



Planninghelp

Lobbying your MP

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>MPs retain a strong link with their constituencies and are judged in part by their ability to defend and promote local interests.

Beyond their duties at Westminster, MPs act as high-profile community leaders, a link to and influence on local authorities and the local media and a channel to Government departments and ministers.

>MPs have a duty to represent the views of all their constituents, not just those who voted for them.

This means that making them aware of the strength of feeling on an issue is important, even if they do not share your views.

Remember

MPs pay a great deal of attention to an issue if they receive a lot of letters about it.

>If an MP is supportive of your concerns, you can ask him or her to help by

- Co-operating with your media work and photo opportunities
- Making supportive statements in Parliament, the press or at public meetings
- Applying pressure to your local authority to act
- Writing to the relevant Government department

Working with your MP

How to contact them

MPs are usually at Westminster from about **midday Monday to Thursday evening**.

Parliament goes into recess from **July to mid-October, with breaks for Christmas, Easter and Whitsun**

>If you do not know who your local MPs are, you can find out from your local library or council offices, phone the House of Commons information line (**020 7219 4272**) or visit the website www.parliament.uk/

To contact individual MPs:

- Write to your MP: House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA

- Telephone the House of Commons on 020 7219 3000
- Make an appointment to meet them in person via your MP's office
- Telephone your MP's office to see if you can send faxes
- Email them ([using address from the UK Parliament site](#))

Before contacting your MP

It is worth finding out more about them, including :

- Their party,
- Constituency boundaries
- Correct title (Rt Hon, Sir),
- Policy interests, background, registered interests
- The dates, times and venues of their surgeries

Approach them in the right way

>First contact with your MP will usually be best made by writing - either to register a concern or seek a meeting.

Short, polite letters are most likely to receive a response and briefings should be kept to two sides of A4 at most.

Make connections between your objectives and the known interests of your MP or any recent comments they have made.

Have a clear plan

>If meeting an MP in person, decide beforehand what you are going to say and what you want out of the meeting.

- Think carefully about who should go. You'll want to avoid large delegations and be sure a good presenter is at the meeting
- Think about what you want them to do as a result of the contact with you - sign an Early Day Motion, speak at a meeting, accept a delegation, etc
- Don't make it easy for them to fob you off with vaguely supportive comments alone
- Be clear, brief and firm. Secure a commitment to some kind of action after the meeting and leave some kind of briefing behind as a reminder of your views

Dont forget about their researchers

>Relationships with your MP's researchers and secretaries should be cultivated as much as with the MP because they can be good allies and help you make your case to your MP.

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Planning Help is a project of the Campaign to Protect Rural England

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