

Lobbying: best practice, better outcomes

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DEFINITION

Terms of engagement

- “Activities carried out in the course of a business for the purpose of influencing government or advising others how to influence government.” - PRCA Public Affairs and Lobbying of Conduct (Definition of Lobbying)
- “Public affairs is a term used to describe an organisation’s relationship with stakeholders. These are individuals or groups with an interest in the organisation's affairs, such as politicians (MPs, MSPs, AMs, MLAs, MEPs), civil servants, customers and local communities, clients, shareholders, trade associations, think tanks, business groups, charities, unions, and the media.” - Public Affairs Networking
- “Ask the person on the street about what they understand lobbying to mean and you’re more likely to hear about expensive agencies rolled in by major corporations to schmooze politicians.” – Spinwatch
- Public affairs or lobbying?

VALUE

Words of wisdom

- “Lobbying serves an important function in politics – by putting forward the views of stakeholders to policy makers, it helps in the development of better legislation.” – Cabinet Office
- Legislation cannot exist in a vacuum.
- Evidence-based policy.
- Value to both the organisation and to the political process.

CONTEXT

Local government lobbying

- A range of services; a responsibility, then, to engage as part of that work.
- Lobbying as part of effective delivery.
- Responsibility to share experience for the good of the public.
- A two-way process; action over passivity.

ETHICS AS BEST PRACTICE

PRCA Professional Charter and Codes of Conduct

- Dedicated PRCA Public Affairs and Lobbying Code of Conduct as part of the PRCA Professional Charter and Codes of Conduct. Specific standards and parameters.
- (1) demands honesty towards the institutions of government.
- (7) requires you to keep your personal activity or involvement with a political party – for example, as a supporter or association chairman – separate from your professional life as a public affairs and lobbying practitioners.
- (11) focuses on the need to disclose details on the PRCA Public Affairs and Lobbying Register.
- (14) is about managing expectations: you must not make misleading, exaggerated, or extravagant claims, or otherwise misrepresent the nature or extent of your access to institutions of government or to political parties or to persons in those institutions.
- (16) prohibits members conducting public affairs and lobbying working on an assignment of which the objective is to influence a decision of the local authority on which they serve.

**BROAD RANGE,
BETTER OUTCOMES**

The means to an end

- Actual lobbying – specific, strategy, what, and what stage.
- Monitoring – cutting through the noise.
- Writing – consultation, statements, invitations, written evidence, and briefing.
- Media – traditional PR activities with a political focus. Media can be a significant stakeholder and lobbyists do not exist in a bell-jar.
- Events – your own and externally.

The means to an end

- Information to stakeholders – trusted source.
- Political marketing – procurement and public sector practices.
- Networking – across different sectors, you are the spokesperson.
- Policy – the absolute nitty-gritty of politics.

BEST PRACTICE IN ACTION



Bingo Budget

- Background: outdated, unloved, and disadvantaged.
- Objective: understand affection and wallets.
- Advocates: 300,000+ bingo slips, 400 clubs, and 3.5m regular players.
- Data: investment, reverse decline, and marginal mapping.
- Action: march of the bingo players and local games.
- Social: #BingoBudget becomes byword.
- The Budget: Robert “the most expensive MP in Parliament” Halfon.
- Outcome: duty to 10% and bingo in every major publication.



We're **#ForAccessibleHomes**, are you?

Join the campaign.

For Accessible Homes

- Background: 11.6 million disabled people in Britain but only 7% of homes accessible.
- Objective: policy and legislative change to increase lifetime homes and wheelchair homes.
- Political change: Minister for Disabled People, Minister for Housing, and pro-active inquiries.
- Action: Neighbourhood Planning Bill as the best opportunity to change the law.
- Local councils: identified best examples and sent scrutiny toolkits to help others.
- Activating the public: day of action.
- Outcome: all of this joint activity combined to achieve a change in the law and new guidance from the government which will have a major and long-term impact on the availability of accessible housing.



Cycle to Work Alliance

- Background: HMT threat to the entire cycle to work scheme.
- Objective: protect the scheme by, importantly, increase understand of its benefits and context.
- Evidence: (1) 13,000 employees over 350 cycle to work employers, (2) impact assessment of independent bike dealers, and (3) quantifying the contribution to economy and workplace in terms of productivity, absenteeism, and retention.
- Allies: MPs with a cycling interest, local MPs, and cross-party support.
- Government departments: Transport and Health.
- Review: quickly engaged with the formal review.
- Outcome: scheme protected with the Budget drawing a positive distinction between schemes with clear policy rationale and other schemes.

**BEST PRACTICE
GOING FORWARD**

Learning points

- Good stewardship and culture: a two-part process.
- Outcomes over outputs: purpose and goal.
- The public: core constituents.
- Central government: hold to account.

Q&A