



## How do I hold a community meeting about school funding cuts?

The Government's cuts to education spending are affecting schools across the country – check [schoolcuts.org.uk](http://schoolcuts.org.uk) to find out about cuts in your local area. These affect everyone and cuts are having a drastic impact on communities – now is the time to get local people involved in fighting back against the school funding crisis

If you've never held a community meeting before, here are some practical steps to get you started.

### 1. Decide who you want to involve.

The cuts are having a massive impact across the country so there are lots of people you could invite to your meeting. Parent groups, youth groups, grandparents, politicians or councillors, celebrities, activist groups, school governors, heads and teachers from local schools. There may already be campaign or pressure groups set up – contacting them could help publicise your meeting, as well as rally activists to make your voices heard.

### 2. Publicise your meeting.

Be as clear and visible as possible to ensure interested parties know about your meeting. Create a poster to make your meeting stand out and display it anywhere you think might catch people's eye. Your library, GP surgery, dentist, town hall, community centre, schools or Post Offices are good places – local shops and public noticeboards might also grab people's attention (make sure you've got permission to display them). Social media is excellent and free and allows interested parties to raise points or questions that might help discussion on the day. Don't forget the personal touch – simply talking to people can help spread the word too.

### 3. Make the aims of your meeting clear and concise.

You should aim to educate and activate your community at this meeting. If they've come along to listen, they already want to fight school cuts.

**Educate** attendees about the realities of cuts, both locally and on a national level (this [link](#) will direct you to useful resources that show how cuts affect different areas of education.)

You could encourage individuals or community groups to share experiences and thoughts with the meeting – this will help demonstrate how cuts affect everyone.

**Activate** your members by deciding on the action you will take.

There are numerous ways you can spread the message that education needs fair funding. Decide on one or more course of action and ensure that it is followed through collectively.

Possible action points to suggest at your meeting:

- Have attendees [sign up to the schoolcuts campaign](#) for a revised and fairer funding formula in schools.
- [Email or write to your local MP](#), calling on them to demand a better deal for education. If your MP attends, they might want to share what they will be doing to fight against cuts and explain their next steps in making the Government listen.
- Organise a local event to publicise how cuts are affecting schools in your area. Resources to help you can be found [here](#). If you have invited pressure/campaign groups to your meeting, this may be a chance to invite support for any events they have already planned.
- Encourage attendees to share outcomes of your meeting as widely as possible, through word of mouth as well as social media.
- Invite local press along and distribute a [press release](#).

#### 4. The next step...

Keep the momentum going. If you have made alliances with other groups, ensure they continue to network through further local events and aim to keep education spending at the top of the political agenda.

A number of unions will be taking part in a National Weekend of Action on 21/22 April – use this date to build on the successes of your first meeting and as a focal point for taking action.

If your area is holding local elections in May, this could also be a great opportunity to get your community talking about education and the pressures schools are facing. Follow this [link](#) to find out about upcoming local elections.

#### Tips:

- DO encourage attendees to share personal experiences of how a tighter school budget has affected them. It might be worth asking individuals before the meeting so they can prepare.
- DO keep your meeting focused on the issue of funding cuts – if attendees raise other subjects, note them for the future but remember you will have limited time to decide on action.
- DON'T be worried about talking to parents or school leaders – the cuts to education are affecting management and parents alike and neither wants to see pupil's learning suffer. Encourage them to make their voices heard.
- DON'T forget that the Government has already been forced to accept the need to invest in education. Last July, the then Education Secretary Justine Greening announced a £1.3 billion boost for core school funding as the result of Union pressure. Although more needs to be done, this shows what's possible through focussed, collective action. This is not a losing battle.
- DO remember to check out the [resources](#) available to help you organise your meeting.