

LIAISING WITH LOCAL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

KEY POINTS

- MPs need to hear from their constituents. They depend on their constituents to educate them about what issues are most important to them. Writing a letter only takes a short amount of your time but it ensures that the people who make decisions on your behalf, every day, know how you want to be represented.
- If an MP understands your business, they will be able to speak knowledgeably about it and in some cases defend it when speaking with Ministers, contributing to debates, developing policy and responding to constituents or the local Press.
- Getting an MP to visit your premises and to meet some members of staff is a great way to build up a relationship. Very often they will also be constituents.
- MPs very often use business visits to gain positive publicity. Sometimes however they prefer a private visit so always check on what basis you are meeting your MP before the meeting takes place.
- If the visit is to be publicised, work closely with your MP's office (and the ERC if required) to ensure that maximum positive coverage is achieved. Do not forget the photographer!
- Find a constituency angle if possible. MPs are elected to serve their constituents. Try to outline why this will matter to the people that elect them both in the service you provide and a local employer.
- If an MP has raised concerns about debt in old age, inadequate pension savings or ways to fund care – in their constituency this is a useful angle to write to them about a real solution which can help people locally
- Know what you want. MPs are very busy. Know what you are asking them to do at the start. Do not wait until the final paragraph of your letter or the dying minutes of a meeting to blurt out your request. You may just wish to ensure that your MP has a better understanding of your business, what it provides and its importance to UK plc. Try however to think of something concrete that you would like either the MP or the Government to do which would help you provide an even better service and be careful to avoid providing a long list of things you *don't* want them to do.

- Always leave them with a positive message and any call for action at the end of the meeting.
- Always provide a good brief in advance. It is impossible for an MP to be up to speed every single issue, campaign, and piece of government legislation, so provide them with accurate, concise background material. It is important to find out what they may have already said on the issue. Check their website and Hansard for information (<https://hansard.parliament.uk>) . Also, try to find out which issues are of particular concern to the MP as this might help you develop an angle. ***The Equity Release Council can help you with this.***