Effective Lobbying

Type of resource: summary, lesson plan, handouts and trainer notes

Resource summary: twenty-five page document on effective lobbying. Sets out what lobbying is, how to gather evidence, the implications of the Community Call for Action (which to give citizens new rights to petition for action from councillors and officers local authorities). Includes a summary, lesson plan, handouts and trainers’ notes on effective lobbying.

NB: please refer to the effective Lobbying PowerPoint which accompanies this course material.

Resource intended for: course tutors.

Produced by: Volunteer Centre Southwark, Active Citizens Hub
What is lobbying:
Lobbying is influencing decisions made by government. It includes all attempts to influence to ensure the point of view of an individual or organisation is represented.

A lobbyist is a person who tries to influence government on behalf of a special interest.

Your ultimate goal
When lobbying, your ultimate goal is to ensure your target:

- Is informed about the issue
- Understands your position
- Becomes convinced that your position is the one they should adopt

Preparing to lobby or influence your local authority:
- If lobbying your local authority, it is important to find out about your local authority and its councillors, before you start lobbying, so that you target the right people, departments and committees at the right time
- Knowledge of the council’s work and past decisions on certain issues will make you more confident in your lobbying. A whole range of information is available to the public, including documents, reports, and the minutes and agendas of council meetings
- It’s often useful to attend your local community council meeting. This way you can keep up-to-date with the progress of the council’s work and the decisions on the issues that affect you

Preparing to lobby or influence:
- Top facts - It is vital to gain evidence when lobbying on an issue of concern or trying to influence decision makers. Hard or ‘top’ facts add weight to people’s views and concerns
- Gathering evidence and doing your research
- Sources of information
- Know exactly what you want

Gathering evidence and facts:
- Really important to do this before you start getting support or building a campaign
- Evidence and facts will enable you to be more convincing

Where can I get evidence?
- Local residents (quotes)
- Library
- Internet
- Local authority, Police or any other statutory service (Freedom of Information Act – see below)
- Newspapers and back copies of papers
- Your MP – get him / her to ask a question in parliament
- Schools
- Major charities
The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act – the right to see a wide range of public information
The FOI gives you the right to ask any public body for all the information they have on any subject you choose. Also, unless there’s a good reason, the organisation must provide the information within a month. You can also ask for all the personal information they hold on you.

As part of the preparation and planning it is very important to know exactly what you want. Such as whether the ultimate goal of lobbying government is to represent your views or if it is influencing people to support your view and/or help you in some way. Do you want?

• Money / funding
• Speeches, questions, motions in Parliament
• An amendment to upcoming legislation
• Letters to colleagues/cabinet/ministers
• Items in newsletters
• Setting up meetings with colleagues
• Lobbying on your behalf
• Practical assistance with campaigning – photocopying, etc

Different ways to lobby, influence, contact & inform people:
Write a letter
Through websites / online communities
Send a fax
Give your local representative a call
Get a letter published in local press
Petition
Email
Organise a public meeting
Speak at your local Community Council meeting
Visit the office of your local representative
Presentation / speech
Focus groups
Exhibitions
Door-to-door / meet and greet
Help lines
Stickers, balloons, badges
Training courses
Leaflets / brochures
Posters
CDs
Round table events
Special events
Community Call for Action:

- Was introduced by government in a publication called *Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power in 2006* to give citizens new rights to petition for action from councillors and officers
- Councils have to respond to petitions and the Call to Action so quite a powerful lobbying / influencing tool
- Residents were encouraged to petition their local council and others to make service improvements

The paper introduces “a new duty on local councils to respond to all petitions, including electronic petitions, relating to local authority functions or other public services where the council shares delivery responsibilities.” Petitions could call for action – to deal with empty properties, to transfer the ownership of a building to the community, to calm traffic in an accident blackspot, or to request refuse collection on a certain day, gates at the end of the passages behind houses, a new school crossing, or new street lights in a dark corner of an estate. They could also call for participatory budgeting or a local referendum thus giving the initiative to the citizen”

The new duty requires local authorities to respond to petitions under the following circumstances:

- The subject of the petition relates to the functions of the local authority or its partners through the Local Area Agreement (LAA)
- The petition has been organised by a local person, i.e. someone who appears on the electoral register or lives or works in the area
- The petition demonstrates a sufficient level of support from local people, i.e. has a minimum required number signatures
- The petition has ‘relevant’ signatures of people who either live or work in the area
- The petition satisfies the minimum requirement in relation to its manner of submission, its form and content

Southwark Council stipulate the following minimum requirements:

If a petition is submitted the organiser must:

- Provide their own contact details
- State clearly the application that is being opposed and the reason for opposition on each page of the petition
- Ensure all names and addresses are clearly legible and preferably written in black ink
- Show the date the signatures are collected on each page

Effective communication is vital when you are trying to get your point across and influence people.

Five key aspects of effective communication are:

- Active listening
- Valuing diversity
- Understanding body language
- The rhythm of three
- Being assertive

Rhythm of three:

- Technique used in sales and marketing
- Most people remember words and numbers best in groups of three
- For example:
  - Phone numbers 455 644
  - ‘There are three things we need to agree today. Firstly, how we can work together, secondly, where we should hold out meetings and finally where we apply for funding’
# LESSON PLAN

## Effective Lobbying & How to Influence People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To equip delegates with the skills and knowledge to lobby effectively</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater understanding of the need to influence people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to gain allies and supporters in lobbying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater confidence in your ability influence people and lobby effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of the importance of effective listening and speaking</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timings</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Assessment of learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-15 minutes</td>
<td>Introduce yourself and what you do</td>
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<tr>
<td>(15 minutes)</td>
<td>Get everyone to sign in and explain any Health and Safety issues and how to evacuate the building in an emergency and where they should assemble</td>
<td>Signing in sheet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Trainer must ensure that everyone has filled in a booking form and completed an enrolment survey</td>
<td>Booking Form Enrolment Survey</td>
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<td>Explain what welfare facilities are available and where to locate them</td>
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<td>Ask people to put their mobile phones on silent or discreet and cover any other codes of conduct you wish to bring to the groups attention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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</table>
| 15-20minutes | Using the **PowerPoint slide (Slide 2)** go through the **aims and learning outcomes**:  
**Aim:** To equip delegates with the skills and knowledge to lobby effectively  
**Learning Outcomes:**  
- Greater understanding of the need to influence people  
- How to gain allies and supporters in lobbying  
- Greater confidence in your ability to influence people and lobby effectively  
- Understanding of the importance of effective listening and speaking  
**Ask** delegates if they have any questions |  
|            | Brief introduction about who you are, the area they live in and why they have come on this course today | **Candidates** |
| 20-35minutes | **Ice breaker – Human Bingo**  
Distribute **handout Bingo** and ask delegates to find someone in the room for each of the categories. Put their name in the box. The first delegate to complete the list shouts 'bingo'  
**Ask** delegates if they have any questions | **Handout Bingo**  
Use the bingo handout and find someone in the room for each of the categories. Put their name in the box. Shout 'bingo' when you fill all boxes. The first delegate to complete wins |
| 35-45minutes | **What is lobbying?**  
Using the **PowerPoint slides (Slide 3,4)** cover the definition of lobbying and what the ultimate goal should be  
**Ask** delegates if they have any questions | **PowerPoint**  
View PowerPoint presentation  
**Q & A** |
| 45-95minutes | **What I Care about in my Community**  
View PowerPoint. Choose one issue | **PowerPoint**  
View PowerPoint. Choose one issue  
**Evidencing** |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</table>
| 50minutes | **Exercise 1:**  
*Ask* delegates what they care about in their community and provide some prompts e.g. litter, poor bus service, large school class sizes, dog mess, badly maintained parks, no youth facilities, no support group for the Somali community, knife and gun crime, using the PowerPoint slide (Slide 5). Ask delegates to choose one issue that they care about and make some notes for 10 minutes about it on the handout *What I care about in my community*. Delegates are to give a 3-5 minute informal talk that you care about and make some notes for 10 minutes about it on the handout sheet. Include detail of the issue and what you want to do about it and why others should get involved. What change/improvement would you like? After ten minutes discuss what you have come up with the rest of the group for 3-5 minutes. |  |
| 95-110minutes  
(15minutes) | **Break**                                                                |  |
| 110-135minutes  
(25minutes) | **Preparing to lobby or influence**  
Using the PowerPoint slide (Slide 6) take delegates through the three bullet points  
Using the PowerPoint slide (Slide 7) signpost the next section of the training by briefly stating the four bullet points  
Focussing on **Top facts** tell delegates:  
*It is vital to gain evidence when lobbying on an issue of concern or trying to influence decision makers. Hard or ‘top’ facts add weight to people’s views and concerns*  
Provide delegates with the handout Top Facts  
Read through the Top Facts handout on |  |
|           | **Group discussion**                                                    |  |
|           | **Evidencing**                                                          |  |
**Facts.** Explain to delegates that these are facts about litter and rubbish. Ask delegates to read through the handout or read it aloud with the group. Prompt a **group discussion** by asking delegates to consider:

- how they feel about rubbish and litter now they have been presented with these facts
- did any of the facts make a particular impact on them?
- Were they surprised by any?
- Will the facts influence their behaviour / opinion on litter or rubbish in the future?

**Ask** delegates to make a list of 20 top facts on their issue from this morning. Delegates can use the same handout provided.

After ten minutes **ask** delegates if they are happy to share any of their top facts. **Suggest to delegates that facts don’t just have to take the form of statistics on paper.** Others ways of evidencing include:

- Photographs - if an area needs cleaning up, take photographs to show how bad things are
- Testimonials / quotes from local residents – these can be recorded on video or CD
- Physical evidence – such as

Using your handout *What I care about in my community* think about 20 top facts you could use to support your case
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Slot</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>135-150 minutes</td>
<td>Gathering evidence &amp; facts Using the PowerPoint slide (Slide 8) cover the two bullet points. Ask delegates to have a think about where they can gather evidence from and reveal them to the group. Flipchart the responses</td>
<td>View PowerPoint presentation and consider where you could gather evidence from PowerPoint Flipchart Handout Freedom of Information Act Q &amp; A</td>
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<td>(15 minutes)</td>
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<td>150-160 minutes</td>
<td>Know what you want Using the PowerPoint slide (Slide 10) explain to delegates that as part of the preparation and planning it is very important to know exactly what you want. Whether it be the ultimate goal of lobbying government to represent your views or if it is influencing people to support your view and / or help you in some way. Cover the nine bullet points</td>
<td>View PowerPoint presentation PowerPoint</td>
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<td>(10 minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>160-175 minutes</td>
<td>Checklist Provide delegates with a copy of the handout Preparing Checklist. Ask delegates to fill in the handout using their issue from this morning</td>
<td>Using the handout provided fill in the columns using your issue from this morning Handout Preparing Checklist Evidencing</td>
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<tr>
<td>(15 minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>175-235 minutes</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
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<td>(60 minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>235-245 minutes</td>
<td>Different ways to lobby, influence, contact &amp; inform people Using the PowerPoint slides (Slides</td>
<td>View PowerPoint presentation PowerPoint Flipchart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Community call for action**

Using the **PowerPoint slide (Slide 13)** cover the three bullet points. For background reading refer to the **handout Petition Call for Action**. Provide delegates with a copy of this and specifically highlight point 4.5 in regards to petitions:

"We will introduce a new duty on local councils to respond to all petitions, including electronic petitions, relating to local authority functions or other public services where the council shares delivery responsibilities. Petitions could call for action – to deal with empty properties, to transfer the ownership of a building to the community, to calm traffic in an accident blackspot, or to request refuse collection on a certain day, gates at the end of the passages behind houses, a new school crossing, or new street lights in a dark corner of an estate. They could also call for participatory budgeting or a local referendum thus giving the initiative to the citizen”

The new duty requires local authorities to respond to petitions under the following circumstances:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>245-255 minutes</td>
<td>View PowerPoint presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Q &amp; A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• The subject of the petition relates to the functions of the local authority or its partners through the Local Area Agreement (LAA)
• The petition has been organised by a local person, i.e. someone who appears on the electoral register or lives or works in the area
• The petition demonstrates a sufficient level of support from local people, i.e. has a minimum required number signatures
• The petition has ‘relevant’ signatures of people who either live or work in the area
• The petition satisfies the minimum requirement in relation to its manner of submission, its form and content

Southwark Council stipulate the following minimum requirements:
If a petition is submitted the organiser must:
• Provide their own contact details
• State clearly the application that is being opposed and the reason for opposition on each page of the petition
• Ensure all names and addresses are clearly legible and preferably written in black ink
• Show the date the signatures are collected on each page

Ask if they have any questions
Effective communication
Using the PowerPoint slide (Slide 14) highlight that effective communication is vital when you are trying to get your point across and influence people. Five key aspects of effective communication are:
• Active listening
• Valuing diversity
• Understanding body language
• The rhythm of three
• Being assertive

This course will not go into great detail regarding effective communication however refer to the Trainers Notes on effective communication so that you can provide delegates with some broad information.

Using the PowerPoint slide (Slide 15) cover the Rhythm of Three as a technique and briefly ask delegates to try the technique using their issue from the morning. There is room to do this in their handout What I care about in my community.

Signpost delegates to other courses available at the Active Citizen Hub which they could benefit from:
• Effective Communication
• Presentation & Public Speaking Skills

View PowerPoint presentation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 275-305m | **Lobbying Southwark Council for a community allotment (Slide 16)**        | This activity will enable participants to practice in groups some of the new techniques they have learned. Ask delegates to read the task brief on the handout and then ask the participants to work in two or three groups depending on numbers. After the coffee break delegates will make a brief five minute presentation and be subject to questions from the other groups. View PowerPoint presentation. Read the task brief provided. In groups you will be required to lobby Southwark Council for a community allotment. Firstly, you need to write a letter to your local councillors and local authority environmental services officers to bring this matter to there attention. You will also invite them to a public meeting. Plan what you will say within your group. Take into consideration the things you have learnt today. After the break your group will be required to give a brief five minute presentation and be subject to questions from the other groups. | Handout Task Brief  
Flipchart  
FC Pens |
| 305-320m | **BREAK**                                                                  |                                                                                                                         |               |
| 320-350m | **Presentations**                                                         | Each group has five minutes to present and will take questions from the other groups before they finish. Provide delegates with some feedback on their use of the techniques learned today. Remember to use WIN: Wonderful say something positive  
• Improvement give constructive ideas for improvement  
• Finish with something positive | Presentation delivery  
Flipchart  
FC Pens |
| 350-360m | **Using the PowerPoint slide (Slide 18) review the aims and learning outcomes:** | View PowerPoint presentation | PowerPoint  
Q & A Discussion |
Aim: To equip delegates with the skills and knowledge to lobby effectively

Learning Outcomes:
• Greater understanding of the need to influence people
• How to gain allies and supporters in lobbying
• Greater confidence in your ability to influence people and lobby effectively
• Understanding of the importance of effective listening and speaking

Ask delegates if they have any questions

Closing
Ask delegates if they have any questions about the topics covered in today's training. Close with the PowerPoint slide (Slide 19) with the SVC contact details for any further information.

Before leaving ensure all delegates will out an Evaluation Form

DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING

Identify specific needs: (i.e. for slower learners)

Point in Session:

Materials:

Extension work:

Point in Session:

Materials:
## Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Contact info</th>
<th>What do I want from them?</th>
<th>What can I offer them in return?</th>
<th>How can they help me/pledges of support?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List the groups you want to target</td>
<td>Email, phone Mobile phone</td>
<td>E.g. money, help, use of facilities Translation feedback on a project Costs of services Ideas about funding Use of equipment</td>
<td>Logo on publicity, Support Chance to be a partner Some of my time</td>
<td>Money Expertise Local knowledge Get more support Promote my project Celebrity endorsement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>e.g. Crime &amp; Disorder, Regeneration, Drug Action Team, Youth Offending Team</td>
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<td>School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Businesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landlords</td>
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<td>Voluntary Organisations e.g. Victim Support, Volunteer Bureau</td>
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<td>Public Services e.g. Local Authority, Police, Health, Fire, Job Centre</td>
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<td>Local/national media</td>
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<td>Bing Ice Breaker</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Took a bus here today</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Someone left handed</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Someone who likes spinach</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Someone who is double jointed</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Someone wearing brown</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Someone who hates sport on tv</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Someone who can hum the tune of East Enders (they must demonstrate)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Someone who can whistle (they must demonstrate)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Someone who hasn't had measles</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Someone with green eyes</strong></td>
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**HANDOUT**

What I care about in my community

Make notes in the box below so you can speak for 3-5 minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information about the issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What you would like to do about it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who needs to be lobbied for support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why the audience should support you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the next steps (action group, campaign, fundraise)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example of TOP FACTS on litter and rubbish

- Local Authorities spend £540m a year clearing up litter and cleaning streets
- Local Authorities have a legal duty to clear litter and refuse and their performance in this is measured by government
- It is an offence to drop litter under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. People can be fined up to £2500 for dropping litter
- In UK 20 million people consume more than 935 million packets of chewing gum every year
- Dog fouling is consistently one of the highest sources of complaints by the public to MPs, councillors and local authorities
- UK dog population is between 6.5 million - 7.4 million producing 1000 tonnes of faeces every day
- Households produce more than 30 million tonnes of waste every year
- The estimated cost of waste management to local authorities is over £1.3 billion a year
- 180 million tonnes of waste are produced by commerce and industry every year
- More than 100,000 trolleys go astray from supermarkets each year. Many end up obstructing paths, spoiling beauty spots or polluting rivers. Dealing with abandoned trolleys costs local authorities £5 million a year
- The annual cost to the country to remove abandoned vehicles is around £20 million. Some councils spend £80,000 annually
- The average amount of money spent by a local authority cleaning up flyposting is £6043
- 77% of Londoners said graffiti was a key quality of life concern
- The estimated cost of graffiti in the UK is over £1 billion
- London Underground spends £10 million a year to replace glass scarred with graffiti in addition to the £2.5 million needed to clear up other types of graffiti
- It costs council tax payers £500 million a year to clean the streets of England
- this does not include parks or other public places (Defra)
- Over 30 million tonnes of litter are collected from our streets every year
- A quarter of areas are blighted with fast food rubbish
- Sweet wrappers are found on 68% of streets
- Half of our streets, parks and other public places are covered with soft drinks containers, with nearly another 20% littered with beer bottles and lager cans
- 25% of people admit to dropping food rubbish
- Food litter attracts rats. You can contract Weil’s disease from rats’ urine. The disease can lead to kidney and liver failure and eventually death
- We are never more than 8 feet from a rat
- 1.3 million bits of litter are dropped on our roads every weekend
- Throwing litter out of the car window is Britain’s biggest driving annoyance—with over 90% of road users finding it irritating (2003)
- The amount of fast food litter on our streets has risen by 50% since 2001
HANDOUT

Task Brief – Lobbying Southwark for a Community Allotment

Work in 2/3 groups depending on the size of the whole group. Your group has decided to lobby for a community allotment. You must first write a letter to your local councillors and / or Environmental Service officers bring this issue to their attention and inviting them to a meeting. Secondly, you have called a public meeting and invited fellow residents, your councillors and council officers from the Environmental Services Department. List the evidence you have for wanting the allotment (you’ll have to invent some of this to do this task) and where you have gained this from e.g. resident survey, newspaper articles. Your evidence might include things like wanting an area that will bring different sections of the community/different age groups together on a common project, interest in growing vegetables, financial pressures and the need to still eat healthily when money is short, need to offer people outdoor exercise. Make a list of your **20 killer facts** (make up as required). Draft your presentation to the public meeting where you try and persuade others to support you and the council to give you a green space for the allotment. You might also ask them for a small grant to get you started. Use the **rhythm of three** in your opening sentence. Use any of the checklists and information from the **handouts** to help you. One or more of you can do the presentation. It should last about **5 minutes**. **Practice** your presentation to get the timing right before the coffee break.
4.1 Britain has a long-standing tradition of petitioning to express a collective view and put pressure on those in power. For example, the Chartists demanded greater democracy in the 1840s, including demanding an end to rotten boroughs, payment for MPs, votes for working men and annual parliaments. They organised a petition in support of their demands which was signed by six million people, out of a population of under 20 million. Tens of thousands of people signed petitions as part of the campaign to abolish the transatlantic slave trade.

4.2 There is a long-established tradition of members of the public presenting petitions at the door of No. 10 Downing Street. Since its launch in November 2006, the e-Petitions site has proved to be a highly popular innovation, helping people communicate with the Government and with the Prime Minister’s office. There have been more than eight million signatures, originating from more than four million different email addresses. The software behind the system is also available free for anyone to use.

4.3 We are not proposing government by petitions, nor are we suggesting that the role of elected representatives in taking difficult decisions should be undermined. But, we do believe that stronger petition powers will enable more people to have their voice heard and help elected representatives do their jobs better. Many local authorities handle petitions very well. However, research for the Local Government Association (LGA) suggests that fewer than a third of councils guarantee a response to petitions.¹ Our own research suggests that the number of councils who make details of their petitions scheme available to the public is even smaller.

4.4 We will introduce a new duty on local councils to respond to all petitions, including electronic petitions, relating to local authority functions or other public services where the council shares delivery responsibilities. Petitions could call for action – to deal with empty properties, to transfer the ownership of a building to the community, to calm traffic in an accident blackspot, or to request refuse collection on a certain day, gates at the end of the passages behind houses, a new school crossing, or new street lights in a dark corner of an estate. They could also call for participatory budgeting or a local referendum thus giving the initiative to the citizen.

4.5 Responding to a petition should not be a ‘tickbox’ exercise. If the council’s overview and scrutiny committee decides the response is not adequate or substantive, petitioners will be able to secure a debate of the full council. In any event, if five per cent of the local population sign a petition, there will have to be a full council debate. Local authorities will be able to set lower thresholds.

4.6 A few issues, for example planning, will need to be dealt with differently to reflect existing robust statutory processes for public participation and consultation. Petitions are used extensively by local communities to express their views on planning matters. Local planning authorities are already legally required to address representations, including petitions, by taking relevant comments into account and by making their decision and the reasons for it public.
The new duty requires local authorities to respond to petitions under the following circumstances:

- The subject of the petition relates to the functions of the local authority or its partners through the Local Area Agreement (LAA)
- The petition has been organised by a local person, i.e. someone who appears on the electoral register or lives or works in the area
- The petition demonstrates a sufficient level of support from local people, i.e. has a minimum required number signatures
- The petition has ‘relevant’ signatures of people who either live or work in the area
- The petition satisfies the minimum requirement in relation to its manner of submission, its form and content

Southwark Council stipulate the following minimum requirements:
If a petition is submitted the organiser must:

- Provide their own contact details
- State clearly the application that is being opposed and the reason for opposition on each page of the petition
- Ensure all names and addresses are clearly legible and preferably written in black ink
- Show the date the signatures are collected on each page
Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act – the right to see a wide range of public information
The FOI gives you the right to ask any public body for all the information they have on any subject you choose. Also, unless there’s a good reason, the organisation must provide the information within a month. You can also ask for all the personal information they hold on you.
Scotland has its own Freedom of Information Act, which is very similar to the England, Wales and Northern Ireland Act. If the public authority you want to make a request to operates only in Scotland then your request will be handled under the Scottish Act.

Public sector bodies covered by the Act
The Freedom of Information Act applies to all 'public authorities' including:

- government departments and local assemblies
- local authorities and councils
- health trusts, hospitals and doctors’ surgeries
- schools, colleges and universities
- publicly funded museums
- the police
- lots of other non-departmental public bodies, committees and advisory bodies.

Who can access the information?
Any person can make a request for information under the Act – there are no restrictions on your age, nationality, or where you live.

What can you ask for?
You can ask for any information at all - but some information might be withheld to protect various interests which are allowed for by the Act. If this is case, the public authority must tell you why they have withheld information.
If you ask for information about yourself, then your request will be handled under the Data Protection Act instead of the Freedom of Information Act.
Effective Communication

Active Listening

- Active listening is a structured way of listening
- It focuses attention on the speaker
- Listening to not only what is being said, but also what isn’t being said
- It is not only hearing words and tones it is:
  - understanding non-verbal communication
  - being aware of feelings
  - encouraging the speaker
  - paraphrasing – summarising what the speaker has just said

Intercultural skills

- Engaging with people from different cultures, who may have different values to yours, can mean communicating in different ways
- Intercultural skills are the skills we need to understand the values and customs adopted by people from different cultures, how these might affect their behaviour and how we should respond
- They are skills that help us to communicate and behave flexibly and sensitively with people from other cultures
Intercultural skills

There are three main elements to intercultural skills:

• Knowledge and awareness of different cultures – way of life, customs, social and religious practices that may affect people’s behaviour
• Understanding our own attitudes and behaviour and how they might differ from those of other people
• Recognising the differences and being willing to adapt were necessary

Body Language:

Body language is an important part of communication which constitutes around 55% of what we are communicating. Given this, it is extremely important that we use body language to our advantage.

Assertiveness:

• Standing up for one’s rights without anger or aggression
• Saying what you want
• Keeping calm and sticking to the point
• Declaring strongly
• Using appropriate body language
• If you meet objections, keep repeating your message but respect the other person’s point of view