



Core units: Inquiry and skills

Illustration 1: Citizenship in action –Year 5

Resource sheet 2

Strategies used to influence decision-making processes

Outlined below is a range of strategies used to influence the decision-making processes of governments and other decision-makers.

Petitions to parliament: As part of parliamentary procedures, petitions (written requests by people concerned about a particular issue) are 'tabled' in parliament.

Deputations to members of parliament or local government representatives: Citizens often meet with members of parliament or leaders of local government by way of a deputation – a small group, representing the view of a larger group. The member or representative then approaches the relevant minister or raises the issue in parliament or a local government forum.

Direct appeals to ministers or head of the relevant local government authority: Individuals and groups lobby people with decision-making authority, such as ministers or mayors, or their senior advisers. Sometimes citizens, or groups of like-minded citizens, will use the services of a professional 'lobbyist' – a person who is paid to present the group's case.

Letter-writing: Letter-writing campaigns are used to persuade decision-makers that there is widespread community concern about a particular issue. Letters written to the editor of newspapers are also used to help shape public opinion.

Social media: Increasingly people are turning to the technologies that are used to create, share, exchange and comment on topical issues. They use these technologies to bypass the traditional media such as newspapers, television and radio.

Talkback radio: Participating in talkback radio programs is a good way to influence public opinion.

Advertising: Some individuals and groups use advertising to promote their concerns. However, this can be very expensive.

Protests and demonstrations: Demonstrations and other forms of peaceful protest are used to attract the attention of the media. Individuals and groups hope that the publicity generated by these activities will help to shape public opinion.

Public meetings: Public meetings can be used to inform the public about a particular issue.

Other strategies: Other activities could include designing issue-specific websites, bumper stickers, posters and slogans on T-shirts.