

Campaigning Handbook



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About Elmore

Elmore Community Services is a charity working across the Thames Valley, providing mental health, domestic abuse, and personality disorder services. In a perfect world, there would be no gaps between services. Our vision is that 'services are sufficiently funded to flexibly engage and support people'. When there are no more gaps, Elmore's reason to exist will end, and we will on that moment every day.

In a perfect world, economic factors and political decisions at both local and national levels will not lock in disadvantage or hardship. The people we support are especially disadvantaged by such factors and decisions.

Elmore is a campaigning charity, but always on behalf of our clients and about the issues they care about—in the last year we have campaigned for a modern slavery law and protested the funding cut in Universal Credit, the social security payments to which people are entitled.

In this handbook, though, we support people to become campaigners themselves on the issues they care about and in the way they believe is best. In line with our values, the Elmore team wants to work with people to increase their sense of control over all areas of their lives—and for us, that doesn't stop at the support we provide, it extends to empowering people to know and use their rights, determine their own future, and lead the lives they wish.

This booklet is written by me, based on my campaigning experience at the disability charity Scope and mental health charity Restore, and leadership of UK campaigns for Oxfam GB. It draws upon the expertise and experience of some of the country's best campaigners and community organisers. Together, we hope this booklet is helpful to you.

Tom Hayes

Tom Hayes

Chief Executive of Elmore Community Services



This Handbook

This handbook offers practical advice on how to plan, run and talk about a successful campaign. Broadly speaking, we think some of the advice here will be relevant to you.

This handbook is for people who:

- Are affected by issues who want to campaign for change
- Want to organise in their community and support local and national campaigns
- Are passionate about fighting for a better world

We want to work with people to help them:

- Build confidence to develop a powerful voice and make a lasting impact
- Learn skills and how to plan a campaign with training from experienced campaigners
- Meet others fighting for change and experiencing similar issues to you
- Empower you and others to plan, act, and drive change.

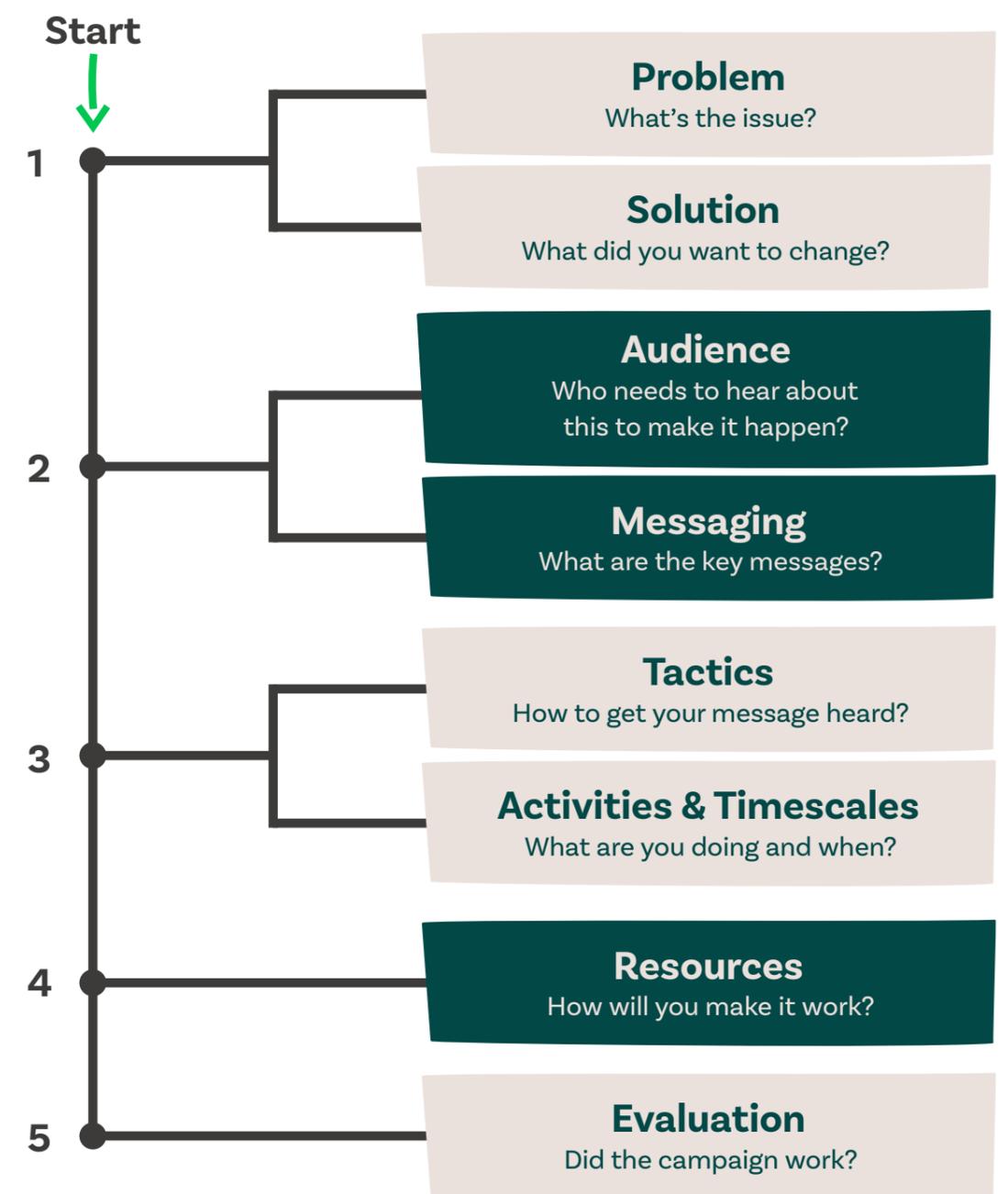
If you've used the handbook as part of your campaigning, please get in touch with us at www.elmorecommunityservices.org.uk

We'd like to hear what change you're trying to bring about and how you've been supported by this guide.



Creating a Winning Campaign Strategy

A winning campaign strategy has two big things: a clear idea of what you'd like to change and a plan about how you're going to make that change.



Problem and Solution

What's the problem and what do you want to change?

Try to describe the problem in just one sentence to make it clear and easy for other people to understand quickly. Then try to describe the change you would like to bring about the same way—just one sentence.

For example, the problem you face may be your bus service. Buses may be infrequent and when they run, they may arrive late more often than not. Bus travel might be too expensive, and services may not go to the places you need to visit, meaning you're cut off from easily and affordably getting to the places giving you support.

The solution you may want to bring about could be anything from bus services that are cheaper, regular, reliable, and better connected to places. When there are so many ways that you could improve bus travel, it will be important to keep your aims **SMART**.



S

Specific

What do I want to achieve?

M

Measurable

How will I know if I'm making progress?

A

Achievable

How will I make my goal a reality?

R

Realistic

Is it feasible for me to make it happen?

T

Time Bound

How long will it take me to achieve my goal?

Audience and Messaging

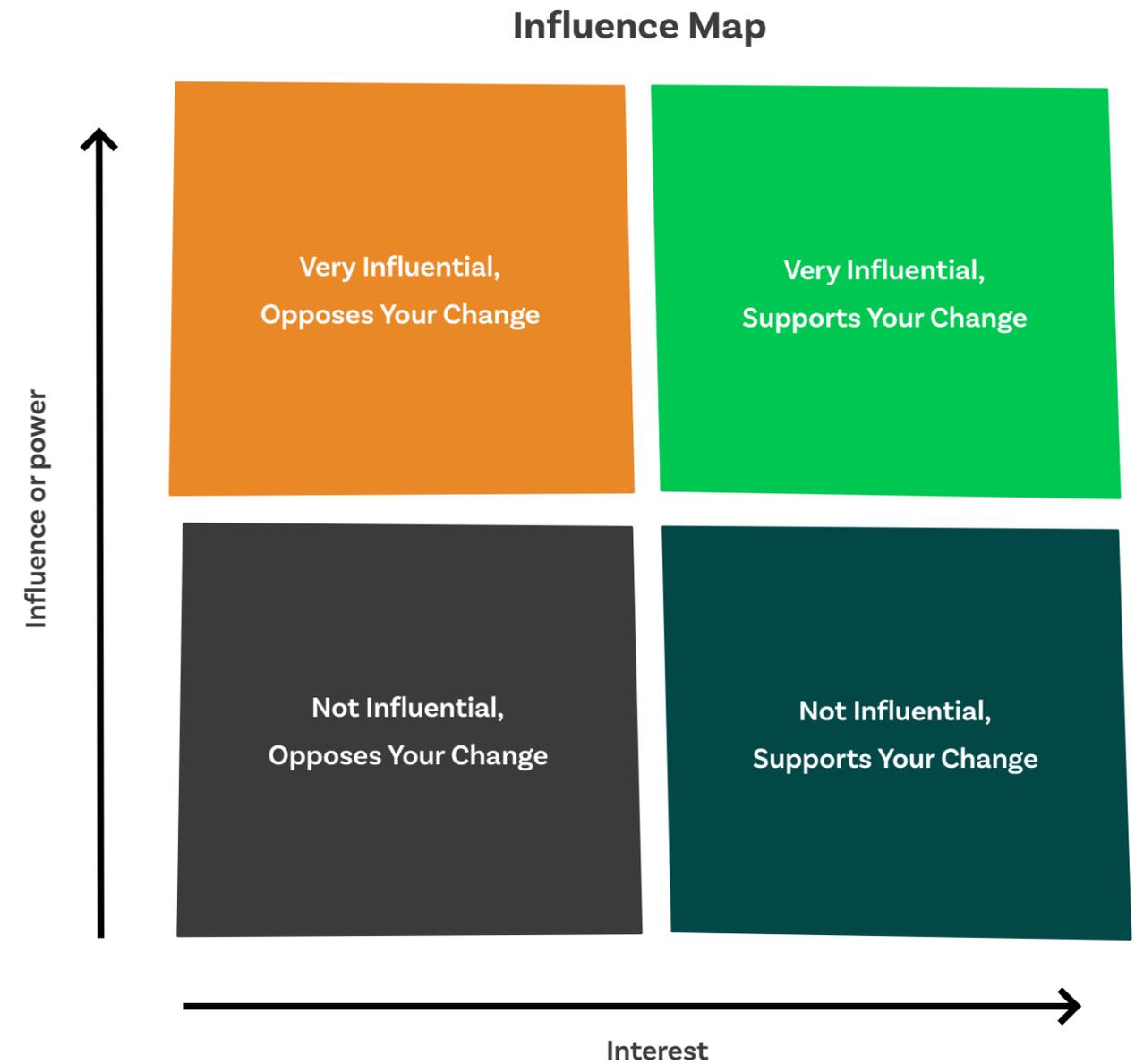
It can be helpful to map out the different groups of people who have an interest in your campaign or who you need to target to help make change happen.

This is called an influence map.

An **influence map** shows the influence a group or a person has to make change and how much they support your campaign. The influence map can help you see which people and what tactics might work best to help you reach your campaign goals.

You can then identify your target by mapping out who has the power to make the change you want to see. It's useful to target a person who has responsibility for a specific issue rather than someone who is seen as having a lot of power over many broad issues.

Do not be discouraged if powerholders do not fully support your campaign or see it as less important than other things. Every successful campaign has changed the hearts and minds of decision-makers who were not supportive at first.



For Example

If you are campaigning to improve bus services in your area, your **target** might be the **bus service providers** and a funder the **local council**. The **audience** will be **people who rely on buses** who may share your concern, **bus service managing directors** who make decisions about services, and **elected councillors** who make decisions about local funding levels and service conditions, and **elected members of parliament** and the **Government** who influence or decide overall funding levels.

Creating Your Message

Your audience are the people who you want to hear about your campaign in order to make change happen. It's helpful to consider how you talk about your campaign in ways that will encourage other people to support your campaign. Broadly speaking, this can be through evidence and statistics or emotions and values.

Providing More Information

Campaigners often assume that decision-makers and the public will change their mind if they receive information. This is based on the idea that decision-makers simply lack sufficient evidence and closing gaps in this information will lead them to change their view and embrace new solutions. For example, Elmore analysed our tenancy sustainment and mental health and complex needs services to find out how much money our way of supporting people has saved the public purse, in addition to the positive change we've supported people to make in their own lives.



£535K

Elmore's tenancy sustainment service has saved the public purse £535K in the last five years

 Elmore
Community Services

Tapping Into Emotions and Values

Making the case for change on the basis of evidence will be important, but it will rarely be the full solution or appeal to every decision-maker. For some decision-makers, evidence won't be critical in the process for making change. Some decision-makers may ignore information that contradicts their existing views. To change people's minds, and their sometimes deeply held views and how it works, evidence has to be supported by stories which strongly tap into people's emotions and values.

What's The Best Approach?

People have different interests, beliefs, or experiences which affect how they respond to different messages and arguments. Try out a few ways of explaining your campaign to see which is the most effective, using your influence map to guide you.

It's important to give your supporters information and ways to help your campaign. Provide them with updates on how the campaign is going, show the progress you're making with their help, and ask them to do activities that help your campaign.

- Your aim: What are you campaigning for?
- Who's your audience?
- What do they care about?
- Who are the people who have interest in your campaign?
- How much impact could they have on your campaign?
- What influence do these people have to make a change happen?

Tactics

What Are You Going To Do?

Once you've decided what you want to change, why you want to do it, and who you need to influence, the last piece of the puzzle is how you are going to campaign.

Your tactics are the things you want to do to reach your objectives. They are the core activities of your campaign.

Some common campaign tactics include:

- Petitions
- Digital and social media campaigns
- Letter writing
- Freedom of Information requests
- Public meetings and events
- Formal complaints
- Private meetings of lobbying
- Legal challenges
- Protest or direct action



Activities and Timescales

Different tactics will work for different campaigns, depending on who the decision maker is and how supportive (or not) they are of your campaign.

It's important to bear in mind that very few campaigns are won using only one tactic, and it usually takes a range of different actions to achieve the change you're after. Tactics will also have varying timescales.

Writing an email to your MP or councillor will take less time than submitting a Freedom of Information request or arranging a public meeting.



We strongly recommend working alongside others and building a community. Campaigns are stronger when more people work together than apart. We say this from experience: nearly everything Elmore does is in partnership as a founding member of the Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership, the Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance, and the Family Solutions Plus Partnership. We are also the Co-Chair of the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Network.



“Campaigns are stronger when more people work together than apart”



Resources

How Will You Make It Work?

Many activists push ahead with their campaigns without considering how they will make things work in practice. Deciding how much time to put into a campaign, how much money you can spend (if any), and who else you need to get involved are called your resources.

Resources can be broken down into the following: skills, people, time, and money.



Skills

Think about what skills you have and the people you know have. You can use those strengths to support your campaign. For example, if you are creative, then you could produce things to visually support your campaign. Maybe you have the skills to create a website for your campaign.



People

It can be tempting to try and do everything by yourself. Think about the people you know or could reach out to. Other people in your community are likely to share your aims.



Time

Be realistic about what can be done and when - there is only one of you after all. Running a campaign at the same time as studying or working means you need to be careful with your time to avoid 'burn out'.



Money

You may need some money to run your campaign. Two ways of raising money are through fundraising and crowdfunding.

Fundraising activities, like selling something, completing a charity event or having a sponsored activity are a great way to bring in income to fund your campaign if you need to. These can also be great opportunities to tell people about your campaign face-to-face.

Crowdfunding is when you ask people to donate directly to fund a campaign. Online fundraising platforms like GoFundMe or Kickstarter are popular. Remember that crowdfunding sites often take commission, and you need to be specific about what people's donations will go towards.

Evaluation

Keeping Track of Your Progress

Make sure you keep track of your campaign by measuring your success against your goals and objectives.

By taking a step back and looking at what you've achieved, you can see the impact that your campaign is making and where you still have room to make change.

Evaluating your campaign throughout can also help you reflect on the changes you would like to make to your messaging, tactics or audience targeting.



Influencing Governments

The way you campaign will vary depending on who you are targeting.

UK Parliament

Parliament is a common target for campaigns that aim to make change on the national level. Parliament is where the laws and legislation that govern the whole country are made. Members of Parliament (MPs) raise issues brought to them by constituents, scrutinise the work of the Government, and shape laws.

If you're able to get your MP to support your campaign, they can also do a number of things in Parliament such as ask questions of Government and the Prime Minister, put forward draft laws, speak in debates and arrange meetings.

There are a range of ways to influence Parliament:

Your Local MP

You can contact your local MP to raise an issue. They can then do things like ask questions in Parliament or write to Government Ministers.

You can find out who your MP is and how to get in touch here:

Parliamentary Petitions

You can set up a petition at petition.parliament.uk and ask others to sign. If you get 10,000 signatures, the Government must respond. If it reaches 100,000 signatures, it will be considered for debate in Parliament.

Select Committees

These are groups of MPs from different political parties that investigate the work of Government and run inquiries to learn more about a topic. You can submit evidence to raise your concerns on a specific issue.

The Government usually responds to the reports that Select Committees produce.

Freedom of Information Requests

Freedom of Information (FOI) requests can be made to public sector organisations, including Government departments. They can be a helpful way of establishing evidence for an issue and help you demonstrate the need for change. Information about FOIs is available on the Government website:

Local Government

Your local council has oversight and decision-making powers for the things that happen in your area. But, in some areas the responsibility for certain things can be complicated. Oxfordshire has a two-tier system of local government. This means that your council services are provided by two different councils.

In Oxfordshire, there is one county council (Oxfordshire County Council) and five district councils (Oxford City Council, Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, and West Oxfordshire).

District councils run services such as planning, leisure, and waste collection, while Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for running services such as libraries, schools and social care.

Spend time getting to know how your local government works and who has the power to make a difference on local issues in order to enable change to happen.

Influencing Businesses

Not every campaign requires political change. Sometimes persuading a company or business to do something differently can be the way to achieve change.

If this is the case for your campaign, start by finding the person most able to make change within the company and approach them politely and constructively. That could be someone who has responsibility for customer service, a facilities manager, or someone responsible for diversity and inclusion.

As well as thinking through your case for change, try to predict the reasons why the company may not support your campaign and prepare some counterarguments. Do think about how you can talk about your campaign in a way that will appeal to their interests and goals.

A financial argument can often be more convincing to a business than an argument based only on equality and fairness.

Other customers or the trade bodies that represent the business may also be supportive of your campaign. They could be one of your audiences to help your call for change.



Communicating Your Campaign

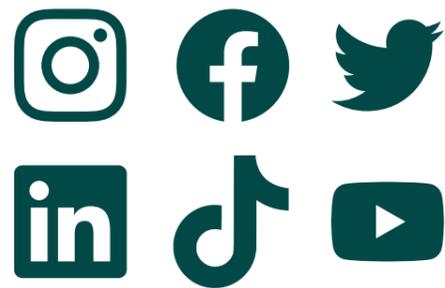
It's important to have clear communications for your campaign. It will help people to understand what you are trying to do and how they can show support.

Be clear, concise, and confident in your communications to help you get your message across. Create a name for your campaign that makes it easy to find when searching online.

Social Media

Bear in mind that different groups of people use social media differently. Consider who might see your messages and how they might respond to content depending on where they see it.

For example, Twitter is a good way to engage with political decision makers and journalists, while Instagram and Facebook are more effective platforms for building public support and keeping people up to date with your campaign.



Social Media Tips

No matter what social media platform you're using, there are some key things to bear in mind:



Be Conversational

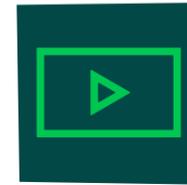
Social media works best when you are having real conversations with people - it's meant to open up discussion, not be a notice board. It's good to express your opinions authentically, but make sure you keep your tone respectful.



See What Other Conversations Are Happening

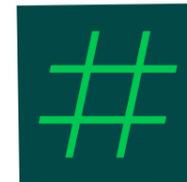
Find and follow people who talk about the topics you're interested in and try to talk to them and share what they are saying. You could become part of an online community or search a relevant hashtag to find others with a similar interest in an issue.

“Create a name for your campaign that makes it easy to find when searching online.”



Make It Engaging

Photos or videos help people to see what you're working on. They also catch people's attention. Try to use relevant photos or videos to show what you're talking about. You could even make graphics to illustrate the messages for your campaign.



Use Hashtags

Hashtags let other people find your content on social media and can also become a unifying feature of your campaign. Try to stick to just one or two hashtags per post.

Storytelling

By using your story, you can personify an issue. This will help people to understand the real impact of what you are campaigning for. A good story is authentic, clear, and engaging.

Your story should include information like who you are, where you're from, your experiences and why those experiences have led to your campaign. However, you don't need to include every fact about your life, or anything that you don't want people to know about.

You can also ask other people for their stories to support your campaign. Just note that it's important that they know how their story will be used and that you gain their permission to use it.

Self-care

Lots of people start campaigns extremely fast, but then end them after a relatively short time without much change being achieved.

Pace yourself, set small achievable goals, and take a break when you need it. Campaigns are rarely won in a week, so think about how you can help keep your campaign going.

Looking after yourself is important especially at busy stages of a campaign. Many people run on adrenaline or excitement, which can be a lot of fun, but isn't sustainable long term. Make sure you take regular breaks, even if you feel you don't need them.

Plan out campaigning activities and try to bring more people into your campaign who can support you and share responsibilities. If you're not able to complete something on a certain day, someone else could follow your plan to do it in your place.

Don't forget to take care of the essentials like food and any medication you need to get through a busy campaigning period.

It might sound pessimistic right now, but something may well go wrong at some point.

But remember that most problems can be worked around. It's not a reflection on you, problems occur in every campaign. Being prepared and putting things in perspective will help you to bounce back.

Most of all though, keep it fun!

Campaigning doesn't always have to be too serious. Build a campaign that you enjoy running.



Campaign Plan

Problem

What's the issue?

Solution

What do you want to change?

Audience

Who can make the change?
And who else can help?

Messaging

What are the key messages you want to get across?

Tactics

How will you get your message heard?

Activities and Timeline

What are you doing and when?

Resources

What help do you need to run your campaign?

Evaluation

How will you know if your campaign is a success?

