

How to communicate with and influence MPs and councillors

Why should you communicate with your MP or councillors?

1. **To keep them up to date** – it makes sense to keep everyone living in or representing your area up to date.
2. **To explore how they can support Big Local** - building a relationship with your local MP or councillor may not seem like the most important thing on your list of Big Local priorities. But until you do, you will not know how they can support what you are doing.
3. **To get publicity** – those extra few newspaper column inches that they can help you get might increase your fundraising potential or help you get volunteers.
4. **To support residents** - your local MP or councillor could provide support or offer advocacy for residents who have flagged their needs with you.
5. **To make connections** - they could help you link with the local council or another organisation to deliver a project together.
6. **To represent your interests** - MPs and councillor should raise local issues and support their constituents.

How can you get in touch with them?

Send them a letter or an email. Every MP and councillor is different, some are happy to correspond with constituents via email whereas others have a preference for written mail. Either way, here is some template text to help you put pen to paper:

<http://localtrust.org.uk/assets/images/uploads/MP%20letter%20template.doc>





Invite them to a Big Local event. The only way for people to really understand Big Local is for them to experience it.



Attend their constituency surgery. This is where MPs meet people and give them an opportunity to discuss matters of concern. MPs usually hold surgeries once a week and advertise them locally and on their website. Councillors often hold surgeries too.



Send them your newsletter. Here is some guidance on writing newsletters about Big Local <http://localtrust.org.uk/library/programme-guidance/newsletters#sthash.ZAHRq6C0.dpuf>



Send them a tweet - 86% of MPs have an active Twitter account. Find your MP's here - <http://www.mpsontwitter.co.uk/>



If you are still not sure how best to make contact, drop us a line at Local Trust and we will be happy to provide any advice we can. When you do make contact let Local Trust know – info@localtrust.org.uk.



Links to further information in this area:

'How can residents and public services work together' Local Trust blog - <http://localtrust.org.uk/news/blogs/how-can-residents-and-public-services-work-together#sthash.vHOJqJo9.dpuf>

'Find Your MP' Parliament website - <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>

'MPs on Twitter' interactive website to explore which Members of the UK parliament use the social media website Twitter - <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>

'Write To Them' website to make sending your MP an email easier - <https://www.writetothem.com/?pc=>

'They Work For You' website provides information on how your MPs are representing you in Parliament - <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/>

'Communicating with MPs: Build the relationship' Ipsos MORI website - [https://www.ipsos-mori.com/newsevents/blogs/thepoliticswire/1541/Communicating-with-MPs-Build-the-relationship.aspx#gallery\[m\]/0/](https://www.ipsos-mori.com/newsevents/blogs/thepoliticswire/1541/Communicating-with-MPs-Build-the-relationship.aspx#gallery[m]/0/)

'How to engage with parliamentary candidates' Knowhow Nonprofit website - <https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/how-to-engage-with-parliamentary-candidates>