Contacting your target

This handout explains how you can develop actions which target a group or individual as part of your campaign.

Contacting the target of your campaign, or getting others to, can be a powerful way of getting the message of your campaign across. It also shows the support your campaign has.

These types of activity can be particularly good for those who can't physically get to protests or activities or who feel unsafe or unsure of attending large scale demonstrations or protests.

There are lots of ways you can get in touch with your target in creative ways, below are just a few examples which increase in effort and time.

**Tweeting your target**

Tweeting at your target takes a very low amount of effort from you and your supporters to do. Whilst it’s low effort, which can be good for supporters who are not hugely engaged in the campaign and only have a small amount of time, it does run the risk of being lost in the social media noise. That being said, if your target is on twitter, encouraging supporters to directly tweet them can make it hard for them to ignore your campaign and means their followers might also see the campaign.

If you are encouraging your supports to do this activity, it’s often a good idea to send them a suggested tweet so that they stay on message and the campaign is speaking with a coherent message.

**Emails to target**

Over the years mass emails have proved to be an effective way of targeting decision makers. These actions have drawn criticism from MPs and other leaders who criticise it for being ‘clicktivism’ which is why these kinds of activities should never be the only action for a campaign but part of a broader online and offline campaign.

You can set up an email to a target through the KCLSU website with the help of the campaigns coordinator. There are a few bits of information you need to provide though:

- The email address of the person you would like to target – ideally this would be the decision maker you are trying to influence.

- The content of the email and a suggested email subject line – When you are writing an email to a target it needs to be as impactful as possible. You should include the name of your campaign, why your campaign is important perhaps by including a case study or some interesting statistics, and what you want the decision maker to agree to do. Remember that people often don’t have long to read an email so don’t make it too long or confusing.

- Some draft text to include on the website to detail what you are asking your supporters to do. Emailing decision makers can be particularly impactful when the content is personalised so it is worthwhile encouraging your supporters to add their own personal message within the email so that it stands out.
Once you have all of the relevant information, send it over to the campaigns coordinator at campaigns@kclsu.org who will set it up. Please keep in mind that setting this up can take up to three working days.

If you don’t want to use the KCLSU website, you can still encourage supporters to send an email to your intended target. You can email your supporters or post on social media telling them that you have emailed your target, including the content of the email, that people can copy and paste and email on themselves.

Examples of an email to target

**NUS FE Unplugged**

**Letters and postcards to target**

Although emails can be a quick and easy way to get supporters to contact your campaign targets, writing letters and postcards to targets can be even more powerful as it is something tangible and harder to ignore.

As with emails, it’s important that your postcard and letters includes some important information:

- Set out who you are and the campaign you are writing on behalf of
- Set out why you are writing to the person you are writing to and explain to them about the campaign and what you hope the campaign achieves
- Detail what you would like the person you are writing to do for the campaign
- Include your contact details if you would like a response

**How to get people to sign them**

There are lots of ways you can encourage people to sign the letters and send them in;
- You can email your supporters with a copy of the letter and ask them to sign it and send it to the relevant target.
- You could hold a stall in an open place, such as The Shed, and print hard copies of letters for people to sign. You can find out more about booking our spaces at kclsu.org/roombooking

**A note on postcards** – if you are going to send in postcards, rather than letters, you need to make the message to the decision maker shorter and just focus on the key information – your campaign aim and the ask you have for them. However, postcards do allow you to be more creative with the imagery on the front of it. This could be a powerful photo, a comic image or you could even book out an activity room on one of our campuses and get supporters to engage in a craftivism activity and decorate them before they are sent.

**Sending them in**

If you are planning on sending in cards and letters that require stamps you will need to think about covering costs for this. This could be something you ask your supporters to cover or you could send them on-masse on their behalf.

You can also think about the possibility of handing in the letters or postcards. This could mean handing them into their office or handing them in during a meeting you are having with them. If you are planning to do this, make sure you make the hand in an event that you can take pictures off and share with your supporters so they know what’s going on.

**If supporters have taken the time to fill in emails or letter don’t forget to thank them!**
An example letter to target from Women’s Aid and IC Change

Dear XXX

As your constituent and a Women’s Aid Campaign Champion, I am writing to ask that you attend the Private Member’s Bill on Preventing and Combatting Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence on 16 December 2016.

This vote really matters. You may already know the statistics. The police receive over one hundred calls about domestic abuse every single hour. On average, two women every week are killed by their partner or ex-partner in England and Wales. But behind those statistics are real women. Children robbed of their mothers. Real families being robbed of daughters, sisters, aunts. Not only does domestic abuse cost our police, health system and public services billions each year, it devastates lives up and down the country.

I want our Government to take action, and ensure all of us can live free from violence and abuse. How? By ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence – the “Istanbul Convention”.

This historic international treaty makes violence and abuse against women and girls illegal. When a Government ratifies the Convention, they are legally bound to prevent and tackle violence against women. Crucially, the Convention gives all survivors of domestic abuse the right to access the specialist services – such as local Women’s Aid refuges – which they need to live in safety and rebuild their lives. As I’m sure you know, these services are currently facing crisis. Since 2010, 17% of specialist refuges in England have closed down. On an average day last year, 92 women and 75 children were turned away from refuge because there was not enough space.

The UK Government signed the Convention is 2012. But until they ratify it, the Convention remains just a piece of paper. If 100 MPs attend this historic debate on 16 December and vote in favour of the Istanbul Convention, we will be one step closer to ratification. One step closer to protecting life-saving services and the women and children that depend on them.

As my MP, and a representative of domestic abuse victims and survivors in [INSERT CONSTITUENCY], please seize this opportunity to “Change Herstory.” Please attend and vote to support the Private Members Bill on 16 December 2016.

You can find out more about this historic vote here: http://icchange.co.uk/pmb/

Thank you for considering this request, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]