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*The Resource Centre also has the  
following information sheets:  
News release, Radio interview,  
Organising a petition.*

# State your case

## How to write a briefing sheet for a campaign

A briefing sheet is a useful tool for any campaign. It is simply a statement of your aims with supporting facts and information to back up your case. You can use it:

- H As the basis for your campaign leaflets and website pages
- H To help you write press releases or letters
- H To give you the facts at your fingertips when giving media interviews
- H As background information for anyone who wants to support or find out more about your campaign

Your briefing sheet should be one or two sides of A4 paper. Use a fairly large size of lettering (14 point text will allow most people to read it, even if they have a slight visual impairment) and allow plenty of space between the lines.

## Work out what you want, and who from

Before you start writing, you will need to do some detailed thinking and talking within your group.

Decide on a few specific objectives for your campaign – short statements of exactly what you are trying to achieve.

Your objectives should be:

- H **Specific**  
If you ask for something vague like “improvements”, you can’t be sure that everyone is talking about the same thing.



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- H **Winnable**  
Campaigning for the impossible quickly becomes demoralising.
- H **Easy to understand**  
You will lose supporters if they cannot follow your argument. Write all your campaign materials in plain English, and always check that what you have written cannot be misinterpreted.
- H **Agreed democratically within your group.**  
If you spend time making sure that everyone's voice can be heard, the group will be able to work together better towards the agreed aims. If you claim to represent people in your community, you should also do some research into their opinions, so that you know your campaign will have a broad base of support.
- H **Targeted at the right people**  
Find out before you start who has the power to change the things you are concerned about, and make sure your demands are addressed to them.
- H **Up to date**  
It is useful to put a date on your Briefing Sheet so people know when it was produced or last updated. You should also regularly check key facts and add any new information that you have.

## Get your facts straight

To make a convincing case, you will probably need to do some research.

### *Using information gathered by other people*

- H **The census.**  
The government carries out a census of the whole population every 10 years. The last one was in 2001.  
Information is collected in small *enumeration districts* of 150-200 households. This means you can use the census figures to build up a picture of your immediate neighbourhood.  
The Research Unit at Brighton & Hove City Council has produced census briefings covering eight topics, all of which are available on the website.

All the census data can be downloaded from the Office for National Statistics at [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

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For 2001 census briefings contact the Research Department or go to: [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/site01.cfm?request=b1000175](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/site01.cfm?request=b1000175)

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**Economic Development Team**  
**Brighton & Hove Council**  
**Tel. 290011**  
Email: [economic.development@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:economic.development@brighton-hove.gov.uk)  
**Economic statistics:**  
[www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1000926](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1000926)

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**National Statistics**  
**Tel. 0845 601 3034**  
[www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)  
e-mail: [info@statistics.gov.uk](mailto:info@statistics.gov.uk)

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**Brighton and Hove Local  
Intelligence Service**  
[www.bhlis.org](http://www.bhlis.org)

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**The Resource Centre has an  
information sheet on 'Designing  
and Using Questionnaires'**

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## H *Other Local Data*

Brighton and Hove Local Intelligence Service (BHLIS Online) provides a wide range of facts and figures at different geographic levels for the Brighton and Hove area.

## H *Other National Statistics*

The government carries out a vast amount of research between censuses. The National Statistics website includes a database which you can use to search for recent information on a particular topic. Information is available down to ward level and the site is easy to use.

## H *Economic Data*

Brighton & Hove Council's Economic Development Team gathers local information about things like unemployment and business growth. Links to most of this is on their website.

Wherever you get the information from, it is important to acknowledge your sources when you present your argument. It shows that the facts and figures you use are based on research, which other people can check.

## *Doing your own research*

If no-one else has done research to find out what you need to know, you can do your own.

There are lots of different ways of gathering information. The kind of research you do will depend on what you are trying to find out, and how you are going to use the results.

Some of the research methods you may want to think about are:

- H straightforward counting  
(e.g. of traffic levels, recreation facilities in the area, etc.)
- H door-to-door surveys
- H postal questionnaires
- H interviews with a representative sample of people (a representative sample should match the wider population as closely as possible, in relation to things like age, sex, ethnic origin, social class and any other relevant factors)

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However you do the research, you need to do a good deal of planning in advance in order to:

- H make sure you collect only relevant information
- H make sure the information you are asking for can be easily obtained
- H make sure you collect all relevant information – otherwise you may have to start all over again
- H make sure your research methods are sound, and you cannot be accused of bias

## Writing the Briefing Sheet

1. Briefly describe the problem or issue
2. Quote any facts you have to support your case
3. State clearly what action you want to be taken, and who should do it
4. Provide any information you have to show that this is a good solution to the problem you have identified (e.g. if you are campaigning for traffic calming you could refer to another area of the city where this has been introduced and the reduction in the number of accidents in that area)
5. Include information to show that there is a lot of support for the proposal (e.g. '100 people attended our Public Meeting on 3rd September' or 'over 1000 people have signed our petition')
6. Don't forget the basics:  
Include a date, contact name, phone number, email address, postal address, and website if you have one.



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## *A few tips for writing clearly*

- H Organise your information. Use headings to guide the reader through your argument.
- H Keep your sentences and paragraphs short.
- H Avoid jargon, abbreviations and technical language.
- H Make sure everything is spelt correctly and always ask someone else to check it through when you have finished.
- H Let the facts speak for themselves. The briefing sheet will usually be used as the *basis* for a media interview or another piece of campaign literature. It should not be a detailed script.

## Getting help if you need it

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### H *Reference Libraries*

Your local reference library is a good place to start if you need to find out pretty much anything. Librarians are knowledgeable and helpful, and can usually point you in the right direction, even if they do not have the information in their own stock.

### H *Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP)*

This team based at Brighton University offers free support to community and voluntary organisations who need some help or advice with doing research.

### H *Resource Centre*

We keep a small reference collection of books and pamphlets of interest to community groups, as well as a range of local information. We are always happy to try and help groups find things out, and we aim to act as a central reference point, so that if one group learns something useful, we can pass it on to other groups.

For Brighton & Hove Council Residents' Associations and some other groups, we can help you to plan and design your research, and to analyse and present the results.

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**Community University  
Partnership Programme (CUPP)**  
**01273 643004**  
**[cupp@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:cupp@brighton.ac.uk)**  
**[www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp)**

# Sample Briefing Sheet

## *Busyroad Estate Tenants' Association Traffic Calming Campaign*

**Briefing Sheet**

**October 2010**

### ***The estate***

Busyroad Estate is eight streets of houses and two blocks of low-rise sheltered housing; approximately 700 dwellings in all. Housing on the estate is a mixture of local authority rented and owner-occupied/leasehold.

The area which includes the estate has a higher proportion of children in the population (22.4%) than in Brighton & Hove as a whole (16.6%). [Figures from the 2001 census]

500 children under 16 live on the Busyroad Estate. 100 of these live in Speedy Hill and Deathtrap Road, the two busiest roads in the area. [BETA survey, September 2008]

Although census figures show a relatively high level of car ownership in the local area, our own survey has revealed that on the estate itself, most households (55%) do not have access to a car. [BETA survey, September 2008]

### ***Traffic and traffic calming***

The estate is bordered on two sides by major roads, which are busy throughout the day.

Several of the residential streets are regularly used as rat runs by commuter traffic and by commercial vehicles travelling to and from the nearby industrial estate.

Our survey showed that 80% of the children aged eight to twelve who live on the estate are not allowed to play outside on their own, mainly because of concern about traffic levels. By contrast, 75% of adults recalled playing out alone at that age. [BETA survey, September 2008]

Of those households who do have access to a car, 70% drive children to and from school.

There is a noticeable increase in traffic levels on the estate at the time of the school run. This makes walking or cycling to school more dangerous.

In other areas of Brighton & Hove, where traffic calming measures have been introduced, residents report a clear reduction in the use of residential streets as rat runs, and a general feeling of increased freedom and safety for pedestrians, especially children. [Correspondence with Eversocalm Community Association, 2008]

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## ***Our proposals***

The Busyroad Estate Tenants' Association Traffic Calming Campaign calls on Brighton & Hove Council to:

- F Work with local schools to develop safer routes to school for children who walk or cycle, and to encourage parents not to increase traffic levels by driving their children to and from school.
- F Work with the Tenants' Association to draw up a joint plan for traffic calming measures which will alleviate the main problems caused by traffic in the area. Such measures could include road entry treatments, speed humps, lower speed limits, and additional pedestrian crossings on the roads surrounding the estate.
- F Consult fully with all residents of the estate and take their views into account in the final development of the traffic calming plan.
- F Begin to implement the agreed traffic calming plan by January 2012.

## ***How to find out more***

To find out more information, for a copy of our survey results, or to support the campaign, contact:

Busyroad Estate Tenants' Association

Secretary: Mary Jones

43 Backgarden Street

Brighton

Tel. 01273 708954

Email: [mary.jones@thisismyemail.co.uk](mailto:mary.jones@thisismyemail.co.uk)