

Pagefield



Pagefield Perspectives

THE CASE FOR CAMPAIGNING

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Contents

Foreword.....	03
Executive summary.....	04
1. What do we mean by ‘campaigning’?.....	05
2. What’s in a word?.....	08
3. Perceptions of campaigning.....	10
4. Regulating campaigning.....	12
5. The case for campaigning.....	14
6. The Top 10 campaigns.....	19
Appendix 1: Opinium Research overview.....	22
Appendix 2: The 50 campaigns.....	24

Foreword

I have dedicated nearly 30 years of my professional life to the art and practice of campaigns. In just the past decade, as the Founder of one of London’s most successful independent communications consultancies, Pagefield, I am proud to have been involved in campaigns that have shaped policy in culture, media, energy, financial services and tech; campaigns that have defended the rights of women and girls, promoted awareness of breast cancer and sought to protect our heritage and the natural environment.

I am unashamedly pro campaigning. Unfortunately, over the three decades of my career, I have seen the reputation of professional campaigning – including lobbying – damaged by repeated scandals. And I have felt increasingly frustrated by the apparent unwillingness of my professional colleagues to defend the right to campaign.

I believe that campaigning is an integral part of our liberal democracy; that it makes an important contribution to crafting sound policy; and that, on balance, it is beneficial to the interests of the public. And I believe that, in a free society, people, charities, trade unions and businesses must all be equally at liberty to put their case before those in power and to the wider public: which is why I am committed to mounting a robust defence of campaigning.

This report is a part of that defence. But it does not merely defend campaigning, it celebrates it. In these pages we highlight some of the many achievements of campaigns over the past decade – achievements that would have been lost in a world in which campaigning was curtailed.

Earlier this year, we convened an eminent panel of opinion leaders from across business, media and the communications industry to select a Top 10 list of the best campaigns of the past decade based on each contender’s legislative, media and cultural impact on UK politics and society. We share the Panel’s selection here and unveil the campaign selected by the public as their favourite.

I’d like to thank the Panel, which included **Starling Bank CEO Anne Boden, HS1 Ltd CEO Dyan Crowther, Daily Telegraph Associate Editor Camilla Tominey** and **PR Week News Editor James Halliwell**, for their amazing work reviewing reams of information to decide upon such an impressive and thought-provoking Top 10.

Also on the panel was **former UK Ambassador to the United States and Pagefield Chairman Sir Christopher Meyer KCMG**, who sadly died this summer. Sir Christopher remains forever in our thoughts, and we are determined to honour his memory by standing up for the values of the free society which he so admired and championed.

This report contains original research, polling and interviews with a wide range of campaigners – I hope that it will inform and educate, challenge and persuade. I hope that it will enlighten and entertain. Above all, I hope that, having read this report, you will join me defending the right and freedom to campaign in the UK.

Mark Gallagher, Founder, Pagefield

Executive summary

One of the primary challenges in the debate about campaigning is clarity over terms. If you cannot define something, it cannot be regulated effectively. If it isn't defined it is too easy for misunderstanding to creep in. And if a term cannot be defined, it is too easy for those who seek to abuse the rules or escape responsibility to hide behind semantics. Hence this report begins with an attempt to create a comprehensive definition of 'campaigning' that we hope will be a useful contribution to discussions amongst policymakers, regulators and the industry in future.

In Chapter 2 we explore how the precise words we use impact upon, reflect and reinforce our prejudices and beliefs. As part of our research for this report, we spoke to leading campaigners from across the UK – those connected with the campaigns which make up the Top 10 campaigns of the past decade as selected by our Expert Panel. We asked them for their opinions about the difference between lobbying and campaigning. The somewhat tortuous distinctions many of them draw, illustrate a deep unease with 'commercial' lobbying that is then reflected in public opinion as outlined in Chapter 3.

As part of our work on this project, we commissioned original research from market research company Opinium. In that research, half of our sample was asked to proffer their opinions on a series of questions about 'campaigning'; whilst the other half were asked the exact same questions about 'lobbying'. The results not only make for interesting reading, they should sound alarm bells for those within the campaigning world who use lobbying tools and techniques to achieve their ends.

Interestingly, and somewhat to our surprise, the discomfort many feel about lobbying has not led public opinion to call for bans. This report is not designed to provide a comprehensive review of campaigning regulation, nor to offer a series of detailed regulatory recommendations but in Chapter 4 we do outline some key points for regulators to consider.

We are passionate proponents of campaigning. We believe it is ultimately a force for good, an essential element of liberal democracy and that it delivers benefits for society, and policy, as we explain in Chapter 5.

Finally, in Chapter 6, we share the Top 10 campaigns as selected by our Expert Panel and congratulate our overall winner – as selected by the public – the inspiring Free School Meals campaign led by Marcus Rashford and the Food Foundation.

1. What do we mean by ‘campaigning’?

Whether it is in a report like this or in the process of formulating policy and law, agreed upon terms and definitions provide all parties with a basis for a common understanding. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to find a clear and agreed upon definition for ‘campaigning’.

We started with the dictionary definition: “a *planned group...of activities that are intended to achieve a particular aim*”¹. Whilst entirely accurate, this definition is so broad that it could apply to Marcus Rashford’s campaign to extend free school meals and equally to your children’s co-ordinated campaign to secure a later bedtime. We were looking for something a little more specific.

In the search for specificity, we turned to the world of regulatory bodies to see how they would define the activity. What we discovered – perhaps unsurprisingly – is that very few attempt to define ‘campaigning’ as a whole but instead focus on those aspects of campaigning relevant to their own remit.

The Electoral Commission, for example, defines *political* campaigning in its educational resources² as follows:

“Political campaigning is where political parties and their candidates try to persuade you to vote for them, normally by talking about their policies. This is most noticeable in the run up to elections, but campaigning can take place all year round. Campaigning is a really important and useful part of helping you choose who to vote for.”

Whilst there is nothing we disagree with here, it doesn’t help us in our search for a more inclusive definition of campaigning as a whole.

In its guidance on campaigning, the Charity Commission³ does attempt to provide a definition of the term ‘campaigning’ and states the following:

“Campaigning: the commission uses this word to refer to awareness-raising and to efforts to educate or involve the public by mobilising their support on a particular issue, or to influence or change public attitudes. It also uses it to refer to campaigning activity which aims to ensure that existing laws are observed.”

However, the Commission goes on to say:

*“The commission distinguishes this from an activity which involves trying **to secure support for, or oppose, a change in the law or in the policy or decisions of central government, local authorities or other public bodies**, whether in this country or abroad, and which it refers to in this guidance as ‘political activity’.”*

This definition reflects the requirements of charity law which states that a charity can only engage in campaigning to secure support for, oppose or change law or policy in the context of supporting the delivery of its charitable purposes. Hence the need for a clear demarcation between different types of activity which is then reflected in the guidance offered by other, related organisations. For example, in their guide to campaigning for Trustee’s, the **National**

1 Cambridge Dictionary

2 <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/welcome-your-vote/resources-14-18-year-olds/campaigning>

3 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/speaking-out-guidance-on-campaigning-and-political-activity-by-charities-cc9/speaking-out-guidance-on-campaigning-and-political-activity-by-charities>

Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) defines campaigning based on the outcome that each campaign is designed to achieve⁴:

“Public or awareness campaigning

Focused on public attitudes and behaviour and aimed at mobilising public support for or against an issue or to get them to take action.

Political influencing

This is most often the sort of campaigning people have in mind when discussing its regulation and is often termed ‘lobbying’. It is the practice of trying to bring about a change in the policy of Government or public bodies with a view to either preserve or change the law in this country or abroad.”

This guidance is undoubtedly useful for Trustees but the distinction drawn between ‘public’ and ‘political’ campaigning ignores what is, in fact, an increasingly blurred line. Some of the most successful campaigns seeking to change Government policy or legislation have been grounded in activity designed to mobilise public support. Nearly all of the campaigns in our ‘Top 10’ for example relied heavily on raising awareness and mobilising the public to raise their voices in support of their aims. And most of the campaigners we spoke to in the context of our research identified social media, media outreach, petitions, protests or marches as legitimate forms of campaigning activity – all of which they used primarily to influence public attitudes and demonstrate support for their cause.

The search for a definition continued. As there is no single regulatory organisation covering ‘campaigning’ *per se* we moved on to look at the professional bodies representing those who engage in campaigning activity.

The **Chartered Institute of Public Relations** (‘CIPR’), **The Public Relations and Communications Association** (‘PRCA’) and the former **Association of Professional Political Consultants**⁵ (‘APPC’) between them represent individuals and organisations involved in media relations and public affairs – both key

elements of the campaigning mix. We had high hopes – that were swiftly dashed. In 2012 these bodies agreed on a definition of ‘lobbying’ to inform their discussions about future regulation:

“Lobbying services” means activities which are carried out in the course of a business for the purpose of:

(a) influencing government, or

(b) advising others how to influence government.”

This definition may be useful for that subset of campaigners who are involved exclusively in work to influence Government, but there are missing elements that means it is too narrow in its scope to be useful for our purposes.

Firstly, ‘lobbying’ is a group of activities and practices available to anyone who seeks to influence policy via campaigning: in other words it is a ‘subset’ of campaigning’ not a synonym for it.

Secondly, this definition does not capture the full range of **decision makers** whose policies and practices affect the public and who might therefore be the intended ‘target’ of ‘lobbying’ activity. The impact of a decision by a major regulator like Ofcom or Ofwat could potentially affect a far greater number of people than a decision taken by Handforth Parish Council, but activity to influence the regulators would fall outside of the scope of this definition.

And finally, the definition is also limited by its focus on ‘*lobbying services...carried out in the course of a business*’. By confining the scope to commercial interests, this definition excludes activity by voluntary organisations, charities and private individuals – all of which may be seeking to influence Government – and leads to the kind of confused and contradictory regulation that we explore later in this report.

⁴ http://therightethos.co.uk/files/NC636_Trustee_guide_to_campaigning_and_influencing.pdf

⁵ Now part of the PRCA

After many hours of fruitless searching for a definition, in the end, we crafted our own:

“Campaigning is a group of planned activities, including the mobilisation of public support, designed to influence the decision-making of Government or public bodies with a view to either preserving or changing policy or legislation in this country or abroad.”

It isn't perfect but this definition covers the outcome ('preserving or changing policy or legislation') and the activity (all 'planned activities' including those designed to mobilise the public). It therefore recognises that whilst lobbying, social media, media outreach, petitions, protests or marches might be distinct activities, they are all a part of the campaigners' arsenal.

Our definition covers activity to influence decisions by 'Government or public bodies' which would therefore include local Councils and regulatory bodies but exclude campaigns targeting private companies.

Finally, this definition does not perpetuate a distinction based on who is conducting the campaign – whether commercial or charitable or individual – but it would exclude your kids' campaign for more time in front of the TV.

This is the definition we have used in the rest of this report and which informed the work of our Panel in selecting the Top 10 campaigns⁶ of the past decade.



⁶ The 'No More Page 3' campaign selected as one of our Top 10 campaigns does not conform to this definition as it was intended to influence a private company. However, the panel felt that this campaign was one of the best recent examples of strong grass roots campaigning initiated by a small group of concerned citizens and that it deserved to be highlighted.

2. What's in a word?

We spoke to campaigners linked to each of our Top 10 campaigns and the majority of the campaigners we interviewed when asked to define campaigning, drew a clear distinction between 'campaigning' and 'lobbying'.

We understand that the desire to draw this line reflects the discomfort that many feel about 'lobbying', engendered and reinforced by decades of repeated scandals. And we agree that there is a difference – just not the ones that were implied or expressed by some of those we spoke to.

For example, many made reference to 'campaigning' as being for the 'public good' whilst 'lobbying' was seen as pursuing vested, commercial interests; as exemplified by one campaigner who said:

"I always think of 'lobbying' as financial interests...although not strictly because you get charities lobbying. Lobbying always sounds like it's vested interests that are not for the public good. Whereas campaigning seems broad, open, more public fuelled."

The underlying assumption that campaigning for the public good is entirely the preserve of voluntary or non-profit organisations is clearly just wrong. Look at the work done by Dove, a Unilever brand, and their campaign for real beauty. This campaign includes a wide range of activity to promote beauty inclusiveness and self-esteem for all women and girls – which is clearly a 'public good'. And whilst Dove's campaigning was originally designed exclusively to raise awareness and challenge public prejudice, as exemplified by their focus on marketing and advertising, it has expanded to include what can only be defined as 'lobbying' activity. For example, in 2019 Dove joined with the Crown Coalition in the US to ensure legal protection against discrimination based on race-based hairstyles. And in 2021, they launched The CROWN UK Fund to help eradicate race-based hair discrimination and campaign for legislative change in the UK.

Similarly, the implication that lobbying by commercial organisations is somehow inherently antithetical to the public good is easily challenged. There are countless examples of 'lobbying' by private sector organisations who offer expertise in specialist areas beyond the experience of most lawmakers thus ensuring clearer and better legislation that is in the interests of all. For example, one of our Founding Partners worked with the advertising industry on the Communications Act 2003. This complex legislation – brought in by the then Labour Government – was designed to update the regulation of a sector (telecoms and broadcasting) that had changed beyond all recognition since the advent of the internet. The Act introduced the Office of Communications (Ofcom) as the new industry regulator; introduced legal recognition of community radio; paved the way for full-time community radio services in the UK; and made it illegal to use other people's Wi-Fi broadband connections without their permission. All of these provisions – and many more contained within the Act – delivered a 'public good'.

The desire to 'hive off' commercial lobbyists and regard them as a separate and distinct category is exemplified by another campaigner who said to us:

"People campaign for things they believe in. Lobbyists are guns for hire."

Leaving aside the idea that lobbyists never campaign for things they believe in, this distinction ignores the fact that 'lobbying' is an activity that is available to all. It is, in fact, utilised by entirely voluntary campaigners such as those involved in the Upskirting campaign on our Top 10 list and who were clearly 'lobbying' for things that they passionately believed in.

Just as definitions establish a shared and common understanding, so the precise words we use reflect and reinforce our prejudices and beliefs. They impact on perceptions and influence our attitudes and our willingness to support – or partake in – a specific activity, with obvious implications for discussions about controls and bans in any area.



3. Perceptions of campaigning

As part of our research for this report, we asked Opinium Research to measure public perceptions⁷ of campaigning. Opinium's sample of 2,001 UK adults⁸ was split in half. Both parts of the sample were presented with the same set of questions but one half was asked about 'lobbying' and the other half was asked about 'campaigning'. Some of the most interesting findings in the research demonstrated very clearly that if you change the 'word', you change perceptions of and attitudes towards the activity.

At the outset respondents were asked "Which organisations, charities or companies do you associate with... ['campaigning' / 'lobbying']?". Only one commercial entity – Asda – was named by the group asked about 'campaigning' which was seen almost exclusively as the preserve of charities and individuals. But 'big business' was frequently mentioned in relation to 'lobbying'.

Those polled by Opinium were then presented with a range of statements and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with them. One of those statements was "Campaigning / Lobbying is a positive force in society." Over half of those questioned about 'campaigning' agreed with this statement (54%) compared to less than a fifth (19%) of those who were asked about 'lobbying'.

Furthermore 56% of those questioned about 'campaigning' agreed with the statement that it plays 'an important role in shaping policy in a democracy' compared to just 27% of those who were asked the same question about 'lobbying'.

On the flipside, when asked about 'lobbying' rather than 'campaigning', the public were significantly more likely to agree that it is a means to 'unfairly influence policy' (46% v 27%) and that decision makers can be "too easily swayed by it" (49% v 35%).

Attitudes to regulation & bans

Over the past few decades the world of commercial – and charitable – campaigning has been rocked by scandal that has undoubtedly undermined public trust and led to calls for further controls and even outright bans on the activities of campaigning.

When we spoke to the campaigners behind our Top 10 campaigns of the past decade, NONE of them believed that campaigning – commercial or otherwise – should be banned. Banning campaigning – even if it were to be practicable – is not seen as a reasonable or proportionate response to address the malfeasance of a few bad apples. One campaigner said:

"I don't think you could or should ban it. It's a bit like banning books you disagree with."

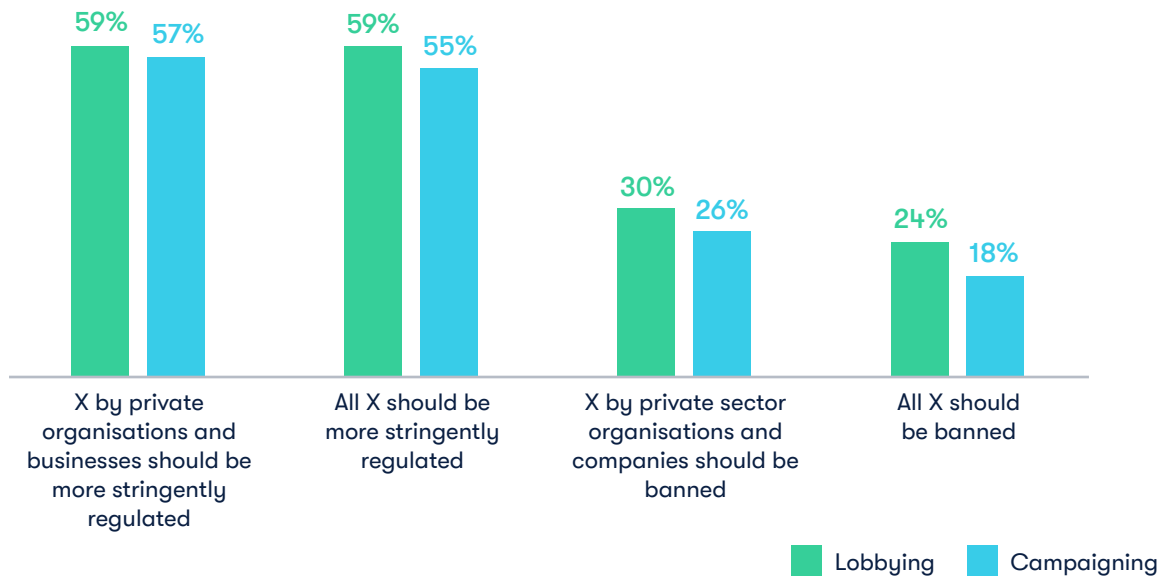
However, the majority believed that reform of regulation was required which would seem to accord with our belief that what is needed is a more consistent and effective approach to regulation.

But what does the public think? The campaigning industry often attracts a great deal of unwarranted opprobrium. We were therefore pleasantly surprised to see that there is NOT a majority consensus for a ban – irrespective of whether those questioned are asked about 'campaigning' or 'lobbying' (see chart below).

⁷ An outline of the research can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

⁸ National sample size 2,001. Fieldwork 30th November – 3rd December 2021

Views on regulations for lobbying / campaigning



There is, however, a slight majority in favour of more stringent regulation; and again these numbers are remarkably consistent across the two groups – those who were asked about ‘campaigning’ and those asked about ‘lobbying’.

4. Regulating campaigning

We are not interested in defending the indefensible. Those who break the rules, whether they are campaigning for private companies or charitable organisations or individuals, should be called to account for their actions.

Nor are we opposed to the regulation of campaigning. Far from it. We believe that it is in everyone's interests for campaigning to be – and to be seen to be – effectively and consistently regulated.

And we do not under-estimate the challenge of regulating campaigning – particularly when you consider the diversity of the activities that could be captured under an inclusive definition of campaigning such as ours.

Campaigning activity

The type and extent of campaigning activity is constantly evolving as people come up with new and more innovative ways to express their views and seek to influence policy. A definitive list of what might be covered by the 'planned activities' of our definition is likely to be out of date shortly after being drawn up. But as professional campaigners, we believe this list to be fairly comprehensive at the time we go to print.

- Launching / signing petitions
- Protests / marches
- Using social media including blogs and videos
- Creating stories / being interviewed in the press / on TV (often based on original / commissioned research)
- Giving expert written or oral evidence to Government consultations / Parliamentary Committees / individual policy makers or regulators

- Employing current / former politicians⁹ / decision makers
- Hospitality / entertaining of policy makers / politicians
- Briefing decision makers (face to face or in writing)
- Advertising to mobilise public support
- Direct mail to supporters (and encouraging them to use direct mail to contact policy makers)

When we spoke to those connected to each of our Top 10 campaigns and other professional campaigners, they also identified these activities as being part of the suite of tactics at their disposal as they sought to influence policy. The most universally cited were:

- Launching / signing petitions
- Using social media including blogs and videos
- Creating stories / being interviewed in the press / on TV
- Giving expert written or oral evidence to Government consultations / Parliamentary Committees / individual policy makers or regulators
- Briefing decision makers (face to face or in writing)

⁹ Other agencies may choose to employ sitting politicians, but Pagefield does not, will not and never has done.

Interestingly, in our research with the public, we again saw a marked difference between our two research groups when asked what types of activity they associate with the act of generating support for a campaign.

For those who were asked about ‘campaigning’ – the number one answer given was protests and marches (53%), followed by launching and signing petitions (52%). The group who were asked about ‘lobbying’ were most likely to associate it with entertaining politicians or decision makers (39%) and employing current or former politicians or decision makers (28%).

Reforming regulation

We welcome regulation and we agree that regulation *should* be more stringent in so far as it needs to be more consistent and more effective. But our intention with this report is to defend campaigning itself not to begin a campaign for specific regulatory reform; and so a complete review of all aspects of the legislation and regulation affecting the array of campaigning activity that we have identified is beyond the scope of this report. However, even the most cursory glance leads us inevitably to the conclusion that current regulation is deficient. It is not deficient because of a lack of regulation – on the contrary, there may be too many codes and duplicate requirements. We believe that the deficiency arises largely because of flaws in the scope of the regulation.

We agree with the 46% of those polled by Opinium who felt that the individual or organisation doing the campaigning or lobbying should be regulated *irrespective of who they are*.

At present, the law does not, for example, apply to the over 100 policy, advocacy, campaigns, and communications experts employed in the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate of the UK’s largest Cancer Charity.

Nor would it apply to a meeting between the Corporate Affairs Director of the UK’s largest Water Company and the MPs (excluding the Minister) on the Committee scrutinising and amending the Environment Bill.

A telephone call between the former Permanent Secretary for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to the current DCMS Secretary of State on behalf of a client of the consultancy where she is a specialist partner would be captured. However, her call to the same Secretary of State to discuss the work of the Satellite Communications company on whose Board she sits, would not.

We would therefore support recommendations from the **Chartered Institute of Public Relations** who have called for consistency in the application of the current Transparency of Lobbying legislation.

We also agree with those who took part in our polling who felt that the *target* of campaigning (ie: the decision makers) should be better regulated.

As campaigners, we provide information; offer insights; seek to promote awareness; mobilise public support and – yes – attempt to influence the decisions of policy makers and others. But ultimately, as much as we might wish to be in charge of the decision itself, we are not. It is elected representatives, civil servants and regulators who decide on policy, legislation or regulation. And yet arguably the weakest part of the regulatory structures are those elements relating to the target of campaigners rather than campaigners themselves.

It seems that the Committee on Standards in Public Life agrees. As we were beginning our research for this report the Committee published their review¹⁰ of the effectiveness of standards regulation in England and concluded that “*the primary responsibility for transparency around lobbying should rest with the lobbied. The obligations of open government should fall on the shoulders of ministers, special advisers and senior civil servants, rather than those making representations to them.*”

¹⁰ Committee On Standards in Public Life Standards Matter 2 – Committee Findings June 2021

5. The case for campaigning

The freedom to campaign is as much a part of our democracy as our freedom and right to vote.

Although the term ‘campaigning’ appears to have been coined as recently as the 19th century, engagement between the governed and their governors in ancient Greece would have shared many of the same characteristics as modern day campaigning.

And according to the European Public Affairs Consultancies’ Association¹¹ (EPCA) “the concept of ‘lobbying’ in Europe originated in 1215 AD, when King John of England gave the barons the right to petition him to protest any violation of their new rights under the Magna Carta”.

Campaigning is an important and legitimate aspect of public life in a liberal democracy. We believe that people, charities, trade unions and businesses must all be equally free to put their case forward to those in power and to the wider public. But of course we would say that wouldn’t we? After all, we are professional campaigners. But we are not alone in this belief.

According to the Committee On Standards in Public Life:

“The right of individuals, businesses and interest groups to make representations to government, and the need for government to discuss policy proposals with those who might be affected, is essential”.

The European Commission also believes that *“lobbying is a legitimate part of the democratic system, regardless of whether it is carried out by individual citizens or companies, civil society organisations and other interest groups or firms working on behalf of third parties (public affairs professionals, think-tanks and lawyers).”*¹²

But the case for campaigning rests on more than the assertion of an ancient privilege and the opinions of campaigners and politicians. **Campaigning brings real and tangible benefits to society as a whole. It contributes to progress; promotes inclusivity; shines a light on overlooked issues and consequences; and leads to better policy outcomes overall.**

¹¹ <https://epaca.org/about-lobbying/>

¹² <https://epaca.org/about-lobbying/>

CAMPAIGNING SHINES A LIGHT

Campaigners often shine a light on the unintended consequences of bad legislation and direct attention towards overlooked issues and problems that might otherwise be ignored. Clearly this was the case with the coalition campaign spearheaded by Marcus Rashford and the Food Foundation. Their campaign – one of our Top 10 ten – began when the impact of lockdown on children receiving free school meals was

overlooked by Government. Similarly, campaigns by the Bingo Association and the British Beer & Pub Association have shone a light on the plight of sectors unfairly impacted by Government tax policy. And, in the campaign we highlight below, the overlooked and disproportionate impact of the imposition VAT on digital publications on partially sighted people and those with dyslexia was highlighted by an industry body: The Publishers Association.

Axe the Reading Tax

In his budget of March 2020, Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced that VAT would be removed from digital publications, and then fast tracked implementation in light of the COVID pandemic. VAT remains on audiobooks and the campaign continues to press for its removal.

This campaign – spearheaded by the Publishers Association – aimed to remove VAT on digital publications to bring them into line with printed books. The call was simple, clear and easy to understand: level the playing field.

Using evidence and findings from an enquiry by the All Party Writers Group and gathering support within parliament via an Early Day Motion, the campaign also made use of well known names from publishing and media such as Stephen Fry to advance their case. Led by Konnie Huq, children’s presenter and author, campaigners delivered a letter to the Chancellor calling on him to axe the levying of VAT on ebooks.

The campaign also cited the impact VAT on digital publications had on people who found it more difficult to access printed publications – for example people with dyslexia and partially sighted people – and gathered support via an online petition.

In his budget of March 2020, Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced that VAT would be removed from digital publications, and then fast tracked the introduction in light of the COVID pandemic. VAT remains on audiobooks and the campaign continues to press for its removal.

The ‘Axe the Reading Tax’ campaign was one of our Top 50 campaigns of the past decade.

CAMPAIGNING PROMOTES INCLUSIVITY

Campaigners provide a vehicle for other voices to be heard – whether those voices come from overlooked parts of the country; struggling industries or marginalised populations – making sure that they are included in the political debate.

We believe that democracy is improved when nobody is excluded from the democratic process and everyone has a voice in policy making. Campaigning

provides a mechanism for anyone who wishes to influence policy to speak up and be heard.

There are several examples of these kinds of campaigns in our Top 50 including: the “Betrayal of the Brave” campaign for former Afghan Army translators is a wonderful example of this; the WI campaign for crucial rural bus services for under-served parts of the UK; and of course the Windrush campaign.

Hostile Environment: Windrush

A campaign against immigration policies designed to create a ‘hostile environment’ for refugees, asylum seekers and other immigrants to the UK – focussing on the Windrush generation.

The Windrush scandal began to surface in 2017 after it emerged that hundreds of Commonwealth citizens, many of whom were from the ‘Windrush’ generation, had been wrongly detained, deported and denied legal rights. Coverage of these individuals’ stories began to break in several newspapers, and Caribbean leaders took the issue up with then – Prime Minister, Theresa May.

Liberty used the Windrush issue to highlight the consequences of the Government’s self-proclaimed ‘Hostile Environment’ policy. Providing an online tool enabled campaigners to contact their MP about the issue, and use social media to highlight individual cases and the lack of compensation paid to people wrongfully deported.

In January 2018, the Home Affairs Select Committee issued a report which said the hostile environment policies were “unclear” and had seen too many people threatened

with deportation based on “inaccurate and untested” information. A month before the report was published, more than 60 MPs, academics and campaign groups wrote an open letter to the then Home Secretary Amber Rudd urging the government to halt the “inhumane” policy, citing the Home Office’s “poor track record” of dealing with complaints and appeals in a timely manner.

In 2020 Britain’s human rights watchdog, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, said that the Home Office had broken the law by failing to obey public-sector equality duties by not considering how its policies affected black members of the Windrush generation.

The ‘Hostile Environment: Windrush’ campaign is one of the Top 10 campaigns shortlisted by our panel.

CAMPAIGNING CONTRIBUTES TO PROGRESS

Campaigning contributes to changes in policy and legislation that positively change lives, foster equality and improve outcomes for individuals, communities and businesses.

From the abolition of slavery and votes for women, to climate action and equal marriage – history is littered with examples of progressive policy change that have come about because of the determined activities of campaigners. Our Top 50 included several examples

of campaigns that have made a clear contribution to progress. From same sex marriage to relationship education in schools; from single use plastic to abortion rights in Ireland – campaigners have secured outcomes that have created genuine societal progress. And it is not just grassroots campaigns that initiate and deliver public goods as we have referenced with, for example, the ongoing campaigns by Dove under the auspice of their ‘Real Beauty’ and ‘CROWN UK Fund’.

Same Sex Marriage

A campaign to secure equal marriage rights for same sex couples.

In 1992 OutRage! organised the first challenge to the ban on same-sex civil marriage. In 2004, legislation for civil partnerships was introduced. OutRage! argued that civil partnerships were a valuable advance but not equality.

In the run-up to the 2010 general election, the Conservatives were the only major party with no gay rights policies. OutRage! organised a flashmob protest outside Tory election HQ which prompted a meeting with George Osborne and Theresa May. Three months after the election, the Conservatives announced that they had completed a review and had decided to keep the ban. In 2010 OutRage! formed the Equal Love coalition to press for full equality in civil marriage and civil partnership law. During the 2010 Pride London the newly-elected Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, was persuaded, in front of the national media, to support same-

sex marriage. By late 2010, the campaign had broad cross-party support except for the Conservatives – now in Government. In February 2011, the Equal Love campaign filed a legal case in the European Court of Human Rights.

Three months later the government agreed to consult on ending the ban on same-sex marriage. A few months after that – in October 2011– David Cameron said he supported same-sex marriage during his conference speech. The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act was passed in 2013.

The ‘Same Sex Marriage’ campaign is one of the Top 10 campaigns shortlisted by our panel.

CAMPAIGNING LEADS TO BETTER POLICY

According to a 2015 report¹³ from The Smith Institute, a quarter of all MPs have an occupational background in politics and “the occupational background of MPs continues to be ever more biased toward business and the ‘metropolitan professions’” particularly finance, law and public affairs. What this means is that the expertise of those considering policy and legislation is increasingly narrow.

Campaigners are able to fill this gap in knowledge and insights; and with expert input MPs are able to take better, more informed decisions on areas outside of their zone of expertise. This was the conclusion the Cabinet Office drew in their 2012 consultation¹⁴ on introducing a statutory register for consultant lobbyists; “Lobbying – seeking to influence public policy, government decisions or legislation – can improve results by ensuring that those developing and considering the options are better informed about the consequences of the available options”.

Payday Loans

A campaign to secure better and more stringent regulation of the payday lending industry by the Church of England, Compass, Citizens Advice, Stella Creasy MP and others.

Campaigning for the better regulation of payday lenders was spearheaded by the charity Credit Action – which originally made a complaint to the then Office of Fair Trading in 2008 about unfair advertising practices. In 2010 an additional campaign was organised by pressure group Compass to “end legal loan sharking” and apply interest rate caps in the “high cost credit sector” – this campaign saw over 200 MPs sign an Early Day Motion by April 2011. In 2013 Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, threw the weight of the Church of England behind the campaign when he met with the chief executive of leading payday lender Wonga, and told him: “We’re not in the business of trying to legislate you out of existence. We’re trying to compete you out of existence.” In January 2014 payday lenders were accused by the consumer group Which? of using “excessive” default fees to cut their headline rates of interest.

A ‘sharkstoppers’ campaign was launched by Labour MP Stella Creasy, who claimed that just six companies controlled lending to 90% of the seven million Britons without a bank account or credit card. Her disclosure that the average cost of credit charged to these customers was 272% APR, and that there was a fourfold increase in payday loans since the start of the recession in 2008, led to cross-party parliamentary support for a cap. Creasy also highlighted the lack of competition in the market calling on the Government to improve policy in this area and support a cap on loans.

The ‘Payday Loans’ campaign is one of the Top 10 campaigns shortlisted by our panel.

¹³ <https://smithinstitutethinktank.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/who-governs-britain.pdf>

¹⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/78896/Introducing_statutory_register_of_lobbyists.pdf

6. The Top 10 campaigns

We are unashamedly pro campaigning for one very simple reason: we believe that democracy is dependent on all people having a voice and being able to participate in the policy process. But this report is not merely a salvo in the defence of the freedom to campaign – it is also a celebration of campaigning and the tangible benefits it delivers to all parts of our society. And so, this final section of our report is dedicated to the creativity and commitment of campaigners.

We spent most of the summer reviewing campaigns of the past decade. We read award entries and press coverage; spoke to professional campaigners from across the country; and canvassed friends and family to identify the very best campaigns. Our initial list consisted of over 50 campaigns¹⁵ and we are grateful to our Panel¹⁶ for helping us to narrow that list down to this Top 10 taking into account each campaign's legislative, media and cultural impact on UK politics and society.

The Top 10 campaigns shortlisted by the Panel were:

Criminalising Upskirting: The campaign to make 'upskirting' illegal, led by Gina Martin, which was then backed by the Ministry of Justice which tabled a Government Bill in support. This was eventually approved by the House of Lords in February 2019, leading to the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 coming into force in April the same year.

Sarah's Law: The Sarah's Law campaign, which was spearheaded by the News of the World newspaper in response to the murder of Sarah Payne, gave the public controlled access to the sex offenders register, leading to the extension of the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme in England and Wales.

Free School Meals: Marcus Rashford led the Free School Meals campaign during the COVID-19 pandemic to secure holiday food vouchers for school children receiving free school meals. The campaign led to the UK Government providing funding of £400m over 12 months to support poorer families with the cost of food and household bills.

Windrush: The Windrush campaign, led by Liberty, resulted in The Equality and Human Rights Commission recognising that The Home Office had broken the law. It was found that The Home Office was failing to obey public-sector equality duties by not considering how its policies affected members of the Windrush generation.

Tampon Tax Abolition: Laura Coryton spearheaded the Tampon Tax campaign, resulting in the Chancellor of the Exchequer abolishing the tax in 2021, with the EU Commission also committing to abolish the tax in 2022.

Vote Leave: As a result of the Brexit campaign led by Vote Leave, the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU resulted in a 51.9% result in favour of 'leave'. This led to the UK's full withdrawal from the EU on 31 January 2020.

¹⁵ The full list of 50 campaigns can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

¹⁶ The Expert Panel included Starling Bank CEO Anne Boden, HS1 Ltd CEO Dyan Crowther, Daily Telegraph Associate Editor Camilla Tominey, PR Week News Editor James Halliwell, Pagefield CEO Oliver Foster and the late Sir Christopher Meyer, former UK Ambassador to the USA and Pagefield Chairman.

Same Sex Marriage: The Same Sex Marriage campaign, originally led by Peter Tatchell and OutRage!, led to legislation for civil partnerships being introduced in 2004. Although a valuable advance, campaigners argued the legislation fell short of equality and after decades of campaigning the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act was passed in 2013.

Plastic Bag Tax: Keep Britain Tidy founded the Plastic Bag Tax campaign, which led to a coalition being formed to lobby supermarkets directly and engage with media and UK Government Departments. This led to a 5p plastic bag tax being adopted in 2015.

No More Page 3: Lucy-Anne Holmes led the No More Page 3 campaign, lobbying against the use of topless models on page 3 of The Sun. As a result, the newspaper permanently dropped the feature in 2015.

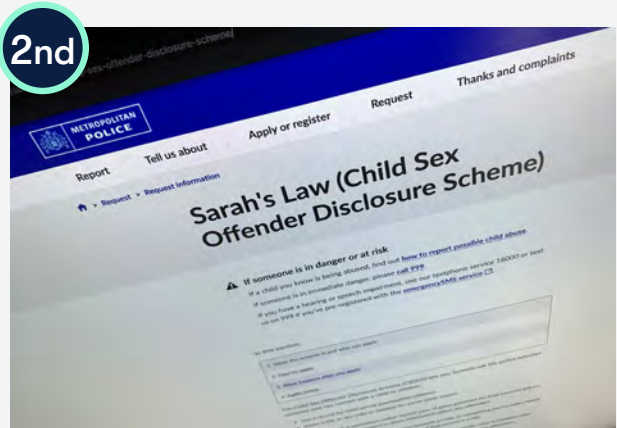
Payday Loans: The Payday Loans campaign aimed to impose stricter regulation on the payday lending industry. The campaign led to a dramatic reduction in the size of the payday loans sector from around £2 billion in 2013, to roughly £220 million in 2019, due mainly to tougher legislation.

The shortlisted campaigns were then presented via social media to the public– who were asked to select their favourite campaign. And to avoid claims that an online poll by a campaigning agency may be self-serving, we also commissioned Savanta ComRes to poll a nationally representative sample of 2236 UK adults. This cross-section of the population were asked a simple question: “Which one of the below ten campaigns do you think was the best campaign of the past decade?”

The top three campaigns, selected by the public were:



In Third Place: The Vote Leave campaign for the UK to leave the European Union (15% of the vote)



In Second Place: Passing ‘Sarah’s law’ allowing ordinary people to have controlled access to view the sex offenders register (18% of the vote)



In First Place: The coalition campaign led by Marcus Rashford and the Food Foundation to extend free school meals to children outside of term time (20% of the vote)

CONCLUSION

When we look at the work of the Free School Meals campaign led by Marcus Rashford and the Food Foundation, it is easy to make the argument that this campaign is a force for good. However, in this report, we seek to make the case for campaigning *per se*.

Campaigning is a legitimate, longstanding and essential element of our democracy. Indeed, it is the bedrock on which many of our essential democratic rights and freedoms stand. Without campaigning, slavery might never have been abolished; women would not have a right to vote; and our policymakers would still be made up exclusively of male, landed gentry. These are the grand, historical achievements of campaigning that the likes of Marcus Rashford and Nigel Farage seek to emulate today with their own campaigns to change social policy, protect rights and defend freedoms.

But there are hundreds, possibly thousands, of campaigns delivering public and policy benefits every year. These campaigns may receive less public support; their leaders may be less lauded in the media or awarded in public votes like ours – but they are no less important. They create better policy outcomes by helping policymakers to understand the true implications and unintended consequences of proposed legislation. They give voice to the unheard and the overlooked. They ensure that our laws are – at least sometimes – grounded in expertise and insight and not simply political ideology and horse-trading. The Cycle to Work Alliance campaign to extend the cycle to work scheme; the campaign on letting fees by Shelter; or the Smart Motorways campaign by the RAC and the AA – all of which we selected in our original Top 50 – are just some of the many hundreds of examples of these smaller, less well known campaigns that shape our environment and our lives.

Our Founder, Mark Gallagher, began his foreword to this report by declaring himself to be ‘unashamedly pro-campaigning’ and as a business, we are unequivocally in agreement on this issue. We hope that having stuck our heads above the parapet, we will encourage others who operate in and benefit from campaigning to do the same. It is time for our industry and all those who seek to “influence the decision-making of Government and public bodies” to be less apologetic, less defensive about the work we do. Instead, we should insist on the best and most effective regulation; we should demand that those who bring the practice of campaigning into disrepute are held properly to account; and we should be proud to make the case for the campaigning work that we and others do.

We hope you will join us in making the case for campaigning.

APPENDIX 1

Opinium Research overview



Opinium Research overview

The opinion research conducted to inform this report was carried out by Opinium Research between 30 November and 3 December 2021 with a sample size of 2001 UK adults weighted to nationally representative criteria.

Respondents were asked the following questions. Half of the sample was asked these questions about ‘lobbying’ and the other half about ‘campaigning’:

Q1 Which organisations, charities or companies, if any, do you associate with lobbying / campaigning?

Q2 Which, if any, of these activities do you associate with lobbying / campaigning?

Q3 How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

“Lobbying / campaigning is a positive force in society”

“Lobbying / campaigning is a way of unfairly influencing policy”

“Lobbying / campaigning plays an important role in shaping policy in a democracy – it leads to better policymaking because it ensures expertise and evidence is taken into account”

“Decision makers can be too easily swayed by lobbying / campaigning”

“Lobbying / campaigning by private sector organisations and companies should be more stringently regulated”

“All lobbying / campaigning should be more stringently regulated (ie whether it is by charities, trade unions or the private sector)”

“Lobbying / campaigning by private sector organisations and companies should be banned”

“All lobbying / campaigning should be banned (ie whether it is by charities, trade unions or the private sector)”

Q4 You mentioned that all lobbying / campaigning should be regulated regardless of the cause. Who or what do you think should be regulated?

The individual or organisation doing the lobbying / campaigning

The activity of lobbying / campaigning ie: certain types of activity irrespective of who is carrying them out

The target / decision maker ie: the person responsible for making the decision on policy

Other

I don't know

APPENDIX 2

The 50 campaigns



THE 50 CAMPAIGNS	
	CAMPAIGN
1	Get on Board Bus Campaign (2019-)
2	Bingo Association – Bingo budget (2014)
3	Letting fees – Shelter (2013)
4	Housing Made for Everyone (HoME) (2020)
5	Scottish Independence Referendum (2014)
6	Brexit Campaign – Vote Leave (2016)
7	Pasty tax – Numerous organisations (2012)
8	Free School Meals – Marcus Rashford (2020)
9	Payday loans – Church of England, Compass, Citizens Advice, Stella Creasy MP and others (2010)
10	Uber drivers – GMB (2016-2021)
11	Reduction in plastic recycling targets – British Plastics Federation (BPF) (2016)
12	Abortion rights in Ireland – Together for Yes (2018)
13	Scrap the tax on family flights – Coalition campaign (2014-2015)
14	Ending Revenge evictions – Shelter led coalition (2014-2019)
15	Tampon Tax – Laura Cortyon (2016)
16	Sling the mesh – Kath Sansom (2015-2020)
17	Immigration Caps – CBI (2017-2020)
18	Business Rates review – British Retail Consortium (2020)
19	Campaign against Porn blocker – Open Rights Group (2010-2019)
20	Axe the reading Tax – The Publishers Association (2019)
21	Newcastle City Baths Campaign (2012-2020)
22	No More Page 3 – Lucy-Anne Holmes (2012)
23	Free Periods – Amika George (2017)
24	Upskirting Campaign – Gina Martin (2017)
25	Say No to Single use plastic (Message in a Bottle) – Surfers Against Sewage (2016)

THE 50 CAMPAIGNS	
	CAMPAIGN
26	Sarah's Law (2011)
27	Hostile Environment: Windrush – Liberty (2018)
28	Cycle to Work Scheme – Cycle to Work Alliance (2016)
29	Bode Property Development – Hill House (2014)
30	Greenpeace International – Plastic microbeads (2016-2018)
31	Humanists UK – Teach evolution, not creationism (2011-2014)
32	Freedom to Donate – blood donations policy (2011-21)
33	Making Stalking a Criminal Offence – Protection Against Stalking / NAPO (2011)
34	Ban on smacking – Various organisations (2015-2020)
35	Banking Separation – British Banking Association (2011-2012)
36	Better Buses for Greater Manchester campaign (2018-21)
37	Better Deal for Animals – Coalition campaign (2020-2021)
38	Cannabis as Medicine campaign – I am Billy (2016-)
39	Plastic Bag Tax – various organisations (2012)
40	Lobbying Bill – various organisations (2013)
41	Close the loophole – NSPCC (2017-2021)
42	Climate Emergency – Extinction Rebellion (2018-)
43	Relationship Education in Schools – Terence Higgins Trust, Stonewall and others (2016-2020)
44	Beer Duty Campaign – British Beer and Pubs Association / Tax Payers Alliance (2013-present)
45	Fair Fuel Campaign – Howard Cox / Robert Halfon MP (2010-present)
46	Same Sex marriage – Outrage (2010-2013)
47	Better Together (2012 – 2014)
48	All Lane Running (Smart) Motorways – RAC, AA etc (2018-)
49	Campaign for a referendum on EU membership – UKIP and others
50	'Betrayal of the brave' campaign for former Afghan British Army translators (2015-)

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