign meeting - encourage people to stay involved!

Top tips

Top tips for great Facebook posts:

- Never just post text - always include a link, image or video
- Leave space of at least 2 hours between posts
- If you're low on content, try and at least have 1 post a day
- After you've inserted a link and the sample post has appeared, you can then delete the URL in the text box
- For videos - upload directly to Facebook, don't share YouTube links. Videos should ideally be under 2 minutes and there should be a strong hook in the first 5 seconds
- If you're sharing a photo album, keep it under 10 photos. Choose the best!
- Don't forget that you can schedule posts in advance!

Top tips for Twitter:

- Use hashtags in a limited way - one or two per Tweet
- If you're sharing a link, don't just include the title as your tweet text - add a personal comment about what the content is
- If you're not sharing a link, try and include an image if you can
- You can also share short videos too. You can record, edit and share videos from the Twitter app
- Try to make tweets stand alone pieces of information that make sense without loads of context
- Try to have a mixture of retweets and original posts
- Make sure you tag (@) other organisations or people when referencing their work - solidarity!
- Don't start a Tweet with an @username - it will be invisible to most users (unless you're targeting journos)

Using your personal accounts

As well as just posting as your campaign group, you can (and should!) use your personal accounts on social media to amplify your campaign.

Nothing is more likely to convince someone to come to an event, or get them interested in your campaign than seeing a post from one of their friends - so don't be embarrassed, share away!

If you're using your personal account, try using the hashtags to make your post findable - or tag the Fossil Free Facebook and Twitters in your post.

Good luck!

Getting media coverage is down to a mixture of good planning and good luck. Sometimes you get lots of coverage; other times things just don't work out, even with the savviest media work and it can be frustrating. Good luck trying, email emma@platformlondon.org to get data for your local council and share your media plans!