

Functions of pressure groups

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



functions of pressure groups Pressure groups are a vital part of a healthy democracy. Indeed the sustained and rapid expansion of pressure group activity and involvement in the political process is often heralded as a sign of growing political involvement among many thousands of people. Among the role played by pressure groups, large and small, we can identify the following:

- Pressure groups Promote discussion and debate and mobilise public opinion on key issues
- Perform a role in educating citizens about specific issues
- Groups can enhance democratic participation, pluralism and diversity
- Groups raise and articulate issues that political parties perhaps won't touch because of their sensitivity
- They provide an important access point for those seeking redress of grievance
- They represent minorities who cannot represent themselves
- Groups can be an important and valuable source of specialist information / expertise for an overloaded legislature and civil service
- Many groups play an important role in implementing changes to public policy
- Pressure groups encourage a decentralisation of power within the political system. They act as a check and balance to the power of executive government [pic]

An illustration of the policy-making process is shown in the chart above. Groups can become involved in influencing and shaping public policy at many different points. For example, groups can seek to raise issues up the political agenda. This might speed up a process of political reform that might already be in the minds of the government or the opposition. Groups can be brought into the consultative process (see the distinction between insider and outside pressure groups) and may try to have an impact when a bill reaches the stage of Parliamentary drafting, debate and amendment. Finally as mentioned above, many groups are

actively involved in implementing political decisions and evaluating their relative success or failure.