

How to lobby MPs

The purpose of lobbying is to make sure MPs and Government are aware of the expertise and experiences of Amicus members when they make decisions that affect our lives.

Write to your MP

You should e-mail or write to your MP informing them you are a constituent of theirs (include your address so they know you live in their constituency) and that you want to meet him/her in Parliament to lobby them on this issue. To find the name and address of your MP call the House of Commons information line on 020 7219 4272 or look at www.locata.co.uk you can also email your MP through this website.

Appointment

Ask for an appointment on the 10 January. If they are available they should respond with a time. If they are not available you should receive a response informing you of this. It would be helpful if you could make an arrangement to see your MP locally or at one of their surgeries if they are not available on the 10th.

Issue

You should also use your letter/email to set out what you wish to lobby them about. A model letter is enclosed in the campaign pack for you to use. This should ensure that any reply offers an opinion on the issue from the MP, thereby allowing us to build up a database of support. You should remember that MPs are very busy and often have commitments booked several months in advance.

The Green Card

If you do not receive a reply from your MP or do not get a chance to write to them then you can use the Green Card system. This allows you to fill in an appointment card in Central Lobby (the main central area of Parliament where the public can meet MPs) and the staff in the House will attempt to find your MP to see if they are available to meet you. You should wait in Central Lobby while your MP is found. This may take some time so please be patient. Sometimes your MP will be available and will come to Central Lobby to meet you, but sometimes they will not and will send back a message saying they cannot meet you.

Other ways to contact your MP

If your MP is not available then you should continue the campaign by trying to attend one of their constituency surgeries where they meet members of the public about any issue you wish to talk about. These surgeries happen regularly and are normally advertised in your local paper or town hall. Some MPs operate an appointment system for these surgeries; others just operate a turn-up and queue system.

Continued on reverse

When you meet your MP

Amicus already lobbies Government at a national level. However the lobbying done by individual members is crucial as it provides MPs with a personal dimension. You should always emphasise how the Governments proposals could affect you, your family and friends (especially if they have a vote in the MPs constituency).

The use of personal experience will make the MP aware of the issue on a more human level rather than just the figures and the policy. If the MP supports our case then you are giving them ammunition for the case, if they do not support you then you are making them respond on an individual level rather than the abstract political level. Remember our case is fair and we already have huge support in the House therefore anything you can do to help one MP be supportive or to change support into activity is a bonus for our campaign.

Why don't you ask your MP to come and visit you?

Many MPs won't know much about the work you do. Like the wider public they may have the false perception that the NHS is just 'Doctors and Nurses'. By arranging for your MP to visit your place of work you can highlight the contribution of your work to the NHS. This can also provide a useful story on which to attract the interest of the local press and media. Caution, be certain to clear all arrangements with your local management.

Have fun lobbying.