

## TASK 1: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

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### 1 Hello and welcome. We've now got an interview looking at what pressure groups are and what they do.

#### To start with, what is a pressure group?

Well there are various types of pressure group but the broadest definition is of a group of people who share a common interest or belief and who try to influence government policy at local, national or international levels. Sometimes, they're known as policy groups, sometimes lobby groups or even interest groups.

So a wide range of names then.

### 2 You say there are different types of pressure group; can you explain what these types are?

Pressure groups mainly fall into two areas: cause groups and promotional groups. Cause groups may campaign for a single cause such as animal rights or the environment, or even multiple causes as in the example of Oxfam who work on poverty, development and health.

Promotional groups on the other hand focus on the interests of a group of people rather than a specific cause. This could include campaigning on a whole range of causes but the focus would always be on the group of people within a particular area. Examples are the Confederation of British Industry and the National Farmers' Union. I see.

### 3 So how do pressure groups actually go about achieving their aims?

Well there's a whole range of methods. Promotional groups are especially good at lobbying, which involves trying to persuade politicians and businesses to follow particular policies or strategies.

Cause groups often arrange street protests or demonstrations and may try to organise boycotts of particular products or companies. Other methods used by both cause and promotional groups include handing out leaflets or organising petitions.

### 4 Do they always use legal methods?

Actually, not always. Some groups may propose legal civil disobedience. A famous example of this took place in Alabama, USA in 1955 when Rosa Parks refused to obey racist regulations and wouldn't give up her bus seat to a white passenger. This triggered the Montgomery Bus Boycott which was one of the most successful movements against racial segregation. **But still legal.** Absolutely. But other groups may decide to take illegal action. This could involve criminal damage, occupation of public buildings or other more violent actions. Some examples of this are Fathers 4 Justice climbing up Big Ben to display a banner or the Animal Liberation Front who have been accused of arson and car bombing.

### 5 Are pressure groups always effective?

The influence a pressure group can have depends a lot on its resources, the number of members, and how influential the members are. Some of the outcomes could be new or adapted legislation, changed public perception and altered consumer behaviour. In some cases, groups have managed to get new projects started. For example the Make Poverty History campaign.

### 6 In general would you say that pressure groups are a force for good?

Well, their influence is not always positive. Groups have been accused of a selfish focus on their own interests and distorting government policy. A particular worry is that groups with a lot of money can achieve what they want which is essentially undemocratic. But, whether they're democratic or not, they're an important part of modern society.

Thank you.