

Arranging a meeting with your MP – a guide for town and parish councils

Splitting their time between constituencies and Westminster, MPs generally have tightly-packed, busy schedules making securing a face-to-face meeting slightly more difficult than other forms of lobbying. However, once secured, a meeting can serve as a good opportunity to discuss what actions can be taken on your issue. Below are some tips to keep in mind when arranging your meeting.

1. Work around your MP's schedule

MPs normally allow Monday mornings and Fridays to be dedicated to constituency work. To meet with your MP in your constituency, it is recommended scheduling a meeting for a Friday. You might also ask the MP's office which days tend to suit them best, as each MP will have their own preferences and schedules.

2. Ask for realistic time frames

Given an MP is only in their constituency for part of the week, their schedules on Fridays are busy so asking for a 15 or 30 minute meeting instead of an hour or over is more likely to take place. This is more than enough time to discuss one issue; it is recommended you discuss one issue per meeting to keep to time. If the MP feels they need more information or you feel you'd like to discuss the issue in more depth, follow-up phone calls and meetings can be arranged.

3. Let them know who you are

Mention that you are writing on behalf of your council and/or that you are a local councillor (whichever is relevant). MPs are more likely to answer a letter from a local council or local councillor as a democratic representative of local constituents.

4. Get to know your MP's staff

Meetings are arranged by the staff in an MP's office and getting to know them can be helpful in scheduling follow-ups and future meetings. It is important to remain patient and polite as an MP's office deals with a high volume of requests on a daily basis, making diary management a difficult process.

Many MPs will have a member of staff who they might ask to represent them at meetings – often this will be their researcher but they may have other job titles. If offered a meeting with their researcher this can still be a useful way to get your issue on the MP's radar

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Telephone Script:

- Mention that your council is in their constituency and that you would like to arrange a meeting
 - At this point, you may be prompted to request in writing via email though you may be able to progress on the phone
- You'd like a meeting on [suggested date] for [no more than 30 minutes] to discuss [one issue]
- Be sure to ask who you are speaking with [in case there is a need to follow up] and thank them for their time

E-mail template:

Dear [MP],

I am writing from [name] Council and I would like to meet with you on [suggested date;] for [no more than 30 minutes] to discuss [one issue;]. If you are unable to meet on [date] please suggest an alternative which best suits you and I'd be happy to rearrange.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[Councillor – if relevant] [Your name]

[Clerk – or job title]

[Council name]

[Address]

[Contact phone number]