



November 27 2020

Dear Member,

As you know, the Equity Release Council, as part of its Public Affairs function, works closely with Ministers, Shadow Ministers, Members of Parliament, Whitehall Officials, Special Advisers and a wide range of regulatory and stakeholder bodies with the aim of creating the optimum operating environment for all of our members. I am pleased to say that we have built up solid working relationships across all these fields although more could always be done. With this in mind, I believe that it would bring further benefit to both the work of the Council and to individual member companies if they were to develop a close working relationship with their local MP. There is no doubt that MPs are showing increased interest in our sector. This is especially true following the recent research report into the pensions savings gap which, as you know had a large emphasis on women's pensions.

Constituency MPs have a key part to play in the policy process at all stages from policy development right through to legislative scrutiny in the House and their ability to lobby Government on behalf of their constituents. It is vital therefore that constituency MPs have a close understanding of the issues that directly affect your business. Ideally, this knowledge should be built up as part of an ongoing relationship rather than only being brought to an MP's attention once a problem has arisen.

It must be remembered that MPs need to hear from their constituents. They depend on their constituents to educate them about what issues are most important to them. In the case of larger companies, they will very often employ a large number of the MP's constituents and play a key role in the local economy. It might be that your MP has a particular interest or concern surrounding debt, pensions, or care funding. If this is the case, it would be a useful hook to discuss the role of equity release and its advantages.

MPs will always respond to letters from constituents but, in the case of businesses, they are always to visit premises to meet management and staff. This could either be a private visit or, more likely, one that the MP would wish to publicise to gain maximum local coverage.

In the current climate, MPs are even more keen to show that they are supporting their constituents through lockdown so an invitation to meet management and key staff members via Zoom is likely to receive a positive response and could generate positive publicity all round.

I know that many members already have strong local political relations, and I am sure that you are keen to develop even further going forward. I hope that member with slightly weaker political ties will see the benefit of developing them and I am happy to offer the Council's help and support as and when it is required.

The Equity Release Council has a wealth of in house Public Affairs experience built up from my personal experience as an MP and my teams wide-ranging experience of working in both Whitehall the lobbying industries and we are here to help at all times should you require any support in your own lobbying activities. We would also be happy to help by attending MP meetings (either virtually or in person when restrictions allow); drawing up briefing material; providing MP profiles; drafting letters; contacting media etc.

In the meantime, we have produced material which I hope you find useful. If you do wish any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact Simon Posner, our recently appointed Public Affairs Manager. He can be reached at simon.posner@equityreleasecouncil.com. Simon would also be interested to see any response that you get.

Thank you as ever for your assistance and support.

David Burrowes,



Chairman,

Equity Release Council.

Head Office: 35-41 Folgate Street, London E1 6BX

Registered Address: Equity Release Council, The Old Rectory, Church Lane, Thornby, Northants NN6 8SN

Tel: 0300 012 0239 **Email:** info@equityreleasecouncil.com **Web:** www.equityreleasecouncil.com