



## How to Communicate our Message

### **Make your argument convincing**

Being a successful activist is about more than understanding the strengths and weaknesses of different voting systems. To persuade other people that change is necessary, you'll need to think what kind of arguments your audience will find most convincing.

Assume your audience has a general familiarity with politics, but don't take for granted that they will already understand why or how we ought to change the way we vote.

People will only want to reform the system if they first understand the problem of elections under First Past the Post (FPTP).

Practical examples make good talking points:

- how big is the majority of the local MP? Is this "safe" or a "marginal"?
- which parties have a chance of winning in your area?
- What would you do between elections if you felt your MP wasn't responding or was unsympathetic on an issue that mattered to you?

### ***Junk the jargon - emphasise values***

It's generally best to talk about the benefits of reform, not the mechanics. Don't think that people will automatically know what is meant by terms like "proportionality", but point to what is unfair about the present system.

Concentrate on the main values that a different voting system should promote. Try to illustrate your arguments with reference to experiences rather than just statistics - how does it feel if your vote doesn't count?

### ***Let's work together***

Winner-takes-all systems like FPTP can produce a culture of confrontation, where parties concentrate on attacking each other rather than co-operating. Does the "Punch and Judy" element help government make the right decisions? Or would more teamwork help to get politicians to get things done?

### ***Empowering voters***

Electoral reform is about strengthening the power of voters to hold their MPs and local councillors responsible for the decisions they take. Don't make it seem like this is only something for the parties to agree amongst each other. How we elect our representatives is a decision for us all.