

Mencap 75th



Mencap craftivism

A guide for people to organise a 75th craftivism event



What is Mencap 75th craftivism all about?

Mencap began with the love and determination of one mother, Judy Fryd. Judy's daughter, Felicity, had a learning disability.

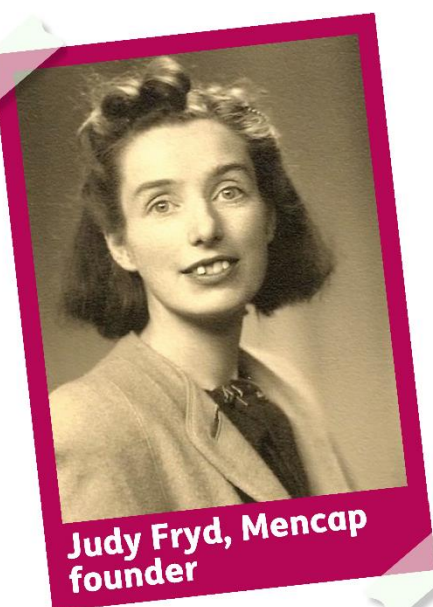
In 1946, Judy wrote a letter to Nursery World magazine. This was at a time when people thought children with a learning disability could not be taught in schools and were discriminated against under the law (1944 Education Act). Families like Judy's were left with little support.

Determined to make a difference, Judy used her letter to reach out to other struggling parents. Over 1000 parents responded with issues about lack of support, education and stigma for their children who had learning disabilities.

Together they created Mencap, which continues its mission to make the UK the best place in the world for people with a learning disability to live happy and healthy lives.

We want people to know Mencap's rich history in campaigning. We want to celebrate how far we've come since Judy Fryd wrote her letter, 75 years ago!

This is a guide for people to organise a local event using craftivism, which sends a message to decision makers: people with a learning disability deserve to be understood, to be seen and heard.



Judy Fryd, Mencap founder



Drawing of Judy Fryd by Caroline, who is supported by Mencap

Why we are getting people together

There are 1.5 million people in the UK with a learning disability, but are their voices heard?

We want to make learning disability visible. We want people talking about learning disability.

A fun way to do that is through craftivism. This guide tells you how to celebrate 75 years of Mencap with a craftivism event.

We also want the voice of people with a learning disability to be heard by decision makers, including our MPs. Members of Parliament are there to represent us and the things we care about. It's part of their job! So, we need to make sure they know what issues matter to us.

If you're hosting a craftivism event, invite your MP along so they can hear what issues matter to you!

If you don't know who your MP is you can look them up with your postcode here:

<https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>

An introduction to craftivism

Craftivism = activism + craft.

Craftivism is a form of gentle, thoughtful activism where campaigners use craft (anything from sewing, knitting, to drawing and gluing) to campaign on social justice issues.

It is a different way to build a movement, which can be more inclusive than traditional forms of protesting.

You can use craftivism for a specific call to action, or a way to raise awareness about the issues you care about.

Here is an article for more information if you want to find out more:

[Craftivism Explained: Protest you can do at home, by Ethical Unicorn](#)

What will we be making and why?

Your event can be as long as you need, but to fit with the theme of '75,' we are encouraging it to be at least 75 minutes long.

We're asking campaigners to all join in to create a long and impressive string of bunting – to celebrate 75 years, but also to show how big things can happen when individuals come together.

We want decision makers to be in on the conversation, too. We will collect all the bunting flags and string them together to display in Parliament in 2022. That way, MPs will see how many campaigners care about the rights of people with a learning disability and we can make a public celebration of Mencap's 75 years. Think of it like a physical petition!

Each person attending your event will make a bunting flag – a triangle flag that will be tied together with other flags on a string. Decorate your flags with a message you want to say to your MP. For example:

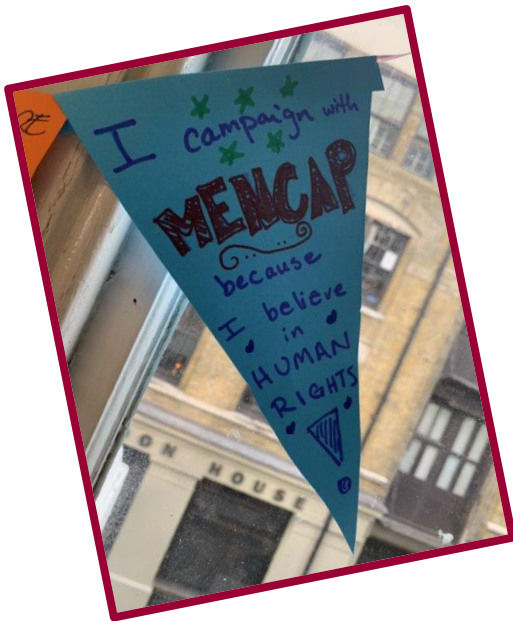
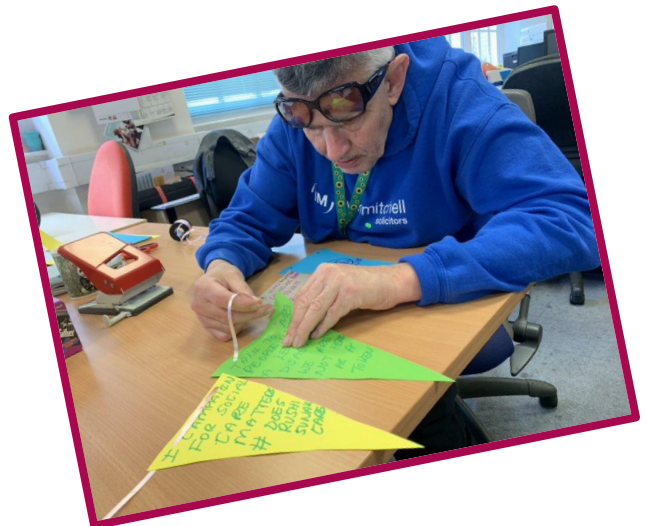
- Treat Me Well!
- I campaign because... (finish the sentence with your own reason. For instance, "I campaign because I care about human rights!")
- Say something about issues people with a learning disability face, for example: reasonable adjustments, health, social care, homes not hospitals, bullying, education and employment.

Decorate the bunting flag to represent you. You don't have to be too crafty – you can just use paper, pens, crayons and markers. Get creative!

When you are done creating your bunting, send it to Mencap's Centre of Engagement:

Mencap Campaigns & Activism Team
Centre of Engagement
123 Golden Lane
London
EC1Y 0RT

Please send it to us by 30th June 2022.



Supplies you will need

This is just an example of the kind of materials you can have for your session. Feel free to bring other craft materials not listed here! And if you're not sure you can provide enough materials yourself, do invite others to bring their own.

- Pieces of card or paper (bring a variety of colours); or if you sew, you can use fabrics and thread
- Scissors
- A hole punch if you're using paper - this is an easy way to thread the string through your flag
- Glue or sellotape to fix the flag to the string, if a hole punch isn't accessible
- Rulers
- Ribbons, string or yarn to put the bunting together
- Buttons, Glitter or sequins to help decorate
- Coloured pencils, markers, paints and crayons
- An envelope to send all the bunting to Mencap's Centre of Engagement

Accessibility

Think about anything that people in your group might find difficult before you start. For example, if someone might find it hard to use scissors, you could have some triangles cut out already on card or paper.

We have suggested using colourful paper, but if you are craftier and sew or knit, that's great! Please bear in mind that others might find sewing hard, so make sure there is glue for them to use or other materials to work with, like paper, markers and stickers.

Tips to help you plan

You will need to make sure you have a date in the diary and a space to host your event. The space should be accessible for everyone that gives everyone a place to sit and craft. Maybe there is a local café you can book a table? Or a community centre?

Invite friends and family and give plenty of time for them to put it in their diaries. If it's in a public space, like a café or a Mencap retail shop, why not bring extra supplies in case people passing through can join in?

On the day

You'll need to have a flexible plan for how the event will go. Be sure you have included time to introduce why you are gathered, what craftivism is, what you plan to make and why.

If your MP is attending, be sure you introduce them and encourage others to talk to the MP about learning disability.

Here are some points you and the group can discuss as you craft, or invite feedback from your MP:

- How have things changed since Judy Fryd first wrote her letter?
- What are some of the local issues that people with a learning disability face?
- Why is campaigning for the rights of people with a learning disability so important to you?
- What can MPs and decision makers do to make the UK the best place in the world for people with a learning disability?
- What can I do to make a difference for people with a learning disability?

Information on learning disability and how to have conversations about it is [here](#).

Inviting your MP

Remember, this is a great opportunity to invite your local MP, so they can also learn about learning disability and what issues face local people with lived experience. We have included tips on how to invite your MP but do be sure you invite them with plenty of time to attend.

Most people never contact their MP. When you write a letter to an MP, you can make a difference, so imagine what meeting your MP in person can do!

Spreading the word

Be sure you let people know about your event on the day! You can share photos from the event on social media ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)) - be sure to tag Mencap and use the hashtags **#EverydayActivism** and **#Mencap75th**!

If your MP attends and you have some great photos to share, why not write to your local paper and see if they'd like to use them as a news story?

Need any help?

You can contact us at campaigns@mencap.org.uk if you need help or if you have any other questions.

We will be able to provide you with resources on how to plan your event, how to invite others in your community as well as your MP.