

CAMPAIGN TACTICS AND EVENTS

Campaigning doesn't just mean taking to the streets to protest; there are lots of different ways that you can help make your community better for people with MS.

Here are some ideas about how you can influence decision makers in your area.

Writing letters

A good way to start your campaign is by letter or email. You can explain the issue to decision makers and the impact it's having on local people. You may wish to ask for a meeting to discuss the issue further.

You may also want to think about a letter writing campaign where you encourage others to also write to your local decision maker to let them know how important the issue is to the local community. This can be a good idea if your first letter doesn't get a response.

Meetings

One of the best ways to get your message across is to meet with the person making the decisions.

You may need more than one meeting, and you should time these carefully to fit with key points in your campaign. This could be at the start, to raise the issue for the first time, followed by meeting again before important votes or deadlines.

To get the most out of your meeting:

- Plan what you want to say before the meeting. Gather your evidence on the issue and any other key information that backs up your campaign. Bring copies of evidence or detailed information for everyone who'll be at the meeting.
- Think about who to invite – is there someone who can speak from personal experience?
- Make notes during the meeting, so there's a record of what's agreed.
- Follow up with a letter or email thanking them for their time. Use this as an opportunity to remind them of any actions you, or they, agreed to take.

Top tip

Stick to topic – remember your campaign's key messages and your campaign goal.

Top tip

Remember to keep your social media posts positive and focused on your campaign's key messages.

Read more about social media on our website: mssociety.org.uk/socialmedia/campaigns

Petitions

Petitions can be a great way to show decision makers in your area the strength of feeling about an issue, and for your community to show they support your campaign.

To reach more people, and make signing your petition easier, you could set up an online petition using a website such as change.org. You could also have paper copies to sign up people on the move.

Once you have enough signatures, arrange a time to deliver the petition to your decision maker, and contact your local press to see if they'll cover it.

Pledges

A pledge is a statement that shows a commitment to your campaign ask, eg. I pledge to get loud for MS. Decision-makers or your campaign targets can take a picture with your pledge and share it on social media to show their support. It also demonstrates that pledge-takers have promised to undertake your campaign ask, so it's a useful tool for holding them to account.

To get as many people signing the pledge as possible, it's best to make it broad, straightforward and easy to agree with.

You can then follow up with specific examples of how pledge-taker can support your campaign goal in either a letter or an email.

Campaign events and stunts

To gain more interest in your campaign from the public or press, you could arrange a public event or stunt. This could be arranging a stall in a public place, a demonstration outside your council office, or inviting a local decision maker along to an MS service.

Things to consider:

- Do you need permission? If it's in a public place you may need to contact the local council first. If you're inviting a decision maker along to a therapy centre or branch, you'll need to arrange this with the person in charge.
- Is it the right time? You may want to hold your event before an important vote or meeting, or in the evening or weekend so more people can attend.
- Is your event accessible? It's also a good idea to check it can be reached by public transport.
- How will you follow up? Think about how you'll keep decision makers and interested members of the public informed about the next steps with the campaign.



Social media

Using social media platforms is a great way to spread the word about your campaign.

Twitter and Facebook can be used to contact decision makers, other community groups or build a network of supporters in your local area.

Tips for using Twitter:

- Research what hashtags people are using to talk about your issue. Use these to increase the reach of your tweets.
- You could also create a dedicated account and hashtag for your campaign.
- Tweet information (a web page or infographic) about your campaign to local community pages or decision makers to spread the word.
- Use images

Top tip

Many councils, MPs and organisations are contactable via Twitter. If you haven't heard back following a letter or email, try sending a tweet. A large number of tweets from people affected by an issue will often make a decision maker take notice.

Tips for using Facebook

- You can create a Facebook group, which other supporters can join. Use this to keep local people up to date with campaign news through updates, events or pictures.
- Share your campaign events, petitions, or news in other local community groups to raise awareness.
- You can contact local media through Facebook to draw attention to your events by posting on their pages – you can search for your local paper or radio station.

