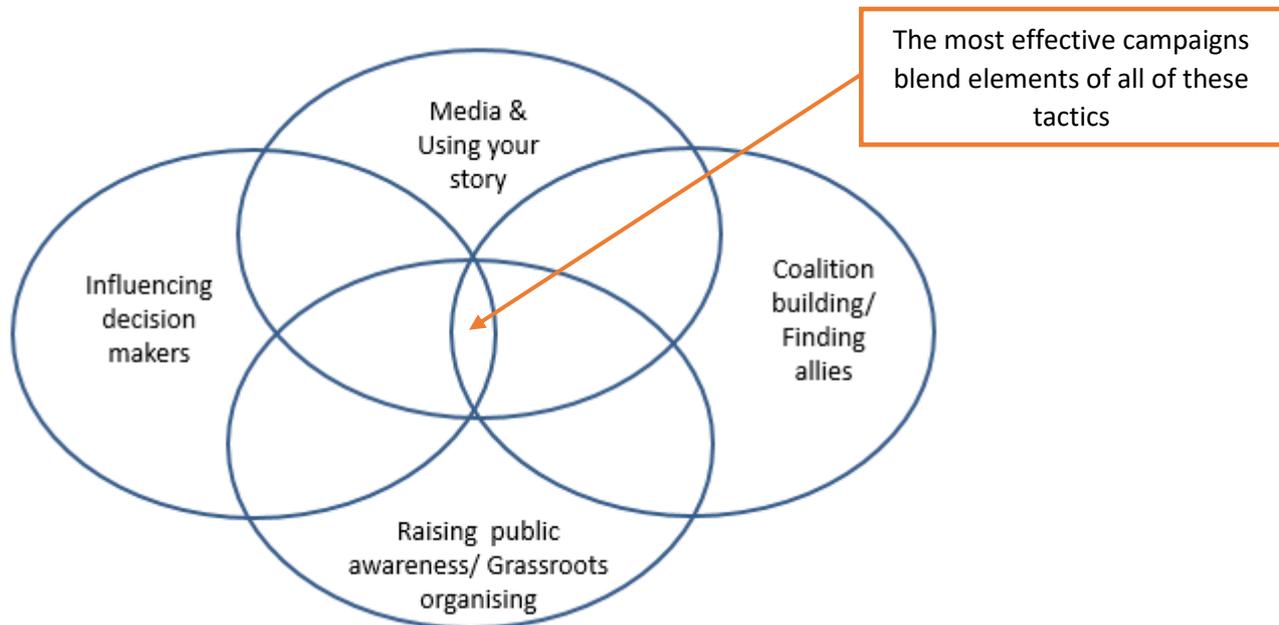


## Top Tips For Influencing Decision Makers

### 1. Where does influencing decision makers fit in a wider campaigning strategy?

Key elements in an effective campaign...



- 'Influencing decision makers' is one of many tactics in any campaigns strategy;
- It's a key component of campaigning for change, but cannot usually be used in isolation;
- Campaigning tactics all work together to support and reinforce one another, but they require different approaches, connections and know-how;
- Sometimes 'Grassroots organising' and 'Coalition building' serve to lay the groundwork in terms of building momentum, mobilising powerful allies and getting the public on side, but it's not until there is a shift in the political environment that paves the way to an opportunity in which 'Influencing decision makers' can tip the balance.

### 2. Key to effective influencing is understanding who has the power to make change happen

- This is also called a 'power analysis' and is essentially about identifying:
  - Who holds the power?
  - Who do they listen to?
  - How can you change their mind or make them care about your issue?
- It's important to be clear about whether you are trying to change policy or practice: the law may be on your side, but service providers or institutions charged with delivering that policy may be failing to do so.
- Be sure to identify all the power holders and key players; you may end up needing to influence several people or your target may shift according to which element of policy or practice you are trying to change.
- Don't forget about opinion formers. Their role in leading opinion and influencing key public audiences is a 'soft power' and can be just as important in achieving long-term change.

### 3. Who's who? Who are the power holders when it comes to improving the treatment of people seeking asylum in the UK?

This is not an exhaustive list! You may well identify additional power holders at a local and national level, and the key players change according to which particular policy area or service you are looking at (e.g. you would target different power holders if trying to end asylum detention from those you would target if trying to improve access to healthcare for asylum seekers, though there would also be some overlap). The power holders will also be different if you are operating within a system of devolved government

#### Parliament and Government

- Ministers and Cabinet, such as:
  - Prime Minister, Theresa May
  - Secretary of State for the Home Department, Amber Rudd
  - Immigration Minister, Brandon Lewis
  - Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid
  - Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, David Gauke
  - Could we soon see a Minister for Refugees? (See [APPG on Refugees](#) report recommendation)
- Shadow Ministers, such as:
  - Leader of the Opposition, Jeremy Corbyn
  - Shadow Home Secretary, Diane Abbott (though currently covered by another shadow minister)
  - Shadow Immigration Minister, Afzal Khan
- MPs & Lords, considering in particular those in the cabinet and shadow cabinet (as above) or those who are part of:
  - Select Committees – a cross-party group of MPs or lords with a specific remit to investigate and report on specific issues, by gathering evidence from ministers, officials, the public and organisations (eg Home Affairs Select Committee or Health Committee).
  - All Party Parliamentary Groups – an informal group of Members who join together to pursue a particular topic, run by and for Members of the Commons and Lords (eg APPG on Refugees or APPG on Social Integration).
- Non-elected power holders include civil servants who help the government develop and implement its policies and they are appointed rather than elected, so are accountable to relevant Ministers rather than to the public. The Asylum Policy team is based in the Home Office and key power-holders there include the Head of Asylum Contracts and Compliance and Head of Asylum Policy.

**N.B.** The [Parliament website](#) is a great source of information on MPs, Ministers, Lords, Select Committees, APPGs and parliamentary procedure.

The [Parliamentary Outreach Team](#) deliver excellent free training across the country on understanding the role of MPs and parliamentary procedure.

#### Local Government

The power holders at a local level depend on what type of council structure you have, and whether your town/ city is part of a wider city region or combined authority. Your local council website should have a section called 'Council and democracy' or similar, explaining more. Key powerholders include those who are elected and those who are unelected.

**Elected power holders** (all are elected by the public to become councillors, but may then be elected by non-public vote to take up a particular office such as council leader or executive member)

- Council leader

- Cabinet Members/ Executive Members
- Ceremonial Mayor
- Metro Mayor
- Councillors

#### **Non-elected power holders**

- Chief Executive Officer (this only applies in certain structures)
- Council officers
- Commissioners

#### **Other regional power holders**

- Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships (funded by the Home Office and co-ordinated by a local council on behalf of a region. They oversee COMPASS contract; though limited powers to raise concerns or enforce contract compliance. Some RSMPs play a signposting and information sharing role and act as a bridge between statutory sector and refugee support organisations)
- Health and Wellbeing Boards
- Safeguarding Boards
- Plus many other Boards and groups within councils, and encompassing wider stakeholders (e.g. police, health services) that responsible for strategies/services in the areas of homelessness, community safety, equality, children etc.

## **4. Understanding the role of an MP**

The UK is currently divided into 650 parliamentary constituencies, each of which is represented by one Member of Parliament (MP) in the House of Commons.

An MP has to balance the demands of:

- working on **issues that are important to them** as an individual;
- representing the **people of their constituency**;
- supporting the **goals of their political party**; and
- if front bench, acting on behalf of the **Cabinet**.

#### **What can your MP do for you?**

- **Meet you at their constituency surgery** to discuss an issue
- Sponsor or support **amendments to a Bill**
- **Raise an issue with the Minister**
- **Lobby internally** for changes to their own party's policies or priorities
- Put down a **Parliamentary Question**
- Sponsor or sign an **Early Day Motion**
- Take up an issue via **Select Committees/ All Party Parliamentary Groups**
- Table a **Private Members' Bill**
- **Host a meeting** in Parliament or elsewhere
- Take on **casework** on behalf of constituents

#### **How to Contact Your Parliamentary Representative:**

- MPs have a duty to respond to inquiries from their constituents, but they do not have a duty to respond to inquiries from people who are not their constituents.
- It is possible to contact other MPs, but only if they hold a portfolio relevant to your campaign. For example, if you were campaigning on women's issues, you could contact the Minister for Women and Equalities, even if they weren't your local MP.
- Find your MP's contact details by searching using your postcode (or if you know them, search for their name on the [Parliament UK](https://www.parliament.uk) website).
- You can also find out about their voting record at [TheyWorkForYou](https://www.theyworkforyou.com).