

Lobbying your MP



An important aspect of this campaign is gaining the support of MPs. They will be able to communicate your objection to government policy and push for a change.

You can lobby your MP in the following ways:

- **Write to them** – the more letters an MP receives from constituents on a certain issue, the more likely they are to take notice and do something about it.
- **Arrange a meeting** – you can meet your MP at their constituency office during their ‘surgery’ time or at the Houses of Parliament.

What you can aim for your MP to do

You can request that your MP act on your behalf in one of the following ways:

- Raise your concerns with the relevant Government minister
- Raise your concerns with a Parliamentary question
- Sign an Early Day Motion in Parliament supporting the issue
- Make commitments addressing the issue within your community

Ways of contacting your MP

Finding out who your MP is

- Go to www.theyworkforyou.com and type in your postcode.
- Or call the House of Commons Information Office on 020 7219 4272.
- Or search by name, constituency or postcode at <http://www.locata.co.uk/commons/>

Write to them

- All MPs have Westminster offices and will make arrangements for their mail to be dealt with or redirected when they are away from London:
Name Surname MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Email them

- Find out MP e-mail addresses at www.parliament.uk/directories/hciolists/alms.cfm
- Contact them via the www.writetothem.com website

Phone them

- You can contact your MP’s office at the House of Commons by asking the switchboard to put you through: 020 7219 3000
- You should be able to find out the phone number via your MP’s website or at your local library.

Writing to your MP

- **Introduce STAR** – this will mean subsequent correspondence has more impact, and your MP will be more likely to accept future invitations

- **Be concise and precise** – inform them about the issue, your views and suggested solutions, but remember that they receive a huge amount of correspondence.
- **Be clear what you are asking** - let them know what you would like them to do (e.g. that you would like to meet them, or you would like them to sign an EDM in support of the campaign, etc)
- **Request a reply** - Ask for a specific response.

Meeting your MP

At Westminster - You can arrange to visit your MP when the House of Commons is sitting. You will need to make an appointment to see them in the Central Lobby in Parliament.

In their constituency - MPs also hold regular 'surgeries' in their constituencies. You can find out details from their office. Groups such as STAR often visit their local MPs.

- **Introduce STAR** – explain who you are and why you want to meet them
- **Be realistic** – make sensible aims about what you can cover in one meeting. List the most important things you want to cover.
- **Go as a group** - attend the meeting as a (small) group and decide who will speak on the issue
- **Have a clear aim** - be clear about what you want your MP to do as a result of the meeting, such as writing to a minister or asking a parliamentary question
- **Predict their responses** – research your MP and their party and use this to predict their responses. Prepare yourself to respond effectively if they disagree.

Follow Up

- Always write and thank your MP, include the main points agreed and any action that has been promised on either side.
- Record any additional information you found out about your MP
- Consider inviting your MP to a follow up event at your union. If you can make the event a photo opportunity, so much the better. You can speak to your MP's secretary to help with getting some media coverage.