

# How to Get Active for Animals!

Animal Aid campaigns peacefully against all forms of animal abuse and promotes cruelty-free living. Our vision is a world in which animals are no longer harmed and exploited for human gain but allowed to live out their lives in peace, and we hope that this is a goal that you share. Changing your own personal behaviour is a great place to start, but taking this further and getting active for animals can be an extremely positive way to help end animal exploitation.

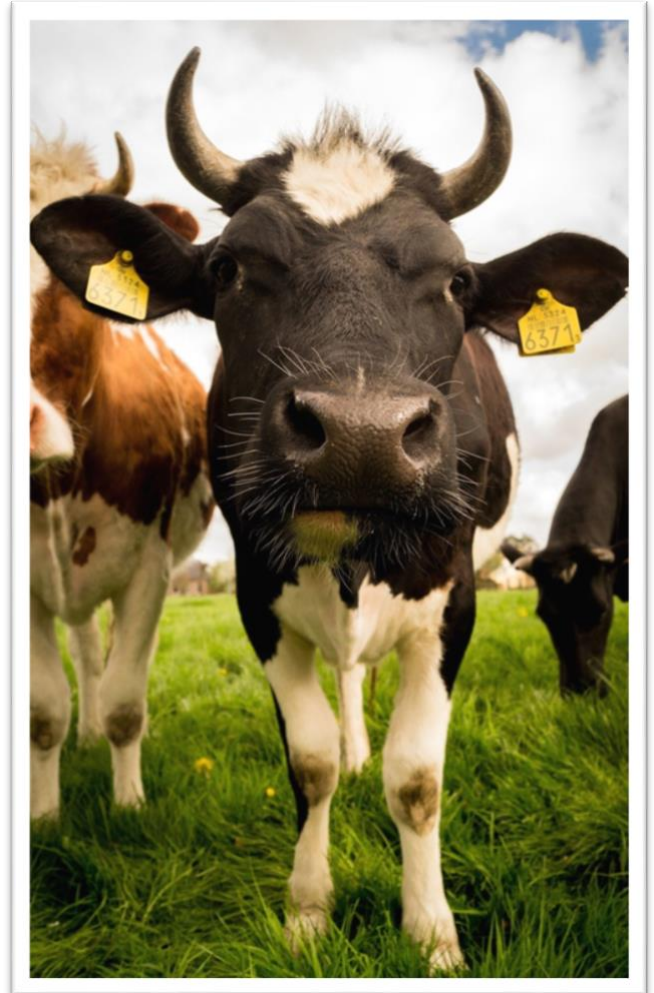
Campaigning is about lending your voice to the animals, who are unable to speak out for themselves. Most people are not inherently cruel or uncaring, and just don't realise what is going on, or they have been brought up to believe things are normal, acceptable and even necessary. Animal rights activism is a fantastic way to educate the public and spread the message of compassion for all living beings, and to influence businesses or people in power to stop cruel practices.



Our guide has lots of suggestions and tips to inspire you, whether you want to get together with like-minded people in your local area or prefer to campaign alone in the comfort of your own home. You may have lots of spare time to dedicate to the animals, but it's fine if you don't, as many of our suggestions can fit into your daily life quite easily. Whatever your circumstances, we're here to help you get active for animals!

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# 1. Individual Campaigning

## a. Internet activism

Activism using the internet can be as simple as sharing Animal Aid's posts on social media. It spreads our message and gains essential support for animals. You might want to set up a dedicated social media account for supporting animal issues, but this is not essential.



### *Tips*

- Remember, it's great to 'like' a post, but it helps Animal Aid to feature more highly on people's social media feeds if you comment and share our posts with friends and family.
- Please use non-judgemental and non-offensive language. Obviously, these issues may make you extremely angry, but you will engage more people if you aim for reasonable language.
- Avoid posting graphic images of animal

cruelty frequently on social media. Your friends and family may not want to see horrific pictures in their news feed on a regular basis and may decide to block you. Instead, share inspiring posts with positive steps that others can take to help.

## b. Letters to newspapers

Never underestimate the power of letter-writing! A letter to a local or even national newspaper can prove invaluable for getting the animal rights message across to a wide range of individuals.

### *Tips*

- You can increase your chances of getting a letter published, by writing a response to a recent article. For example, if the original article supports something cruel, your letter can speak up for the animals and "show the other side" of the argument. If the article supports cruelty-free living, you can express gratitude and encouragement. You could also write to publicise a specific event, such as our campaign against the Grand National, or findings from any new investigations that are published in our Outrage magazine or on our website.
- Start your letter with Dear Editor. Be rational, concise and polite. Ranting won't get you anywhere! You don't have to include lots of facts and figures and a simple argument is just as valid. It's more impactful to make one strong point rather than put in everything you know about an issue, try to keep your letter to under 200 words. A shorter letter has a greater chance of being printed, without first being edited by the publication. Please include the Animal Aid web address when appropriate, so that people can contact us for more information.
- You can usually submit your letter by email or post, and contact details will be available either in the paper or magazine itself or on the website. Address it to the Letters Editor, marked 'for



publication'. You usually need to supply your name and address but can ask for your details not to be published.

- Papers want to print responses to featured articles while the topic is still newsworthy. For daily papers, you usually need to email your letter before mid-day on the day the original article was printed. Newspapers receive lots of letters each day and can't print them all, so if yours isn't selected for publication, keep trying and experiment with different papers, too!

### c. Radio stations

Speaking on a national or local radio station can be a fantastic way to speak to a wide audience. The conversation may already be about an issue of animal cruelty, and you may want to give your views or sometimes you can call and ask to chat about a certain topic.

#### *Tips*

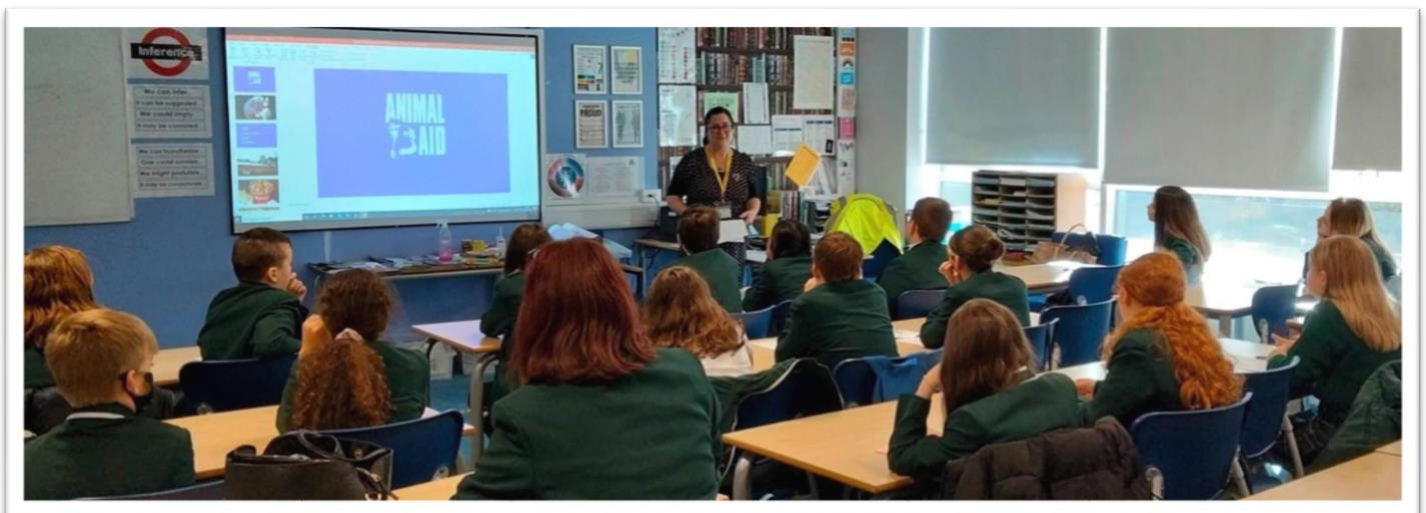
- Talk slowly and clearly and keep what you say brief and to the point. If you ramble, people often lose interest. Vary your tone and try to be yourself by imagining you are chatting to a friend.
- Prepare some bullet points of things you want to say so that you don't forget the important parts. It can be a good idea to write down a statistic or two to back up your argument.
- Don't worry if you hesitate or make little mistakes; people understand that you are not a professional radio host. Ask friends for honest feedback so that you can improve next time and remember the more you do it the better you will become!



## **2. Volunteer as an Animal Aid School Speaker**

Sharing information with young people can be a great way to inspire the next generation to be kind to animals! If you have excellent communication skills and relate well to young people, as well as having a good knowledge of animal rights and veganism, why not consider becoming a school speaker for Animal Aid?

Animal Aid runs workshops to train volunteers from all over the country to give age-related talks, involve children in activities and deliver vegan cookery demonstrations in both primary and secondary schools. Contact [karin@animalaid.org.uk](mailto:karin@animalaid.org.uk) for more information.



### 3. Out and About

Getting out into your community and talking to the public is a fantastic way to promote kindness to animals. Remember, most people do not want to inflict harm on animals but are just unaware of certain issues. You might be the very first person to present the other side of the argument. The key is to be passionate but polite and approachable rather than argumentative.

If you are asked a question and are not sure of the answer, say so! You are entitled to be opposed to the use and abuse of animals on entirely ethical grounds, without having detailed knowledge of every single area of animal harm and exploitation.

From time to time, you may come across individuals who are deliberately awkward or confrontational. Disengage from the conversation as quickly as you can, just say we will have to 'agree to disagree' and leave it at that. There's no point in arguing, as it will only take up time that you could dedicate to speaking to someone who is genuinely interested.

Some people prefer to go out alone; however, you may choose to campaign with others for mutual support. If you don't already know a group of animal campaigners, get in touch and we can provide you with a list of animal rights groups in your area or have a look at our suggestions below for forming your own group!



Photo by Wild Moors

#### a. Leaflets

Handing out leaflets, in your local town centre and other venues, can be simple but effective and can be a great conversation starter. Animal Aid has a list of the leaflets we produce on our website which you can order by emailing [info@animalaid.org.uk](mailto:info@animalaid.org.uk). Please allow plenty of time for your order to arrive.



#### Tips

- Always be polite and friendly. Even if you have different opinions, your conversation can still have a positive impact in the long run if you're able to listen, calmly explain your own views and stay polite.
- Local businesses, vet surgeries, libraries, vegan cafés and health food shops are often happy to have leaflets on display.
- Please note that you may need to apply for a permit to hand out leaflets in public places, so check first.

## b. Street Stalls

Holding a street stall is a good way to engage the public, share information, hand out leaflets and get people to sign petitions or learn about local actions. Stalls do not have to be confined to the streets, you just need to pick somewhere with a lot of passers-by and preferably, some shelter. Approach the organisers of local events to see if they will allow you to set up a stall.

Pedestrianised streets are a good location as you are less likely to cause an obstruction. Standing outside businesses that are closed, e.g. banks on a Saturday afternoon, is a good way of avoiding complaints.

If the stall is on private property, such as a shopping centre, you will need to contact the manager for permission. Permission is not usually needed to set up an information stall on a public highway if you do not obstruct the flow of people or collect money. However, to avoid being asked to pack up or move on, you should check with the Licensing or Environmental Health department at your local council.

### *What you'll need:*

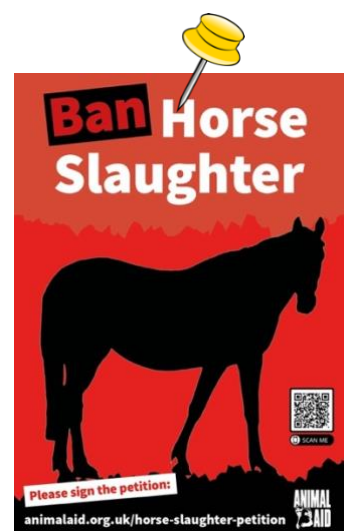
- A display table and tablecloth or banner to cover the table and hide boxes and bags underneath.
- Leaflets (secured by rubber bands so that they don't fly away) and posters. Animal Aid can supply free resources if we have enough notice.
- Friendly, confident and enthusiastic people to staff the stall (it's not easy, or particularly fun, doing a stall on your own: apart from being a bit lonely, it makes things tricky if you want to buy a drink, go to the toilet or get involved in a chat with one person when others want to talk to you).
- If your stall focuses on animal farming and slaughter and encouraging a vegan diet, you could display some empty vegan food and drink packets, or you could offer free samples of food. However, unless someone in your group is familiar with the necessary food hygiene and safety policies, we'd suggest limiting this to free chocolates or shop-bought cakes.

## c. Noticeboards

Pinning up leaflets or posters on communal noticeboards or booking a display board in a public venue is a great way to share information and get different people to pay attention to your campaign. All sorts of places have noticeboards for the exchange of information, including workplaces, schools, colleges, universities, the local community centre, church hall, youth club or supermarket. You'll often find display boards in your local library, hospital, civic building and other locations.

### *Tips*

- To have your own display, you'll probably need to book the board in advance. This is especially important if the display is for a specific period or event, e.g. the Grand National.
- Aim to grab attention with colourful graphics, large photos and easy-to-read information. If possible, leave some leaflets or other resources that people can take away to read.
- Be sensitive with the images you use; graphic photos of animal cruelty may not be permitted, so please check with the venue. Also, upsetting images can be off-putting and may prevent people from engaging with your display. If you're not sure, get in touch with Animal Aid for advice.

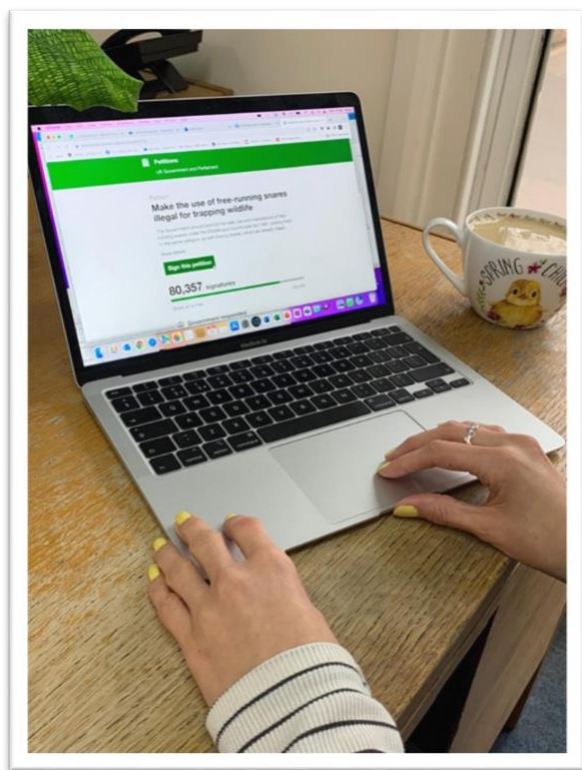


## 4. Petitions

Petitions are a simple and effective way to show the level of support on an issue of animal cruelty and have led to change for animals when used as part of a wider campaign. Why not help to get more names on an existing petition by sharing it as widely as possible? There are so many petitions online now, that sadly people do not read each one that comes into their inbox or that they see online. Therefore, if you can find a petition asking for an issue you feel strongly about, or for something very similar, it may be worth promoting this instead of creating another. You will get more signatures and are more likely to get change for the animals! Animal Aid frequently has petitions as part of our campaigns and would appreciate help gaining extra signatures.

If you decide to create a new petition, here are some tips on how to get started:

### *Tips*



- You can create a free petition online, for example at [ipetitions.com](https://www.ipetitions.com) or [change.org](https://www.change.org).
- Keep the description of the petition short, easy to understand and to the point, as people don't always have a lot of time.
- Be polite. People are often put off by rude or offensive petitions, even if they're sympathetic to the goals you're trying to achieve.
- Ask someone to spell check and proofread it.
- If you are calling for a change in UK law from the Government, you could create a parliamentary petition at <https://petition.parliament.uk/>. These elicit a response from government, when they reach 10,000 names and can lead to the matter being debated in the House of Commons if you get 100,000 signatures. However, they can only be signed online and have certain standards that must be met; for example, you cannot start a government petition if there is already one 'open' on a similar subject.
- If you want your local council to act, for example, to stop a pigeon cull that they have commissioned, then

contact your council office first or check their website for guidance on the criteria they have for accepting petitions.

- Share your petition as much as possible with friends and family and in as many online groups as you can. Ask others to share it, too.



## 5. Fundraising

Raising money can be a great way to support Animal Aid. You will also raise awareness of issues affecting animals by promoting your efforts!

### a. Sponsorship

Being sponsored for something that requires time, effort, bravery or 'sacrifice' is a popular and proven way of raising money for animals. There are the usual activities, such as an impressive walk, run, cycle ride, swim or dance-a-thon and more adventurous activities, such as climbing a mountain. There are countless ways, so get creative!



### b. Clear your clutter for animals!

You can get rid of unwanted belongings and raise some money by holding a car-boot, yard or garage sale. You only need a display table and items to sell, such as shoes, clothes, books, toys, furniture and even artwork! It helps if you promote your event online and with posters in the local area. Be sure to advertise which charity or animal sanctuary will benefit from the proceeds.

### c. Vegan benefit night



If there is a vegan café or restaurant in your local area, ask them if they would host a benefit night. They could provide a set menu and allow customers to purchase tickets in advance, with a donation being made for the animals. You can make extra money with a raffle, offering prizes such as gift tokens, dairy-free chocolates or vegan wine, etc\*. Work with the venue to publicise the event to existing customers and in the local media.

\*If the evening is benefitting Animal Aid, we may be able to provide a raffle prize and promote the event to our supporters.



## 6. Local Groups

There may already be an active, grassroots animal rights group close to you. If you are not aware of one, get in touch with us and we can provide you with a list of groups in your area. If there isn't one close by, you may want to start one yourself. It's a really great way to promote animal rights locally, as well as build friendships with like-minded people.

### a. Starting an animal rights group

Think about whether you want to start a general animal rights group or one which campaigns on a topic that is specific to your local area. For example, you might live somewhere where there is a zoo, a university that carries out animal experiments or a greyhound track. Focusing attention on a local establishment is a good way to get local media coverage for the issue concerned. Also, for businesses with paying customers, it gives local residents an opportunity to withdraw financial support from something cruel, which can sway businesses into changing their practices.



If you start a local group or campaign or a local issue, please keep us informed, so that we can tell other supporters looking to get active in your area.

#### *Finding like-minded people*

- Create a group online using networks such as Facebook, Next Door or Meet Up and people will find you!
- Put up posters in your local library, community centre, health food shop, vet's surgery or university letting people know that you are interested in setting up a local group.

#### *Organising your first meeting:*

- Depending on the needs of your group, you may decide to hold your meetings online, using an application such as Zoom or Teams. However, remember not everyone has access to the internet, so it may be worth meeting up in person from time to time.
- For in-person meetings, find a suitable venue, such as a local hall, community centre or pub.
- Contact us to order leaflets and booklets, to share with attendees.
- Limit your first meeting to one or two hours. Some people might want to talk for much longer, but if you want members to attend regular meetings, it's important to keep the time commitment manageable.
- If your group has a general animal rights focus, discuss what you want to campaign on first. This could be something local like objecting to plans for a local factory farm or a circus that

visits. Alternatively, you could campaign on wider issues, such as promoting veganism or lobbying the government to ban animal experiments.

- Use the first meeting to get to know each other. Find out what skills, resources and contacts your group has e.g. letter-writing abilities, time available to do stalls, transport, etc.
- Be inclusive; animals need as many humans as possible on their side and we all must start somewhere. Keep your group open to anyone interested in joining, regardless of their current diet or beliefs. Attending a meeting is a first step into the animal rights movement for most people so it is vital that they are made to feel welcome.

### *Moving ahead*

- Agree a regular date and time for subsequent meetings and decide how you will keep in touch.
- Delegate responsibilities such as updating social media.
- Set up a Facebook page, Twitter and Instagram accounts and, if someone in your group knows how, make a website. However, it is better to have just one or two up-to-date social media channels than a slow or outdated website. Keep your social media channels up to date as you don't want the group to look defunct or inactive when people find it online.
- It is helpful to set up a dedicated email address for your group to give out to new supporters or media contacts. Decide who will check and respond to emails.
- Ensure everyone in the group feels valued, no matter how little time they are able to contribute, and remember that a positive attitude goes a long way towards encouraging and inspiring others. Don't be afraid to ask for support from us, should you feel you need it. When it comes to challenging traditions, the establishment and what most people regard as 'normal', it can take time before you see any results. The important thing to remember is that every action, no matter how small, plays its part in reaching the ultimate goal of a cruelty-free future.



### **b. Starting a vegan meet-up**

Many people new to veganism or considering that change can feel like they're the odd one out amongst friends and family, so 'Meet-up' groups are an easy way to encourage others to go and stay vegan. Monthly get-togethers in a local pub, café or restaurant are a fun, laid-back way to welcome new vegans, and they provide a sense of community. They also encourage local businesses to cater for vegans.

*It's easy to start a group, all you need to do is;*

- Set up a Facebook page and/or a group on meetup.com

- Invite anyone interested in veganism, not just vegans, as this allows others to find out more about cruelty-free living and animal rights issues. Remember to specify that while you welcome everyone, people should not consume animal products while at a meet-up.

## 7. Group Events

### a. Demonstrations, protests and marches

Demonstrations and protests involve a group gathering to show their disagreement with or support of something and are a fantastic way for a group to raise awareness of issues, gain support and hopefully get change for the animals. You could meet outside an establishment where animal cruelty is happening, such as a slaughterhouse, or outside a government building. For example, you may want to organise a demonstration outside your local council offices to protest against a pigeon cull. You could also gather somewhere where there are lots of people, like a local high street, to raise awareness and get the public to act. A march, from one area to another, can be very effective if there are many people attending.

Peaceful protest does not involve inflicting violence or causing criminal damage. Sometimes protesting can be limited, for example when a protest or assembly would result in a threat to public health. If you would like further advice on this, please get in touch. Please note Animal Aid does not support illegal activity.



### Tips

- Promote your action on social media and by handing out flyers.
- Invite other groups and organisations.
- Create eye-catching, big, bright and colourful banners and posters with images and simple, easy-to-read slogans. Signs with lots of words are harder to read, so passers-by might not understand what you are campaigning for. Animal Aid has posters which you can order free of charge.
- Try to stand out by wearing a particular colour, dressing as animals or using face paint.



- Imaginative stunts or performances involving actors, dancers or musicians can help grab attention and make great pictures for the media!
- Take a megaphone, and chant simple phrases that people can join in with.
- Moving speeches can help educate the attendees and the public and inspire them to act.
- If you are standing in a public place, have actions people can take, such as signing a petition or boycotting a business.
- Invite the local press or write a press release and send pictures to the editor after the event.
- By law you must tell the police in writing six days before a public march if you're the organiser. If there's no march organised as part of your protest, you do not have to tell the police.
- Take plenty of supplies, such as snacks to share and plenty of water. Think about the weather and take hats and sunscreen or extra layers, waterproofs and an umbrella if necessary!

## **b. Screenings and speakers**

Organising a film screening or booking a speaker from a national animal campaigns organisation, local animal-friendly business or sanctuary to come and talk about their work, can be a fantastic way to educate your local community about animal rights issues. It can also keep people motivated and interested in your group and may attract new members.



Ask in advance if your speaker requires a projector to show any presentations or films. Make sure your chosen venue has this capability or arrange to borrow equipment and have someone on the day who is comfortable setting it up and sorting out any issues that arise.

There are lots of great animal rights/pro-vegan documentaries that you can show, including: Blackfish, Forks Over Knives, Vegucated, Cowspiracy, The Ghosts in Our Machine, Maximum Tolerated Dose and Seaspiracy. Peaceable Kingdom, although a little older, is a lovely film and of course there is Earthlings, although this is very difficult for many people to watch due to the harrowing footage it contains. Animal Aid also has short films on animal experimentation and other topics.

You should promote your event as widely as possible on social media and by putting up posters in your local area.

### c. Media

Local newspaper and radio coverage of an event or demonstration can prove invaluable for getting the animal rights message across to your community. The aim is to develop a two-way relationship, whereby you get publicity, and they get interesting articles, photographs and interviews. Often, you will find journalists who are sympathetic to the cause, so develop a working relationship by giving them ideas for stories and notifying them of upcoming events and photo opportunities. Try to avoid getting on the wrong side of the media, even though some of what they print and broadcast might disappoint you. Falling out with journalists will do nothing to help animals.

#### *Tips*

- Do something original and interesting that will grab the attention of the public!
- Bold and bright colours often attract more attention, as do creative costumes and props.
- Write a press release before your event.
- Animal Aid can provide you with a comprehensive list of your local media contacts.



## 8. Other Suggestions



### a. Use your talents!

Have you ever heard the saying "A picture paints a thousand words" or "Where words fail, music speaks"?

Whether you paint, draw, crochet, write poetry or music, play an instrument or take photographs, think about lending your skills and talents to animals!

The Arts can be a powerful medium to spread the animal rights message, so share your talent with as many people as possible. For example, you can post poems on Facebook or offer to sing at a concert or in an open mic session at your local pub.

### b. Spread the message

Spread words of kindness everywhere you go using thought-provoking logos! By using T-shirts, badges, bags, mugs and car stickers with inspiring messages on, you can promote kindness while travelling, socialising or at work, when you may not have much time. It's a fantastic way to encourage others to consider animal issues and sometimes even start a conversation!

Animal Aid's online shop has a selection of merchandise which is perfect for getting the animal rights message out there and don't forget members get a 10% discount! We also have a range of posters which are free of charge.

Alternatively, you can write your own message on plain T-shirts, diaries, notebooks and other goods using pens, fabric paints or other craft materials. Just remember to check they are cruelty-free first!





## 9. Taking Care of Yourself and Others

Unfortunately change for animals rarely happens overnight and often takes many years of hard work and dedication. Many people have been campaigning for years for animal liberation and it can be easy to get demotivated and experience burn out, if you feel nothing is happening. This can lead to depression and cause activists to give up, which is why it is essential to take time to care for your own wellbeing and mental health.

### *Tips*

- Think of any physical needs of you and your group when campaigning, for example, take plenty of water, snacks, sun cream and a hat or warm, waterproof layers.
- Get support from other animal activists, friends and family or even a professional. Often just sharing how you feel can improve your mood and allow you to keep going or even help you decide you need to take a break for a while.
- Try to debrief as a group at the end of any event or, if you are campaigning on your own, speak to a friend. Discuss how you felt it went and what you would improve next time. Talk about any difficulties you came across and how they made you feel.
- Think of all the positives that you have achieved, no matter how small. For example, you may feel disheartened after spending a whole morning talking to the public about the meat and dairy industry, because no one agreed to change their diet. However, people rarely change their behaviour of a lifetime after one conversation. Often, they may need to hear the message a few more times. Instead, think of all the seeds of change you sowed and the potential for them to lead to positive outcomes.
- Say no! It can be tempting to give all your free time to the animals, and many activists often feel guilty about taking time off to have fun. However, burnt out, tired activists are rarely as effective, so take time out for rest and relaxation whenever you need to. In the long run your activism will

improve by doing so.

- Organise some non-campaigning activities as a group, such as yoga, meditation, walking or going for a meal to help you all relax and have fun!
- Visit or help out at an animal sanctuary or rescue centre. Spending time with animals can be a great reminder of why you are campaigning and give you the motivation to continue.



We hope this guide has inspired you to get active for animals! Please get in touch for further advice or support.

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