

Keep Our NHS Public

CAMPAIGNER'S HANDBOOK

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Produced by Keep Our NHS Public



Introduction

[Keep Our NHS Public](#) (KONP) was founded in 2005 and continues to grow.

We campaign on a wide range of local and national issues, with an equally wide range of members, supporters and campaigners. The experiences, and skills in our organisation are incredibly varied. All are welcome and very much appreciated. The following document is a guide to campaigning for Keep Our NHS Public.

If you have any questions, please do get in touch with the national office.

Campaigning Works

It is a common misconception that politics is something done only by professional “politicians” within the confines of Westminster. This view, however, overlooks the powerful pressure from outside parliament that drives social and legislative change. The reality is applying pressure from outside is just as important for winning reforms and reshaping society as anything politicians do and say in the Houses of Parliament.

By building strong [local](#) and national campaigns that shift public opinion and pressure politicians, it is possible to protect the NHS from privatisation, underfunding, and mismanagement. Joining or working alongside Keep Our NHS Public means becoming part of a movement capable of doing exactly that.

If you don't believe us, check out our [NHS Campaigning Wins webpage here](#).

Of course, we still have a long way to go to rebuild and restore the kind of NHS we all deserve. And that's why we need your help.

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Designing a leaflet

Leaflets are a fantastic way to push out your message, whether on a large demonstration or running a stall in your local area.

A good leaflet should be eye-catching, with a bold, easy to read message to passers-by, and focused on one or two clear points.

People will often only spend a few seconds looking at it, so clarity and simplicity matter more than including lots of information.

What every leaflet should have:

A main slogan/headline - as big as possible e.g. Stop Cuts to Children’s Mental Health, End Migrant charges. The headline should be the biggest text on the page and immediately communicate the main message of the campaign. Keep it short, direct, and easy to understand at a glance.

Really try to think about your target audience – use as little jargon as possible and always explain initials (for instance, PFI). Always consider who the leaflet is aimed at and what language will make sense to them.

Link or QR code, to social media profiles or websites for instance. QR codes are particularly useful because many people will scan them quickly on their phones

rather than typing in a web address. You can generate them for free in many places online, for instance [bit.ly](#)

Text – use as little text as possible – the hardest part

A photo or illustration is good - Make sure you check KONP's Copyright guidelines, [here](#).

Keeping it brief

One of the hardest parts of leaflet design is deciding what to leave out. Most people will not read long blocks of text, so try to:

- Use short sentences and short paragraphs
- Break information into bullet points where possible
- Focus on the most important facts or actions
- Include only one main call to action

If the leaflet is too long, try asking yourself:

- What is the single most important thing people need to know?
- What do we want them to do after reading this?
- Is the text as concise as it can possibly be? Is every single word necessary? (George Orwell's 'Politics and the English Language' is a great pamphlet on concise writing)

Include a clear call to action

Every leaflet should tell people what they can do next. For example:

- Attend a meeting or protest
- Sign a petition
- Contact their MP
- Join the campaign

Make this information easy to find and easy to act on.

Design Tips

- Use large fonts that are easy to read
- Leave enough blank space so the leaflet does not feel cluttered - this may feel counterintuitive, but a minimalistic leaflet looks far more professional than a cluttered one.
- Stick to one or two different fonts as a maximum
- Stick to two or three colours if possible
- Make important information stand out using bold text or boxes
- Read the leaflet from a distance to check whether the key message is visible immediately
- Avoid clashing colours or colours that are difficult to read together, for instance, red text on black backgrounds and vice-versa can be very difficult to read. This is difficult to read. So is this. This is also difficult to read. Dark text on a light background is far easier to read.

Design tools and printing

- A very good, free tool for creating leaflets is Canva, which has plenty of pre-made templates that you can adapt for your leaflet.
- Other tools include Affinity or Adobe InDesign or Photoshop, though these are far more complicated to learn to use than Canva.
- If you need help designing a leaflet, or want to see examples of other leaflets, contact nationaladmin@keepournhspublic.com.
- The KONP national office uses Solopress to print leaflets, but there are plenty of other options including local printers.

Organising an event

Organising a successful meeting or public event takes planning, preparation, and time to build support. Whether you are holding a public meeting, campaign launch, rally, workshop, or discussion, it is important to be clear about your purpose and organise everything around that goal.

Ideally, planning should start as early as possible. Even a small meeting usually needs at least several weeks of preparation if you want a good turnout. However, it is often necessary to respond to events quickly. For instance, if the Government were to announce a tenfold increase in migrant health charges overnight, it would be necessary to hold a meeting/event/protest as soon as possible rather than delaying a month. Often, it is easy to build a meeting if you are responding quickly to big events.

If you have decided to organise an event, contact the KONP national office so that we can share the details on our website's Events page and in our newsletter.

What kind of event are you hosting?

The type of event will shape everything else — the venue, speakers, publicity, and format.

For example:

- A public meeting
- A campaign launch
- A protest or rally
- A fundraiser
- A film screening
- A panel discussion

Think about what format best suits your aims. A large public meeting may help raise awareness, while a campaign lunch or rally may be suitable to support a strike or stop a hospital closure.

What is the political goal?

Before organising anything, decide exactly what you want the event to achieve.

Possible goals might include:

- Building support for a campaign
- Recruiting new members or volunteers
- Pressuring decision-makers
- Raising awareness of an issue
- Preparing for future actions
- Bringing different groups together - for instance a meeting on Palantir may help bring together a Palestine campaign and an NHS campaign.

Having a clear political goal helps you make decisions about messaging, speakers, publicity, and follow-up.

Ask yourself:

- What do we want people to do after the event?
- What would make the event a success?

Decide on the basic details early

You will need to decide:

- **Date and time:** avoid clashes with major local events or holidays where possible. Think about what date and time would make it easier for people to come - 3pm on a weekday may be difficult for people working or looking after children, for example.
- **Title:** make it short, clear, and engaging
- **Venue:** make sure it is accessible, affordable, and the right size
- **Speakers:** choose people who are informed, engaging, and relevant to the topic, always make sure there is a speaker representing KONP.

- **Chair or host:** someone reliable and experienced who can keep the event running smoothly and on time and is prepared in advance to manage any difficult responses.
- **Online or in person:** There are instances where an online meeting would be easier or better attended than an in-person meeting, and times where the opposite is true. This often depends on the area covered (national meetings may be easier online, for instance), the date and time and the topic of the meeting. Discuss this with your group to decide.

When booking a venue, check:

- Accessibility
- Public transport links
- Capacity
- Audio/visual equipment - will you be needing microphones, for instance.
- If the meeting is hybrid, can the venue provide this option?

Create publicity materials

Good publicity is essential. People are unlikely to attend an event they never hear about.

You should usually prepare:

- A graphic or poster for social media
- A leaflet or flyer
- A Facebook event or Eventbrite page and use the link in your publicity
- A QR code linking directly to booking information or campaign pages

Your publicity should clearly include:

- The title of the event
- Date and time
- Venue
- Main speakers

- Who is organising it
- How people can attend or register

Keep designs simple and readable, especially for mobile phones and social media. Include some contact information in case people have questions about accessibility needs.

How many people do you expect to attend?

Having a realistic estimate helps you choose the right venue and plan properly.

Consider:

- Previous turnout at similar events
- The size of your organisation or mailing list
- Whether speakers are likely to attract people
- How much time you have to publicise the event

It is usually better to have a full smaller room than a half-empty large one.

What is your budget?

Even small events can involve costs.

Possible expenses include:

- Venue hire
- Printing
- Travel expenses for speakers
- Audio or technical equipment

Think about:

- Whether the event is free or ticketed. Always have a free ticket option - no one should be turned away based on cost.
- Whether donations will be collected
- Whether other organisations can contribute financially

- Whether the meeting is hybrid

Keep a simple budget so you know what you can realistically afford.

How are you going to build the meeting?

Building the event means actively encouraging people to attend. This is often the most important part of organising.

Useful methods include:

- Leafleting - think about big events that could be leafleted in the run-up to your event.
- Social media promotion
- Email lists and newsletters
- Personal invitations
- Asking partner organisations to share publicity
- Ask for announcements at other meetings and rallies
- Posters in community spaces/hospitals/universities.

People are much more likely to attend if someone personally asks them. Try to begin publicity early and increase activity as the event approaches.

Plan the running order

Prepare a simple agenda or running order before the event.

This might include:

- Welcome and introductions
- Main speakers
- Audience discussion or Q&A
- Campaign announcements
- Closing remarks

Keep events moving and avoid running over time where possible. Keep the event brief - an hour or two is probably enough for a meeting.

Think about practical roles

On the day, it helps to have people responsible for:

- Managing sign-in sheets
- Chairing the event
- Taking photos or technical support
- Collecting donations
- Stewarding or accessibility support

Do not leave all tasks to one person.

What are your next steps?

A good event should lead somewhere. Think in advance about how you will follow up afterwards.

For example:

- Collect contact details - via a sign-in sheet.
- Invite people to future meetings
- Encourage people to join the campaign
- Share recordings or photos online
- Send follow-up emails
- Organise further actions

Without follow-up, even a well-attended event may not build lasting organisation or momentum.

After the event, it is also useful to evaluate:

- What worked well?
- What could be improved?

- Did you achieve your political goals?
- How many new people became involved?

This helps strengthen future organising.

Social Media campaigning

Social media platforms

Different platforms offer different strengths for campaigning, whether that's reaching new audiences, sharing information, or organising. In practice, the best place to start is the platform you already use confidently. From there, you can expand or create dedicated accounts for your organisation or campaign.

Facebook

Facebook remains useful for community-building and local organising. Groups and pages make it easy to coordinate activity, share updates, and host discussion in one place. It's especially effective for reaching people through real-world networks.

The downside is limited organic reach. Content visibility depends heavily on the platform's algorithm, and posts may not travel far without engagement or paid promotion.

X (formerly Twitter)

X is fast-paced and well suited to public debate, rapid responses, and engaging with journalists, politicians, and organisations. Hashtags and reposts help content spread beyond your immediate network.

However, it's less effective for deep discussion or sustained organising, and visibility can be unpredictable. The platform has also become more fragmented, with audiences spread across alternatives, such as Bluesky, which works in very similar ways to X.

Instagram

Instagram is highly visual, making it best for images, infographics, and short videos (Reels). It can help campaigns build a recognisable identity and reach younger audiences.

It's less suited to detailed messaging or linking out to external content, and requires consistent visual content to stay effective.

TikTok

Short, engaging videos can reach very large audiences quickly via TikTok.

Messaging needs to be simple, authentic, and adapted to trends, which can make it challenging for some campaigns.

Other platforms

Platforms like WhatsApp are increasingly important for organising, especially for coordinating volunteers and sharing updates in closed groups. WhatsApp's new community feature allows you to contact large groups of people at once, though it can be complicated to set up. It is always important to get permission from people before you add them to a WhatsApp group.

Useful links:

- [Guide to using Facebook](#) for campaigning
- [How to Use Facebook for Business: A Beginner's Guide](#)
- [WhatsApp Help](#)
- [The Complete Hashtag Handbook for Facebook, Instagram, and X](#)
- [How to Use Hashtags on Twitter, Facebook & Instagram](#)

Working with the Press

This section will instruct you on how to build relationships with local members of the press and help you understand the importance of these relationships to your campaigning.

It will offer advice on getting to know your target audience and the best way to gain coverage through insider knowledge of journalistic processes. The main take-home message here is that journalists are incredibly busy people, so anything you can do to make their life easier will be appreciated.

Developing and maintaining a press list

- Retain and store press contacts (phone, email and news outlet) in a centralised and secure way, and don't share! These contacts were given to you for use for a specific purpose, and unless publicly available, should remain in your possession
- Categorise into print, local online news, and broadcast media (radio and television) for easy reference
- Get to know individuals' preferential areas so you can target them with any relevant press releases

Forming relationships

- At Health scrutiny meetings or similar where decisions are being made there should always be a member of the local press in attendance. This can provide an excellent opportunity to introduce yourself and have a quick chat, just remember anything you say may be quoted as part of proceedings
- Identify relevant journalists to contact by keeping an eye on your local NHS news in the paper or on radio or TV – local press are always hungry for stories!
- Be visible – Foster a social media presence for your group so you can be noticed by local journalists/news outlets in the first place, but do remember content that you put out can be seen by the press, so make sure it represents you well
- Don't offer to meet a journalist for a quick coffee without at least one story to pitch – they are busy people, and having something for them will make them far

more receptive to you when you contact them in the future. Don't waste time – theirs or yours!

- You can fairly easily generate local news stories using [Freedom of Information](#) requests or from what you have been a party to at board meetings etc (just make sure you can back up any claims you make)
- Be available and approachable when contacted to both establish and maintain a relationship

Maintaining relationships

- Network (including with communications officers at your local ICB or hospital trust) to build up contacts and foster relationships you've already founded. With comms officers in hospital trusts and CCGs – a discreet relationship can reap great rewards by offering you insider knowledge
- Be trustworthy and discreet. As you become trusted, journalists will email you with the body of their stories before publication or with embargoed copy from others that they plan to print. This should never be shared with anyone. If asking another person for a quote then summarise the story as closely as possible, and ask that person to also keep the content confidential
- Be available at the end of a phone and answer emails promptly, time is money in the media world and stories move fast. Failure to be accessible will count against you going forward
- Be trustworthy and accurate and provide sources in the notes section of your press release. If you put out inaccurate information that is then taken up by a journalist who trusts you, you will never hear from the press again!
- Get to know your audience and individuals, their specific interests etc so you know who is best to approach. With the local press there is less scope here, but it's still highly beneficial to recognise which stories have the best chance of take-up
- Know *when* to contact and *how* (see section on Press releases) - the timing of this can be crucially important to your ongoing relationships

- Be available/communicative and help even if your organisation will not be getting a mention on that occasion, rest assured that these interactions are remembered by journalists

Spokespeople

- In a small organisation, the person writing the press release may be the one who also provides quotes; however, the best spokespeople are those with lived experience of the issue and knowledge, so always use these people as a preference
- Confidentiality is crucial in press work and you have a responsibility to any NHS staff you work with to maintain this with members of the press. In local organisations (where for example, there is only one hospital) this confidentiality will be harder to maintain. NHS staff have a clause in their contracts stating they cannot mention their trust or disclose sensitive information so the press liaison has a duty to oversee this when selecting and briefing spokespeople
- For a broadcast interview it is important to brief spokespeople who may be inexperienced on key points (sometimes called 'Top Lines') if they need guidance. What do they need to communicate to the audience? Is there anything you'd rather they didn't mention? Offer them a couple of sources to quote for backup in case they are struggling to answer a particular question
- Spokespeople appearing on broadcast media where people may be put on the spot, must be quick-thinking and articulate. This is something that could be rehearsed prior to the eventuality with a sympathetic press officer! Make it clear that you are always available to coach in these circumstances as live interviews can be daunting for the inexperienced
- Ironically it can sometimes be easier in a smaller organisation to identify a few key people that fulfil different briefs and have different areas of expertise to comment or appear. Have a meeting to establish this going forward, and be upfront with people about their availability and willingness to appear – you don't want to overpromise a broadcaster and fail to deliver

How to write an effective press release

A solid [press release](#) is usually your first point of contact in reaching the media. It is important to set out your message in a way that will gain the attention of your recipient and encourage them to distribute your message/story.

Before you begin

- **Don't Include logos or pictures** in the actual email body. These are distracting, unnecessary and may be flagged as spam so may never make it to the inbox.
- **Don't lead the email with 'Dear John, hope you're well etc...'** unless you have a special relationship with a particular journalist, or it's being offered/pitched individually. Just send the release as the email text.
- **Always blind copy (BCC) your emails** – both for data protection purposes and because you don't necessarily want other journalists to know how wide a release has been sent! And guard your press lists carefully – don't share them. Contacts are hard-won and confidential.
- **Don't send as an attachment**, journalists are very busy and inundated with emails; in many cases it just won't get read. Why put another potential barrier in the way? There's just no point. Copy your text in the body of the email.
- **Don't send press releases too often** unless really worthy of reading. Standalone comments can be sent sometimes instead and offer the opportunity to get your name into another story. Make sure the release is timed well (always aim to send it first thing on a weekday morning about 8.30am, and if it's about an event, then around 2-3 days prior to give enough time to schedule). Editors will usually meet mid-morning to finalise the spread, so by sending early you stand the best chance.

Beginning/middle

- **Have an excellent subject line where possible!** Something in as few words as possible that offers a juicy flavour of the contents – don't be tempted to try and tell the whole story in the subject line!

- **Who, what, when, where and why?** Including these details in the first paragraph is crucial to your release and must be communicated as quickly and simply as possible. Make sure you have a decent hook before sending, why is your story important, is it exciting enough to stand up in its own right, or is there a big local story it relates to? This sounds obvious, but releasing stories that aren't newsworthy will lead journalists to tire of opening your mail when they only have limited time. **And it's important to remember that 'interesting' and 'newsworthy' are not necessarily the same thing.** As a press liaison for your group, you will sometimes need to tactfully tell your fellow members that what they think is a good story, won't be considered to be one by the press at all...
- **Write your press release in the third person** so it can be lifted by a paper as is (saves time!) Journalists want a press release they can basically lift and reproduce for an article if necessary, so...
- **Don't get emotional** – the main body of a press release is designed to be factual and should read in the third person like a newspaper report, save the emotion for the quote.

Finishing

- **Be succinct** and don't ramble. A couple of paragraphs are enough as long as they efficiently outline the issue. You can always be contacted to help put meat on the bones.
- **Include powerful emotive quotes, from the most senior/best placed people you can**, who have the authority to speak on a matter, a quote from someone directly involved will be more likely to be printed than a random 'spokesperson'. However, when quoting an NHS staff member, it's important to maintain some degree of confidentiality for contractual reasons, so you must tread carefully, and anonymous quotes will generally not be taken up. Admittedly this issue is trickier with a local group as it's quite obvious for example, which hospital someone works at. However, always try to quote from someone directly involved if possible. A good quote should summarise the main issue/points succinctly and be memorable to the reader, (perhaps using imagery or metaphor).

- **It sounds obvious, but don't forget your contact details** which should be clear/clickable at the end, and **be available when messaged/respond promptly**. There's no point putting someone down as a point of contact if they then don't pick up the phone, and being unavailable will mean you are less likely to be contacted in future.

Freedom of Information requests

The Freedom of Information Act gives you the legal right to ask to see recorded information held by public authorities. A response must be made to your request by the relevant authority within 20 working days.

Most FOI requests are free, but you might be asked to pay a small amount for photocopying – the organisation will tell you in advance if you need to pay anything.

Your request

The key here is to be specific and succinct. For example, if your current campaign is related to a specific department, state where, when and exactly what type of information you require. Give pointers to the type of information you are interested in receiving – for example, minutes of meetings, financial reports, risk assessments, etc. For clarity, it may be helpful to separate out and number each strand of information required, to minimise blurring or misunderstanding.

There is absolutely no need for you to explain why you are requesting the information or justify your request in any way – you have a right to ask to see the information and any such explanations from yourself can muddy the water.

Some authorities place constraints as to who their response may be shared with so, in writing your information request, it may be a good point to pre-empt this with a statement such as *“I am writing on behalf of..... campaign group, and your response will be shared with group members”*. This may help in some measure to get around some of the constraints – but it is always useful to check the FOI response for any limitations to sharing the information.

Finally, and importantly, the FOI team comprises public employees working in a busy environment with strict organisational protocols - so politeness is advised.

Contact addresses

Send your FOI email or letter directly to the authority concerned; contact addresses for the relevant FOI team can be found by googling the specific Hospital Trust or Council and then searching under “Freedom of Information”. You can write to any public authority (it doesn’t need to be specific to the area where you live) and you can make

your request as an individual (you don't need to be writing on behalf of a campaign group).

As far as your own contact address is concerned, all you need to provide is your name and your email address (or name and home address, if writing by letter). No other personal information is required from you.

The FOI response

Whilst we have found most FOI responses to be helpful as they stand, there have been some exceptions. Occasionally, a written response is received in lieu of a specific document – if you need to see the document, ask for it! Additionally, some FOI responses can have too much information (for example, sheets of data without any associated discussion or guidance which can be off-putting and can lead to misinterpretation) or, conversely, some responses may have too little information, and don't sufficiently answer the question. In all these situations, write back to the FOI team with the initial FOI reference code and a request for clarification or information, as initially requested.

Thereafter, If you are not satisfied with the response, or there is no timely response, you can request an internal review. After that, if you remain dissatisfied with the internal review, you have a right to ask the national Information Commissioner to consider the process thus far.

It is worthwhile noting that authorities do not have to release information that falls under certain exemptions (for example, national security, confidential conversations, some contractual financial arrangements etc). If in doubt – ask for a review of the decision not to provide the information e.g. arguing that availability of such information is in the public interest!

Further information

<https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request>

Attending local and regional health committee meetings

There are several meetings on local health services that can be useful for campaigners. These are usually held every two to three months and listed on the relevant website (e.g. local council, council or area committees, health and social care select/scrutiny committee, along with agendas, papers, past documents, and details of the committee's role. Meetings are often during the day, which limits attendance, but many are now live streamed and recorded.

Agendas and papers are often published only a few days in advance. Most committees allow public questions, typically submitted online or by email at least 24 hours before the meeting. Scrutiny boards may not routinely accept questions, but the chair may allow one if requested in writing beforehand. If possible, prep the person attending on what to expect at the meeting.

Hospital board meetings may not take public questions, but you can write to the board secretary with queries or request that a letter be shared with members. Committees should have a public participation policy explaining how questions are handled. If none exists, write to the chair to request one and consider seeking support from your local [Healthwatch](#).

Why read the papers or attend meetings?

- Reading relevant papers often provides clear background information about local plans for services, which can be useful for campaigning.
- You will get to know, and be known by, some of those involved. This can make it easier to ask questions and engage in dialogue.
- It is good for those making decisions on our behalf to see that there is at least some public scrutiny of their discussions.
- Trust board meetings contain routine reports on performance in relation to national targets such as A&E waits, cancer referrals, and ambulance response times.

- Trust board meetings routinely consider a “risk register” where potential problem areas (such as staffing, estate issues, equipment needs, or financial pressures) are set out. This can be used as the basis for asking questions, for example to the Integrated Care Board (ICB) about commissioning decisions or use of private providers.
- Answers to questions may allow a dialogue to be started and further information or a meeting to be requested.
- Questions and answers are published in meeting minutes, allowing concerns and statements to be formally recorded for others to see.
- If there is already a local campaign underway, for example over reduction of a service, meetings may provide the opportunity to ask relevant questions in a public forum and then link these to local media coverage.

It is not easy to get up and ask questions in public, but it gets easier with practice.

Examples of meetings

- Hospital trust board meetings – often worth attending occasionally to gain an overall picture of hospital issues
- Trust AGM – open to the public, with questions usually invited from the floor
- Integrated Care Board (ICB) meetings – questions from the public may be taken at the start of the agenda or at the end of the meeting.
- ICB AGM or annual public meeting – open to the public, with questions often invited
- ICB committees, such as Primary Care, Finance, or Quality Committees – many are held in public and may allow questions or representations
- Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) meetings – bringing together NHS, local authority, and other partners to discuss wider health strategy
- Joint committees across neighbouring ICBs or provider collaboratives – often covering shared services or regional planning
- Local authority Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings

- Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings covering service changes across more than one council area
- Health and Wellbeing Board meetings run by local authorities
- NHS foundation trust governor meetings (where held in public)
- Provider collaborative or acute alliance meetings where papers are publicly available

Some examples of using published documents and asking questions as part of campaigning for the NHS are shown below:

1. NHS underfunding.

Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust Board reviews its risk register as a standing item at each meeting. In the run up to the 2019 general election, Leeds KONP drew this to the attention of the local newspaper by emailing their news desk (like many other local papers, there is no longer a knowledgeable journalist dedicated to health coverage). The risk register gave a snapshot of the kind of issues causing concern to trusts throughout the country. The press coverage resulted in a front page and two full inside pages highlighting problems of underfunding in the NHS (see figures). As well as going through Board papers you can request a weblink for the risk register from the Board secretary.

2. Migrant charging: West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership Board – papers noted a report had been commissioned on how Covid-19 affected BAME staff and patients.

A KONP member asked the following question at the start of the meeting: *With respect to item 28/20, I was pleased to read that the Partnership Board has commissioned an independent review into the impact of COVID-19 on health inequalities and support needed for BAME communities and staff, to be chaired by Professor Dame Donna Kinnair. One of the areas of focus is “to identify opportunities to work as a system to improve outcomes for specific services and specific ethnic groups”.*

I would like to ask the Board if this will include investigating the damaging effect of so-called overseas visitor charging, which deters many migrants with unsettled status from seeking health care for fear of information being passed on to the Home Office. The negative impact

on health of the 'hostile environment' has recently been well documented in a report by [Doctors of the World](#)

In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic it is essential for the health of the wider community that migrants, through fear of jeopardising their applications for settled status, are not deterred from engaging with contact tracing services and are given necessary support if asked to self-isolate. It is also regrettable to see that the counter-fraud teams in some Trusts have identified overseas visitors trapped in the UK during the pandemic because of government-imposed travel restrictions, as a group likely to try and defraud the NHS and requiring particular vigilance. This is not likely to send out a message of support to BAME communities suffering disproportionately from coronavirus.

I would like to receive assurance from the Board that the issue of harm done by implementing overseas charging regulations will be considered as part of this review.

Outcomes

The answer to this question was 'yes' - that the review would consider the effects of charging regulations. This response and the question were included in full in the recorded minutes of the meeting. On this basis, campaigners then contacted Dame Donna Kinnair who readily agreed to a meeting.

The meeting was very constructive, establishing a connection between MedAct and the RCN, and between a Doctors of the World activist and a public health doctor working for the Partnership Board. There was agreement that attention would be given to making hospitals migrant friendly and to ongoing collaboration, and some momentum gained regarding collecting evidence of harm from implementation of charging.

Summary

Meetings and their papers are a good source of information but require a fair amount of time and commitment. While asking questions may not actually change things very much, there is a lot to be learned in the process. Challenging the decision makers hopefully gives them food for thought, provides support to any oppositional voices (for example on scrutiny committees) and empowers campaigners.

Making an impact on the streets

When organising in-person events, there are several ways to make your action stand out.

- Posting pictures on social media is now an essential element of campaigning, so identify at least one person with responsibility for taking pictures/video on a phone or camera. (*If there's no photo, it didn't happen!*) Use relevant hashtags and descriptions when posting (see section on social media)
- Banners and placards can make an impact and communicate visually what the event is about. There are commercial banner printers who are relatively inexpensive and will use artwork provided to make something for a specific event, [Solopress](#) is one good example. You can contact the KONP head office for banner designs too.
- Foam board cut into a 'picture frame' with slogans around the edges is a good way to engage people - get them to have their picture taken and share on social media.
- Street 'theatre' in costume and with homemade props can also get you noticed. If you have someone that plays a musical instrument this will also attract the interest of passers-by to your street stall.
- Have your own group banner made and consider investing in a gazebo for stalls at festivals.
- Flags can be printed with your design and are highly portable if attached to a telescopic flagpole.
- Playing music or using a megaphone can also grab the attention of passers-by. A megaphone is especially helpful if you're hosting a protest.