

Media Guidance for Squatters – Dealing with the Media

SQUASH Key Messages - *These are succinct messages which are the main points you want to get across. They are points which you should refer to again and again when doing an interview.*

- 1. Unjust** - The criminalisation of squatting in residential properties has resulted in young homeless people going to prison
- 2. Unnecessary** - Everyone arrested so far has been squatting in empty properties, not in lived-in homes which shows that this law was never about protecting home-owners as claimed
- 3. Empty Buildings** - There are over 1 million empty properties in the UK while homelessness rates are increasing. Criminalising squatting encourages property speculators and unscrupulous landlords to keep buildings empty.

Sending out Press Releases

Use the SQUASH media list when sending out a press release. Make sure all journalists go into the BCC section. Avoid sending to hostile journalists at bottom of page. Key messages should always be worked into a press release.

Interview Technique

Try using ABC if you can. A- Acknowledge B-Bridge C-Communicate. This allows you to take control of an interview and gives you the opportunity to pro-actively get your key messages across.

Avoiding Stereotypes

You need to think about your voice and your image when doing media on squatting. What are you wearing? Do you have loads of tattoos? Do you have lots of piercings? Do you have dreadlocks? How are you dressed? Are you too middle class? etc etc You need to think how the media might try to portray you and work around this. This is called playing the media game because remember all you are there to do is to put the key messages across, you don't want the interview to become about you.

Further guidance

Practice with your friends. Get a friend to pretend to be a journalist and ask loads of difficult questions as if you are in an interview situation. This is the best way to practice and become comfortable with the key messages.

Have a read of this 'good media practice' guide from Climate Camp which is really handy:

<http://www.planestupid.com/blogs/2011/04/20/10-steps-hard-hitting-action-media-team>