Student Campaigning Toolkit

THE SU BATH

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What is a Campaign?

A campaign is defined as 'the mobilising of forces by organisations or individuals to influence others in order to effect an identified and desired social, economic, environmental or policy change'.

When you observe something that you feel is unjust or misunderstood by the population, a campaign can be a useful way to achieve change about this.

Campaign objectives can be aimed at creating all sorts of change, from policy reform to correcting misinformed attitudes about an issue. Furthermore, campaign scopes can span from university to national level.

When considering undertaking a campaign, remember that support is out there from your peers – with almost a third of Gen z having participated in activist campaigns (according to United Way NCA).

You may also be able to get support from The SU, before undertaking any campaigning plans alone, consider contacting **The SU President** who may have worked on a similar issue in the past or can direct you to an SU Officer who has and The SU may be able to collaborate with you to support your campaign.



How do Campaigns Create Change?

Campaigns create change by influencing the environment in which decisions are made. Although different tactics and strategies achieve this differently, campaigns generally create change through one of the following mechanisms:

- Raising awareness and changing public attitudes about an issue
- Demonstrating widespread support for a stance on an issue
- Building direct relationships with decision makers
- Pressuring decision makers through collective action

Examples of student-led campaigns at the University of Bath:

- No detriment policy for exam results post-COVID-19
- University divestment from direct holdings in fossil fuels
- The Fossil Free Careers campaign

Step-by-Step

If you are just considering starting a campaign and are unsure where to start, use this toolkit by following along:

1. Identifying the problem that your campaign will solve - complete the problem tree (p.5).
2. What makes campaigns successful? - answer SMART questions (p.6).
3. Is a campaign right for you? Follow flowchart (p.7).
4. Selecting a campaign strategy - identify your strategy (p.8).
5. Follow dedicated step-by-step guides for strategy-relevant tactics.

Identifying the problem that your campaign will solve

Before planning a campaign or setting goals, be clear about the issue you want to change and the problems it causes for people.

Use the Problem Tree: This activity works best with a diverse group that can bring different perspectives on how the issue affects people's lives.

Using the Problem Tree template:

- **Roots:** Identify the possible causes of the problem.
- **Trunk**: Write the problem you have identified (the issue that has prompted you to consider campaigning).
- **Branches**: Identify the impacts and challenges people experience as a result of the problem..

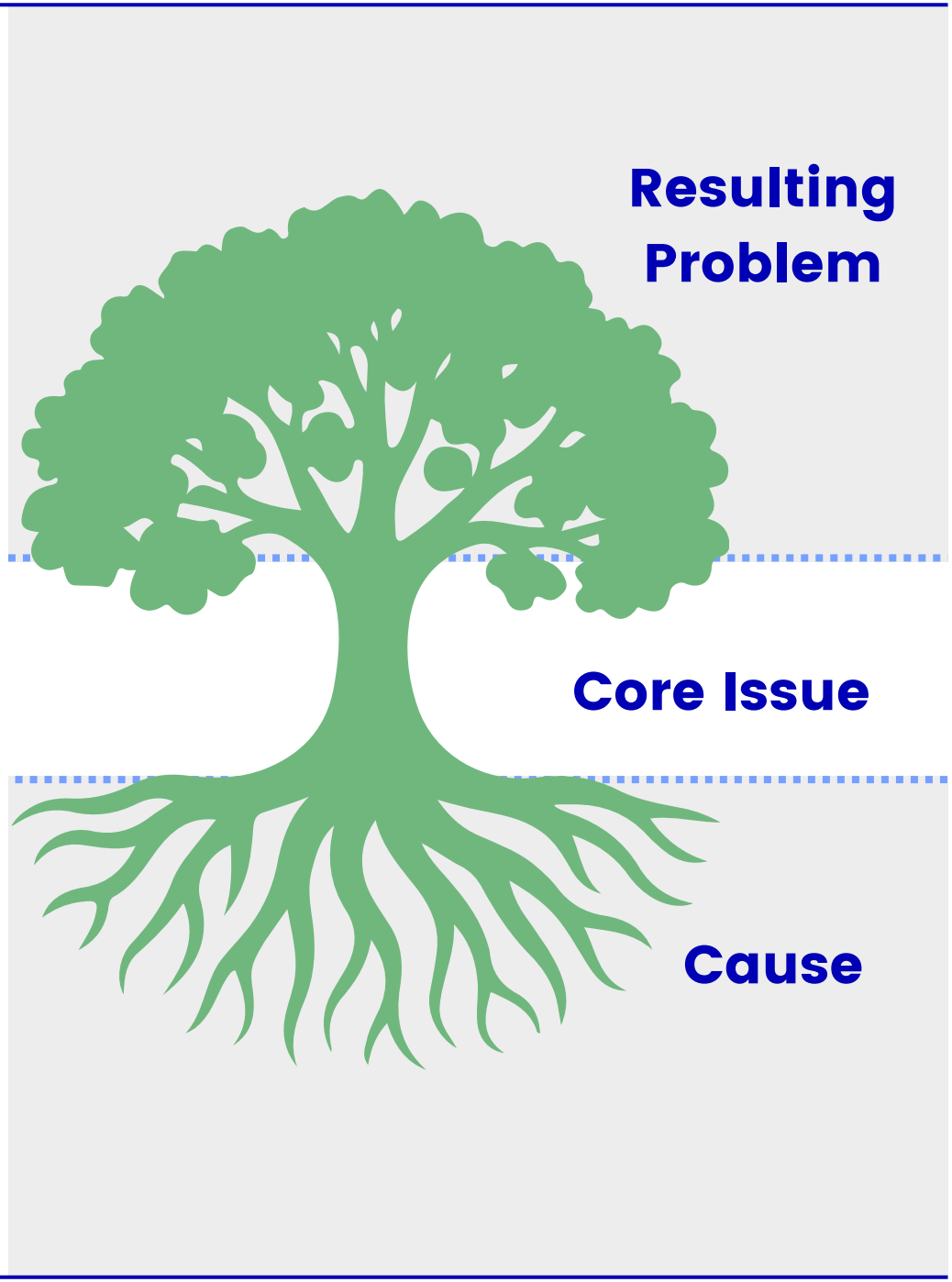
Using the branches in your campaign

The impacts identified in the branches can help:

- Show decision-makers why action is needed.
- Connect your campaign to stakeholders' day-to-day experiences and gain their support.

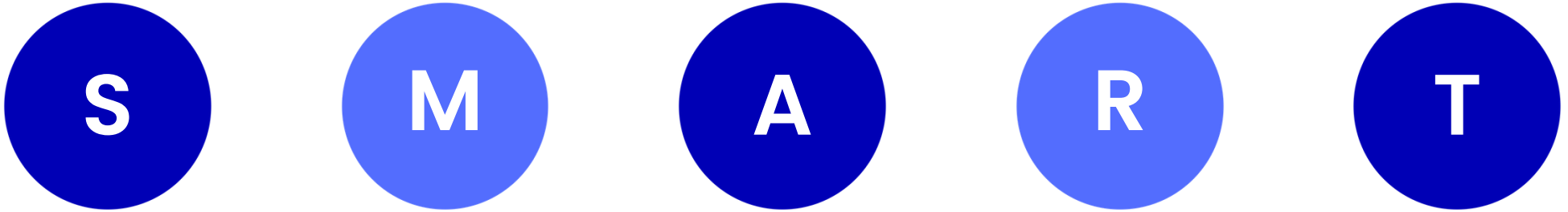
Using the roots in your campaign

The causes identified in the roots can help you set campaign goals by highlighting what needs to change. For example, if a university policy is contributing to the problem, your campaign may focus on changing that policy.



What makes campaigns successful?

A successful campaign is dependent on **SMART** objectives:



Specific: Objectives need to be specific and focused, having vague objectives makes the success of a campaign difficult to assess.

Measurable: Using measurable goals along a campaign enables success to be accurately gauged. Strategy can be adjusted accordingly by leaning in to successful strategies or pivoting away from unsuccessful ones.

Achievable: Goals should be realistic according to the resources available and overall capabilities.

Resources: A successfully run campaign should make considerations for the necessary resources.

Think about what you might need and how you can obtain it.

Time-based: Is there a time limit to when your campaign objectives need to be met?

This is crucial to maintaining pace of campaign and can be a factor in selection of techniques.

To turn your campaign idea into a SMART objective, answer the following questions:

- What specifically do you want to change? (What was at the root of your problem tree?)
- Who has the power to make this happen?
- How will you know if you have succeeded?
- What resources do you need?
- When do you need the change to happen by?

Is a campaign right for you?

Start: Do you have an issue to address?

No → No campaign needed.

Yes

Does the issue impact a wider group?

No → Try alternative individual-focused methods.

Yes

Is the goal clear and achievable (SMART objective)

No → Do not undertake the campaign yet, refine your goal first.

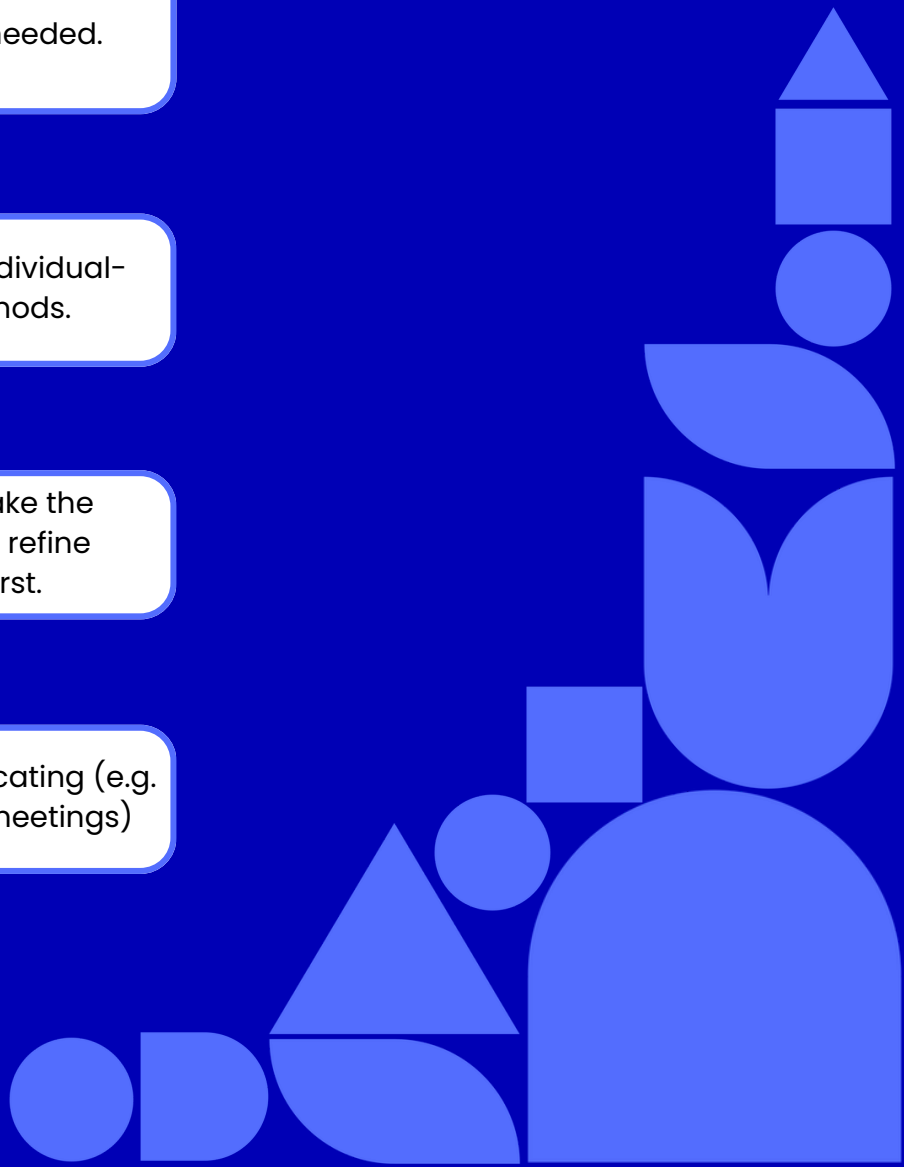
Yes

Can your goal be achieved through direct communication alone?

No → Focus in communicating (e.g. through emails, meetings)

Yes

A campaign is appropriate.



Selecting a campaign strategy

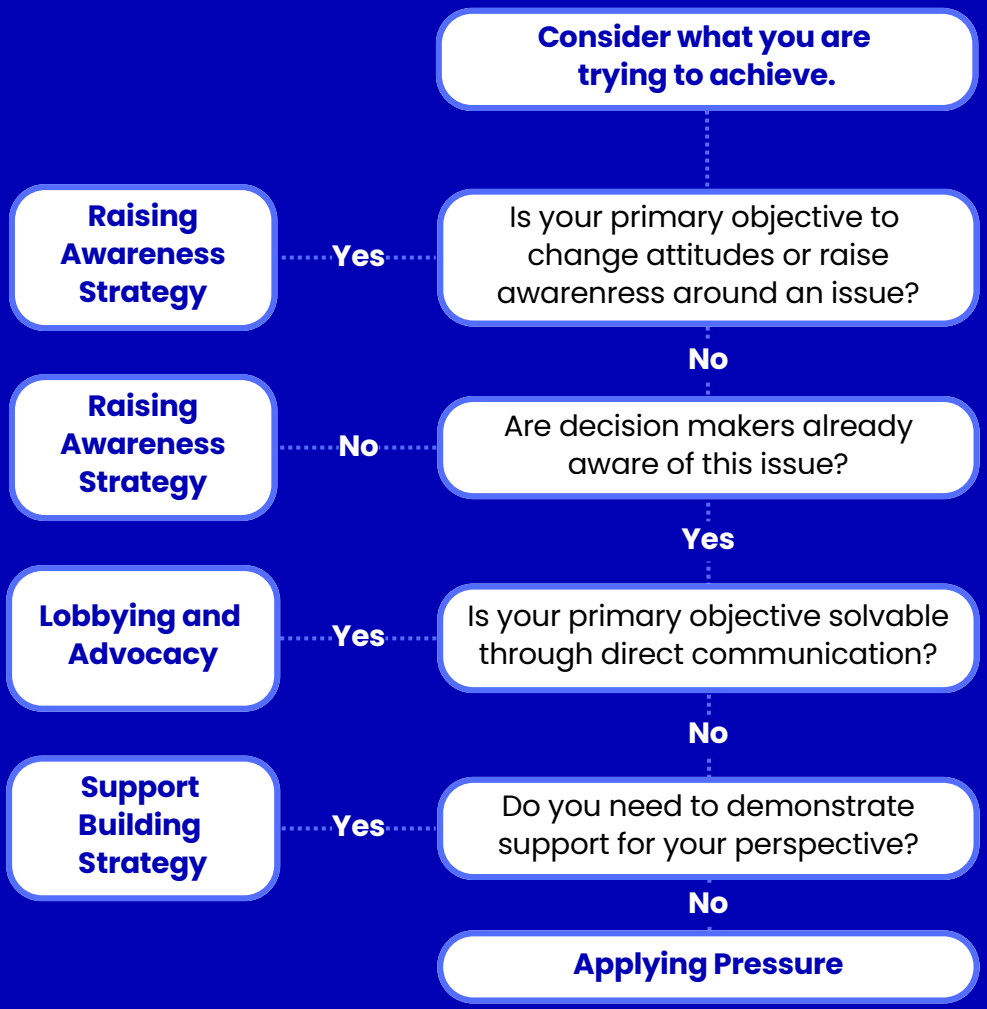
Before deciding on campaign tactics, you should select a strategy for your campaign. A strategy is your overall approach for creating change. Different strategies should be used for different issues and having a strategic focus is important when you have limited capacity and resources.

Awareness Campaigns
These aim to inform and educate people about an issue, influencing attitudes or behaviours. They can target the general public or a specific community, such as students, and can operate at local, national or international levels.
Examples: Social media campaigns, posters, vigils, demonstrations.

Lobbying and Advocacy Campaigns
Aims to directly persuade decision makers through relationships and evidence. Here, the aim is to work directly with key decision makers (those who have the power to enforce the change sought) and influence them to go along with you.
Examples: Meetings, outreach to key decision-makers, letter-writing campaigns.

Support Building Campaigns
These are aimed to demonstrate wide spread support for a stance on a particular issue. Support building campaigns are useful when decision makers are aware of an issue and you aim to demonstrate support for a particular perspective on it.
Examples: Petitions, open letters, surveys, demonstrations.

Pressure Campaigns
Pressure campaigns increase the cost of inaction for decision-makers, encouraging them to respond or make changes.
Examples: Protests, demonstrations.



Building a Campaign Team

Running a campaign requires significant effort and it is important to establish a team, among yourself and others, within which tasks can be delegated.



Campaign Lead
The primary coordinator, responsible for collaborating with others to set campaign strategy and the goals which the team will work towards (e.g. running a petition and getting 500 signatures).

Social Media Lead
Responsible for promoting the campaign on social media and attempting to convert online attention into active participation (e.g. through events or petitions).

Outreach Officer
Responsible for reaching out to other stakeholders, alternative campaigning organisations that could be convinced to back you and communicating with key decision makers.

Resource Lead
Responsible for producing and distributing resources to be used as part of the campaign (e.g. promotional posters to be displayed around campus, event programmes to be issued to attendees at a vigil).

Research and Policy
Responsible for undertaking research into the policy relevant to your campaign goal.

Research must also be done to ensure any events or actions taken within your campaign are in accordance with university regulation, and to gather data surrounding your issue to give your campaign requests factual grounding.

Note: these roles are suggestive. You should consider the nature of your campaign and its needs when deciding on team roles.

Delegating Tasks

Depending on the type of campaign you're running (e.g. national or local, awareness or policy focused, and whether stakeholders are involved), responsibilities may be divided differently across your team.

A useful delegation model is: Action, Coordination and Decision.

1. List all tasks involved in the campaign.
2. Using the task delegation template, create a column for each team role.
3. For each task:
    - Allocate responsibility to a team role, taking into account individual interests and skills.
    - Record this in the role's Action column.
4. Once tasks have been allocated, identify who each role needs to work with and what information should be shared with others. Record this in the Coordination column.
5. For each role, define decision-making responsibilities:
    - Which decisions can be made independently?
    - Which require consultation or approval?
    - Record these in the Decision column.

Completing this exercise will help ensure everyone understands their role, responsibilities and decision-making authority within the team.

Task management

A campaign can be an extended process where the responsibilities that each role is tasked with can change throughout the campaign's lifespan. After initially delegating tasks, to ensure that your team are all on the same page and up to date with each other's progress, consider using a shared task managing software.

Here, Microsoft Teams' Planner capability can be used.

Roles	Action	Coordination	Decision

Identifying Stakeholders

Use a stakeholder mapping template to identify the people and organisations with an interest in your campaign and understand how they can support your objectives.

1. Start by listing the problems caused by your campaign's core issue (you can identify these using the Problem Tree method).
2. For each problem, ask: Who is affected by this? These individuals or groups are your stakeholders.
3. Record these stakeholders on your stakeholder map.
4. Next, identify individuals or organisations that represent, influence, or advocate for those stakeholders (for example, Bath SU Officers representing students). These are stakeholders with the potential to support and influence your campaign.

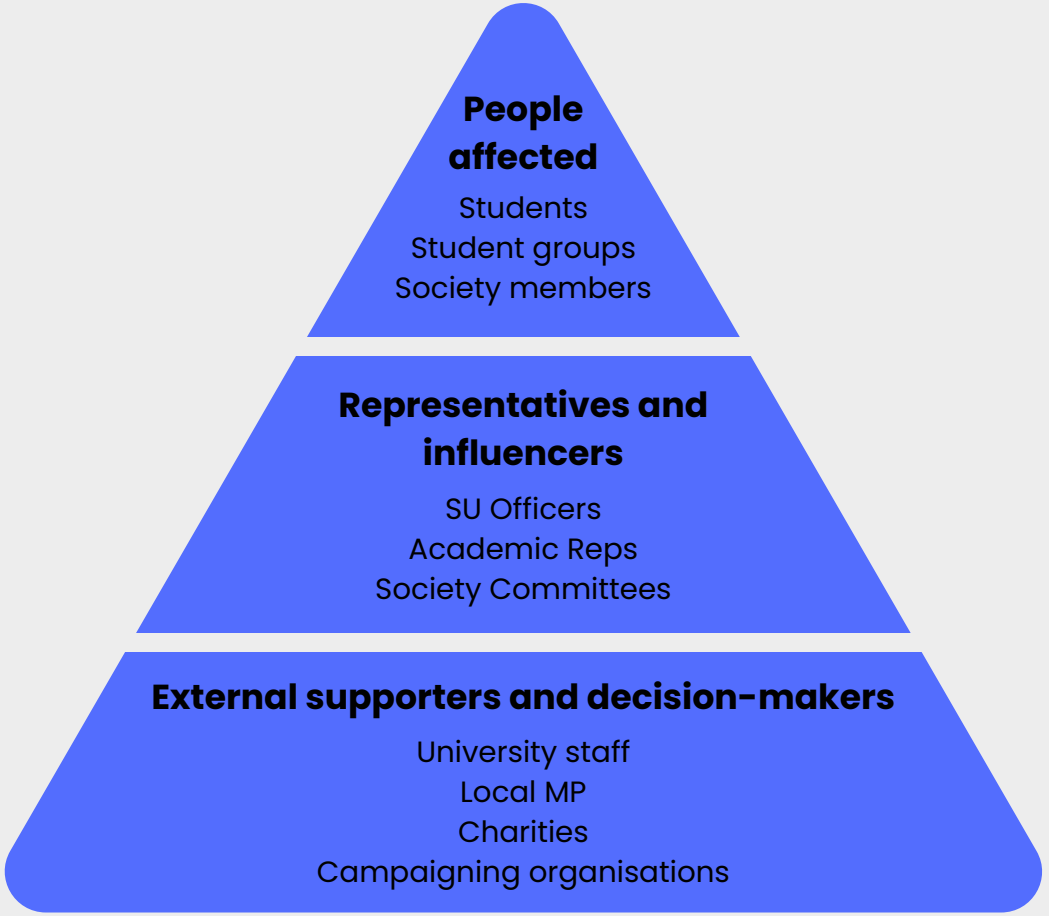
Potentially supportive stakeholders may include:

- Society committee members
- Bath SU Officers
- Academic Representatives
- Your local MP
- Relevant charities and campaigning organisations

Once you have identified your stakeholders:

- Find their contact details.
- Contact them to explain your campaign, its aims, and why the issue matters to the people they represent.
- Clearly outline how they can support your campaign.
- Ask whether they can recommend others who may also be interested in supporting your cause.

As your campaign develops, continue building your network and identifying new opportunities for support.



Tactics

Tactics are practical methods by which you can acheive your campaign goals.

All tactics have strengths and weaknesses, and your selection will depend on your campaign goals and the broader strategy used to acheive them.

Method	Purpose	Strengths	Risks
Petition	Demonstrate support	Easy to organise	Limited impact alone
Open Letter	Influence decision makers	Clear public position	Needs support
Meeting Decision Makers	Direct influence	Relationship building	Can be slow
Social Media Campaign	Raise awareness	Broad reach	Often low commitment
Vigil	Reflection and solidarity	Strong symbolic value	Usually awareness-focused
Demonstration	Visibility and pressure	Public attention	Requires planning
Protest	Challenge a decision	High visibility	Higher risk

Note: these roles are suggestive. You should consider the nature of your campaign and its needs when deciding on team roles.

Petitions

A petition is a formal request, usually signed by multiple people, asking a decision maker to take action on a specific issue.

Strength: Petitions demonstrate public support for a cause and can encourage decision makers to take an issue more seriously. They are particularly effective in policy change campaigns.

Weakness: Petitions rarely achieve change on their own. They should form part of a wider campaign that includes activities such as lobbying, advocacy, meetings with stakeholders and media engagement.

Running a Successful Petition

1. Choose the Right Platform

The best platform depends on who you want to influence.

- **Government:** For national policy or legislative change, use the UK Parliament petition website.
- **University of Bath:** Use the dedicated University of Bath page on Change.org.
- **Local services and councils:** Bath & North East Somerset Council does not operate a public petition scheme. However, petitions can still demonstrate community support and be presented alongside meetings with councillors or through the General Public Speaking Scheme. Third-party platforms such as Change.org can be useful for collecting signatures.
- **International organisations:** Consider Avaaz, which is designed for campaigns seeking international change.

- **Human rights campaigns**: Check whether your issue is already the subject of an Amnesty International petition. You may also wish to engage with the University of Bath Amnesty International Society for support and resources.

2. Write an Effective Petition

A strong petition has two key elements:

A Clear Petition Action

Your headline should clearly state what change you want and appeal to your target audience. Keep it concise, memorable and action-focused.
For support with crafting a message, refer to the guidance on developing concise campaign messaging.

A Strong Case for Change

Explain:

- What you want to happen.
- Why the change is necessary.

When defining your objective, ensure it is specific and achievable. The SMART framework can help you develop a goal that is realistic and measurable.

When explaining why the change matters, use evidence and examples. The Problem Tree method can help identify the wider issues caused by the problem you are seeking to address.

3. Promote Your Petition

The impact of a petition depends largely on the number of signatures it receives, making promotion a critical part of the process.

Social Media Campaigning

Social media allows you to reach large audiences quickly and at low cost. Petitions work well as part of a wider digital campaign because they provide a clear action for supporters and a measurable indicator of engagement.

When promoting your petition:

- Include a clear call to action.
- Provide a direct link to the petition.
- Explain why people should support the campaign.

Refer to the guidance on running a social media campaign for further advice.

In-Person Activism

Face-to-face engagement remains one of the most effective ways to gain support.

Consider collecting signatures in locations where your target audience is likely to be present. For example, a campaign aimed at University of Bath students may benefit from visibility in busy campus locations such as The Parade.

To maximise participation:

- Adapt your message to your audience.
- Use clear, eye-catching materials.
- Show how the issue affects people directly.
- Make it quick and easy for supporters to sign.

4. Know When to Close Your Petition

The appropriate time to stop collecting signatures depends on the purpose of your petition and the platform used.

Some petitions have built-in deadlines. For example, UK Parliament petitions automatically close after six months.

Others have signature-based milestones. Parliament petitions receive a government response at 10,000 signatures and may be considered for debate at 100,000 signatures. Reaching these milestones may represent a successful outcome.

Where no formal deadline or threshold exists, such as with an independently organised Change.org petition, the decision is yours.

Consider closing your petition when:

- You have gathered enough evidence of public support to strengthen your case.
- Signature growth has slowed significantly.
- The campaign would benefit more from moving to the next stage, such as stakeholder meetings, lobbying, advocacy or open letters.

Remember that a petition is usually most effective as a tool for demonstrating support rather than as the final stage of a campaign. The signatures you collect should help build momentum for further action and engagement with decision makers.

Open Letters

An open letter is a public message addressed to a specific decision maker, organisation or institution. While written for a named recipient, it is intended to be read and shared by a wider audience.

Strengths

Open letters can be an effective campaigning tool because they make requests and concerns publicly visible. This can increase accountability, raise awareness of an issue and build support for your campaign.

Limitations

An open letter is most effective when it reaches and engages a large audience. Simply publishing a letter is unlikely to create change on its own. Open letters should therefore be supported by promotion and shared through channels that are likely to reach the people you want to influence.

Writing and Sharing an Open Letter

1. Identify Your Recipient

Choosing the right recipient is essential.

Consider:

- Decision-making power: The recipient should have the authority to make the change you are requesting.
- Public visibility: Recipients who are well known or publicly recognisable are more likely to attract attention and encourage engagement with your campaign.

2. Draft Your Letter

Begin by writing the letter as though you were communicating directly with the recipient.

Include:
Your Motivation and Requests
Explain why you are writing and clearly state the changes or actions you would like the recipient to take.

Evidence

Support your arguments with accurate information and evidence. Well-supported claims strengthen your credibility and make your case more persuasive.

Your Perspective

Explain who you are and why the issue matters to you. Readers are often more engaged when they understand how a decision, policy or action affects real people.

3. Adapt the Letter for a Public Audience

Although the letter is addressed to a specific recipient, much of its impact comes from how it is received by the public.

When reviewing your draft:

Use an Appropriate Tone

Keep your language respectful and professional. Criticise actions, policies or decisions rather than making personal attacks.

Use Clear Language

Write in a way that is accessible to a general audience. Avoid unnecessary jargon and explain issues in practical terms that people can easily understand.

Offer Solutions

Where possible, explain what positive action could be taken. Presenting solutions helps readers see that change is achievable and encourages support for your campaign.

4. Share Your Letter

The best method of publication depends on your audience and the scale of your campaign.

University Campaigns
If your campaign relates to the University of Bath:

- Share the letter through society or campaign social media accounts.
- Engage with Students' Union officers who may be able to support your campaign or raise the issue with relevant decision makers.
- Circulate the letter through student networks, group chats and communities affected by the issue.
- Use stakeholder mapping to identify additional audiences who may be willing to support and share the letter.

Local Campaigns
If your campaign focuses on a local issue:

- Submit the letter to local newspapers such as the Bath Echo.
- Share it through local Facebook groups and community forums.
- Consider neighbourhood platforms such as Nextdoor to reach local residents.

Key Takeaway
Open letters are most effective when they combine a clear message, strong evidence and broad public visibility. A well-written letter can raise awareness, build support and increase pressure on decision makers, but it should usually form part of a wider campaign strategy rather than being used in isolation.



Meeting decision makers

Meeting with decision makers involves engaging directly with individuals who have the authority to help achieve your campaign objectives.

Strengths
Meeting decision makers allows you to build relationships, explain your concerns directly and discuss possible solutions. This approach can be particularly effective for long-term campaigns that require ongoing communication and collaboration.

Limitations
Securing meetings and achieving outcomes can take time, particularly within large organisations or public institutions. Progress often depends on persistence and effective follow-up.

How to Meet with Decision Makers

1. Identify the Right Person
The most important step is identifying someone with the authority to influence or implement the change you are seeking.

University Issues

- **Academic Representative**: Course or departmental issues.
- **SU Officer**: University-wide student issues.
- **Head of Department**: Department-level concerns.
- **Vice-Chancellor**: Significant university-wide matters.

Local and National Issues

- Local Councillor: Community and local government issues.
- Member of Parliament (MP): National policies, legislation and wider political issues.

Always choose the decision maker most closely connected to the issue you are raising.

2. Prepare Your Case

Before requesting a meeting, be clear about:

- The issue you want to address.
- The change you want to see.
- Why the issue matters.
- The evidence that supports your position.

Useful evidence may include:

- Survey results
- Statistics
- Case studies
- Petition signatures
- Feedback from affected groups

Being well prepared will help you communicate confidently and make the discussion more productive.

3. Request a Meeting

When contacting a decision maker, keep your message brief and focused.

Include:

- A clear subject line.
- A short introduction about who you are.
- A summary of the issue.
- The change you would like to discuss.
- Any key evidence that highlights the importance of the issue.
- A request for a meeting.

Be polite, professional and flexible when suggesting dates and times.

If you do not receive a response within two weeks, send a short follow-up message.

4. Draw up an agenda

After selecting a strategy of approach/framing for the issue and demand, you should clearly draw up the core details and facts that form your argument and that need to be presented to the decision maker.

This should include:

- A declaration of your problem
- Justification for why it is a problem of significance. Here, include at least one of the following:
  - The power of statistics: using statistics in your claim to the decision maker is a more direct way to emphasise that your issue is significant (e.g. demonstrating the percentage of students impacted by bus delays).
  - The power of moral authority: if your cause impacts people in a value-driven way, emphasise this in your agenda as it strikes a moral obligation for the decision maker and makes them more likely to act in your favour.
  - The power of facts: when making claims, provide clear references that separate them from being categorised as personal judgements.

Meeting decision makers - agenda writing

Subject matter

1. Who are you representing?
2. Why are you meeting with this decision maker?

Objective

What are you asking for?

Data and statistics

Present supporting facts that indicate the significance of your issue.
Refer to this throughout the meeting discussion if it gets off-track, the power of statistics should anchor your proposal.

Impact

What do your presented data and statistics say about the issue's impact?
Don't be afraid to draw on the power of moral authority, appeal to the decision maker using value driven claims.

Impact on the decision maker

How can you frame your issue to appeal to the decision maker? Try to frame your proposed solution as being favourable to their interests.

Constraints

What constraints may be brought to attention by the decision maker? Identifying these constraints prior, ensure you have researched ways to get around them such that they do not derail your argument.

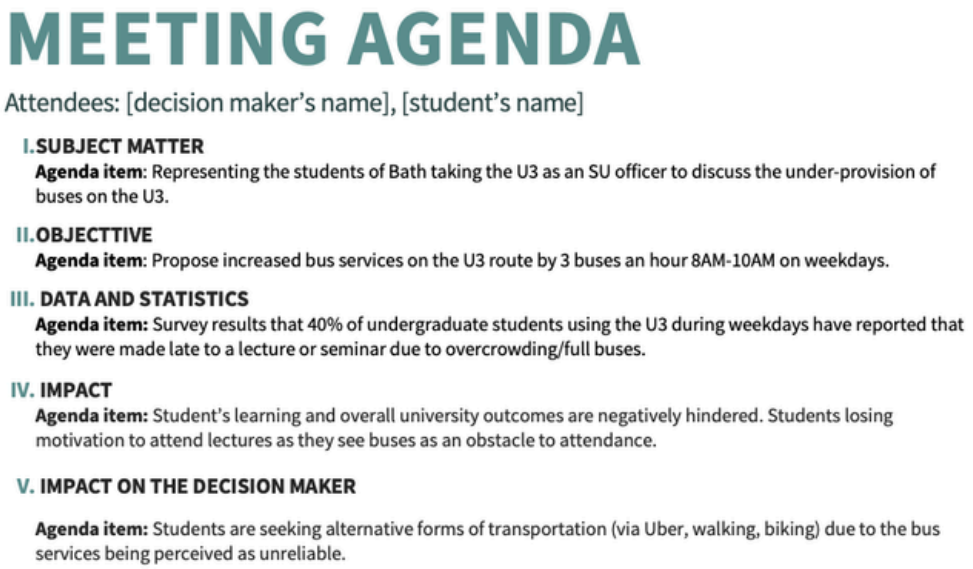
Having a dedicated item for constraints will enable you to keep the meeting on track when they bring these up during your proposal to justify resistance. Example: 'I accept your identification of these cost constraints lets park this until we arrive at the constraints item.'

Alternative options

If the decision maker refuses your proposal, what are the alternative options that still improve your targeted issue but may get around any obstacles that the decision maker has based their decision on?

Decision point

Ensure that the meeting ends with an decision point on the agenda. This will prevent vague non-responses.



MEETING AGENDA

Attendees: [decision maker's name], [student's name]

I. **SUBJECT MATTER**
Agenda item: Representing the students of Bath taking the U3 as an SU officer to discuss the under-provision of buses on the U3.

II. **OBJECTTIVE**
Agenda item: Propose increased bus services on the U3 route by 3 buses an hour 8AM-10AM on weekdays.

III. **DATA AND STATISTICS**
Agenda item: Survey results that 40% of undergraduate students using the U3 during weekdays have reported that they were made late to a lecture or seminar due to overcrowding/full buses.

IV. **IMPACT**
Agenda item: Student's learning and overall university outcomes are negatively hindered. Students losing motivation to attend lectures as they see buses as an obstacle to attendance.

V. **IMPACT ON THE DECISION MAKER**

Agenda item: Students are seeking alternative forms of transportation (via Uber, walking, biking) due to the bus services being perceived as unreliable.

5. Prepare other materials pre-meeting

In addition to the meeting agenda, prepare any materials you want to show:

- Any evidence of support (signed petitions or printed references to change.org, survey results).
- If your agenda refers to any statistics or study findings, bring a printed copy of the original source.

It might be useful to identify material you can send by email or drop off later as an excuse to follow them up. But you should assume that your decision maker is busy, this is particularly the case where they have decision making power that many causes seek to influence (e.g. MPs). Anything you give them must be succinct.

6. During the Meeting

To make the most of the meeting, follow a structure:

1. **Welcome and introductions**
   - Introduce yourself/yourselves by telling your story – both your personal story and the groups you represent:
     Example: I am a committee member for X society who is concerned about Y issue, a concern that I share with my peers within the society and the wider university student body.
   - Connect your cause to the decision maker: why have you decided that they are important to reach out to?
     Example: Because of your role as X, overseeing important functions related to our campaign goals, I asked to meet with you with hopes that we could move the issue forward.
2. **Make your case**
   - Describe the problem faced and why it matters.
   - Build up your problem and justify its significance. Frame your problem around your strategy for approaching the meeting and using the backing of your prepared statistics, facts, and positions of moral superiority.
   - State your request. This should be clear and direct. **Example:** to resolve issue X, I am asking for the change Y.

   This should be done by working through your agenda items.
3. **Structure open discussion:** After making your initial case, setting out your problem and solution, you should be prepared to discuss further with the decision maker and answer any questions they may have:

   a. Bring a physical agenda, this should be numbered by items. Having this placed in front of you during the meeting will help you stay on track and is a useful tool to refer back to when the meeting veers off track.
   b. Include time-checks: 'We are half-way through our meeting time, so coming back to the decision point...'
   c. Signpost your responses: how does this link to meeting's decision point?

Before the meeting ends, try to agree on:

- Any actions that will be taken.
- Who is responsible for those actions.
- Any timescales or next steps.

Neutral Redirection: Keeping the Meeting on Track
When discussing your request with a decision maker, you may face challenges with them going off track or trying to derail your argument. It is important to stay in control of the conversation, do this by using neutral redirection statements:

1. Acknowledge the tangent briefly: “That’s a useful point.”
2. Redirect the conversation directly:
    a. Redirect without judgement: “To stay within today’s purpose, let’s return to the main issue.”
    b. If they broaden the scope: “I think that’s a wider issue and today we should focus on the decision point to ensure we agree upon a solution.”
    c. If they go off topic, park them: “I’ll note that for later, but let’s stay with the agenda.
3. Refer back to the agenda and re-anchor with evidence: "We’re still on Item 2 so let’s focus there because this is what is causing X% of students to..."

7. Follow Up

Within the 24 hours following your meeting, send a follow up email:

- Open with a polite address, thanking them for meeting with you.
- Briefly recap the issue discussed.
- Provide a bulleted list of all agreed upon action points, including any agreed upon checkpoints or deadlines.
- Close politely

Within 24 hours, 70% of meeting content is forgotten. Sending a follow up email will remind them, in writing, of any commitment they made in the meeting and of upcoming deadlines that they may have to meet as a result.

Consistent and professional follow-up is often essential for maintaining momentum and achieving results.

Working Alongside Other Campaign Tactics
Meetings are often most effective when combined with other campaigning activities, such as:

- Petitions
- Open letters
- Social media campaigns
- Letter-writing campaigns
- Community engagement activities

These activities can demonstrate public support and strengthen the case you present to decision makers.

Key Takeaway
Successful meetings start with identifying the right decision maker, preparing a clear evidence-based case and approaching discussions professionally. Building constructive relationships and following up on agreed actions can significantly increase the likelihood of achieving your campaign goals.

Letter writing campaign

A letter writing campaign is an organised effort by a group of people who collectively agree to send letters to specific decision-makers about an issue.

Strengths

Beyond individually reaching out to decision makers, a well organised letter writing campaign with significant participation puts increased pressure on decision makers and demonstrates to them that the subject matter is of wide concern.

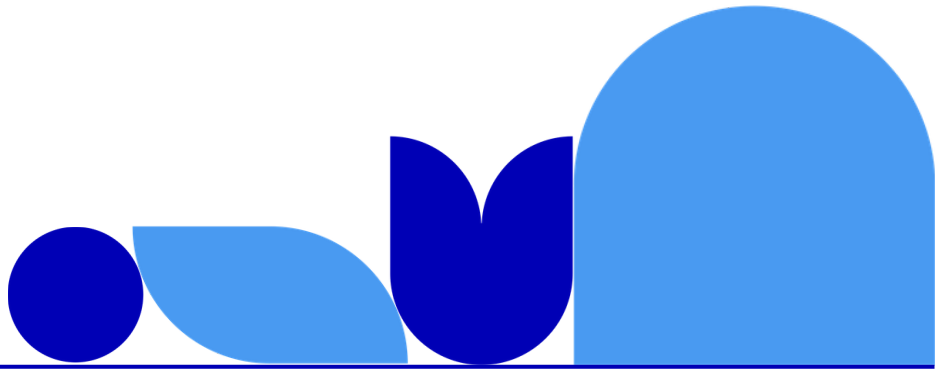
Limitations

Writing letters requires significant effort and your letters may get discarded if reaching out to decision makers who are frequently contacted, particularly if sent by email.

How to organise a letter writing campaign:

1. Consider your subject matter, identify the decision maker whom your campaign will be directed towards. For help selecting a decision maker, read step 1 and 2 of the Reaching out to decision makers guidance.
2. Identify the contact details of the person you want to write to:
    a. Councillors and MPs can be emailed directly via writetothem.com.
    b. MP contact details are on Parliament's website.
    c. The contact details of decision makers within University of Bath can be found on the university person finder.
3. Consider your medium: although reaching out via email can be faster and requires less effort, public decision makers like MP's are contacted at such a high rate that your email is at risk of getting lost within their inbox. Instead, physical letters sent via post are more likely to be read eventually.
4. Provide resources for campaign participants: a well organised letter writing campaign will ensure that all contact to the targeted decision maker has the same necessary information, while being written from the sender's own perspective. You should provide campaign participants with:

    - A briefing sheet with key points to make in their letter. This should include:
        - A clear, concise demand. What is the sender asking the recipient to do?
        - A small amount of background information to back up the demand. Here, you should include the problems at the leaves of your problem tree.
        - An example letter but encourage people to use their own words. For help putting the example letter together, see the Letter Writing Campaign template. Filling out and issuing this to participants will make it easier for them to know how to structure their own letters.
        - The contact details of the person you want them to write to.



Vigils

A vigil is a gathering where people come together in a shared space to mark a significant event, express solidarity, or reflect on an issue. Vigils are often held in response to grief, crisis or important moments within a campaign.

Strengths
Vigils can be powerful awareness-raising events. Their visual impact, particularly when held in the evening using candles or other forms of lighting, can attract public and media attention while creating a respectful space for reflection and community.

Limitations
Vigils are generally more effective for raising awareness and demonstrating solidarity than for directly influencing policy or decision makers. They are often most successful when combined with wider campaigning activities.

Organising a Vigil

1. Choose a Suitable Location
Select a location that is accessible, safe and appropriate for your event.

Consider:
- Accessibility requirements of attendees.
- Symbolic significance of the location.
- Visibility to your intended audience.
- Capacity for the expected number of attendees.

2. Choose the Right Time
The timing of a vigil can affect both attendance and impact.
Consider:
- Holding the vigil on a significant date, anniversary or ahead of an important decision.
- Weather conditions and seasonal factors.
- Whether attendees may require additional support such as shelter, warm clothing or refreshments.

3. Obtain Permissions
If your vigil is taking place on University of Bath property, submit the appropriate SU event planning paperwork and review relevant university event guidance.

For events in public spaces, check whether permissions or licences are required through Bath & North East Somerset Council.

4. Plan the Programme
A simple programme helps create a clear and respectful structure.
Consider including:

Opening Remarks
Welcome attendees and explain the purpose of the vigil.

Speakers
Invite individuals to share experiences, reflections or perspectives relevant to the issue. If inviting external speakers, ensure you follow relevant SU guidance

Closing Remarks
Thank attendees for participating, reiterate the purpose of the event and signpost opportunities for further involvement in the campaign.

5. Promote the Vigil
Promote the event early to give people enough time to attend.

You may wish to use:
- Social media
- Society mailing lists
- Student networks and group chats
- Posters and flyers

Clearly communicate the purpose, location, date and time of the vigil.

6. Prepare Resources
Depending on the size and format of the event, consider:
- Candles or battery-powered lights
- A microphone or sound system
- Printed programmes or information sheets
- QR codes linking to petitions, websites or social media pages

7. Follow Up
After the event:
- Thank attendees and speakers.
- Share photos or updates from the vigil.
- Communicate any outcomes or next steps.
- Encourage supporters to stay involved in the campaign.

Key Takeaway
A successful vigil provides a respectful and meaningful opportunity for people to come together around a shared cause. Careful planning, clear communication and effective follow-up can help maximise both attendance and impact.

Demonstrations and Protests

Demonstrations
A demonstration is a public expression of a viewpoint or position on an issue. Demonstrations can be used to raise awareness, show support for a cause and attract public attention.

Strengths
Large demonstrations can be difficult for decision makers and the media to ignore. They can help raise awareness, build support and increase public visibility for a campaign.

Limitations
Demonstrations require significant planning and organisation. Attendance levels are important, as a well-attended demonstration can show widespread support, while a poorly attended event may weaken perceptions of support for a campaign.

Protests
A protest is a public expression of opposition to a policy, action or issue. Unlike a demonstration, which may express support or opposition, protests are specifically focused on challenging or resisting something.

Protests may be:
- Static: Participants gather in one location.
- Moving: Participants march through a public space.

Strengths
Protests are a highly visible form of direct action and can be effective when seeking to hold decision makers accountable or respond to time-sensitive issues.

Limitations
Protests are subject to legal requirements and organisers must ensure activities remain lawful and safe.

Before organising a protest or demonstration, review relevant legal guidance and University of Bath policies where applicable. You may also wish to undertake Know Your Rights training.

Organising an Effective Demonstration or Protest

1. Define Your Objectives
Be clear about:

- The issue you are addressing.
- The change you want to achieve.
- The key messages you want participants and observers to remember.

Clear objectives will help shape all other planning decisions.

2. Decide Whether Collective Action Is the Right Tactic
Demonstrations and protests can create pressure on decision makers, but they can also create an oppositional relationship.
Consider whether other approaches, such as meetings with decision makers, may be useful before organising collective action.

3. Choose Your Format
Decide what type of action best suits your goals.

Static actions are generally easier to organise and require fewer resources.

Moving actions can increase visibility and public engagement but often require additional planning and permissions.

Important: If organising a moving protest on public land, ensure you understand and comply with notification requirements. If the event takes place on university property, consult the relevant university guidance and discuss plans with campus security where necessary.

4. Select Your Location
Choose a location that maximises visibility and impact.
Consider:

- Accessibility for attendees.
- Visibility to your target audience.
- Proximity to relevant decision makers.
- Capacity and safety requirements.

For demonstrations and protests, the most effective location may not be a bookable venue. Public spaces are often more visible and may place your message closer to decision makers and stakeholders.

Even when using public spaces, accessibility should remain a priority. Consider factors such as step-free access, public transport links, seating opportunities and clear movement routes for participants.

5. Plan Logistics
Careful planning helps ensure that collective action is safe, organised and effective.

Before promoting the event, decide:

- Where it will take place.
- When it will take place.
- How long it will last.
- Whether speakers, marches or other activities will be included.
- Who will be responsible for key tasks during the event.

If organising collective action on university property, ensure that you follow the University of Bath's Freedom of Expression guidance and any relevant event planning procedures.

6. Build an Organising Team

Demonstrations and protests are easier to run safely and effectively when responsibilities are shared.

Ensure organisers understand their roles before the event. Responsibilities may include:

- Stewarding participants.
- Helping manage crowd movement.
- Signposting attendees between activities.
- Liaising with university staff, security or relevant authorities.
- Introducing speakers.
- Delivering opening and closing remarks.

If you are organising as part of a campaign, consider drawing support from societies, student groups or community organisations.

7. Promote the Event

Once the location and timing have been confirmed, begin promoting the event as early as possible.

Consider:

- Social media campaigns.
- Society and student communication channels.
- Posters and flyers.
- Community groups and local networks.
- Partnering with other campaigning organisations.

Working with established groups can help increase attendance, broaden your reach and strengthen the visibility of your campaign.

Clearly communicate:

- The purpose of the event.
- The date and time.
- The location.
- Any expectations for participants.

Strong attendance helps demonstrate the level of support behind your campaign.

8. Plan What Happens Afterwards

Collective action is often most effective when it forms part of a wider campaign strategy.

Before the event takes place, consider:

- How you will communicate the outcome to decision makers.
- Whether you will publish an open letter, statement or media release afterwards.
- Who will be responsible for follow-up communication.
- How supporters can stay involved after the event.
- What your next steps will be if no action is taken.

Having a plan for follow-up can help maintain momentum and turn public visibility into meaningful change.

Ensuring your events are accessible

When organising a vigil, protest or demonstration, consider accessibility from the earliest stages of planning. Making your event accessible helps ensure that as many people as possible can participate safely and comfortably.

1. Ask Participants About Their Needs

When promoting your event, provide a way for attendees to request accessibility accommodations, such as through a registration or Google Form.

Use this information to identify any adjustments that may be needed before the event takes place.

2. Choose Accessible Venues and Locations

If your event uses a bookable venue, research its accessibility before confirming the location.

Useful resources include:

- **Euan's Guide** for accessibility reviews from disabled people and their supporters.
- **AccessAble** for detailed accessibility information about venues and facilities.

For events taking place in public spaces, consider factors such as step-free access, nearby transport links, accessible toilets and seating opportunities.

3. Plan Accessible Routes

If your event involves movement between locations, such as a march or procession, consider:

- Avoiding steep or difficult routes where possible.
- Identifying accessible alternative routes.
- Planning how participants with limited mobility will travel between locations.
- Ensuring any temporary barriers or obstacles can be navigated safely.

4. Communicate Information in Multiple Formats

Important information should never be communicated in only one format. Consider:

For Visually Impaired Participants

- Read key announcements aloud.
- Clearly communicate any programme changes.
- Ensure volunteers are available to provide directions and assistance if required.

For Deaf or Hard of Hearing Participants

- Provide written versions of important announcements or speeches where possible.
- Use clear signage to indicate programme changes and event transitions.
- Ensure attendees can access key information without relying solely on audio announcements.

Key Takeaway

Accessibility planning should be built into every stage of event organisation. The most effective approach is to ask attendees what they need, remove barriers where possible and communicate information in a variety of accessible formats. This guidance is not exhaustive, and organisers should always consider the specific requirements of those attending their event.

Taking the next steps after campaigning

Campaigns don't always end after the initial activities are complete.

Some issues need continued attention, wider support, or formal decision-making channels to move forward. If your campaign has sparked interest or highlighted a concern that affects students more broadly, consider how you can build on that momentum.

SUmmit

SUmmit is key event for decision making held by The SU Bath. Here, the committee makes decisions around taking a stance on a select number of issues.

SUmmit meetings typically happen 4 times a year and if your campaign issue is of university scope, consider reaching out to the **SU President** for support regarding bringing it to SUmmit.



THE SU BATH