

# Advocacy Toolkit

The vision of the Global Coalition for Radiotherapy (GCR) is to live in a world where access to quality radiotherapy is universal and equitable. We plan to achieve this by creating a global community and collaborative network of expert stakeholders and leaders in radiotherapy and cancer care. The most efficient way to do this is to build country-specific networks who advocate for their specific needs in radiotherapy. GCR is taking the lead in delivering radiotherapy solutions worldwide during the radical disruption of cancer services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This advocacy toolkit is aimed at cancer organizations, charities and institutions on a national and international scale, and cancer professionals who want to learn more about successful campaigning and advocacy. This toolkit provides the fundamental components for effective and efficient advocacy in your campaign.

From this toolkit, you will learn about the importance of building a campaign and the initial practical first steps to do so, the importance of understanding and interrogating policy, how to build successful relationships with key political figures and departments, and the integral role of media.

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## Building an Advocacy Campaign

### Why a campaign?

An advocacy campaign allows organizations to focus their collective resources more effectively, streamline messaging, avoid duplicative efforts and measure results. An effective advocacy campaign makes use of media and press coverage, parliamentarians and relevant government departments – the powerful institutions that can effect change.

A successful campaign always begins with a problem. **What is the issue that needs resolving, and how can it be resolved?** These are important fundamental questions to guide a well-structured campaign. Once the urgent problem is outlined, your campaign needs solutions, which could range from national law changes to local authorities receiving additional funding. The demands do not need to be overly extensive, in fact often **the more targeted and specific, the easier they are to achieve.**

Once you have pinpointed the fundamental issue and tangible solutions, make sure that there is not already an effective campaign in place. When beginning an advocacy effort, it is critical to assess which local organizations in your country are already involved in radiotherapy or cancer care, and which campaigns have already been implemented. This could include physician societies, industry and manufacturers, patient organizations, charities and in some cases international organizations with published advocacy programs, measured awareness and effective progress in implementation of radiotherapy.

If a campaign exists already, then join it! Add your expertise, vocalize your support or include your name to open letters – there are plenty of ways to become involved in active campaigns, which will all be listed on the relevant organizations campaign website.

If there is not a campaign for your specific issue, **time to build one.**

### **Develop the scope of your campaign**

After defining a campaign and identifying the organization for implementation, it is important to assess the needs, challenges and resources that are available. What type of funding will you need? Will the organizations involved provide resources for public affairs or do you need to hire an external consultant? Are your policy asks achievable, and if not, can you make them more specific? Once you have answered these questions, you should have a basic framework to create an objective, target audience, timeline and action plan for the campaign. **Make sure these are clear, concise and achievable asks and are underlined by solid evidence.**

### **Planning your advocacy campaign**

Identifying leadership and accountability for a campaign is critical so that you can define, implement and measure advocacy results effectively. It is important to maintain a balanced representation of various stakeholders, including individuals, organizations, societies or similar involved in the advocacy.

#### **Leadership should participate in the following:**

- Preliminary definition of the campaign – this includes development of objectives, scope, target audience and action plan.
- Develop an online presence and social media strategy – this involves creating a website, brand logos, social media pages and social media graphics.
- Develop a communications plan – this involves reaching out to journalists, pulling together press releases and quotes on relevant topics or composing long-form op-eds.
- Stakeholder and MP mapping – this means researching and targeting key politicians or individual stakeholders who have expressed interest in the relevant issue.
- Outline the fiscal responsibilities – this means asking how is this campaign funded? Will it require individual donations on top of private investment? Are there additional costs alongside standard overheads?
- Develop consensus of the key asks and policy proposals among members – remember that united and clear demands are the most effective.

## Develop a timeline

What will be the lifespan of the campaign? Setting milestones for the campaign is critical for setting expectations with stakeholders, and for keeping track of your targets and milestones. Milestones, like the clear asks, should be targeted, specific and direct. It is also important to be realistic and break down the campaign into smaller, more achievable goals.

### Examples could include:

- Meet with 10 Parliamentarians in the first parliamentary session of the year introduce your campaign.
- Contribute to relevant consultations or select committee calls for evidence.
- Work with a Parliamentarian to table written parliamentary questions and oral questions on radiotherapy issues.
- Gain 5 pieces of press coverage, either from national or trade press, across one year.

## Name and brand the campaign

The name of your campaign should attract as many supporters as possible while giving outsiders a sense of the campaign's goal. The name should also reflect your issue, and be short, catchy and memorable. For example, **Radiotherapy UK**, which is advocating for better access to radiotherapy, has developed a side campaign called **Catch Up With Cancer**, advocating for the end to the cancer backlog as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This name is also used as a hashtag, #CatchUpWithCancer – an effective campaign name should be able to work well on social media and not be too long. It is also important to include a strapline, mission and vision of the campaign. Ideally, these should be only a couple of lines long, and should succinctly describe what the campaign is and what it is working towards.

It is also crucial to keep campaign-specific terms consistent throughout. Radiotherapy has many acronyms and scientific terms which parliamentarians, media and the general public may not understand. Define the term or any acronyms at the beginning of any briefing document or on the landing page of your website and ensure simple and consistent terms are used. This avoids any misnomers or confusion and helps build the clarity of the message.

Once the campaign name, straplines and key messages are defined, building a memorable and catchy brand is the next crucial step. This would involve logos, social media assets and a website.

### Engage with GCR

While GCR cannot engage in every country, the GCR team can help with making connections with similar countries or international organizations that have successfully implemented advocacy campaigns like the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO), European Society for Radiation Oncology (ESTRO), City Cancer Challenge and others, who can help you identify additional organizations or contacts that could be useful to your advocacy efforts.



## Understanding Policy Structure and Procedures

The structure of each country's government and the regulatory process varies from country to country. Your advocacy efforts will need to align with that structure. Be sure to educate yourself and your stakeholders on the general structure and regulatory development process and procedures. To learn more about your government, check out your government's website or local university websites which usually contain basic resources. A consultant can also be an invaluable resource to better understanding your government.

### Keeping aware of your government's policy and law changes is a good way to ensure your policy asks can be heard, for example:

- In Ireland the **National Cancer Control Programme**, which is funded by the Department of Health, is responsible for cancer prevention, screen programs, allocation of funding and national policies. A successful campaign could target this directly to advocate for a specific inclusion of radiotherapy.
- In the UK, consultations and select committees are important ways to not only get your message across directly to the government and to contribute to policy change, but also to establish yourself as a leading expert in the field. Consultations and select committee inquiries run frequently throughout the year – it is a good idea to become acquainted with these via the relevant department's website.

### Developing Stakeholder and Political Relationships

Developing personal relationships with government leaders and decision makers is one of the most critical components of influencing the government or legislative process. It is important to build connections any way you can – meet with civil servants or representatives from relevant departments in-person, if possible.

#### Steps to communicate with government leaders

- Target individuals who you want to meet with
- Write your government leaders
- Set up an in-person meeting
- Follow up
- Invite leaders to tour your facility

### Setting an agenda for your meeting

Once you have set up a meeting, it is important to be friendly, informative and genuine, and most importantly set yourself up as a resource. Parliamentarians and government leaders are extremely busy, and most meetings may not last longer than 30 minutes. It is therefore important to position yourself as the leading expert of the particular issue you want to talk to them about – you are offering them expert-led knowledge, alongside improved outcomes, and it is your job to persuade them as to why your issue is so important.

During your meeting, it is important to make sure that your messaging is clear and concise. Come prepared with specifics including the number of radiation therapy facilities in your city, region or country, bill numbers, or accessibility of treatment. Clear policy asks and tangible steps are crucial methods to ensure political engagement. Before your meeting, ask yourself what you want to come away with – listed support, agreement to speak in a debate, or just general awareness. Always remember the problem and the solution – why is your campaign important, and what could the potential outcomes be.

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### Following up

Be sure to follow up with each person that you met with a letter of gratitude and any additional information that was discussed during the meeting. It is important to keep in regular contact with government leaders, not just when you need or want something from them. One easy way to solidify relationships with government leaders and staff is to set up a tour of your facility. Tours are excellent educational opportunities to go into more detail on radiation therapy and strengthen your relationship with leaders.

### Develop a Champion

As you meet with members of the government, you will find that some are more engaged in healthcare and radiation therapy than others. Continue to meet with your leaders until you find one (or several) who are willing to champion your cause. It just takes one to get started! From there you can build a group of government leaders who can help support your campaign efforts in a more meaningful way. These champions could be used in different ways: for example, having a “listed supporter” section of your website with all supportive government leaders.

### Non-political stakeholders

In addition to politicians and decision makers, meeting with other stakeholders – for example, non-radiotherapy cancer charities, or health think tanks – is also a good way to ensure ground support. These like-minded stakeholders will help you reevaluate your own policy positions and can lead to further useful contacts.

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### Connecting with the Media

Engaging with your country’s media can be one of the most effective ways to bring attention to your advocacy efforts. Once your issue is highlighted by the local media, you will find that the government tends to find your issue more compelling. The more media coverage you have, the more pressing your issue will seem to decision makers. Target national, trade and local coverage, and build an engaged list of journalist contacts.

There are several methods of engaging with the media including writing editorials, op-eds, press releases from your organization, offering reactionary quotes, press events or directly connecting with journalists. Different journalists have different methods of contacting them – you could email them, send them a direct message on their social media accounts, or contact the standard editorial news desk. Doing research on the different news outlets and journalists ensures you will be able to target them effectively.

As with your government leaders, you should expect that journalists will not have an in-depth knowledge of radiation therapy. Use your most compelling data and information to engage with journalists. For example, one of the most compelling data points in the UK is the significant backlog of patients waiting to receive radiation therapy. If you browse the UK media coverage of this issue, it almost always centers on the backlog.

### Personalize the campaign

One crucial way to ensure media coverage is to personalize and humanize it: put a patient at the heart. Find an articulate patient representative who has successfully completed radiotherapy treatment – the power of the patient story cannot be overstated. In some cases, these representatives can act as the face or ambassador of the campaign and be present at any panel events or meeting with government leaders.

Targeting Cancer, for example, has a selection of short videos available on their website and YouTube page, which outline individual patient’s stories. These are emotive, informative and patient centered.

**Always ensure that personalization is at the heart of every story you are giving to the media.**