

GETTING THE SUPPORT OF YOUR COMMUNITY

By working with your wider community, you can increase the level of support for your campaign and its impact.

When you've decided your overall aim, think about other people that may want to support the campaign or get involved. This could be people you know, or your wider community.

> You can find the contact details of your local group at mssociety.org.uk/near-me

1. MS Society groups

The MS Society has a network of over 300 groups, all run by volunteers. Each group varies, but all bring people with MS together in communities around the UK.

You should consider approaching your group to ask for support for your campaign. They may be able to help you with gathering evidence about how the issue affects other people with MS in your area, help you with planning and increasing support, or meeting with decision makers.

2. Community groups

Some campaigns may cover issues that are relevant to other people with disabilities and long-term conditions. You may want to consider joining forces with other local organisations, such as nearby disability organisations or charities.

Across England, there's a network of regional neurological alliances, campaigning to influence care and treatment in local areas. Find out if one exists in your area and get in touch via their website: www.neural.org.uk/directory-of-organisations/regional-organisations

If you live in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, contact the local MS Society office to find out if there are alliances or groups campaigning to influence care and treatment in your area. You can find details on the MS Society website.

Other groups to consider:

- Local faith groups – could they show support for your campaign by circulating a petition or providing a place to meet?
- Residents' associations – does your issue affect their members too?

Top tip

Find out more about spreading your campaign message through the media in our **speaking to the press** factsheet.

Top tip

Find out more about tactics you could use to engage the public and how to plan events in the factsheet **campaign tactics and events**.

- Local GP surgeries, or community buildings – can they display a poster in support of your campaign?
- Local interest groups – for example, a local photography society might be willing to help you create images for posters, or publicise your campaign.
- Look at your local council websites for information about local community groups, and to find their contact details. You could approach them directly for support for your campaign.

If you want to reach a wider audience than just those affected by the issue, you need to tell your wider community.

3. The wider audience

- Display posters around your local community – you might want to advertise an event or petition that you're running.
- Hold an information stand at local events such as craft fairs and fun days, or community social events.
- Plan campaign events or activities in public places. You might want to use this as an opportunity to get press coverage, sign ups to a petition or draw decision makers' attention to your issue.
- Organise a public meeting – invite local people and decision makers to come along and find out more about your campaign.
- Contact your local media – find out more in our 'speaking to the press' factsheet.
- Explore local interest groups on Facebook, look for local community interest pages. These could be great places to promote your events or your campaign directly.

