

Getting your students to the People's Vote March for the Future

This briefing pack is designed to help students' union officers and staff to prepare for the national demonstration demanding a vote on the final Brexit deal in London on Saturday 20 October.

#PeoplesVote

#PeoplesVoteMarch

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Introduction

As Vice-President Higher Education of the National Union of Students (NUS), I am proud to support a People's Vote on the Final Brexit Deal and call on the movement to join us on Saturday 20 October in London for the People's Vote March for the Future.

This year, as we've seen the Government struggle to reach an agreement on key aspects of Brexit, it has become increasingly likely that we're heading for a hard Brexit, or even no deal at all. NUS believes that either situation would have wide reaching negative impacts for our education sector and the people that work and study within it. At National Conference 2018, students told us loud and clear that they want to have a say on the final deal and have the opportunity to say no, if faced with a no deal scenario.

Ever since the referendum in 2016, NUS has been unwaveringly committed to securing the best possible Brexit deal, which ensures that no existing opportunities are lost for students or staff and that our education sector retains its world leading status.

These opportunities include the possibility for academic mobility, such as the Erasmus+ scheme which offers opportunities for not only Higher Education (HE) students but apprentices, volunteer, academics and young people to study, work, volunteer, teach and train across Europe. Whilst membership of Erasmus+ is not dependant on EU membership (countries such as Turkey and Norway are amongst existing members) there is no guarantee of our continued membership after Brexit.

On one level progress in the Brexit negotiations has been made; at the end of last year both sides announced their shared commitment to ensuring that the UK would continue to participate in EU funded programmes – including Erasmus+ – until the end of the current funding cycle in 2020. More recently, the UK Government announced an underwrite guarantee for all UK bids made under the Erasmus+ scheme until the end of 2020, in the case of a no deal scenario.

Whilst these announcements are positive in principle, they will only become reality if the UK parliament and the remaining EU member states are able to reach an agreement. Even the possibility of the Government underwriting UK bids in a no deal scenario depends on us being granted permission from the EU. What is more, even if agreed upon, either of these plans would only secure certainty until 2020, with no commitment at all on the long term opportunity for academic exchanges.

We are not willing to gamble with students' futures. By calling for a People's Vote we are calling for all students and academics to have the opportunity to say no to the increasingly likely situation that we lose the benefits that come from academic mobility. And these benefits apply not only for students, but the UK education sector, local communities and the UK economy.

Shutting off opportunities for international exchange for those students that need it most will undermine efforts to widen participation in higher education and improve upward mobility. In turn, the loss of EU exchange students in our HE sector will be to the detriment of the diverse, multi-cultural, welcoming cultures on our campuses.

In their Brexit White Paper this summer, the Government proposed an EU-UK youth mobility scheme to allow continued educational exchanges, when increased border controls are introduced after Brexit. This again, on the face of it, seems like a great deal for students. We are however yet to see any detail of how this scheme might function come exit day; by leaving this down to chance we risk seeing students looking to undergo EU exchanges faced with unexpected fees and restrictions. And again, we face the very real possibility that this proposal fails to become reality at all, if faced with a no deal situation. That's why we are calling for a People's Vote, because students should have the power to say no to this.

The future looks just as uncertain for EU students hoping to come to the UK for their degree who, whilst currently eligible for home student fees, are likely to see the cost of coming to the UK to study increase significantly with no clarity beyond 2019. The loss of home fee status looks set to impact EU students looking to study in Scotland more so, as tuition fees for EU students in Scotland look set to be introduced for the first time after Brexit.

And of course Erasmus+ is just one of many EU funded schemes that students in the UK currently benefit from, with funding from the European Social Fund propping up the Further Education (FE) sector in some of the UK's least privileged areas, and Horizon 2020 providing crucial research funding for our world leading universities. Since Horizon 2020 began in 2014 the UK has been a significant funding recipient securing €4.6 billion, or 14.3% of the overall total. Whilst the Government have made a similar commitment to underwrite any existing bids up until 2020, opportunities for collaboration will be limited in a no deal scenario.

There's still so much to be won and we are not willing to gamble with students' futures. Losing access to Erasmus+ and free movement, home fee status for EU students and Horizon 2020 would have devastating impacts for students and our community. And in particular for students in Northern Ireland, the threat of a hard border looms, with key Brexit players seemingly willing to pursue Brexit at the cost of the peace process. In calling for a People's Vote we are calling for students and academics to have the opportunity to say no, if faced with the prospect of losing these transformative opportunities for academic international exchange and seeing our education sector damaged.

In June, over 100,000 people joined us on the streets of London. This time, it's going to be even bigger and better.

Join us on Saturday 20 October at People's Vote March for the Future and make sure students are too loud to ignore.

1. Getting started

Why is NUS supporting the People's Vote?

For our future. It is now fundamentally clear that this government is on the brink of imploding, and has no idea what it is doing. Brexit will have huge, irreversible, ramifications for the UK. If a good Brexit deal cannot be agreed, it's our generation, and generations to follow, that will have to suffer the consequences. That's why NUS is backing a second People's Vote March for the Future on Saturday 20 October, demanding a public vote on the final deal.

We must be allowed to decide if a decision that will affect our lives forever makes the country better or worse off.

Who else is supporting it?

The People's Vote campaign was established to ensure that the government's Brexit deal is put before the country in a public vote. Good deal, bad deal, no deal.... it's definitely a big deal - and that's why it should be put to a People's Vote.

These are the groups that now support a People's Vote:

- Open Britain
- European Movement
- For Future's Sake
- Britain for Europe
- Our Future Our Choice
- Scientists for Europe
- Healthier in the EU
- Wales for Europe
- In Facts
- Royal College of Nurses
- Royal College of Midwives

The march is also backed by [*The Independent's Final Say*](#) campaign, to make sure this protest is so loud and so big that no one can ignore it.

What will the march look like?

In June, over 100,000 people from all walks of life marched on Parliament to demand their democratic voice be heard. Time is now ticking away rapidly, yet we are nowhere near securing a decent deal for the future. Indeed as crunch time looms ever closer, we appear to be hurtling towards a no-deal Brexit that will be no good to anyone.

So on Saturday 20 October an even bigger march will take place, demanding that MPs finally listen to us before it's all too late. To listen to the young people whose voices were ignored two years ago because we were deemed too young to vote. To listen to us, taking part in **the most important protest of our generation**, because this issue affects us more than anyone.

What can my SU do?

As planning for the march is underway, there are a number of things you can be working on in your unions to ensure an inspiring turnout.

Things to do *now*:

- **Establish which officer or staff member will take a lead on march mobilising;** these people can be used as your lead contacts with NUS and any organisations you may approach for sponsorship.
- **Contact your local UCU branch;** find out if they are also mobilising for the march and work together. If you don't know who your UCU rep is visit <https://www.ucu.org.uk/yourcontacts>. Search by institution name, select your university or college, and there will be a name and email address of the UCU contact.
- **Contact other trade unions and campaign groups** in your area to find out if they would like to take part and how you can work together to promote the march. Again, your UCU rep should be able to help with this too.
- **Set a target student attendance number.** It may be useful to do this per union and per city – talk with other SUs around you about how you can work together.
- **Organise your transport to and from the march.** If you are travelling from outside London, ask local coach companies for quotes ASAP. Coaches can cost quite a lot, and for many groups and SUs this will be the main barrier to coming down. But there are ways to keep costs to a bare minimum.

Here are a few of the most useful:

a) Look to collaborate

- It may be possible to reduce costs by sharing a coach with a group local to you. Email Amanda.cc@ffsakes.uk to see if this is possible. Alternatively, you may want to consider approaching other local groups and arranging transport together.

b) Think ahead:

- Remember that you can recoup the costs of hiring a coach after the event, so although coaches always seem expensive, they can be quite affordable as long as you sell the tickets rather than give them away, and fill the coach. There will always be enough activists in your local area, and we will help you find them.
- Sometimes it's cheaper to book private transport, especially megabus tickets, and then resell them, as long as you do it well in advance. So check the availability and price of them now!
- Book chartered coaches as early in advance as you can.

c) Start selling tickets now!

- Selling tickets helps you get the funds back – but it also ties students in. People are more likely to come and bring their mates if they have parted with money. Keep proper lists of everyone who has booked.

d) Fundraise:

Fundraising can be an effortless and easy way to afford the journey down to London. There are a few basic things that you can do:

- Set up an online fundraiser like GoFundMe.

- Ask around all of your local trade union branches, asking them for help with cash. Some branches have a lot of money – some have tens of thousands of pounds – and will be more than happy to fund students defending education.
- Ask local academics and community figures for money. Many academics, who will be unable to attend themselves, will be happy to chip in. Many students got down to last year's demos by running a "sponsor me to go to London" campaign. Go to other trade union meetings (for instance, at fire stations) and ask for a whip-round.
- Do the usual fundraising events: bake sales, gigs and bucket shaking.

e) Ask students who can to pay for their own transport:

It's not ideal to ask students to fund the whole journey themselves, but it's not immoral either, especially if you can't do it.

- Ask students to book ASAP. But students are more likely to book if you make it easy for them. It's ideal to advertise the tickets, the times of transport and the website to book on in the SU, or over email or Facebook. Make it as convenient and straightforward as possible, and advertise this.
- Send out a mass email telling students to book transport now, if they can, before tickets get too expensive. Remind them to use their NUS Extra or TOTUM card to take advantage of offers and discounts from selected travel operators. You can find a list of offers [here](#).

Things to do next:

- Promote your plans via your SU **website**.
- Use **social media** (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vine, Snapchat, etc.) to promote and create a buzz around #PeoplesVote.
- Set up an SU Facebook event for the march early on (e.g. Fibchester goes to The People's Vote March for the Future). This is a useful way to spread the word, communicate meeting points and transport, as well as build data on likely numbers.
- **Write blogs/make videos**, etc. about how the march connects to your membership and post one every week (e.g. why is this march relevant to home students, international students, your institution, etc).
- Put up **posters** around campus advertising the march.
- Leaflet all the **clubs and societies'** chairs, and ask to speak at their meetings, to get their support in mobilising for the march.
- **Contact your local news outlets** (e.g. student media, local newspapers, TV and radio) and let them know why you're taking part in the march.
- Organise a team of volunteers to do as many **lecture shouts** as possible about the march – work with your local UCU branch on this too.

One month to go!

- Hold a **banner making session** and invite as many people as possible. Making a big, bright banner can be an effective way of getting a message across. These are easiest to make on old bed sheets or cheap cloth which can be bought by the metre. You can also use this time to discuss ideas for the demo and how to get as many students as you can involved. Banner making is also a great ice-breaker if people don't already know each other.
- Set up a **photo opportunity** for local media so that they have a good picture to use to accompany your story. Line up some students to be at hand to do **interviews** with local media – journalists are always interested in hearing from 'ordinary students' and what they think about how Brexit will affect them.
- **Publicise** the march across campus! Banners, posters and chalking (make sure the building isn't listed) are all great ways to promote the march, as well as using SU TV screens and writing articles for your campus press.
- Go **door knocking**. It might seem a bit weird, but knock on doors in halls and have a chat to people about Brexit and why the People's Vote is so important. Sunday evenings are a good time to do this – people are generally bored or procrastinating! Most people will be up for talking to you and meeting someone face to face really encourages freshers to take part in further actions.

One week to go!

Hold a People's Vote Week of Action:

- Turn your SU into a **campaign headquarters**: plan activities to take place each day of the week and encourage students to call into the SU to take part in them.
- **Decorate the SU** (or alternative venue) so students are aware it's the campaign HQ.
- Get out and about with a camera to create Humans-of-New-York style **student profiles** in which students explain a little about themselves and their fears for the future – and why they're joining the People's Vote March for the Future. These can then be posted on social media.
- **Banner drop** outside your SU or an appropriate university building. Set a time for its unfurling, organise a crowd to stand in front of it and invite local media to take photos and interview students about why they are taking action.

2. Organising a successful meeting

We all know that meetings can be a really useful way to get your ideas over to a large number of people, but be aware that many people shy away from attending meetings as they think that they will be pointless or irrelevant. If you are going to hold a meeting think carefully about the 'hook' that you use to get people to attend.

- **What do you want?** Is this an awareness raising exercise or are you trying to recruit people to your People's Vote campaign team? Is the meeting just for students or do you want to involve staff and the public at large as well? Decide all this before you do anything else.
- **Timing:** Check your SU, university/college and local listings to make sure the meeting does not conflict with other major events. Decide on a time to maximise attendance.
- **Size:** Nothing looks worse than 50 people turning up for a meeting in a room that can hold 500. It's better to book a room that holds 35 and have people standing at the back. However, if you have enough people, you may need to book an external venue, so check your budget. Do not book anything until you have confirmed this.
- **Speakers:** This is the most important element in a successful meeting. It doesn't matter how much they know; uninspiring speakers will put an audience to sleep. So make sure the speakers you invite are knowledgeable and engaging. Feel free to invite NUS officers to your campus to speak at any events you are hosting, to find out more contact campaigns@nus.org.uk
- **Publicity:** By all means put up posters in the students' union bar, but do not stop there. Poster and flyer everywhere you can think of, and *go out and talk to people!* Tell them about the meeting and why it is important. Be a bit daft. Offer prizes to the first 50 people to arrive and then give them each a Haribo or sticker - or something equally cheap and silly.
- **Press:** Make sure your student media plan to cover the meeting. If you are looking for wider coverage, also contact local media. Having a high-profile speaker (e.g. a local dignitary such as your local MP if they are in favour of a People's Vote) will help you get local media attention.
- **On the day:** ensure you and your campaign team get to the meeting location early enough to set up an information and sign-in table. Collect e-mail addresses and phone numbers for everyone who shows up and encourage them to attend the march. Take notes and e-mail them to everyone as soon as you can. If anyone agreed to do something during the meeting, make sure they are reminded.
- **Preparation:** ensure you have someone to chair the meeting who is not shy about ensuring that people stick to the timetable. A 90-minute meeting that overruns by two hours is frustrating and counterproductive.
- **End early:** Make sure the meeting ends early enough for people to get together for a pint or a coffee afterwards. This is the time when creative ideas will spill over and you can really get people excited and recruit them to your campaign team.

Operational logistics

Holding a meeting will only be an effective way of publicising and mobilising for the march if you organise it properly.

Getting people interested

If your meeting isn't very successful, it is tempting to put it down to the date or the time, when in fact it's more likely to be because your publicity wasn't good enough or people just weren't interested. Generating interest in meetings can be difficult. This is especially true in the early stages when students may not be clear about the issues or how they may directly affect them. It is important for each individual students' union to look at local issues to ensure meetings are relevant to your particular students. Participants will need a reason to attend the meeting, so this should be made clear from the start.

You will need to check the following points:

- **What's** the purpose of the meeting?
- **Who's** the meeting aimed at – all students, or targeted groups with specific interests?
- The issues raised should not be the ones you think are important but those that your students think are important.
- Different types of publicity could be used, for example, student newspapers, radio, banners in the catering/bar outlets, door-to-door, etc.
- If you decide to organise a meeting in the evening, it's best to start early so that you catch people before they leave campus to go home. It all depends upon your local circumstances, so familiarise yourself with the facilities available and gauge the best place and time to hold a meeting for your particular audience(s). You may find you need to organise more than one meeting at different times in different locations to reach more students, particularly if you operate across different sites.

Booking a venue

If it's not possible or practical to organise a meeting within college or on campus, you may need to book an external venue.

Think about:

- How many people you expect or want to come.
- What time you want the meeting to begin and end.
- Where you expect people to come from.
- How accessible is the venue.

If you decide to book a local community hall, make sure the authorities who administer it know the date, the time, what the meeting is for, how many people you are expecting and how long the meeting will last.

You will need to consider:

- What time the organisers will be allowed in the hall before the meeting.
- Where you should collect the keys before the meeting or if there is a caretaker, where to find them to let you in.

- What time you must vacate the hall.
- Whether there are any special restrictions, e.g. no drinking or smoking.
- Whether there is there a public address system you can use. If not, check they have a power point for amplification.
- Whether they want a deposit, how much it will cost, and where to send the money.

Finding the right speakers

A good speaker can make a meeting. If people leave the meeting feeling bored and uninspired, they are unlikely to be inspired to attend the march. Don't invite too many speakers, as they are all likely to run over the allocated time. Three people speaking for quarter of an hour each, with time for summing up and questions, is quite enough for most people's attention spans!

Ensure you draw speakers from a diverse range of backgrounds, so that they can speak on a variety of experiences and perspectives, because students' experiences differ – a panel of straight white men will not touch on all of these!

Give one person the responsibility for booking and organising the speakers. You should always confirm a booking to the speaker in writing, giving full details of:

- The date, time and place of the meeting.
- How to get there by car or public transport.
- How long they are expected to speak for.
- Who else is speaking and whether they will be part of a panel.
- Who to contact if there are problems (if possible, give them a phone number to contact if there is a last minute crisis).

You should also:

- Enclose a publicity leaflet for the meeting to let them know what attendees are expecting.
- Phone them the day before the meeting to make sure they are coming. If you've agreed to pay their travel expenses, make sure you do: they may be depending on them to get back home.
- Remember to write thank you letters the next day to all speakers: you may want to invite them back!

Regard meetings as an entertaining way to inform people. Playing music as people are coming in and out, and/or providing some other form of entertainment, will transform the event. If meetings fail, it is usually because the timetable has not been well thought out, the chair is ill-prepared, and the majority of speakers find it difficult to stick to their allocated time slot.

3. Organising a pre-march stunt

To publicise the march to students, and to increase students' involvement and media interest, a well-designed stunt can be useful in getting your message out there.

Before organising your stunt, it is important to be clear about its objectives. Are you:

- Generating publicity for the march?
- Encouraging participation in the People's Vote campaign?
- Targeting your local MP?
- Recruiting people for your coach?
- Demanding an opportunity to vote on the final Brexit deal?
- Demonstrating the value of remaining in Europe?

When deciding what you're going to do, it is important to balance your efforts and tactics with the resources available to you. In general, the more personalised the tactic, the higher the impact.

For example, a generic postcard campaign in which people simply stamp and sign a pre-printed message will be recognised by decision-makers as generic and orchestrated. Consequently, it would take a high number of them to have any impact on these decision-makers. Conversely, a visit to a constituency surgery with five constituents who can individually express their point of view may have a much higher impact, and requires fewer activists.

The same is true for potential supporters. A generic Facebook message will again be recognised as such; how many groups have you joined in the past but then never taken any action? An afternoon spent around your institution talking to individuals about how they feel about Brexit and whether they should have a say on the final deal will prove more fruitful and secure stronger commitments.

Keep these tips in mind:

- **Dominate something:** concentrate an action over a small period of days in order to strengthen its potency and message.
- **Do a few things well** rather than many things poorly.
- **Make your strategy personal**
 - **Keep recruiting:** keep a focus on building, sustaining, and expanding your number of supporters.
 - **Follow up:** select strategies that are conducive to reporting back to your supporters.

4. Overcoming barriers

Organising a delegation of students to attend the People's Vote March for the Future may seem like a daunting task for range of reasons, but where there's a will, there's a way and there are usually plenty of ways to overcome barriers that may at times seem like too much of a block. For example:

a) We have other campaigns we want to focus on so don't have time for this

You can use the march to build action and momentum for your local campaigns so you may want to at first focus on those messages, and then move on to asking students to attend the march once they are already interested in your local campaigns. It's also important to target information at specific groups rather than bombarding everyone with irrelevant messaging. Think carefully about the different ways you will engage different types of students, e.g. home students vs international students.

You can also highlight the fact that the timeline for this campaign is short –the UK is set to leave the EU in March 2019. This is the last chance for young people to have their voices heard in the Brexit debate which, if it goes wrong, will have wide reaching impacts for students.

b) Some sports teams/societies are reluctant to get involved

Try targeting your messaging in ways that might apply to them. If they're still reluctant to attend, encourage them to show their support in other ways, e.g. getting involved with local People's Vote events and/or supporting via social media.

c) Students with part-time Saturday jobs would need time off

You can encourage people to try to re-arrange their shifts if at all possible. If they really can't take time off, encourage them to show their support in other ways, e.g. getting involved with any local People's Vote events and/or supporting via social media. If they really can't make it, encourage them to take part in the virtual demo instead to show their support. This will be made available online in the lead up to the demo.

d) Our students are actively against a People's Vote

Ask them why; ask them if they're happy for their future to be decided for them, rather than have an opportunity to have their own voices heard on such an important issue. If they're not, explain that this is a way to voice their concerns. If they are OK with the idea of others deciding for them, move on – don't waste time and resources on those whose minds won't be changed.

e) Our SU staff are against the march

If the officers are in favour of taking part in the march, staff should try to understand why and work towards it – they are non-political and paid to support the officers and the SU.

f) It's really difficult to get the messages across to our students

There are a variety of methods you can use to get the message out to your students. These include: social media and emails; giving out wristbands, flyers and hand stamps; displaying posters and other decorations (let your imaginations run wild!) around campus; lecture shout outs (work with your UCU reps on this); incorporating it into your other SU activities through the use of competitions, etc. Think about all the ways you got

students to vote for you in your SU election. Most of these methods will work just as effectively in getting students to sign up to come to the march.

g) Our students are worried about police/threat of arrest/kettling

The march organisers will be doing everything they can to decrease the chances of any of the above happening. It is important for all those attending to know their rights and to promote them. Everyone has the right to protest and we shouldn't let perceived fear of police actions stop us from demonstrating and having our voices heard. See Section 9 on *Your Protest Rights* for more information.

h) Our students are apathetic/disillusioned about it making a difference

We have everything to march for! As the prospect of a no-deal Brexit becomes more likely by the day, so too does the prospect of a People's Vote on the Brexit deal.

i) We can't afford it

- Pool your resources with other local SUs and your UCU branch, and/or hold fundraising events on and off campus (see section 1 for more on fundraising).
- Approach local trade union branches to see if they can assist with costs (your local UCU branch may also be able to help with this).
- Ask students to pay a small amount for a seat on your coach/mini bus – this has worked for many SUs in the past as students are often happy to contribute a little to the cost.
- Some SUs have previously ring-fenced income generated from NUS Extra card sales to fund coaches to demos. Our new TOTUM platform promises to provide increased income to your students' unions, so the more cards you sell, the more you will be well on the way to being able to afford transport.

j) We have students on placement who are difficult to engage

Try to contact any placement students you know of as soon as possible so that if they want to attend the march they have enough time to arrange a day off if they are expected to work on Saturdays. If students are on placement, it may be difficult to engage with them so contact course reps and ask them to pass on information. If they can't get time off, can they support in other ways, e.g. by attending local campaign actions, and supporting via social media? Many placement students and work-based learners will also belong to trade unions and may have received information through them as well.

k) There's so much to plan, where to start?!!

This may be the boring part, but it's also the most important. You should have a number of resources available to you to help with organisation, including your SU staff, and NUS can also advise (just contact campaigns@nus.org.uk). However, don't just assume that others will do it for you; set aside time to think about this and make sure you are well organised. Students will be able to see if you aren't, and it may determine whether they want to join you or not.

5. Working with your local FE or HE union

Working with your local Further Education (FE) students' unions

Most FE SUs don't have full-time sabbatical officers, and some won't have any officers in post until after elections in October. The easiest way to make initial contact with your local FE union is therefore usually via their staff support, and this will normally be a college staff member. These staff members have variety of job titles including 'Staff Student Liaison Officer', 'Learner/Student Voice Coordinator', 'Learner Involvement Coordinator', or it might be the Student Services Manager.

You can either phone the college switchboard and ask to speak to the students' union (in which case you will probably be put through to the staff support), or, if you are in England, get in touch with your NUS MEE (Membership Engagement Executive) or MSA (Member Support Advisor).

If you are unsure who this contact membershipteam@nus.org.uk. For SUs in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland contact your respective NUS office.

Once you've made contact with the staff support, ask them to put you in contact with:

- The SU President or other SU officers (if in post)
AND/OR
- The student governors
AND/OR
- Leading class/course reps from the previous year.

Working with your local Higher Education students' unions

The majority of HE unions have at least one sabbatical officer in place. You should be able to find out details of sabbatical officers on the SU's website or by phoning the SU directly. If this is not possible, then you can find them in the [NUS Connect SU Directory](#).

You might find that by working with your local HE union that they have access to funding and resources which will help you to get more of your students involved. Likewise, you should find that HE unions are keen to work with you and your students to create a stronger and more wide-ranging voice.

Working with NUS

If you are planning any local or regional activity, let your Development Consultant or your NUS MEE or MSA (if in England) know. They will help to make regional activity as effective as possible, coordinating help and assistance across your region and promoting information and resource sharing.

Action points:

- Make contact with your local FE/HE student officers and students' unions. Discuss issues of common concern at the earliest opportunity and investigate how you can work together and solve them.
- Try to identify students with a powerful story to tell about why they believe there should be a People's Vote; these can be used by the media, and help to get the wider public interested in joining the march too.
- Visit your local FE and HE institutions in the run up to the march. Talk to students about the People's Vote, and encourage them to get involved. They may want to attend your pre-march stunt, or sign up as a supporter.
- When organising any city-wide or regional activities, try to co-ordinate with your local institutions well in advance and ensure you invite any FE or HE institution to the pre-march events you organise.

6. Lobbying your MP

Effectively lobbying MPs is one of the most important aspects of any campaign which aims to change something in Parliament. Whether it is getting students to get their parents to lobby their home MP, or you mobilising students and the general public to lobby the MP local to your institution – it is vital MPs know that you, as their constituent feel strongly that we need a People's Vote.

Meeting with MPs

MPs have surgeries within their local constituencies. These can be used to inform MPs about the issues you care about, ask them to write to ministers or to consider backing a bill going through parliament. **The surgeries will be publicised locally** or you can **ring the local constituency office** or House of Commons to see when the next one will be.

When contacting your MP:

- **Do your research.** What is your MP's position on Brexit and a People's Vote? Did they vote to leave or to remain? How have they voted since? You can find out their voting history on www.theyworkforyou.com. Don't assume that just because they are from a specific political party their views will be reflective of that party's policies.
- **Contact allies quickly.** If they voted to remain then it is more likely that they favour a People's Vote. Contact them as soon as possible to introduce yourself, ask them if they are supportive of the People's Vote March for the Future, and whether they will be attending.
- **Decide the best time** to request a face to face meeting and make sure you have plenty of time to prepare. You may be very busy with Welcome Week events and campaign preparations, so do not rush into lobbying your MP - find a time when you know you will be able to do the required research.
- **Rehearse what you want to say.** Work out your key points and exactly how you want to make them ahead of time. Try your approach out on a friend who is familiar with the arguments or can play Devil's Advocate. If you do not persuade them, you will not persuade an MP; this is especially important if the MP is wavering on the issue. If more than one person is attending, decide who's doing what. There should only be one spokesperson.
- **Dress for success.** How you look when you meet your MP will make an impression. You don't have to wear a suit (unless you really want to), but make an effort to look clean and tidy. If others are going with you, make sure they do the same.
- **During the meeting** be tolerant of differing views and keep the dialogue open. State your points clearly and firmly, but do not argue or speak badly of other MPs or organisations. Your aim is to put your case, understand their view and get a promise on what action they will take.
- **Be organised.** Take a short briefing of your key points which you can leave with your MP. If more than one person is attending, appoint a spokesperson and, if possible, a note taker.

- **Know what you want.** If you've done your research properly, you should have some idea about your MP's views on Brexit and whether they are in favour of a People's Vote. If you know they're broadly supportive of your views, then the object of your visit is to get them to take action or do something; make sure you know what this is before you meet them. Is it to agree to take part in the march themselves? Or to issue a supportive press release or take part in a photo op with you to help promote the march? If you know they are not supportive or are unsure of their position, you may be going with the intention of changing their mind; think about how you could do this. Make sure you have clear and reasonable requests.
- **Get them involved.** Try to arrange an interview with them for your student media, or get a quote from them for your website or social media. Make sure they are aware of the response their opinions have elicited.
- **Follow up.** Make sure you write to them, thanking them for their time. Stay in touch and make sure they get copies of all relevant press stories, press releases or reports on the issue.
- **Put your family to work.** Every student in further and higher education has at least one, possibly two MPs; the MP who represents your institution address and the MP who represents your home address. Many students have parents, grandparents and siblings living in different constituencies around the UK. At a minimum, get them all to email their MPs. Anything more you can coerce them into will be icing on the cake.

Please feedback on any MP meetings you have to: public.affairs@nus.org.uk so that we can add them to our information on each MP.

7. Working with the media

Positive media coverage is key to winning any campaign. The media influences students, the general public and the decision makers. Coverage of your People's Vote activities in your local media will help to generate a bigger buzz so think about how you can get people in your local area talking about the march.

Planning your engagement strategy

Try to think about the following when you are targeting the media:

- **Give them what they want.** Journalists love to have numbers to report – can you do a survey of how students on your campus feel about their futures? How they feel about being denied a say on their futures? Have you already got lots of people signed up to come to the march?
- **Be imaginative.** Media work isn't just about press releases. Press releases are a tiny part of how you can influence the media. Think about letters to editors, comment pieces, statements, quotes, blogs, articles for student media and offer your time for interviews. The NUS press office will always be on hand to advise you about which course of action is best and we can provide you with comments from national officers to support your work.
- **Contact us.** It would be brilliant if you can let the NUS national press office know what you are doing and, of course, if you have any concerns or questions about a story then please phone or email us, the press office will be able to provide you with advice and support. Contact us at press.office@nus.org.uk

News releases

When putting out a news release, it is important to come across as professional so people take you and your message seriously. Try to follow a few simple guidelines:

- A news release should be no more than one page in length and needs to have contact details for someone who can quickly respond if journalists need more.
- It should state clearly that it is a NEWS RELEASE, with the date and time of release.
- If you are sending a news release out but do not want the information covered until a later date (usually if it relates to an upcoming event), make sure you specify an embargo date ("Embargoed until: tt:tt, dd/mm/yy") at the top.
- It should carry a headline, which should be short and snappy – the normal rules of sentence construction do not apply. Don't try to be clever, just make sure the journalist knows what the release is about.
- The opening paragraph should be no more than a couple of sentences long (25-30 words) and should include WHO is doing WHAT, WHERE they are doing it, WHEN and WHY – for example 'students (who) are signing up members of the public (what) in the city centre (where) tomorrow (when) to come to #PeoplesVoteMarch (why).'
- It should then continue with a short paragraph or two giving background information, closing on a snappy quote.
- A news release should have the word 'ENDS' at the bottom, followed by contact details and any additional information re times, availability for interview etc.

Case studies

Journalists love case studies because they offer them a human-interest angle.

- Gather case studies for use when they can help illustrate a point you are making in the media.
- Always ask their permission first, and make sure you respect any confidentiality issues.
- Write short and snappy summaries of their stories (e.g. "Joanna Bloggs, 18, was unable to vote on June 23 2016, however as she is old enough now she is desperate for a say on her future")
- Make it clear that interviews can be arranged with your case studies (again, make sure you have their permission first)

Endorsements

A good way to get your local press interested in an issue or event is to get endorsement. If you are lucky enough to know a locally based celebrity and they agree to back your efforts then great. If not, then a local community figure (MP, Mayor, etc) will work too.

Letters to editors

The most frequently read pages of any newspaper are the front page, the back page, the obituaries and the letters page – in that order. So letter writing campaigns in the press are a good way of getting coverage, whilst also giving the paper the idea there may be a story to cover.

Letters are also a great way to respond to a story you disagree with. Going all out and press releasing something disagreeing with a story will often get you nowhere. A well-placed letter is often the best way.

Relationships

Get to know the journalists who deal with education stories and ask them what kind of stories they might cover. They're trying to include the best stories and will often help you to put them together.

8. Preparing to march

The People's March for the Future will bring together thousands of people marching under one banner; we demand a final say on the Brexit deal. Some students will have been on many demonstrations before but for others it might be there first time. This is what makes the march such an exciting event to be part of! Ensuring you're prepared before the march will ensure that you and your students can have the best possible time on the day, so some things to remember:

What to bring

- A **rucksack** with all the necessities in it; snacks, water, phone, spare cash as well as any medication they usually take in case they end up staying later than planned. Why not bring a flask of tea? You'll be very popular when it gets chilly!
- As any Game of Thrones fan will know, *winter is coming* - so **wrap up warm** and bring a brolly. Hats, scarves, gloves, a rain mac and sensible footwear will be your best friends on the day!

Keep in touch

- If your SU is laying on coaches, we advise that each coach has **one nominated Coach Steward**. This should be an officer or staff member who is responsible for keeping in touch with the coach driver, students and other coaches from your union and passing on any relevant information to students on the day.
- Make sure everyone on your coach has the phone number of a Coach Steward they can contact and, where possible, try to collect the contact details of the people on your coach. It's always helpful to check that the same number of people are on the coach at the end of the day that were on it at the beginning!
- Give students a map of the area with your coach pick up times and location on it.
- Pre-arrange a meeting place in case students get lost or lose phone signal.

9. Your protest rights

It's important to be aware of police powers commonly used on protests, as well as your rights. This will help you and others feel confident about attending the march and exercising their right to protest.

While the number of arrests that occur on protests are relatively small, especially on large pre-planned demonstrations, it is important to be prepared. If you are arrested, the most useful thing to remember is your right to say "no comment" in response to all questions and your right to use a lawyer of your choice rather than a duty solicitor. We strongly recommend law firms below and/or those featured on bust cards, rather than relying on a duty solicitor.

For more detailed information about your rights at demonstrations and protests, we recommend you refer to:

Green and Black Cross www.greenandblackcross.org

Defend the Right to Protest www.defendtherighttoprotest.org

Y-Stop www.y-stop.org

Please note the information contained in this section is only guidance and should not be used as a substitute for direct legal advice.

10. Safeguarding your delegation

What do we mean by 'safeguarding' and why is it important?

The term 'safeguarding' refers to the provision of protection for children, young adults and vulnerable adults which includes their physical and mental welfare, protecting them from varying forms of abuse and making sure such instances are dealt with sensitively and appropriately.

It is important to remember that you are the experts when it comes to the needs of your individual students. Institutions will have their own approaches to safeguarding, risk assessments and trips procedures when it comes to taking students off campus.

If you are in an FE college it will be worth looking at these procedures now and speaking with someone from your institution's health and safety team and also the staff member who is in charge of safeguarding for the college as they will be able to advise and support you to write your own specific documentation for the march.

If you are a HE institution, a staff member in your SU or university will also be able to support you to write your own procedure for vulnerable adult students, and under 18s if you have any.

If you are mobilising and travelling by city/region to the march and have a mix of institutions on one coach, delegation leaders should speak to each other before the march and outline what each other's procedures are.

Some things to bear in mind when planning your safeguarding procedure:

- Phone signal may be limited, although it's important for you to have all the contact details of your delegation and for them to have yours, so make sure you arrange departure times and locations prior to starting the march.
- For many of your delegation this may be their first demonstration, explain to them what to expect.
- Provide a way for delegates to get to know one another before the event or on the coach so delegates will recognise their group.
- Find out before the march if any of your delegation has access needs so you can do your best to support them.
- Speak to someone in your institution about what constitutes a safeguarding incident, and make sure you have the correct local authority details if you need to report a case.

If you are an officer or a new member of staff and this is the first external trip you've organised, or the first time you've had to think about safeguarding your members, don't panic! Safeguarding is about making sure your young people and vulnerable adults are supported and there will be someone in your institution that can support you to do this.

Below are a couple of practical examples of supporting young people and vulnerable adults at the march:

Affinity groups: this is where a group of 6-8 people for example stick together throughout the route and at the rally point. If at any point one member of that group feels unsafe, uneasy or unhappy being in the march, the whole group retires to a safe space until that person is in a position to want to return to the demonstration.

Buddy Up: by buddying up delegates, it means your whole group has a responsibility to look out for one another and everyone in your group is accounted for. It may be worth buddying up delegates with previous experience with those who have none.

Keep in touch!

We really want to hear all about how you are mobilising your students for the People's March for the Future.

Please let us know what you are doing, your Welcome Week plans, what creative stunts you have/are planning, any media coverage you get. We also LOVE photos and will share your stories on NUS Connect and via social media to share the creativity and inspire others.

Hashtags for the event are **#PeoplesVote** and **#PeoplesVoteMarch**

Also let us know what further support you may require from NUS. You can contact us at campaigns@nus.org.uk or via @nusuk/ @nusconnect

More information about the People's Vote can be found at Peoples-Vote.org.uk/march

Amatey Doku

Vice President (Higher Education)