



Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Development Agency

Lobbying for Change

A step-by-step guide



Wandsworth
Voluntary Sector
Development Agency

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Does your organisation work with people and issues that are influenced by decision-making outside your organisation, for example equality and human rights, immigration, children and youth, or health issues?

Have you ever thought about how the system that you and your beneficiaries are in would benefit from change? Have you considered how you might go about trying to influence decision-makers to affect that change?

Don't know where to start? Then this guide may be for you.

This document is meant to assist voluntary and community organisations to plan their advocacy efforts in a simple step-by-step way. It builds on several existing models that have been adapted and summarised to provide a basic process to follow for organisations that may not previously have engaged in lobbying and campaigning.



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Step 1: Identify the Issue

Outline the importance of your issue and include some background information about the field that you are working in, the issue you want to change and why you think it's important to achieve that change. This should be brief – two or three paragraphs.

Step 2: Find out the facts surrounding your issue

Whom does it affect and why?

How many are affected?

What needs to change?

It often helps to bring a small group of people together that know about the issue to brainstorm around what causes the problem (there can be multiple causes). Together you can also identify what further facts you need and what research you should do to find them.

Step 3: Investigate the policy context

Your issue does not exist in a vacuum! Identify the main political frameworks that directly affect the issue that you are interested in. What policy and legislation exist on the local and national, or even international level that can help inform your campaign and make sure that you know the policy context before you try to influence it! This can be anything from international Human Rights treaties to Local Area Agreements, find out what applies to your cause.

Step 4: Identify your objectives

Even if you are clear about what overall change you want to affect in the longer term, you need to identify how you are going to get there; your objectives. They will most likely include setting up meetings with the right people, but could also encompass for example making sure your issue is put on the agenda at a seminar or conference or getting it publicised in a number of different types of media as part of your awareness raising activities.

ISSUE → FACTS → POLICY CONTEXT → OBJECTIVES



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Step 5: Decide who to target

Who has the power to change how your issue is dealt with?

Who makes decisions that affect your issue?

Who are the most important people to target?

Does anyone know the people that hold this power?

Try to find out who the most relevant person or persons are that can actually do something about your issue – your target. Also try to find out what their previous actions in this area are – would they likely be supportive of your cause or do you have to prepare for a lot of “convincing” and “winning over”?

Step 6: Formulate and deliver your key message

A key message will make it crystal clear to the person you are trying to influence – your target – exactly what it is you want to change and how you want him/her to help you. This is one of the most crucial steps of the process as it will to a large extent determine how successfully your issue is communicated in meetings.

State what the situation is in one or two sentences.

Clearly outline the implications of that situation and why it needs to change.

Tell your target what you are doing about it and recommend to her/him what action could be taken from his/her side to help achieve that change.

Step 7: Follow up!

Don't think that the person you have met with will necessarily do everything you asked for during the meeting. You will need to follow up! A good way of making sure that your issue is remembered is to:

Hand over a short paper, pamphlet or other publicity material during meetings that describe your issue.

Send short meeting notes with action points by email to the person the day after the meeting. Offer to provide any further information on the issue that the person may need to pursue it elsewhere.

→ **TARGET** → **KEY MESSAGE** → **FOLLOW UP!**