



## Campaigning toolkit

# Demonstrations



Demonstrations are a high profile technique, and often employed when other campaigning activities have been exhausted, and not achieved the desired campaign outcome.



"I organised a vigil at a craft centre in Canterbury in support of 'Don't let me die without a voice'- the Association General Election campaign. 60 people attended the event, including councillors, Speech and Language Therapists, friends, family and carers of the East Kent Support Group.

With the support of Canterbury Cathedral, the choristers, choir master and musicians came to the event, and sang carols with the crowd. I opened the event with an impassioned speech, regarding the importance of voices. At an organised point during the rendition of Silent Night, everyone ceased singing, and the musicians continued to play. This signified the silence that people with motor neurone disease are often plunged into.

As an event it was extremely moving, and raised the desired awareness of our campaign in a creative way."

**Katy Styles – Campaign Contact, Kent**



The decision to demonstrate would need to be agreed by everyone involved in the campaign, and a plan of action drawn up. It is important you discuss plans with your Campaigns Manager/Co-ordinator, any local branch or group, and relevant regional/national staff, including regional care development adviser (RCDA). This enables staff to support your event in the best possible way. If in doubt as to who your regional team are, please visit our website:

[www.mndassociation.org/staff-contacts](http://www.mndassociation.org/staff-contacts)



We recommend hosting a demonstration somewhere that is visible and has plenty of foot traffic - a park or town square would be ideal. Check if you need to get permission from the local council and/or police to hold the demonstration in a public place. If it's on private property, you will need to get the owner's permission. Gaining the necessary permissions in advance is very important, events should not proceed without this being granted.



Make sure your venue is wheelchair accessible and there is access to a disabled toilet. A health and safety assessment may need to be undertaken, and public liability insurance considered.



The demonstration should consist of a group of people gathering to display your campaign posters and/or banners, and distributing campaign materials – for MND Association campaign resources please contact: [campaignsmaterials@mndassociation.org](mailto:campaignsmaterials@mndassociation.org). Safety is of paramount importance. Please work closely with your Campaigns Manager/Co-ordinator to plan the practicalities of how the event will run: [campaigns@mndassociation.org](mailto:campaigns@mndassociation.org)



You could ask a person living with MND, an officer from the branch or group, your Member of Parliament or local councillor to give a speech or statement during your demonstration. A person with MND could possibly prepare a speech using their communication aid, or ask a family carer or friend to talk about the impact of the disease.



Contact local newspapers and radio stations to tell them that the demonstration is taking place and ask if they will send a reporter to cover it. For local print and online media you may want to brand your demonstration as a photo opportunity: the more creative you are, the better chance you have of reporters coming to cover it! Inform demonstration attendees that photos will be taken for media purposes, and check they if are happy to be featured in them, see photography guidance below.



Vigils are quieter and more subtle than a demonstration, and can be employed at any time during the campaign. As above, please think about where you hold your vigil and ensure you have the required permissions to be there. Vigils work well for many campaigning issues relating to MND, because so many people living with MND lose their voice as a result of the disease, and vigils usually involve a silence.

## Photography Guidance

At any campaign meeting, vigil, or event you must make it clear if photographs/video will be taken, and offer the opportunity for people to opt-out from their image being captured. Please display a prominent sign, and make an announcement to all event attendees. If in any doubt it is important to seek advice from your Campaigns Manager/Co-ordinator.

**Sign to read:** There will be photography and/or video at the \*insert name of event\*. These images may be used for promotional purposes, in future publications, presentations, and on digital, and social media channels, normally within a five-year period from today \*insert date of event\*. If you do not wish to appear in photographs, please let an event organiser know, and they will make sure you are not included in any captured images.