



Lobbying Your MP

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How to lobby your local MP

Lobbying is using your right to meet your MP as one of her or his constituents. You can do this either in your constituency or by visiting Parliament and it doesn't matter whether you voted for them or not!

If you are not old enough to vote, you are still a constituent and one who will have a say in the future. MPs should represent all of their constituents interests. This does not mean that your MP has to agree with you, but it does mean that he or she should listen to you and be prepared to pass on your views to the Government.

You should therefore use a meeting with your MP to try to:

- Give them information they need about why youth services are too good to lose to spending cuts.
- Influence their views
- Persuade them that many other constituents share your concern.
- Ask them to pass on your concerns to the Government
- Ask them to take the appropriate action (we suggest some on the next page) to show that they support you.

Meeting your MP

In theory, you can turn up at Westminster at any time that the House of Commons is sitting and request a meeting with your MP. But, there is no guarantee that they will be there or that they will have the time to meet you. It is always best to arrange a date and time in advance.

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Can't make it to Westminster?

You can lobby your MP in your local area by arranging to go along to one of their surgeries or contacting their office to make a separate appointment. (This is likely to be on a Monday morning or on a Friday as they are required to be in Westminster the rest of the week.)

MP surgeries are advertised and are normally based on a drop in service but best to give their office a call to check if you need an appointment.

You can find out who your MP is by looking on the Parliament website: <https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-your-mp/> This will give you all contact details and often links to the MP's own website where you can check when and where they hold their surgery and find constituency contact details.

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Why not write?

You may find it easier to write a letter or send an email, although meeting face-to-face is always best.

If you choose to write, remember to give your MP a clear picture of what is happening to youth services in your area. Try to make your letter as personal as possible, give examples of why your youth centre, or the youth workers who work in it are important to you.

MPs will find it difficult to ignore the human cost of the cuts on young people and workers.

A template letter to your MP is available on our website. <http://chooseyouth.org> - please feel free to change this to make it personal to you.

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Meeting your MP

If you are able to meet your MP, whether in Parliament or in your local area, try to be brief, clear and courteous.

- Thank them for taking the time to see you
- Establish how much time they have
- Make two or three clear points
- Ask them for a follow up meeting

It's worth having a list of your main points written down so you don't forget any.

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What to say!

Don't be daunted when you meet your MP. Remember, they represent you and they will want to hear from you. They ought to be concerned that throughout the UK, services for young people are being ripped apart by savage funding cuts. These cuts have meant that the youth service has already disappeared in lots of places and will be the first public service to disappear completely if we don't act now!

Top Tips

Don't worry! Be confident in putting across your argument and case. You are likely to know more about the issue than your MP!

Use personal stories and examples in your argument. This is likely to have more influence on your MP.

Be clear about what you want your MP to do as a result of speaking to you.

Ask for a follow up meeting or for a progress report.

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What can your MP do to help?

Your MP can take practical steps to help save the youth service from the onslaught of government cuts.

- They can raise the issue in the House of Commons.
- They can try to have the impact of these cuts debated.
- They can support you in your local campaigns.
- They can lobby the Minister, Mims Davies MP.
- They can support our call for a statutory youth service.

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Make sure you ask your MP to:

Urge the government to recognise the value of youth work and find urgent ways to protect youth work and youth services from further spending cuts. Invest in youth services and youth work. Create youth services and youth work by supporting a statutory youth service.