

Frequently asked questions

I don't have time to spend on this campaign – but what can I do to help?

We understand that everybody is working under pressure. The campaign is designed to ultimately make life better for you, so please do your best to play at least a small part. Start by joining the campaign's Facebook page and mentioning Giving Voice to your colleagues in a team meeting. As the campaign grows, we'll share stories of SLTs getting involved to continue demonstrating how Giving Voice can fit into your busy working life.

I don't think I'm allowed to make approaches to local politicians or media without prior consent from my Trust/Board – what should I do?

You're right to think through who should know about any plans you have to involve politicians or the media. Find out who runs your press office or communications team and let them know your plans – explain that you're raising the profile of the good work of the whole trust/board.

I don't really understand how the local politician could help make a difference?

Local politicians are elected to put the needs of their community first. They depend on their constituents raising local issues for them to follow up – either amongst their fellow local politicians, through contacting government departments on your behalf or by simply helping to bring the issue to the public's notice.

How do I make sure that things happen after meetings with decision makers?

When the meeting comes to an end, reiterate what you've understood the decision maker's committed to do. Afterwards, write and thank them for their time and politely remind them of their commitment. It is perfectly reasonable to contact them again afterwards if you don't get a regular update on their progress with your issue.

There are so many challenges; I'm not sure exactly what to ask the local politician during the meeting?

Talk through the top three challenges your service is facing and work out with the local politician the issues on which they are best placed to offer effective support. There are things which all local 'VIPS' could usefully do: record an 'I'm Giving Voice' video clip for the campaign website (www.givingvoiceuk.org) or design a speech bubble – all helping to show that there is a groundswell of support for the campaign's objectives.

What if I get asked something I don't know the answer to by a local politician?

This is not a problem – if it is something you can find the answer to, commit to doing so (this will give you a great excuse for being back in touch). Use the speaker notes in this toolkit and have a copy of the campaign leaflet and a tailored briefing on hand to help you get your message across confidently.

I don't think I am in a position to be able to approach our commissioner – what should I do?

If your role doesn't give you the opportunity for airtime with the commissioner, your task is to persuade your SLT manager/leader that the Giving Voice campaign is worth getting involved with, so that they can approach the commissioner with the campaign's key messages. The RCSLT is organising business and leadership training for managers/leaders to prepare them for interacting in the new commissioning environment – tell your manager to look out for dates.

I don't think I'm allowed to ask service users to support the campaign – what's your advice?

Share the campaign with your service users by displaying Giving Voice leaflets and notices in your waiting areas or other locations where you work. It should be possible to explain the basics of the campaign to service users (or their parents/carers) that you know well, especially if they are asking questions about the future of the service they're receiving. Simply prompting them to visit: www.givingvoiceuk.org will open up a range of opportunities for service users to get involved independently.

My SLT manager hasn't done anything and I want to support the campaign and get involved but I'm worried about over stepping my position – what should I do?

Your task is to persuade your manager/leader that the Giving Voice campaign is worth getting involved with. If this is not easy, start by supporting the campaign as an individual by joining the social networking profiles and contributing a video or speech bubble design to the campaign website: www.givingvoiceuk.org. Contact the RCSLT to talk in more detail about how services are successfully engaging with the Giving Voice campaign and we can offer advice on convincing your colleagues to take part.

I don't know how to use the Facebook site or twitter, who can I ring for help?

You can contact Ele Buckley, National Coordinator for Local Campaigns.
Tel: 0207 378 3003 or email: ele.buckley@rcslt.org

I work in an acute setting and I'm not sure how much of these activities can apply to me?

Why not investigate advertising Giving Voice and its key messages on your Trust/Board Intranet or organise an awareness day for hospital staff, based around an area such as nutrition, communication or tracheostomy? You could publish a write-up in the hospital newsletter. We are very keen to hear from you about how we could support your campaigning efforts in the acute setting.

My colleagues are focused on what our new provider units are going to look like – how can I make them get interested in Giving Voice?

The Giving Voice campaign is relevant to any discussions about changes to service structures, allocation and new commissioning processes. Make your colleagues aware of the Giving Voice campaign and use items from the toolkit example case study and 'how to tell the story of your service' section to help effectively influence discussions around the changing environment. The RCSLT is organising business and leadership training for managers/leaders to prepare them for interacting in the new commissioning environment – tell yours to look out for dates.

What can I do to help my AHP or other colleagues and what's in it for them to support us?

In the face of current austerity measures SLTs need to look at how to meet needs by working jointly with other colleagues. By using QIPP or equivalent policy frameworks to help focus on evidence-based practice, outcomes and cost effectiveness we can plan for the future in line with this government's priorities and chart a distinctive course during challenging times. Giving Voice is designed to be a collaborative campaign, and throughout your local endeavours you should be emphasising the unique contributions each colleague makes to local service provision. Many of the activities and strategies suggested in this toolkit could be adopted by a group of AHP or other colleagues seeking to work together to influence the future of their service. The RCSLT has already initiated very positive collaborative engagement with commissioners as part of the Giving Voice campaign. Contact us to find out more.

**If you have more questions, don't hesitate to contact Ele Buckley,
National Coordinator for Local Campaigns: 0207 378 3003.**