

Local Housing Rights Defenders

Campaigning safely during the Covid-19 outbreak

Campaigning is personal. There is no right or wrong way to create change in your community and we want you to have ownership over how you organise. Following government advice, this guide aims to support you with hints and tips on how to campaign safely during the Covid-19 pandemic. Remember, your local Community Organiser will support you as much as they can to help you campaign safely under the overarching goal of seeing a Scotland where everyone has access to a safe, affordable home.

When planning your campaigning, it's always useful to consider these questions...

- What are the outcomes I would like to see from this activity?
- Who is my target?
- Will it raise awareness of my issue?
- Can I get other people involved online?
- Are there any other organisations in the community who can support me virtually?
- Will this activity put me or others at risk?
- Do I need online resources or materials?



The possibilities to campaign remotely are endless! Some ways you might decide to campaign are...

Social Media

Social media has been used over recent years to create movements that have made fundamental and lasting changes. You can use social media to influence decision makers in Scotland!

Why use social media?

1. You can reach out to hundreds of people very quickly, sharing key messages
2. You can contact decision makers directly through their social media profile
3. You can create Facebook groups and encourage your local community to join

Check out our 'inspiring through social media' guide for hints, tips and advice to influence change!

Virtual group meetings

Regular meetings are an interactive way to spread your campaign message wider in the community.

Why hold a virtual meeting?

1. It's a chance to share key messages and updates with your group
2. You can plan campaigning activities in a way that keeps everyone involved
3. During a period of social distancing, it's a chance for people to connect with each other

Platforms that you can hold virtual meetings on:

- Skype
- Facetime
- Zoom
- Facebook Messenger
- Google Hangouts
- WhatsApp

What you will need to hold a virtual meeting

- A computer, laptop or smartphone
- A camera
- You may need to download an app or programme depending on your platform

Top tips for holding online meetings

1. Set the date and time well in advance. If your platform allows you to, schedule the meeting and send round

a link at least a few days before the meeting

2. Promote your meetings - you can create an event on Facebook, post in local Facebook groups that it's happening or ask friends and family to share
3. Agree aims - at your first meeting set out clear aims and goals of having regular meetings
4. Keep it simple - set a small agenda each time detailing what you would like to discuss
5. Involve everyone - give everyone tasks if you are planning, ask questions of the group, make sure everyone has input to your activities. Campaigning is about getting people involved!

Remember, your Community Organiser is on hand to help you set up virtual meetings!

Writing influential letters

If your outcome involves changing the policies of government, councils or organisations (such as letting agencies), writing an inspirational letter can help you influence decision makers and create change

Why hold a letter writing session?

1. It helps show decision makers that people care strongly about an issue
2. Letters can be 'from the heart' giving a personal touch to your campaign
3. It helps put pressure on the people or person in power.

See our 'writing an influential letter' guide for tips on how to inspire change through writing!

Create an online petition

No matter the issue, creating a petition to push for the change you wish to see is an easy and effective way to put pressure on people in power.

Why create a petition?

1. It is a way for others in your community to discover and support the issues that matter to you
2. It demonstrates to your target that people care about the issue
3. It is an easy action for people to do at demonstrations, stalls and meetings

Sites you can create a petition on

- Change.org
- 38degrees.org.uk
- Ipetitions.com

Top tips for starting a petition

1. Decide what your issue is - either in a group or on your own decide what your key outcome is.
2. Pick your target - look at who in Scotland is responsible for making that change.
3. Key messages- at the top of your petition, take 2 - 3 sentences to convey your main message.
4. Get the word out - share your petition in Facebook groups, at any virtual meetings you attend and with friends and family.
5. Be compliant- any details taken for a petition can only be used for that purpose

General campaigning tips

- Get creative!
- Promote well in advance if you are holding a virtual meeting
- Don't be disheartened if you don't see a change straight away - campaigning can take time
- Be realistic but ambitious with the changes you would like to see given the unique set of circumstances we see ourselves in
- Make your campaigning fun- the more fun you have, the more you will bring people along with you
- Ensuring the safety of you and others should be your priority when planning activities - please only campaign in a way that follows government advice
- Your voice, and the voice of your community matters. You can make a difference!

'Never forget that a group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.'

~Margaret Mead