

# 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.

Amicus organises lobbies locally and nationally. Local campaigns involve individual Amicus MPs, national lobbies often involve a large demonstration of Amicus members and meetings in the House of Commons.

## Writing 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. Try not to send a standardised letter (some campaigns use standardised letters as a campaigning tool), instead use the format but make sure your letter is individualised. 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](http://www.locata.co.uk), you can also email your MP through this website.

## Appointment

If there is going to be a lobby at Westminster arrange to speak to your MP before that date by requesting an appointment. 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's a good idea to arrange to see your MP locally or go to one of their surgeries if they're not available in Westminster on the date of the lobby.

## Issue

You should also use your letter/email to set out what you wish to lobby them about. This should ensure that any reply offers an opinion on the issue from the MP. Try and give examples and facts in your letter. Try to connect your letter with something the MP has said recently, or make a specific reference to the impact in the MP's constituency. Keep the letter as short as possible and only tackle one subject per letter. If you can, send your letter with supporting information and evidence such as photos or videos, ensure these are clearly labelled. Always ask for a response. 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 can attend one of their constituency surgeries where they meet members of the public to talk about issues on a one to one basis. These surgeries happen regularly and are normally advertised in your local paper or town hall and on the MPs website. Some MPs operate an appointment system for these surgeries; others just operate a turn-up and queue system.

## 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 Government's proposals could affect you, your family and friends (especially if they have a vote in the MP's 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.

## After the meeting

Write and thank the MP for his or her time (even if he/she hasn't been as helpful as you had wished!) Repeat a summary of your case and confirm what action, if any, you agreed.

Make sure you let Amicus Political department know if the MP seemed supportive and what they said so that we know to target them for our campaign.

