



YOUNG CAMPAIGNERS EASY-READ CAMPAIGNING GUIDE



HOW TO CAMPAIGN

About EDCM

Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) is the campaign to get rights and justice for every disabled child.

It is run by four organisations working with disabled children and their families: Contact a Family, Council for Disabled Children (CDC), Mencap and the Special Educational Consortium (SEC). The campaign was set up in September 2006 and now has over 34,000 individual supporters and 200 MPs signed up to it. We also have over 30,000 Facebook fans!

This guide gives you information about how to campaign

If you would like a copy of this Guide please get in contact with EDCM:



Email: info@edcm.org.uk

Website: You can download it at
<http://www.edcm.org.uk/resources>



Telephone: 020 7843 6082



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WHAT IS CAMPAIGNING?

Campaigning is about **changing things for the better**. It means recognising a problem, making people aware of the problem and making people **take action** to solve the problem.



Campaigning is something you can do on your own or by working together in groups. If you are not part of a group you may know some people you could get together in a group.

- You can share tasks out so that everyone can have a say/ help.
- You could ask a local charity for disabled children to get involved and help
- You could also invite other groups and charities to join your group.



WHY SHOULD YOU CAMPAIGN?



- To change things
- To get your voice heard
- To let your MP know what is important to local people so that they can change things.



PLANNING YOUR CAMPAIGN

To start with you need to decide what you want to change



You can either campaign in a group or on your own.

Then you need to decide who you need to campaign to make change happen – your MP? Your local council? Your social worker? Your school?

Now you need to plan the best way to influence them. See below for ideas.



IDEAS TO GET STARTED

Once you have decided what you want to change, you need to decide how you want to campaign. There are lots of different ways to campaign and you need to think about what will work best for your campaign.

Here are some ideas for you:



- **Write to your MP**

This is a good idea if you want to tell your MP about an issue that is important to you. Your MP is chosen to represent your views. That means if there is something you are concerned about, they can write a letter or ask a question about your concerns, to see if they can change things.



... for writing to your MP are:

- Only write or talk about one issue – keep it simple!
- Tell them what you would like them to do – for example, sign up to something or raise your issue in Parliament
- Write about your own experiences – this can make more impact



- **Meet your MP**

This is a good idea if you want to tell your MP a bit more information about your issue. They will have to listen if you are sat in front of them!



... for meeting your MP:

- Book an appointment before you go. You can find out when your MP has their surgery by checking their web site or by telephoning their office
- Tell them what you want to discuss before you meet with them so they can do a bit of research first

- Tell them what you would like them to do – for example, sign up to something or raise your issue in Parliament
- Write down some points before you meet up so you don't forget what you want to say!



Find out who your MP is on these websites:

- <http://www.upmystreet.com>
- <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk>

If you search for their name in Google, you should be able to find their constituency address and other contact details



- **Hold a local event**

You could organise an event in your local area to tell people about your issue.

This could be a sponsored walk or bake sale or anything you can think of.

You could invite your MP to the event. At the event you could ask them for their support

... for holding a local event:

- Think about who you can run the event with – this could be a local organisation who could help to pay for it
- Where will you hold the event?
- When will you hold it? – make sure it doesn't clash with any other important events
- What type of event will it be?
- Invite people early – so that they have enough time to put it in their diaries
- Tell the local media about it beforehand to get people interested and raise publicity





- **Set up a Facebook group**

A lot of people use Facebook to campaign.

It's a brilliant way to share information with other people about your campaign.

You need to set up a group or fan page which talks about your campaign. Then invite people to join.

Go to www.facebook.com for more information

Examples of Facebook groups and pages:

- EDCM fanpage –
www.facebook.com/everydisabledchildmatters - we have over 30,000 fans so it's a great way to reach lots of people by simply posting messages on our Wall
- “OFCOM stop upholding hate speech - the 'R-word' is no joke”
- when Davina McCall and Vinnie Jones said the word 'retard' on television, a Facebook campaign was set up in response
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=301643650888&ref=s>

- **Make a film**



Making a film is another effective way to campaign, and it can also be fun.

You could make a film by yourself or with a group of friends.

It doesn't have to be expensive – all you need to do is borrow a video camera and have a great idea!

You can then post it on a website such as YouTube (www.youtube.com) and invite people (including your MP!) to watch it.

Some other ideas....

- **Hold a demonstration or march**



These can be a bit harder to organise but can still be effective. You can make banners and signs for you and your friends to hold whilst you're marching.

- **Join a Young People's Forum in your local area**



This is where a group of young people get together and discuss issues they want to change. They will then speak about this to politicians, or carry out a campaign project to make change.

- **Support another organisation**



You can sign up as a supporter of campaigns like EDCM. Many organisations will then give updates about their work and also send round links about how to get involved in other campaigns.

- **Start a petition!**



You can register petitions on the 'number 10' website. If you get more than 500 signatures then your petition will get a response from officials that work for the Prime Minister or for Government Departments such as the Department of Health.

Go to <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/> to register your petition.

- **Undercover research**



This is a good way to collect evidence about a service or attitudes.

You and your campaign group could go out and record your experiences of services and attitudes. For example you could record your experiences of attitudes on transport or work opportunities.

Then write down your experiences. You can then tell your MP or the local media about your findings and what needs to be changed.



MORE INFORMATION

Find out more information about campaigning on the internet:

- EDCM Young Campaigners website – you can find out how other young people have campaigned and about EDCM campaigns
www.edcm.org.uk/youngcampaigners
- Trailblazers campaign – Trailblazers are the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign's network of 16 to 30-year-olds who are fighting for the rights of young disabled people. They have carried out 3 months of undercover research to investigate the UK's public transport system.
<http://www.mdctrailblazers.org>
- UK Youth Parliament - Run by young people and for young people to help change the world for the better
<http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/>
- Youth Act - Support and training for young people to tackle issues in their local communities
<http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk>
- 11 Million - The organisation led by the Children's Commissioner to make sure adults listen to children's views - you can have your say through the website
<http://www.11million.org.uk/>



GETTING PUBLICITY

Once you have got a campaign idea, you need to spread the word and get publicity. Your local media is a great way to do this.



Your local media includes your local newspapers and local radio and TV stations. They like to hear about what issues are important to local people.

You can contact your local media at the beginning of your campaign to tell them what it is all about.

You can also tell them about any events you have planned.

You can also contact them at the end of the campaign, to tell them how successful it has been.

You can:

- **Send a press release**



This is the main way to let your local paper or radio station know about your campaign.

You should include information on what your campaign is about and what you want to achieve.

You could also let them know what you have been doing so far.

- **Send a letter to your local newspaper**



You can send a letter to a local paper instead of a press release. It should include similar information to the press release, but it can be more personal.

A letter to a newspaper will be printed in the 'letters to editor' section rather than written up as a news story.

- **Talk to someone at your local radio or TV station**



After you have sent the local radio or TV station your press release, they may want to ask you more questions.

This could happen over the telephone or in the studio.

It is a good idea to prepare what you want to say beforehand and make a list of 2 or 3 good points you want to tell the listeners.

You can also let people know how to get involved.



- **Get support from a celebrity!**

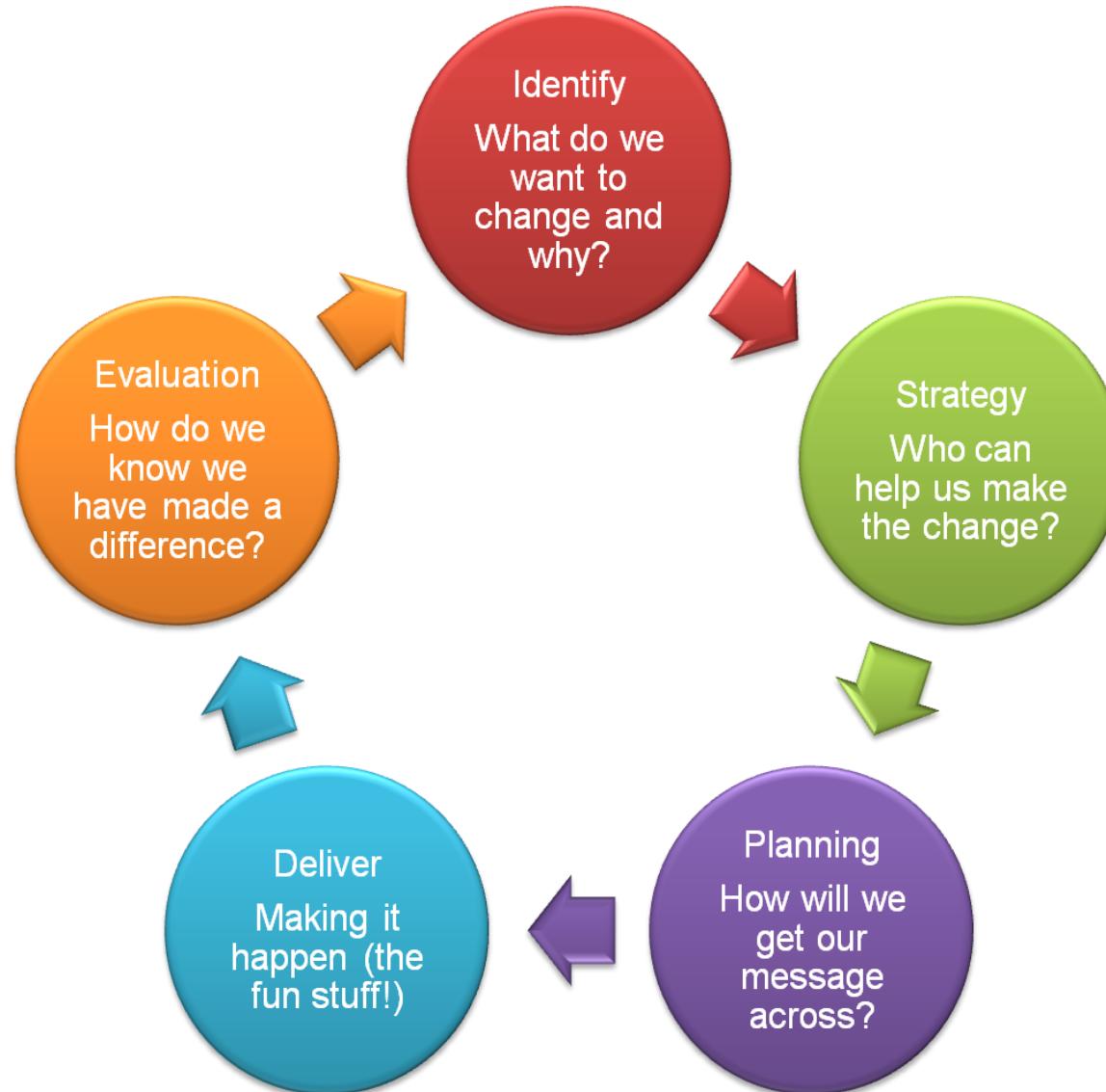
Sometimes celebrities choose to support campaigns. It is hard to get a celebrity to be involved. However, they can bring a lot of publicity to what you want to say.

Media contacts:

CBBC Newsround sometimes report on what children and young people have been campaigning about. You can get in contact with them here:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/contact_us/default.stm

This **campaign wheel** sets out an example of the process you could follow if you wanted to start a campaign:





FACTSHEETS

Here are some definitions of words to help you understand that campaign jargon.

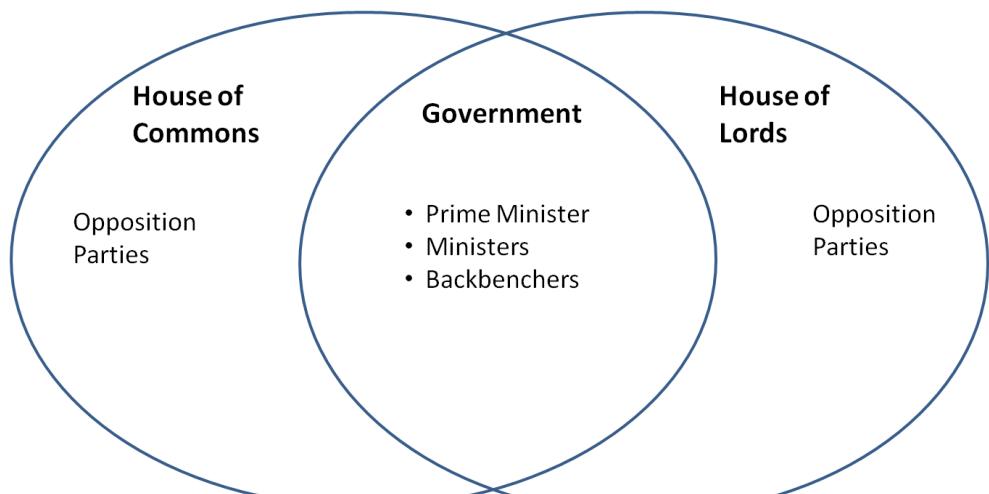
What is Parliament?

Parliament is where politicians meet to decide laws and make decisions for the United Kingdom. For example, how money is spent on schools, hospitals and the police.

There are two main parts to Parliament.

- The House of Commons
- The House of Lords

Both the 'Government' and the 'opposition' parties make up Parliament.



What is a Member of Parliament (MP)?

An MP is someone who has been chosen by people in the UK, through voting, to represent the views of local people in Parliament. That includes the views of young people too.

They work both in Parliament and in the area where you live. They will normally be in your local area on Fridays as Parliament does not have meetings that day.

In your local area MPs will go to meetings, visit schools and businesses, give talks and try to meet as many local people as they can to find out their views.

They also have offices where people can go to ask for help or to tell the MP about problems in their local area.

In Parliament MPs will vote on new laws and speak to other MPs about what things are like for people in their local area.

What is Government?

Around every five years there is a general election. This is when people aged over 18 in the UK vote for who they want to be their MP.

The political party that has the most MPs forms the Government. They then get to make decisions for the UK, for example how much money is spent on schools and how hospitals are run.

However, MPs from other political parties can debate with the Government in Parliament so that the best decisions are made.

What is a political party?

A political party is a group of MPs who agree on lots of issues about how the country should be run. Their aim is to get chosen to run the country.

They battle with other parties to win votes from the public to be the biggest party so they can form a Government.

Examples of political parties are the Labour Party, the Conservative Party, the Liberal Democrat Party and the Green Party.

In Parliament the party with the most Members of Parliament (MPs) become the Government. The party with the second most number of MPs is the opposition.

What is a Minister?

A Minister is a senior MP who is responsible for a particular bit of the Government's work, for example 'schools' or 'health' services.

Ministers work with the Prime Minister to make decisions for the whole Government on that particular bit of work.

What is a Shadow Minister or MP?

A Shadow Minister or MP is an MP in the opposition party who is responsible for challenging a Government Minister.

They keep a close eye on what the Government Ministers do, and let the public know what they would do differently. They also debate with the Government MPs in Parliament.

What is a Political Candidate?

When there is going to be a general election there are lots of people in each area who try to be chosen to be the local Member of Parliament (MP).

These are political candidates, also known as Prospective Parliamentary Candidates or PPCs.

They will all be listed on the voting sheet which people are given when they go to vote.

What is a general election?

A general election is where the people in the UK vote for who they want to run the country.

Every area in the country votes for one Member of Parliament (MP) to speak up for them in the House of Commons.

The person with the most votes in an area becomes the MP. The political party with the most MPs then becomes the 'Government' and will run the country.