



Information Sheet 3

Developing a campaign

The Scottish Older People's Assembly (SOPA) aims to support and empower older people to raise issues that are important to them, so they can be **heard directly by decision makers**. This series of information sheets aims to support older people to have their say, with information on where and how to raise issues, along with tips from our members.

Do you have a burning issue, a local change you wish you could make or a national issue that you would like to influence? It can be difficult to know how to make your voice heard, who to contact and how to make an impact. This sheet provides some key points to consider in developing an effective campaign.

1. IDENTIFY YOUR ISSUE

- Have a clear, simple message – even if your issue is complex, what are the key points that you want people to be aware of?
- Consider the level of action you want to take. For example, if your issue is the cracked pavement outside your house, do you want to focus on that or do you want to launch a wider campaign about improving pavements and streets across your neighbourhood?

2. SET A GOAL OR CHANGE YOU WANT TO MAKE

- If you have a problem or a complaint, try to re-frame it into a positive call for action. Using positive language about the change you want to make, rather than focusing on past negative experiences, helps to engage both your supporters and the decision-makers that you want to influence. For example, rather than focusing on the poor condition of local streets, Living Streets' *Walking Connects* project calls for improvements to streets and pavements that increase wellbeing through walking.
- Even if your experience was negative, your goal is positive – to prevent other people from experiencing the same thing.

Your Issue, Your Voice
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Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation No: SC046520





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3. COLLECT EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR POINT

- Knowledge is key to running a successful campaign.
- There is power in numbers – collect evidence of how the issue affects not just you, but others, and (with permission) record experiences to share.
- Facts, figures and case studies help to build an objective case that is more difficult to argue against.
- Explain the wider impact that an issue is having – for example, broken pavements can prevent older people from leaving their homes, leading to isolation, loneliness and deteriorating physical health.
- Find out whether similar campaigns exist or have taken place in the past – how can you use these to strengthen your case? Examples from elsewhere can help to show what can be achieved and motivate decision-makers to do the same.

4. IDENTIFY YOUR ALLIES AND PEOPLE YOU WILL NEED TO PERSUADE

- Find people who understand or have a connection to your cause.
- Identify routes of influence – politicians, charities, business or community leaders and well-known figures who can support your aim.
- Consider how your issue may affect different groups of people as this could provide a wider pool of supporters. For example, cracked

pavements might be important to older people, people using mobility aids, people with sensory impairments, parents with prams.

- Think about who might oppose your campaign so you can try to understand their point of view and look for common ground.
- Consider points they might put forward, to allow you to prepare any counter-arguments and consider if there are compromises to be made.

5. GET YOUR MESSAGE OUT THERE

- Use as many different channels as possible to reach a wide audience.
- Identify who you need to influence and how best to do this (see ‘Who to Influence’ on sheet 2).
- Understand your key allies and opponents and which channels they use.
- Use your contacts – do you know anyone who could help to design a leaflet or help with social media? (See ‘Using different channels to promote your issue or campaign’ on sheet 4.2).
- Be persistent. It can take a while to find the right person to help you solve a problem. There may be some false starts, but don’t give up!

Top Tips from SOPA Members

“Avoid a ‘one size fits all’ approach – it may make the process easier but you will not reach those who are most in need and require additional support. Work with people and organisations who support those who experience communication barriers.”

Rohini Sharma Joshi, Trust Housing Association

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