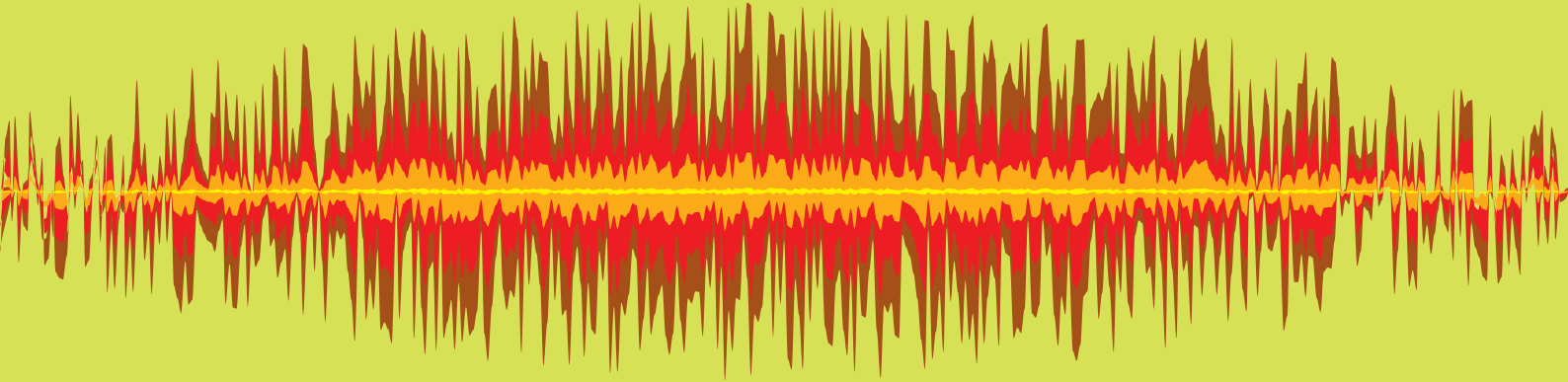


# VOICE ACTIVATED



MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN



The **Methodist** Church   
World Mission Fund

 children&youth METHODIST





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## Introduction

The Methodist Children & Youth resource *Voice Activated*<sup>1</sup> focused largely on encouraging local churches and projects to hear the voice of children and young people and to allow this voice to have an impact on decision making and planning.

This complementary resource moves us on a step further and explores ways in which the voice of children and young people can be heard beyond the Church in the wider world.

Once opinions have been gathered and the issues discussed, how do you help the groups and individuals you work with to influence change and make a real difference – on both a local, national and international scale, within the Church and in society?

How can we help children and young people channel their passions and interests in a way that will impact positively on their communities and help them to further their discipleship?

*Voice Activated: Making Change Happen* offers broad-ranging and comprehensive information and advice and will hopefully prove a useful tool for youth leaders and children's workers – as well as for children and young people themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> *Voice Activated* is available as a free download from [www.childrenandyouth.org.uk/worker/resources-worker/voice-activated](http://www.childrenandyouth.org.uk/worker/resources-worker/voice-activated)



## Section 1: Campaigning – what and why?

### What is campaigning?

Believe it or not, we all campaign on a daily basis – whenever we want something to change. We might campaign to try and change the brand of coffee our friend buys or to get our parents to take us on holiday. Campaigning does not just happen on an individual level, though. On average, someone in the UK will encounter over 3,000 media messages a day – most of which will be campaigns of some description from individuals, governments, companies or charities.

All campaigns, however, as different as they are, have one thing in common: they all aim to influence people and make them do something. So whether it is trying to get people to buy the latest gadgets or raising awareness about children's rights using social media, campaigning is about creating change.

### Why campaign?

Getting involved in a campaign can help raise awareness of issues and can influence those who hold power, instigating change that will affect people's lives for the better. The more people that are involved in a campaign, the more powerful it is. It is true that campaigning can take a long time and be hard work on occasions. **However, campaigning can and does work!** We only have to look at history to see this; women getting the vote in the UK and the abolition of apartheid in South Africa are just a few of many examples of how campaigning can make a difference.

The two examples given in the paragraph above are both campaigns that dealt with hugely important issues of social justice, which had an impact on a global scale. However, campaigning can sometimes be about much more local or personal issues – or simply about lending your voice to one side of a contested matter. For instance, in a local town setting there might be a debate concerning the benefits of pedestrian subways versus pedestrian crossings. One side of this debate might argue that the subways are more environmentally friendly, whilst those opposing might argue that the crossings are safer for lone pedestrians. Both sides of this argument have valid points to make and you may well agree with one or the other. By campaigning, you can improve the chances of a decision being made that you are happy with. By not campaigning you are accepting an outcome without attempting to influence it.

What's more, campaigning can be a fun and rewarding experience and is a great way to meet like-minded people who are also passionate about making a difference! It is an opportunity to make a life-changing difference and make the world a better place to live in.

## Why encourage children and young people to campaign?

The United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child states that children and young people should have a say in the decisions that affect them<sup>1</sup>. Sometimes this happens naturally, as part of a decision-making process but, on occasion, it's not as obvious that children and young people might have something to say on a particular issue. By empowering them to speak up when they have something to say, or a change they want to see, you can help them realise from an early age that their voice matters.

If you work with those coming up to or over the age of 18, this becomes even more crucial, as the most obvious way of making change happen is using our right to vote. The *Bite the Ballot* campaign has this to say about the importance of young people signing up to the electoral register:

When politicians think about writing policies, they write policies for the people on the electoral register and those who vote. And who do they see when they look at the electoral register? Not young people. Only about half of young people are registered, whereas 96% of older people are. Just being **registered to vote** gives you power, it means they have to start thinking about you.<sup>2</sup>

By taking ownership of issues they care about at an early age, children and young people feel more connected to the world around them, more engaged with political and social systems and less alienated as citizens.

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<sup>1</sup> *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, [www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx), 1989.

<sup>2</sup> [www.bitetheballot.co.uk](http://www.bitetheballot.co.uk)





## Section 2: In the Methodist Church

The Methodist Church has a long and proud history of social action and campaigning for justice. There are several ways in which you and your groups could engage with this work.

### World Church Relationships (WCR) & the World Mission Fund

WCR facilitates, maintains and develops the relationships between Partner Churches throughout the world and the Methodist Church in Britain at all levels. This is done through:

- people, as WCR encourages people from churches around the world to exchange visits, share ideas and learn from each other
- money, sharing financial resources to equip churches for mission, ministry and church growth
- prayer, telling stories so that people can pray for their fellow Methodists and other Christians and people around the world.

WCR also works with many different teams within the Methodist Church in Britain to ensure that a global perspective is embedded in Church activities.

WCR works with 60 Partner Churches worldwide in 4 geographical areas:

- Africa
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Asia and the Pacific
- Europe.

The Church also works with the Methodist Church in Ireland.

You can sign-up to receive the monthly *World Church Bulletin*, which will keep you up to date with news from Mission Partners and churches around the world, at

[www.methodist.org.uk/mission/world-church-bulletin](http://www.methodist.org.uk/mission/world-church-bulletin)

The World Mission Fund is the fundraising and grant making arm of WCR. There are several ways in which you and your groups can help support WCR and the World Mission Fund:

1. **Prayer.** *The Methodist Prayer Handbook* (available from Methodist Publishing – see details at the end of this section) contains daily suggestions for prayer, including



prayer for Partner Churches and mission partners working in different countries around the world.

2. **Organise an event for Mission Sunday.** Resources for this are available online at [www.methodistchurch.org.uk/prayer-and-worship/methodist-special-sundays/mission-sunday](http://www.methodistchurch.org.uk/prayer-and-worship/methodist-special-sundays/mission-sunday)
3. **Setting up a church link.** A booklet detailing how to go about this is available here: [www.methodistchurch.org.uk/downloads/me\\_Partnership\\_document.pdf](http://www.methodistchurch.org.uk/downloads/me_Partnership_document.pdf)
4. **Get involved with Junior Mission for All (JMA).** See below for more information.

## Junior Mission for All (JMA)

JMA is part of the World Mission Fund and is the best way for children and young people to learn about, engage with and support the work of World Church Relationships. Money raised through its work is added to the overall donations to the Mission Fund, with one fifth also going to the Mission in Britain Fund (see below).

The threefold aims of JMA are education, prayer and service, as reflected in the JMA promise:

“I promise to learn, pray and serve with the worldwide church of Jesus Christ.”

The success of JMA largely relies on an adult member of a local church or circuit taking on the role of JMA Secretary and coordinating the distribution of resources and collecting in any donations/money raised by children and young people.

The JMA year runs from September through until August; each year, resources for the coming year are made available in July. The work is supported by the publication of *Rainbow* magazine, which is dispatched in the winter, spring and summer terms. Other resources available to JMA groups include collection boxes, donation envelopes, posters, certificates, badges, challenge chart, prayer card, record book, account book and service outline. Some of these can be downloaded for free from [www.childrenandyouth.org.uk/worker/jma-secretaries/jma-information](http://www.childrenandyouth.org.uk/worker/jma-secretaries/jma-information). Everything else is ordered through Methodist Publishing (details at the end of this section).

## Mission in Britain Fund

Mission in Britain supports a wide spectrum of different projects throughout the country that seek to serve in the following ways:

- mission alongside the poor
- chaplaincy
- sharing the gospel with all ages
- ministering opportunities at Methodist Heritage sites

- using church properties to serve local communities.

*Mission Matters* magazine, published three times a year, is the best way to find out about some of the work funded by Mission in Britain. You can download the latest copy of the magazine from [www.methodist.org.uk/mission/mission-matters-magazine](http://www.methodist.org.uk/mission/mission-matters-magazine)

Mission in Britain also produces regular prayer resources and videos featuring some of the projects it supports. These can be found at [www.methodist.org.uk/mission/mission-in-britain](http://www.methodist.org.uk/mission/mission-in-britain)

Other resources, such as giving envelopes, posters and ‘thank you’ bookmarks can be ordered from Methodist Publishing (details at the end of this section).

As already mentioned, one fifth of the money raised through JMA (see above) is given to the Mission in Britain fund.

## Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT)

JPIT is a venture of the Methodist Church, the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the United Reformed Church. The team helps all three churches to work together on issues of justice and equality.

On the website [www.jointpublicissues.org.uk](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk) you can find plenty of information about the Churches’ stance on certain public issues, as well as information about current campaigns on subjects such as the environment, poverty or peacemaking.

JPIT also produces prayer, worship and study resources and has a blog and e-newsletter, *Praxis*, which you can sign up for.

## All We Can (formerly Methodist Relief and Development Fund)

All We Can is a charity that works with people in some of the world’s poorest communities. It invests in partnerships that improve the quality of life and create positive, long-term changes for individuals, families and nations. This is done through a three-pronged approach:

- **Supporting livelihoods** – training individuals in sustainable farming, for instance, or offering credit schemes to help communities establish small businesses.
- **Improving health** – through raising awareness as well as providing basic health care, clean water and sanitation.
- **Strengthening the role of women in society** – promoting women’s voices and their rights to resources, opportunities and protection from harm, increasing their life choices.

Throughout the year All We Can produces a wide range of resources, containing stories from partners around the world and ideas for how you and your church/group can respond

– including through fundraising, speaking out, prayer, promoting the charity’s work and attending/running events. For more information visit [www.allwecan.org.uk](http://www.allwecan.org.uk)

## World AIMS (World Action in Methodist Schools)

World AIMS is a partnership between Methodist Education and All We Can, on behalf of the Methodist Church. The website [www.worldaims.org.uk](http://www.worldaims.org.uk) contains a wealth of teaching resources, aimed at inspiring learners to discover more about the world around them. Many of these resources can be adapted and used in churches and children’s or youth groups.

**To order resources available from Methodist Publishing for work on behalf of JMA or the Mission in Britain Fund, contact Methodist Publishing:**

Norwich Books and Music  
13a Hellesdon Park Road  
Norwich  
Norfolk NR6 5DR  
Telephone: 0845 017 8220

[resources@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:resources@methodistchurch.org.uk)  
[www.methodistpublishing.org.uk](http://www.methodistpublishing.org.uk)



## Section 3: Planning a campaign

There are many different forms of campaigning, which will be listed in more detail further on in this resource. A successful campaign will involve more than one method and different techniques are more appropriate for different stages in the life of a campaign.

If there is an issue that you, or the children and young people you work with, care about, then the first thing to do is investigate what is already happening with regards to that issue. Is there an individual (such as an MP), a community group, charity or pressure group currently working towards a similar goal or goals? If the answer is yes, then obviously it makes more sense to join forces as they will no doubt already have resources you can use and there is power in numbers!

If the answer is no, then you will need to put some careful thought into planning your campaign. To start with, ask yourself the following questions:

- What is it you want to see change?
- What evidence do you have that the change is needed? What is the risk?
- What steps are needed to make this change?
- What is the first step?
- What is achievable/realistic?
- Who has the power/authority to make this change?
- Who can/will support your campaign?

For more advice on what to think about before starting your campaign, visit [www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/campaigns/planning-acampaign](http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/campaigns/planning-acampaign)

Once you know the answers to at least some, if not all these questions, then the next step is to work out which of the following techniques will lead to a successful campaign.



## Section 4: Getting your message out

### Raising awareness

Nearly all campaigns will require you to educate and inform others with regards to the issue at hand. Where each initiative will differ is in relation to the audience that needs to be reached. For instance, a drive to improve the book selection in the school library would not be targeted at the same people as a campaign challenging unpaid internships. There are several ways of raising awareness of your campaign. These include:

- advertising (although this is often not realistic on most budgets)
- leafleting (which could go alongside another campaign technique, such as a 'stunt' or a protest)
- presentations
- public relations activities and 'stunts'.

By presentations we mean speaking in front of those people you would like to influence. This could be the general public or it could be a specific, targeted group such as your district synod or your school assembly. Before doing this you need to make sure you have done your research and you are ready to answer questions! Keep the message short and to the point and use some of the tips from *Making your message effective* towards the end of this section. You could also visit [www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/campaigns/public-speaking-tips](http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/campaigns/public-speaking-tips) for more guidance.

Public relations activities could be as simple as writing a press/media release, outlining the reasons for your campaign and what you are doing to try and make change happen. For more detailed guidance on making your story 'newsworthy' and writing a press release, see [www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/campaigns/press](http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/campaigns/press)

A good way to grab attention for your campaign is to plan a publicity stunt, for example a flash mob (gathering together a large group in a public place and doing something unexpected, such as a choreographed dance routine) or a banner drop from a public building. When planning a publicity stunt, make sure you keep in mind at all times the message you want to get across – it is no use videos of your dance routine going viral if no one knows why you are dancing! Also, make sure you keep it legal and get permission from the relevant people beforehand.

One final note on awareness raising... Whilst this is a very important step in making change happen, you cannot leave it there. **Once you have told people about the issue you are campaigning about, you also need to tell them how you would like them to respond!** This could be as simple as making a donation or signing a petition or it could be that you

want them to contact a decision maker individually. Be clear about what action you want people to take as a result of hearing about your campaign.

## Making your message effective

Many charities, advertisers and pressure groups will use emotive words and language to engage the reader emotionally. Similarly, shocking facts and statistics are also frequently used to spur the reader to take action. Here are a few tips for making sure your message comes across loud and clear:

1. Know your audience. It's always better to think about a specific group of people you want to reach with your message, as opposed to simply aiming your campaign at 'the general public'. Who can help you best reach and/or influence those key decision makers? Once you know this, you also need to know how that specific group communicates. Social media might seem like the most obvious place to start in the twenty-first century – but what if your target audience don't use Facebook or Twitter? Perhaps a community bulletin board or local paper is a better option?
2. Rather than a general aim of raising awareness about a cause, set yourself some specific, measurable targets. What direct result do you want to see as a consequence of people hearing your message?
3. Use facts and figures to show evidence that there is a need for change – but do not rely on these alone! Don't overwhelm people with statistics but back these up with narrative – personal stories that 'tug at the heart strings'. Going back to Point 1, make sure these stories will appeal to the expected values of the target audience. What you see as a sympathetic character might not appear so to everyone!
4. Don't try too hard with the shock tactics. Studies show that people switch off if they feel a charity or campaign is trying to manipulate them into being shocked.
5. Do what it takes to make you stand out; you need to think harder and smarter and be extremely creative to grab people's attention in a crowded marketplace. Have a look at what other messages are out there that you will be competing with, then decide what is going to make yours unique.
6. Make sure you tell your audience how they can and how they have helped. People like to know that they make a difference. Address a reader directly. Persuasive writing uses personal pronouns such as we, you, our and us to make the audience think you are talking only to them.





## Section 5: Campaigning techniques

### Influencing decision-makers

One of the questions you should have asked yourself at the start of the campaign is, 'Who has the power/authority to make this change?'. Often the most effective way of seeing change happen is by going, wherever possible, straight to these decision makers.

This could mean contacting a politician – whether that be a Local Councillor, your MP, a Cabinet Minister (for example the Home Secretary), an MEP, an international politician, a Lord or a member of an All-Party Working Group<sup>1</sup>. If this is a campaign that you are taking the lead on (as opposed to getting involved in wider campaigning through a charity or pressure group) then you are more likely to be contacting a Councillor for very local issues/spending or your MP to effect change nationally. The web page [www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/campaigns/meeting-mp](http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/campaigns/meeting-mp) has more information about contacting and meeting up with your MP. To find out who you should be writing to about a particular issue or from a specific local area, and for an easy way to get in touch, visit [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com)

Here are some hints and tips for writing to your MP:

1. MPs tend to pay more attention to letters addressed from their constituents, so be sure to include your name and address so that they know that you are one of their constituents and where to reply.
2. Write your MP's name and the House of Commons address at the top of the left hand side of the page (however, if you are emailing your MP, it is not necessary to lay out your email as a letter).
3. State why you are writing and why you feel strongly about the issue. Use your own words and make it personal by drawing from your own experience where possible
4. Remember to keep your letter short (one side of A4 should be enough) and to the point – using bullet points to include facts to clearly highlight your argument.

To find out more about what various politicians have been doing in your name, visit [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com)

Whilst politicians are key contacts when trying to effect change, they are by no means the only ones wielding the power. For instance, a child or young person might want to change something within their school and, in this instance; the key decision makers would be the Head Teacher, Parent Teacher Association and the School Governors. If your campaign



was to improve the selection of fair-trade products in a local supermarket, then the key decision maker would be the Store Manager, Regional Manager or even the CEO of the company. One final example, if you wanted to make sure that your Methodist district increased their spending on services for children and young people, your key decision maker would be the District Synod. Again, before starting your campaign, ask yourself who the most effective person to speak to would be and then get researching!

## Petitions

Whoever you identify as being a person of influence, the best way to prove that the issue you are passionate about has support, is by presenting this key decision maker with a petition. This can demonstrate that you are not alone in wanting to see change happen and, in some instances, can also show that the issue crosses boundaries of age, background, gender etc. A petition can be created either in paper form (as a 'hard copy') or online using a variety of platforms.

Here are our 'top 10 tips' for creating a paper petition (some of this advice will also apply to online petitions):

1. Find out if there is a specific number of signatures you need on your petition.
2. Find out what information you need for a signature to be valid (for instance you may need an address or postcode to show that a signatory is a registered voter).
3. Research your topic – understand all the positions on a certain issue fully and, perhaps most importantly, make sure there isn't already a similar petition in existence!
4. Start your petition with a specific summary statement that clearly identifies what you are asking people to support – make it precise, concise and informative.
5. Under this summary, write a very short paragraph to give potential signatories some more information. Make sure you don't put off potential supporters with a huge block of text!
6. Proofread your petition. Get someone who doesn't have much understanding of the issue to read it through. If they can grasp what you are trying to change, then your petition is more likely to be understood by others.
7. Create the signers' form on a separate sheet of paper, with a short petition title at the top. Divide the page into five columns labelled Name, Address, Email address, Phone number, and Signature. Allow plenty of room for the Address column. Add 10-20 lines per page.
8. Photocopy or print multiple copies of your original. Make enough pages for the number of signatures you need. Number the pages so you can keep better track of them and the signatures you have. You may also want signature gatherers to initial the pages they have used or overseen so you can ask them any questions about what is written on a particular page. Initialling pages also increases overall accountability.

9. The best way to promote your petition is to talk to people in person. Go where you can speak with large numbers of people concerned about the issue or open to information about it. If your petition is about a school, speak to people at or near the school. Hang posters on community bulletin boards about your cause.
10. Be polite. No one likes an angry petitioner in their face if they are running late for work! Even if someone believes in your cause, they might not have the time to support you at the moment. Don't take it personally! It's always better to be polite; they may contact you or help your cause when they have the time and resources.

[www.parliament.uk/get-involved/have-your-say/petitioning](http://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/have-your-say/petitioning) has more information on petitioning parliament.

There are now many different platforms for creating petitions online. Here are just a few:

- [www.epetitions.direct.gov.uk](http://www.epetitions.direct.gov.uk)
- [www.sumofus.org](http://www.sumofus.org)
- [www.38degrees.org.uk](http://www.38degrees.org.uk)
- [www.change.org](http://www.change.org)

Obviously, large pressure groups and charities such as Amnesty International and the Children's Society will also have their own online petitions.

## Using social media in your campaigning

With the rise of the Internet over recent years, the use of social media (such as Facebook and Twitter) has become incredibly important in campaigning. Sharing campaign updates, photos and videos with Facebook friends and Twitter followers helps to raise awareness about an issue and encourages others to take action too. What's more, social media is both instant and global. Of course, as covered in Section 6 of *Voice Activated*<sup>2</sup>, safeguarding is crucial whilst engaging with social media. Full guidance on safeguarding and social media can be found on the website [www.childrenandyouth.org.uk](http://www.childrenandyouth.org.uk)

## Prayer vigils

A prayer vigil is an extended period of prayer, often completely silent or with periods of silence and usually focussed on a specific topic or cause. They can take place inside an appropriate building or they can be held in a public place – similar to a static protest, as outlined in section 6, but perhaps less confrontational as a means of raising awareness of an issue. A vigil is another method you could consider using as part of your campaign.

## Boycotting

Another form of campaigning is the boycott. This means taking a deliberate decision to avoid buying from, using goods from or dealing with a specific person, organisation or country as a form of protest. In most cases this is about how you spend your money – whether that be the clothes you buy, the food you eat or where you go on your holiday –

although this is not always the case (for instance, some people chose to not watch the coverage of the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics because they disagreed with different policies of the Russian government).

This often goes hand in hand with ethical buying – choosing to support the companies you ‘approve of’ as well as withdrawing support from those you don’t. For instance, you might choose to stop buying battery farm eggs and, instead, start purchasing free range. Or you might choose to start buying fairtrade tea or coffee. Or you might show a preference for buying from local or independent businesses wherever possible.

Boycotting is not without its problems. Many charities and pressure groups will agree that, in many cases, boycotting should be a last resort. It should not be entered into without first thinking through the consequences and alternatives – particularly when it comes to issues of international development. For example, if a large group of people stop buying from a company that uses child labour, then the children involved may be forced out of work and into an even worse situation. Much better to put pressure on a government to introduce laws protecting workers or to invest in education or social welfare programmes.

For more information on ethical consumerism, visit the following websites:

- [www.ethicalconsumer.org](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org)
- [www.labourbehindthelabel.org](http://www.labourbehindthelabel.org)
- [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> Visit [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmllparty/register/contents.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmllparty/register/contents.htm) for more information on All Party Groups.

<sup>2</sup> *Voice Activated* is available as a free download from [www.childrenandyouth.org.uk/worker/resources-worker/voice-activated](http://www.childrenandyouth.org.uk/worker/resources-worker/voice-activated)



## Section 6: Protests, rallies and events

This is getting into slightly more complicated territory but the key thing you need to know when considering planning a protest march is that, by law, you have to inform the police at least six days before the actual event – by submitting a completed form to your local police station. The police have the power to limit or change the route of your march, as well as setting any other conditions they see fit. This could include changing the location, limiting how long the march lasts or putting a cap on the number of people who can attend. You also have to seek permission from the owner of any roadway that you might be walking along (usually your local authority).

If you are organising a static protest (staying in one location – no marching) then you are not legally required to tell the police. They can, however, stop a sit-down protest if it blocks a road or public walkway. Although you don't have to tell the police, there are benefits in keeping them in the loop. For instance, they might be able to offer advice and even facilitation to help make your event successful and safe. In addition, they can alert you to any planned counter-protests or tell you if your event might clash with another group's plans to use the same venue at the same time.

As with anything, a successful event will only happen with planning. This should include a thorough risk assessment (for more help on this, download the *Events Guidance* pack from [www.childrenandyouth.org.uk](http://www.childrenandyouth.org.uk)). If your intended crowd is large, you may want to consider whether you need to arrange insurance and if you need to recruit stewards. If you are recruiting stewards, organise a stewards' briefing ahead of the event so that all of them are aware of any potential safety hazards, know how to contact the police if necessary and know who to contact if they become aware of a lost child or a safeguarding issue.

With a few restrictions you can hold a march, rally or demonstration in any public place as long as you obtain the relevant permission from the police in advance. Your venue should be big enough to accommodate a crowd safely and small enough to make your crowd look big! Try to choose a venue that is relevant to your campaign. For instance, if you are campaigning to keep a local hospital open then, if possible, march past the hospital.

Before you organise a march, rally or demonstration it is very important that you have identified clear campaigning messages and know exactly who you are trying to influence and what you want them to do. You also need to think about how you will generate enough interest/ attendance to make an impact and who, specifically, you could invite to maximise that impact. If you have a core of supporters, get them to regularly talk to people by word of

mouth or social media. Give each of your core supporters a realistic recruitment target and ask them to bring along family, friends and colleagues. Send a press release to local newspapers and radio stations and, if possible, try to get them to support your campaign.

Include an email address and/or phone number (not your personal one; stay safe!) in all your publicity, and encourage people to contact you with their details if they are planning to attend the event. Contact everyone again just before the event and continue to communicate with them afterwards to update them on the campaign.

However big your crowd, you can maximise the impact and attract lots of attention by using props and making noise. Play music, wave banners or placards, bang drums, wear coordinated and colourful clothing and hand out flyers to the general public as you march.

Address the crowd at the end of the event. Thank everyone for coming and let them know what will happen next. Suggest ways for supporters to continue supporting the campaign. Let people know where they can leave their contact details if they want to register their support and continue to receive campaign updates. Take a photograph of the crowd but make sure you do not feature the faces of any children or young people unless you have the express written permission of their parents and offer others a means of 'opting out' of any publicity shots.

After your event, write to the people you are trying to influence and draw their attention to the number of people who support your campaign objectives. Reiterate exactly what action you would like the decision makers to take. Send any photographs you have taken of the event to the media. Follow up the event by sending out a 'thank you' email and news of the way in which the policy makers responded to everyone who provided their contact details. Do not end your campaign with the march or demonstration; plan your next steps and a follow-up activity.



## Section 7: Being the change...

Sometimes making change happen isn't about getting involved in politics or campaigning. Sometimes, as in the famous quote often attributed to Gandhi, you have to "be the change you want to see in the world" and be hands-on in making that change happen.

### Volunteering

It can be very difficult for those aged under 18 to find volunteer roles. Issues of insurance, opening hours and safeguarding can often get in the way. However, there are a few volunteer opportunities out there that are open to children and young people. WRVS will sometimes take on volunteers from the age of 14 and you can search online at [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk) for other volunteer vacancies. There is also advice and support available from [www.vinspired.com](http://www.vinspired.com), specifically for young people (aged 14-25) looking to volunteer.

As a leader, you could also talk to your children's or youth group about ways in which they could work together to make a difference. Perhaps they could help to decorate a room in their church, organise a litter pick, take part in a day of service for the elderly in the area or even fundraise for a charitable cause? For information and support with regards to working with volunteers, visit the website of Volunteer England ([www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk)). Its *Good Practice Bank* features lots of helpful factsheets and templates (most available for free), including advice on working with young volunteers.

### Setting up a community project

Perhaps the most rewarding way in which children and young people can make a difference – particularly on their own doorstep – is by setting up and running their own community project. Often young people are the ones best placed to not only point out issues or concerns in their area but also identify the solutions to them! Planning and delivering a project – including budgeting, applying for funding, fundraising, organising events, working in a team and evaluating impact – is an amazing way for someone to engage with society, learn skills and make a difference. There are a number of charities and funding bodies out there that will specifically support projects set up by young people, many offering advice and guidance as well as financial help. Here are just a few of them:

- Vinspired cashpoint provides grants of up to £500 for 14-25 year olds: [www.vinspired.com/our-campaigns/cashpoint](http://www.vinspired.com/our-campaigns/cashpoint)



- Live Unltd. offers up to £5000 to those aged 11-21, as well as lots of support to help make a project successful: [www.liveunltd.com](http://www.liveunltd.com)
- Starbucks also provides funding for projects led by people aged 16-24: [www.starbucks.co.uk/responsibility/community/youth-action](http://www.starbucks.co.uk/responsibility/community/youth-action)
- Many local councils will have a youth opportunity fund for local youth-led projects. To find out more, visit [www.gov.uk/apply-youth-opportunity-funding](http://www.gov.uk/apply-youth-opportunity-funding)
- A little different, but Fixers provide funding and support to young people aged 16-25 who want to broadcast a positive message, via film or print: [www.fixers.org.uk](http://www.fixers.org.uk)

The connexional fundraising team can offer advice to local projects. For more information please contact the Fundraising Officer: [fundraising@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@methodistchurch.org.uk)

## Becoming a decision maker yourself!

There are many ways in which children and young people themselves can become one of those key 'movers and shakers' who help to make decisions that affect their own lives and the lives of their peers.

On a local level children or young people might be able to get involved in their:

- local Church Council
- district synod/district youth forum
- student union
- school council
- local authority/council advisory group
- local council as a councillor themselves if they are over 18!

On a national level they could:

- join the British Youth Council ([www.byc.org.uk](http://www.byc.org.uk))
- become a member of a charity's youth board or coalition
- attend 3Generate Children's and Youth Assembly or even stand for election as a Youth Representative or Methodist Youth President
- stand for election in the National Union of Students
- get involved in the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Day ([www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/takeover\\_day](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/takeover_day)).





## Section 8: Other useful resources

We've already signposted several very useful websites and resources throughout this resource. But, just in case they're not enough, here are a few more.

- **TrueTube** was launched in 2007, originally to encourage young people to make films dealing with the issues they cared about. As the library of films grew, the purpose of the site evolved to include lesson and assembly plans to help teachers use the film. TrueTube now hosts hundreds of resources, supporting thousands of students each year: [www.truetube.co.uk](http://www.truetube.co.uk)
- The **British Youth Council** website has lots of information, advice and guidance on lobbying, campaigning and making a difference: [www.byc.org.uk](http://www.byc.org.uk)
- **CRAE** has produced a downloadable resource entitled, *Get Ready for Change: Be a Children's Rights Champion*, which is a pack designed to give young people all the help they need to campaign for their human rights to be better protected and respected where they live. You can find it at [www.crae.org.uk/publications-resources/get-ready-for-change-be-a-childrens-rights-champion](http://www.crae.org.uk/publications-resources/get-ready-for-change-be-a-childrens-rights-champion)
- **Participation Works** offers a variety of useful free downloads. In particular: [www.participationworks.org.uk/resources/how-to-support-children-and-young-peoples-campaigning](http://www.participationworks.org.uk/resources/how-to-support-children-and-young-peoples-campaigning)
- **Community Service Volunteers** (CSV) has expertise to share in volunteering and learning and also heads up the annual *Make a Difference Day* campaign: [www.csv.org.uk](http://www.csv.org.uk)