

Phase 1: Know what you want to change

Agree your policy position

Your analysis of the problem needs to be documented and adopted by your organisation or network. This agreed analysis will then form the basis of your advocacy/campaign, ensuring internal understanding and coherence.

The usual format for such documentation is in a Position Paper, sometimes called a Policy Paper or Policy Brief. They are usually just one or two pages, never more than four. Making them clear and concise helps them to be agreed, read and understood.

The Position Paper will typically set out:

- A summary of the problem or issue and its effects, including its scale and scope, supported by key quantitative and qualitative data where appropriate
- Your analysis of the causes of the problem, supported by key quantitative and qualitative data where appropriate
- Your recommendations for its solution, highlighting the specific actions that you want different actors to take
- When this policy position was agreed and who by

Note that these recommendations are not your advocacy or campaign objectives. Your objectives will be drawn from your recommendations, but will usually be more focussed and possibly more limited in scope.

The main audience for a Position Paper is internal. It is a tool to help get formal agreement on what your organisational policy position is on an issue. Once that agreement has been reached, the Position Paper is then a tool to communicate that policy position to staff and volunteers so that they are able to represent it to their external audiences.

You might use the Position Paper to help build alliances by getting other organisations to sign up to the same policy position (although you might want alliance partners to also sign up to the same set of narrowly defined objectives).

You might also give it to your target audiences after a face-to-face meeting where you have presented your arguments. It is not usually suitable as a main form of communication with targets – the form and style should be adapted for each audience.

