

## Campaigning.

Many of our members are involved in campaigning as part of their work. For some it may be the main focus of their activities as they seek to highlight an issue or to try to bring about change. Campaigning can be about improving the environment, protecting our heritage, changing attitudes or influencing the way services are provided. Campaigning can also be about getting groups and individuals themselves involved in bringing about changes in their own lives or situations.

The online [Oxford Dictionary](#) defines a campaign as 'an organised course of action to achieve a goal'. Many voluntary sector organisations are involved in activities that fall under this type of work even if they do not consider themselves as campaigning organisations or as campaigners.

There are many different resources to help you get your message heard and to help you achieve your goal. It is important that you think very clearly about who you are targeting, how you can best do that and what it is you want to get. The rise of the internet and social media has impacted greatly on who campaigns and how it is carried out.

### Start a petition

In the past there were regular press photos of people standing at the door to 10 Downing Street with piles of papers containing names of people that supported a cause. While this still happens most petitions are now electronic. Where a few thousand names collected by hand were seen as support now tens or hundreds of thousands of people can sign a petition online. Likewise in the past it took time and commitment to start and organise a petition now anyone can do it in a couple of minutes (that said it still takes effort and a good cause to get signatures).

The government has its own [e-petition site](#) that states "You can create an e-petition about anything that the government is responsible for and if it gets at least 100,000 signatures, it will be considered for debate in the House of Commons."

There are also no end of other sites that include the ability to start petitions and these include (but are not limited to) [Change.org](#), [Avaaz.org](#), and [38 Degrees](#) All these sites offer ways to publicise your petition as well as a chance to connect with other campaigners.

### Help with campaigning

There are no end of resources that can help you to get your message across both online and in the 'real' world. NCVO use a cycle of activities with the following steps

- [Analysing the issue](#)
- [Developing a strategy for change](#)
- [Planning the campaign](#)
- [Delivering your campaign – making it happen](#)
- [Evaluate – building on success](#)

There is also lots of useful information on the Know How non-profit [site](#), and this includes links to a number of online learning modules [here](#) that you have to pay for.



The Campaign Central [website](#) has lots of useful information and tips as well as links to other guides. It is owned and managed by the Sheila McKechnie Foundation (SMK) and aims to connect, inform and support campaigners.

## The legal position

Quite a lot has been written recently about how charities lobby and campaign and whether they should be doing that. The bottom line is that charities have been doing this for many years and that they are able to continue to do so where it can be seen that campaigning activities further the charitable aims. More information can be found in the Charity Commission [Guidance CC9](#) Speaking out: Guidance on Campaigning and Political Activity by Charities.

NCVO and SMK produced a manifesto that supports the right to campaign and this can be found [here](#).

One of the most successful uses of online campaigning and the use of email comes from the two campaigns that got President Obama elected. These were on a massive scale and much has been written but check out this interesting [blog post](#) on use of email and language; it has some good links including one to a piece written about the Obama email campaign.

Campaigning is all about telling a story and engaging with people. The web has given us access to a great deal more information and social [media links us to people](#) in ways not envisaged even 5 years ago. The web has also given us new ways to engage and tell a story, check out these three examples [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). Sometimes the results online can not be anticipated and it is important that you are able to react to changing situations. A good example of a campaign that took off was the [Neverseconds](#) blog that has raised well over £100K

Finally check out the ECF online forum (more info [here](#)). This is a great discussion space with many contributors that are far more knowledgeable than me, and from where I have found a number of my resources.

Oh and my favourite campaign at the moment has to be this [one](#).