

How to meet with your MP

By *Maria van Geest*, Created 08/14/2008 –

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Your Member of Parliament is more accessible than you think. If you are passionate about an issue, respectful of the MP's time, and willing to take the time for a meeting, it is more than likely that he will also be willing to meet with you.

Setting up a meeting

- To set up a meeting with an MP, **call the constituency office**. Give your name, your postal code, and the reason that you'd like to meet with the MP. Ask when the MP will next be in town, and when he will be available to meet with you.
- You can also **go to the constituency office** directly to request the meeting. Making a good impression will also increase your chances of gaining access to your MP.
- If the MP is unavailable for a meeting, request a meeting **with a member of his staff**. Staff have more time to meet with you and they can bring your particular concerns to the MP.

Preparation

- **Stay informed** on the issue.
- **Develop a list of questions** that you have for the MP, as well as specific proposals for solutions.
- **Bring materials** that the MP can refer to later. A [one-page brief](#) [1] gives him a concise background on the issue, your concerns, and your proposed solutions.
- **Ask staff beforehand** how much information the MP has on your issue. This way, you will know where to start. Offer to send informational materials ahead of time.
- In a typical meeting with an MP, the MP talks two-thirds of the time, you one-third. **Be prepared to listen.**
- **Focus on how you can help the MP** do his job. Where are the gaps in information? Do you have information that will be of value to him?

At the meeting

- **Present your case** in a clear and concise way, stating the exact nature of your concern and precisely what you want the MP to do about it.
- Focus on **one or two issues**.
- Insist on a **straight answer** to your questions.
- If the representative agrees with you, **get it in writing**.
- Even though you may be very passionate about your issue, and may disagree strongly with the MP's stance, **have a calm and respectful dialogue**. Show that you are willing to work with him.
- Even if the MP disagrees with you, **thank him** for the time and opportunity to meet.
- A meeting with an MP usually lasts no more than an hour. If you have an agreed-upon time limit, stick to it.

After the meeting

- [Follow up](#) [2]. Write a letter thanking the MP for meeting with you. In your letter, summarize any commitments that were made, and ask for an update on what has been done.