National Council for Voluntary Organisations

Campaigning Effectiveness

ncvo

Forum for Change

In Focus:
Integrating
social media

Why is it important?

Social media is a powerful tool for campaigning and influencing and is most effective when it is fully integrated into the wider strategy for change.

Social media tools can support each stage of your strategy to achieve change by making it easy for people with a passion for a cause to find your organisation and tell you about their views and experiences, share your information, and become involved in your work.

It is important that you and your organisation are able to build relationships with people in ways that suit them so that you can engage with them regularly and feed this into your campaigning and influencing work.

Many people are using social media and usage figures are growing, particularly with the increasing ownership of internet enabled phones so access to social media sites is getting easier and easier.

Some facts:

- 30.1 million adults accessed the internet every day in 2010 (Office for National Statistics)
- Social networking accounts for 23% of UK web time (April 2010, Nielsen)
- 75% of 16-24 year olds and 31% of 45-54 year olds posted messages on social networking sites in 2010 (Office for National Statistics)
- There are over 500 million Facebook users world wide (December 2010, Facebook)
- 50 million tweets are posted per day world wide (February 2010, Twitter).

If you are not using social media then you could be missing out on a potentially huge range of opportunities to inform your campaigning and influencing work. This guide sets out some steps you can take to successfully incorporate social media into your influencing work and the tools that enable you to do this.

What does it involve?

What is social media?
The term "social media" covers a broad range of tools including blogs, podcasts, social networks, wikis, picture sharing, video and social bookmarking. The term started to be used when it was realised that these new interactive tools were not just about information but were social, a way to bring people together through the internet.

When the internet was first launched, websites were a way to get information out, broadcasting in one direction to readers. Text and images sat on web pages for people to read and users had to go to the websites to find the information. The next generation of websites – web 2.0 – are more interactive with the ability to update their content easily and allowing users to generate their own content and facilitate conversations.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAN HELP CAMPAIGNING AND INFLUENCING WORK IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:[1]

Creating a dialogue with your supporters, beneficiaries, staff members, campaigners and opposition alike.

Reaching people quickly and reacting to developments as they happen.

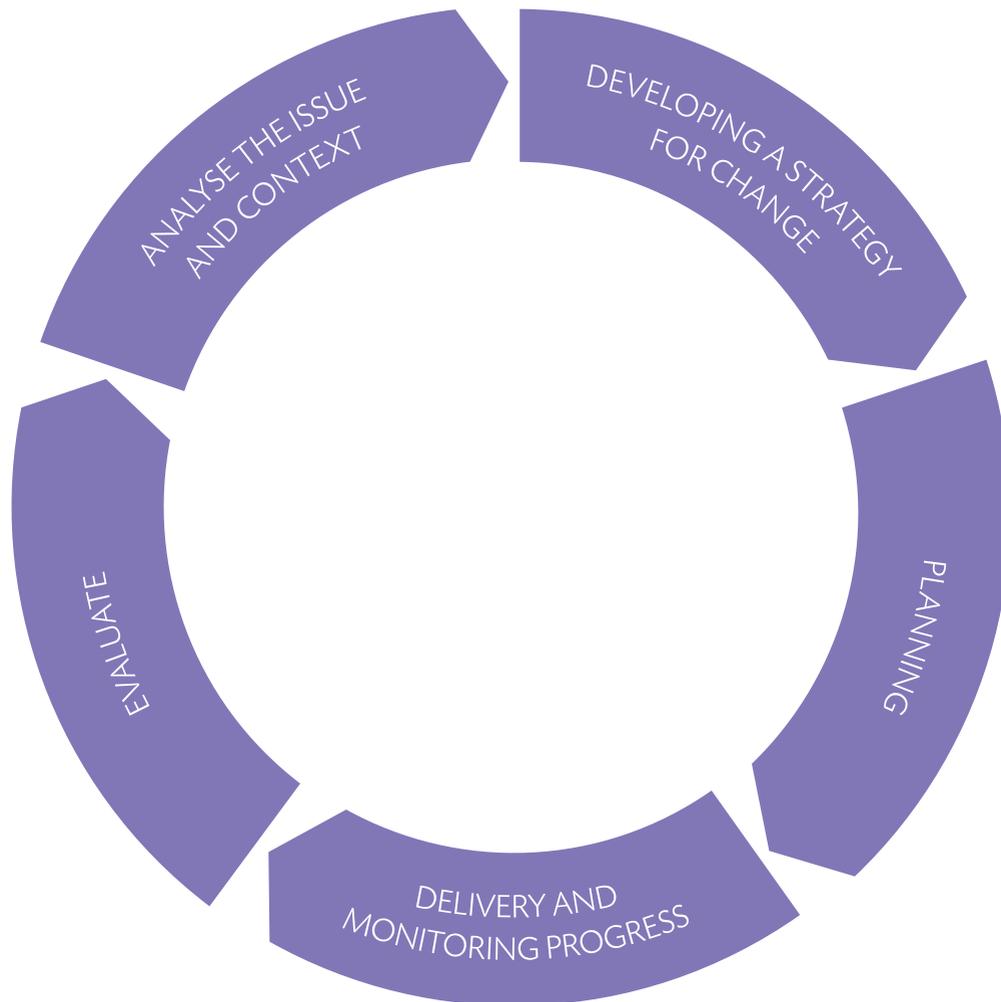Accessibility at times that suit the user.

Sharing your own ideas and experiences as well as those of your supporters and beneficiaries.

Tapping into the expertise of your supporters.

[1] *Adapted from Hannah Lownsbrough, 38 degrees, e-campaigning tips: http://louderdevelop.posterous.com/ecampaigning-tips-from-hannah-lownsbrough-38*

Where do I start?

When using social media in your campaigning and influencing work it is best to think about how it can support each stage of the influencing process or campaigns cycle.

The campaign cycle divides the course of a campaign into a series of stages and this guide explores how social media can support your work in each of these stages.

ANALYSE THE ISSUE AND CONTEXT

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

PLANNING

DELIVERY AND MONITORING PROGRESS

EVALUATE

CREATING SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Getting started with social media can be difficult as it relies on you putting more of yourself and your opinions online. It can be empowering for people to work from a set of social media guidelines or policy, which also help you to have confidence in what staff and volunteers are going to say.

Some key elements to include in your policy or guidelines are:

Why social media is important.

How social media will be integrated with your offline work.

How staff will be responsible for what they write online.

How using social media will help to encourage a sense of community.

How using social media will bring value to the people you're talking to that they wouldn't have got offline.

Respecting copyright.

Protecting confidential information.

Finding a balance between your social media and other work.

STAGE 1:
Analysing the issue and developing an evidence base

You need to understand the context within which your issue sits if you are to successfully achieve the change you want to see. There is a mass of information out there on the web to help you, social media tools can enable you to quickly and regularly access what others are saying and to ask people and instigate discussion on policy changes and campaigns.

Google alerts
http://www.google.com/alerts

Google alerts is a service that searches the web for particular key words and emails you with the results. It can be useful to identify the people talking about particular topics you are interested in, track if people are talking about your work and getting a sense of the sentiment towards topics.

Google Blog Search
http://blogsearch.google.com

Knowing what key commentators are saying about your issues is a great way to keep abreast of new developments and ideas, and often these people will have blogs that you should be reading. Find out if these key commentators have blogs through a simple Google search or using Google blog search and you can then make use of the RSS to keep alerted of new posts.

RSS feeds

RSS (really simple syndication) is one of the key parts of the web 2.0 revolution. Websites with RSS have the ability to push information out to users. Using RSS feeds is particularly good for staying on top of the latest news.

To be able to read your RSS feeds you need to have a reader. Web based sites such as **Google reader** www.google.com/reader allow you to access this information from any computer.

Wordle
http://wordle.net

This tool allows you to put in any piece of text and it will generate a "word cloud". The words that are most used appear biggest in the picture. Word clouds are a quick snap shot of the key points; they can also help you to identify the policy buzz-words.

Survey Monkey
www.surveymonkey.com

This is a cheap (or free for up to 10 questions and up to 100 responses) survey tool that is easy to set up, send out and analyse results from. This is good tool to ask people about their experiences or thoughts of a particular policy change or campaign.

Forums

Forums can be a useful place to ask people and start discussions about issues you're working on. Forums need a lot of input to help them succeed but can be very valuable to create ongoing dialogues with a group of people. There are many build your own network websites out there, such as **Ning** www.ning.com which the Forum for Change is built on.

STAGES 2 AND 3:
Developing your strategy and planning
Once you have decided on the issues that you want to change you can start developing your strategy for achieving the change and planning for delivering the strategy.

Search engines such as **Google** are very useful in helping you to identify your routes to influence, as are more specialised websites such as **Voices for Change Cymru** www.voicesforchangecymru.org.uk/assembly-wag-information

Parliamentary websites can also provide you the means to access the people you want to reach such as **Parliament UK**, **National Assembly for Wales** and the websites of the government departments related to the issues you are working on.

Tweetminster
http://tweetminster.co.uk/

Tweetminster is an aggregator of political activity on Twitter, with a searchable directory of MPs

Twitter lists

Twitter in particular is an excellent way to connect with journalists, MPs and other key commentators to raise awareness of your cause and keep on top of breaking news.

EXAMPLE:
British Heart Foundation

In 2008 the British Heart Foundation launched their "Cigarette vending machines are totally out of order" campaign. They used a creative advert, and an undercover video podcast showing how easy it is for children to buy cigarettes.

Supporters were mobilised throughout the country through a series of online 'asks' ranging from signing petitions, emailing the Secretary of State for Health and their MP and writing to their local newspapers. This resulted in the Scottish Government announcing their intention to ban the sale of cigarettes through vending machines and the UK Government changing their position.

This campaign didn't succeed just because of online activity; it also had a clear media strategy and lobbying tactics. It was the combination of all three that got the results.

TIP: Several policy and parliamentary websites have RSS feeds giving you he most up to date information from Parliament and the devolved governments

Info4local
www.info4local.gov.uk/rss-cover-page/

Parliament UK
www.parliament.uk/site-information/rss-feeds/

ePolitix
www.epolitix.com/index.php?id=754

TIP: Spend some time in a team meeting brainstorming keywords to help you to set up your online searches and check the words regularly to ensure they are up to date.

STAGE 4:
Delivering and monitoring progress
The delivery stage is your reward for careful planning and gives you the opportunity to be creative with your use of social media.

Here is an introduction to some of the most popular social media tools which you can use to support your work in delivering the policy change or campaign.

Email
The most powerful way to rally support and encourage online action is still via email. Almost everyone who uses the internet has an email address and people usually treat their emails in a different way to other social media interactions, taking more notice of what comes into their inbox.

Keys to success:

- Emails asking recipients to take one action and emails updating them on the progress of the campaign are the best performing emails.
- Try different types of content for different audiences and compare their success. You will gradually work towards your perfect email.
- Personalise your emails.
- Take time to target your emails. Find out what people want to know about, what types of action they're interested in taking and send them relevant emails.
- Keep your email list clean – high levels of bouncebacks can blacklist you with email providers.
- Make sure your email comes from a professional email address.
- Follow-up with your recipients with a thank you, updates and further actions.

E-petitions
Petitions can be useful in demonstrating that you have public support behind your campaign. Free online petition tools can be quickly shared amongst your supporters and their friends.

E-petitions have a number of benefits:

- Easy to set up and cheap to administer and collate.
- Allow people to share the link with others.
- Access more background information about the campaign.
- Allow you to feedback to the people that signed the petition.
- Take up can be monitored.

YouTube
Telling stories through video is a powerful campaigning tool. YouTube is the world's most popular video sharing website, with 2 billion views a day and over 24 hours of video uploaded every minute. Despite YouTube's popularity it is just one platform and it needs to work alongside your other broadcast tools to make sure it reaches the widest audiences possible.

Keys to success
- Make sure you have consent from everyone involved to make the film public.
- Make sure your video is under 2 minutes, under 1 minute is even better.
- Your video needs to work outside the context of your website or campaign materials.
- Even if it's brief make sure you include some background information, how you plan to make your change, include a call to action – what you're asking people to do and where to go next.

EXAMPLE:
Campaign to save Morden Park

Local residents successfully campaigned against Merton Council's proposal to allow a private company to build a private football pitch complex over one of the largest green areas in the borough. To raise awareness and bring the issue alive they produced a short film to highlight the impact to the community.

As a small local group the campaigners did not have vast resources but would definitely recommend using films as a campaign tactic which helped both reinvigorate existing supporters and recruit new ones. Watch the film here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=US&hl=uk&v=mL3zafL6_4E

Facebook

Facebook has grown from a US college networking tool to being the biggest online social network and the main online home of many people. Tapping into existing Facebook networks may be a key element to your influencing and campaigning work.

Facebook has over 500 million users worldwide, 50% of whom log in at least once a day and these statistics change and grow daily. By far the biggest age range of people using Facebook are 18-25 year olds but the fastest growing group is the over 55s.

As an organisation you can use Facebook in two main ways, by creating a page or a group. The following table highlights some of the differences between these approaches; however the functions on pages and groups does change regularly so do re-check these at the time of creating your page or group.

TIP: One of the functions most noticed by someone's Facebook page is their profile photo so why not ask your supporters to "donate" their profile to your cause for a specific length of time with a related photo

Keys to success

- Features can change with little notice and it can be difficult to move between them. Make sure you have a back up plan and are encouraging people to your own site.
- Make use of the Facebook Apps that exist to promote campaigns such as Facebook Causes.
- Don't rely on it to run your campaign. You'll need to promote your Facebook presence through your emails and other communications on and off line.
- Promote your Facebook presence on your website, newsletters, emails and in print.
- Encourage people to mention you in their status updates or by tagging themselves in photos in your page.

Facebook page or group?

	PAGE	GROUP
ADMINISTRATION	No personal identity, the page itself is in effect a person.	Directly linked to the people that administer it.
URLs	Customisable/ vanity URLs.	No customizable/ vanity URLs.
MEMBERS	On the whole you cannot decide who can and can't join a page.	Group members can be moderated and approved if necessary.
PRIVACY	Pages are public and less personal.	Groups can be private if necessary.
EMAIL	You cannot send emails to page members but you can send an update which appears in their inbox.	You can send out an email to group members as long as it is under 5,000 words.
NEWS STREAM	You can add content to peoples' news stream.	Content will only be added to peoples' news stream when they join the group or if they are friends with the person adding content.
SEARCH ENGINES	Content is indexed by search engines.	
TARGETING CONTENT TO AUDIENCES	You can target content to people on pages.	You cannot target content to people in groups.
EVENTS	You cannot send event emails.	You can send event emails.
APPLICATIONS	Pages can host applications.	Groups cannot host applications.
MEASUREMENT	You can access metrics for page users.	There are no metrics for group users.

Twitter

Twitter is probably the biggest social media revolution in recent years, after Facebook. A tool that started life as a 140 character update of what you're up to has turned into one of the most useful ways to connect with people, share information and find support for your cause. Twitter currently estimates that it has 190 million users worldwide, generating 65 million tweets a day, and these statistics change a grow every day.

Some functions on Twitter have become important ways of using the tool to its best capacity. Retweeting, or RT, where you can repost something someone else has tweeted to your networks or vice versa. # Hashtags where you can see all other posts that contain the same term such as #BigSociety. Twitter users will also create names of events so that they can be tagged and so enabling quick access to all tweets about that event, such as the last general election #GE10.

Keys to success

- Be personal, people don't want to follow a corporation.
- Make use of personal stories.
- Create easy to share short links for your key online information.
- Don't just broadcast information; interact with your followers, find relevant discussion and reply to them.

TIP: You can create a twibbon for your Twitter page which is a small image that people can add to their avatar often a charity's logo or strapline http://twibbon.com

EXAMPLE:
Children's Food Campaign, Coco Pops and Twitter

The Children's Food Campaign is part of Sustain, an alliance for better food and farming. A recent Children's Food Campaign action harnessed widespread anger among lots of parents about a poster by Kellogg's (a partner in the government's Change4 Life health campaign), advertising Coco Pops, which suggested to children 'Ever thought of Coco Pops after school?' and featured the Coco Pops monkey dressed in a school uniform.

Campaign Co-coordinator
Jackie Schneider said:

"As soon as the bus stop adverts appeared several of our supporters contacted us to complain so we knew the ads were not popular. I looked on twitter and searched the term coco pops ads and found lots of tweets from people who had passed the ads that day and wanted to comment on their inappropriateness. It was easy to follow those people and send them a message about our coco pops slogan campaign. We found that one concerned individual had already tweeted the address of Kellogg's CSR person.

Using twitter allowed us to find people who were concerned about the same issues we were so we could alert them to our work. Many of them signed up to The Children's Food Campaign as a result and went on to tweet links to us.

My advice would be to act fast. Twitter is a very immediate medium and things move on quickly. We were able to show the tweets to a journalists to persuade him it wasn't just us complaining. This led to a piece in a national newspaper.'

Blogging

Blogging can be a great tool for building your relationship with your web visitors. Blogs can add a personal aspect to your campaign, giving people inside information and an insight into what action is being taken. Blogging also connects you to other people that have a passion for your issue as there are millions of other blogs out there on every subject you could imaging.

Keys to success:

- Engage with the people in your organisation who want to blog, not just campaign staff.
- Blogs don't have to be long thought pieces, what is important is that you keep the posts personal and up to about 500 words.
- Don't be too cautious about comments, let the debate flow and moderate only if totally necessary.
- Use other broadcast tools such as Facebook and Twitter to publicise new posts.
- Search out other people blogging on your topic and comment on their posts. Invite them to do the same or pitch ideas to them for potential content.

In all of the examples given here you will find built in mechanisms which allow you to track and monitor usage. For some tools, like email and e-Petitions, this is quite straightforward through knowing who has responded. Other have tools which allow you to see statistics about your users, such as Facebook's Insight Dashboard www.facebook.com/insights, and Twitter Analyzer www.twitteranalzer.com

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EXAMPLE:
ColaLife

ColaLife is a campaign to get Coca-Cola to open up its distribution channels in developing countries to save lives by carrying much needed 'social products' such as oral rehydration salts and high-dose vitamin A tablets.

Founder, Simon Berry, had the idea while working on a British Aid programme in 1988. Having made frustratingly little progress after 20 years Simon decided to try once more using social media. Since floating the idea on his blog in May 2008 he has created a huge community around the campaign using Facebook, flickr and Youtube to get the message out. Utilising this groundswell of support ColaLife pressed for the feature to be picked up on Radio 4's interactive programme, iPM. From this Simon was invited to talk with Coca-Cola and ColaLife is now in discussions with them to take the idea forward.

Simon explained the change in his campaign:

"In 1988, when I first had the idea it was just me. I had no mechanism for convening people around the idea. To do the convening I went to where people already were online. I went to Facebook first and then when I had a few hundred people behind me I went on to the BBC iPM blog. The BBC took up the story and they used their expertise and name to get a statement out of Coca-Cola."

Find out more about the campaign at www.colalife.org

STAGE 5:
Evaluate

As part of your initial discussion about what success will look like you need to think about what part your social media presence plays and how you will measure it. Monitoring what people are doing as you go along is easier than only doing this in retrospect so do factor use the monitoring in the previous stage to support your end evaluation.

It is possible to buy expensive monitoring packages that will follow your entire social media presence but there are also things you can do for little or no money.

Google Analytics
www.google.com/analytics/

This free tool from Google allows you to monitor visits to your website, including how long they spend there, their routes to your information and what (if any) action they took.

Twitter followers
www.twitter.com

An easy figure to have a target for and to track is your number of Twitter followers. There are also many free tools to track the numbers of retweets you have, for instance www.bit.ly will create a short link which track how many retweets you have over time, but you can also see this on the Twitter website itself.

Views on YouTube
You can easily see how many people have looked at your video on your **YouTube** account.

Friends on Facebook
If you have a **Facebook** Page or Group, the number of people that like your page or are members will be shown on the left hand side. You can also track how many people use the Like button too.

Mentions in the press and parliament
You can use a free bookmarking website such as **Delicious** http://delicious.com to record your mentions and then use the keyword tags to record the type of media, topic and sentiment. Also websites such as **They Work For You** www.theyworkforyou.com use Hansard records of parliamentary debates so by using the search function on the website you can get quick information about who has mentioned your organisation or campaign over a set period of time.

Social media aggregators
There are some free tools that pull together everything that is happening online around a specific keyword, such as **Social Mention** www.socialmention.com and **Addict-o-matic** http://addictomatic.com. These tools are excellent at getting an overview of what is happening around your campaign but because they don't keep an ongoing record should be used in conjunction with some of the metrics above.

Putting it into practice
If you have five minutes...

- Sign up to www.louder.org.uk a free web site where you can run your own campaigns and incorporate a range of free social media tools.
- Join the e-campaigners' forum email group for questions, and examples from experienced e-campaigners, around the world: http://fairsay.com/networks/ecampaigning-forum

If you have an hour...

- Arrange a meeting with a senior manager about the importance of using social media to meaningfully support your organisation's campaigns
- Search the resources of FairSay.com and find the articles most relevant to your current e-campaigns
- Visit the NCVO Campaigning Effectiveness' New Media page to read more case studies: http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/campaigning-socialmedia
- Watch the Forum for Change and Third Sector Foresight e-seminar on the future of campaigning: http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/campaigning-socialmedia

If you have a day or two...

- Register for the FairSay eCampaigners Forum annual 'un-conference' event in Oxford and meet great online activists from around the world: http://fairsay.com/events/ecampaigning-forum
- Develop a social media policy or strategy for your organisation, ensuring that all relevant staff/teams are involved and that you have asked yourself the questions outlined in this guide. Guidelines can be found here: http://socialmediagovernance.com/policies.php

Further reading

Online resources

www.Louder.org.uk

Is a free website that draws together a range of online tools enabling you to create and run your own campaigns and connect with others. Louder.org.uk provide a platform to create a home for your campaign and incorporate social media tools (such as YouTube videos, blogs and Twitter feeds), with actions (such as e-petitions and 'write to your MP' functions), as well as a range of administration tools to monitor actions and progress.

www.38degrees.org.uk

The new mass online activism hub, builds immediate mobilisation around pressing political issues in the UK, coordinating mass collective actions. They have grown to almost 70,000 members in less-than-a-year, since their launch in spring 2009. They welcome suggestions for their next campaign.

www.FairSay.com

Consultancy founded by former Oxfam GB e-campaigns manager, Duane Raymond, providing a range of free articles, blogs, reports and videos in the area of e-campaigning and a e-campaigners forum.

www.CampaignCentral.org.uk

The Sheila McKechnie Foundation's social network and resource hub for campaigners, includes how-to guides, user opinion columns and campaign event announcements.

www.AdvocacyOnline.net

Online campaign action agency, offers some free products, valuable case studies of how their clients have utilised their tools to create change, and a e-campaigning review on learning from good practice.

Toolkits, reading and resources

The DigiActive Guide to Twitter for Activism
http://www.digiactive.org/2009/04/13/twitter_guide/

NCVO Third Sector Foresight, Future Focus 7: What will campaigning look like in 5 years' time?
http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/products-services/publications/future-focus-7-what-will-campaigning-be-5-years%E2%80%99-time

FairSay.com: How to Campaign like Obama
http://fairsay.com/tools/campaigning-insights/HowToCampaignLikeObama.pdf

FairSay.com: eCampaigning Essentials
http://fairsay.com/tools/campaigning-insights/ecampaigning-essentials

FairSay.com: 2009 eCampaigning Review
http://fairsay.com/tools/campaigning-insights/research/ecr09b/view

Witness: Video for Change
http://www.witness.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=277&Itemid=207

FairSay.com: social media exit strategies
http://www.fairsay.com/tools/campaigning-insights/exit-strategies-from-social-media

About Campaigning Effectiveness, NCVO

Campaigning Effectiveness, **NCVO** supports and empowers people and organisations to change their world through campaigning and influencing policy. We bring together experience and expertise and drive excellence in campaigning and policy work across civil society by providing support, knowledge, tools and resources. For further information about our work go to www.ncvo-vol.org.uk campaigningeffectiveness

About Forum for Change

The Forum for Change, funded by the Big Lottery Fund is a network for people influencing policy and campaigning for change across the voluntary and community sector. Membership is free and open to everyone. To join or for further information go to www.forumforchange.org.uk or email forumforchange@ncvo-vol.org.uk

About In Focus

In Focus guides are produced for Forum for Change members as part of the Policy Skills Development Programme. Other titles include:

- Building your evidence base
- Commissioning research
- Effecting change through collaboration
- Influencing devolved governments
- Involving people that matter
- Making sense of the external environment
- Persuasion or pressure? Campaigning and the private sector
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