Module 5: How does the system work?

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Aim of the module By the end of the session participants should: ● recognise some of the different ways that people can affect change ● be able to identify a range of government institutions and explain some of their functions. ● know who their local elected representatives are and how they can be reached	*Total time for the module: 2 hours 10 to 2 hours 25 (including a 15 min break)*
# Activity 1 Introduction	# 5 mins
There are many different ways of being able to affect change and nearly as many different arguments as to which is the most effective. This module gives groups the opportunity to talk about what approaches are available. One tried and tested approach is to target decision makers in order to affect change. This module goes onto serve as a basic introduction to how the system works in terms of how government works (or should work!) and also companies.	

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Activity 2: **How does change happen? People power**	30 mins
Aim of the session By the end of the session participants should: recognise some of the different ways that people can affect change and start to think about what this means for our own campaign work.	

How to do it?

Over the years people have used lots and lots of different approaches to try and get change. Before deciding how we will organise our own campaign it is worth considering what approach others have used (some people call this theories of change)

1. Display the 7 'people power' images on the walls of the room. Each chart is a picture and a sentence that describes the approach to change
   - **Pressure on politicians and governments:** trying to influence politicians and those that work in local, national and European governments.
   - **Customer pressure**: refusing to buy certain things or use certain services.
   - **Pressure on companies**: trying to influence a company's leaders, employees, shareholders etc.
   - **Changing how we behave**: the way we live our lives is how we want to see the world
   - **Making lots of people aware:** awareness raising campaigns that try to make as many people as possible understand an issue.
   - **Disrupting: (Non violent direct action)**: people stopping or disrupting the work of companies, governments or whoever is the problem.
   - **Others?** Add your own
2. Examples: ask everyone to tour around and look at the headings and write any examples of the approach in action on post its and stick them under the heading. During this activity the group will discuss and share their different understandings of the approaches. (10 mins)
3. Group discussion: This activity has lots of potential for starting a conversation about a huge number of issues. Here are some suggested prompts:

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- Have you done any of these? What might put you off any of these? Do you think some approaches are more effective than others? Can each of these approaches achieve change on their own? - Do the people really have any power? (this is the start of a conversation about whether or not people in positions of authority (politicians and governments / companies) are the ones with power or whether 'the people' have the power to affect change? (this can lead onto a conversation about who should be the target of our campaigns) - What does this mean for our campaign? (10 mins)	
Trainer tips *If you feel your group might want to have a more sophisticated discussion or you want to read some more on this yourself have a look at the following document [Extra resources/activities for trainers (How does the system work?)](#)*	
What stuff do I need? **Resource 'How does change happen?' group activity** - Post its - pens (1 for each person) - Blu tack	

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Activity 3: **How does (or should) government work?**	45 mins
Aim of the session By the end of the session participants should: ● have a better understanding of the different government institutions, people associated with them and their responsibilities. ● Start to recognise that there is knowledge within the group about how government works.	

How to do it?
Even if we are disillusioned by politicians and government it is still important for us to be able to understand how this system works or should work (in this case in England):
 	
1. laid out on the floor are a pack of cards which list:
    ● different **institutions**: European Parliament, Houses of Parliament, Council/Local Authority (e.g. County Council, District/Borough/City Council, Unitary Authority/Metropolitan Borough, Parish/Community/Town Council)
    ● different **people** (attached to these institutions): MEP (elected), MP (elected), elected members / councillors etc.
2. Also laid out on the floor are a set of headings i.e. institutions/key people/responsibilities.
3. Participants are asked to try and identify the people associated with the different institutions by placing them and them under the different headings. (20 mins)
4. During the conversation the trainer may draw on the resource sheet (How does government work?) to provide additional information e.g. the role of the Scrutiny Committee. The trainer may also want to add some valid local background information to the back of some of the cards (e.g. Name of Leader of the Council and Chief Executive Officer of the local council)
5. The trainer then hands out (or reads out) a number of short case study examples and asks people to place them next to the institution that is best placed to influence their issue. These case studies (one or two sentences in length) are written by the facilitator and are relevant to the group. (10 mins)
The following are examples to show how this could work:	

- ● '*Increase the amount of youth work and youth clubs that exist in our area*'

This card could be placed a) under the 'Council/Local Authority' heading because it's up to the council how much money it puts into providing this service and b) under the 'Houses of Parliament' heading because MPs decide which local services council's have to provide by law (statutory services) and which services council's can decide for themselves they would like to provide (non-statutory services). At the moment youth services are non statutory.

- ● '*Do something about local air pollution*'

This card could be placed a) under the 'Council/Local Authority' heading because the council can regulate traffic by restricting traffic in certain areas and b) under the 'Houses of Parliament' heading because MPs have the power to pass laws that mean diesel vehicles are phased out c) under the European Parliament because European Directives set limits (that are legally binding) for some major air pollutants that affect people's health.

6. A further set of cards lists some of the responsibilities of each institution. These are laid on the floor and the group attempts to assign them to the relevant institution. (15 mins)

7. give out 'How does Government work?' resource sheet that builds on this knowledge by explaining how government is structured and works at a local, national and European level.

Trainer tips

- ● *Note: this is meant as a very basic introduction the trainer can add cards (blank ones are included) to increase the complexity as appropriate.*
- ● *With different issues this can be a complex picture (for example there are many additional decision makers in health, CCGs, Trusts etc). This may mean that the facilitator may need to either a) make a judgement as to whether the knowledge already exists with some in the group or b) do some research in advance of the workshop on the different agencies and produce cards for them c) invite an outsider with some expertise to the session and do the writing of the cards as part of the activity. Note: an explanation of the difference between government and parliament is available [here](#)*

What stuff do I need?

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Resource: <u>How does Government work? (group activity)</u> this needs to be cut up into a set of cards in advance of the session

Resource sheet: How does Government work?

Resource sheet: How laws are made

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Activity 4: **Our politicians: who's who?**	30 mins
Aim of the session By the end of the session participants should: ● have identified who their local political representatives are	
How to do it? In England it is very easy to find out who our elected representatives are and how to contact them. 1. using laptops ask people to visit https://www.writetothem.com/ 2. people take it in turns to input their postcodes (with those more confident with the technology helping those with less confidence) The information on their representatives (names/political party) is then written on cards and placed into the grid from the previous activity. 3. There are other tools for finding out more relevant information. Whilst some people are experimenting with writetothem.com others can be introduced to theyworkfor you etc.	
Trainer tips *The UK Parliament has an Outreach and Engagement team that is happy to work directly with groups to help them better understand how Parliament works. In 2017 the team ran a workshop as part of the Everyday Activism project with members of the Syrian community in Leeds.*	
What stuff do I need? Laptop/s if these are not available make sure that at least one person in the room has a smart phone. **Resource sheet Our Politicians**	

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Optional Activity 1: How do companies/corporations work?	15 mins
Aim of the session By the end of the session participants should: ● have a better understanding of how companies are structured and how they may be influenced	
How to do it? As Donald Trump has shown us very clearly the power of business to influence what happens in the world is becoming increasingly important to understand. 1. Ask the group what companies/businesses may be able to influence the issue under their consideration. 2. On a flipchart sheet of paper draw a product or image that represents the company (e.g. block of flats (developer), supermarket (retailer) etc. 3. Ask the group for different ideas of how the activities of this organisation can be influenced. Draw these as a spider diagram with the image in the centre. The facilitator attempts to use the activity as a way of starting a discussion on how a company may be structured (e.g. directors, shareholders, boards, subsidiaries, CEOs, employees, unions) and how it may be influenced	
What stuff do I need? ● Flip chart ● marker pens	

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Activity 5: **Reflection discussion**	5 mins
How to do it? Reflection: some possible prompt questions maybe: 1. having spent some time looking at the structure of 'government' and how it works (or companies) do we need to make any changes to our campaign plan? After our analysis are we still working on the same targets? 2. In the next module we will start to decide how we can best reach and influence our targets and what message/s we should use. 3. Refer back to the campaign planner do we need to add anything or change anything?	
Trainer tips	
What stuff do I need? **Resource sheet: Campaign planner**	