Campaign with breast cancer now

Working with your MP
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MPs are elected to represent the interests and concerns of their constituents in Parliament, as well as helping them with issues locally. Remember, they are there to help you, so don’t be afraid to use them - getting their support can be a great way to boost your campaign, locally or nationally.

How your MP can help.

Ask questions in the House of Commons on your behalf.

Write to a Government Minister or Department to find out information or to raise your issue with them.

Contact organisations such as the NHS or Public Health England.

Join the All Party Parliamentary Group on Breast Cancer (APPGBC), a cross-party group of MPs and Lords that work on breast cancer issues.

Become a Breast Cancer Ambassador and commit to work with us in Parliament to help ensure that everyone who develops breast cancer will live.

Attend a campaign event you’re holding locally (remember to ask them well in advance because their diaries fill up quickly).

Contact local organisations such as your council, hospital or Clinical Commissioning Group.

“I met with my MP, Andrew Mitchell. He listened very carefully and sympathetically to my concerns and was fully committed to helping. He contacted a Government Minister and the National Cancer Intelligence Network on my behalf, always keeping me updated when he received a reply. He also asked if he could attend one of our local fundraising events.”

Kathy Caldwell, who met with her MP to discuss secondary breast cancer diagnosis.
Getting in touch with your MP

A good first step is to write to your MP. A letter or email is a quick and easy way to raise an issue with them. When writing to your MP, here’s a few tips to bear in mind:

• Keep it short and to the point.
• Focus on one issue.
• Include a clear action for the MP to take – for example, asking them to write to the relevant Government Minister.
• Try to include a personal story – why is it that you are passionate about the issue and want them to take action?
• Let them know you expect a reply. You could end your letter or email by saying “I look forward to hearing from you shortly.”
• Make sure you include your name and address, including your postcode. This allows them to identify whether you are a constituent or not.
• Always be polite!

To find out who your MP is and how to get in touch with them:

Visit the Parliament website: www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/

Alternatively, phone the House of Commons Information Office on 020 7219 4272

Make sure you only contact your own MP as they can only take up issues on behalf of their constituents.
Meeting your MP

Arranging to meet your MP gives you a chance to discuss your issues face to face and explain why you need their help. It can be one of the most effective ways of getting their support.

To set up a meeting, call or email your MP’s office to book an appointment – their office will be able to tell you where and when you can meet and for how long. It’s a good idea to let them know what you’d like to discuss beforehand, this will allow them to prepare and means you don’t have to spend too long explaining the issue when you meet.

When you get to your meeting:

- Introduce yourself.
- Let them know what you have come to talk about and tell them why this concerns you personally.
- Make your ask. Be clear what you are asking your MP to do and try to get a commitment from them.

And a few tips to remember:

- Try to be at your MPs office a few minutes before your meeting is due to start. MPs have packed diaries and they’re likely to be seeing lots of other constituents as well as you. If you’re late, that may mean you get less time to speak with them.
- Remember you don’t need to be an expert, just passionate about the issue. Your MP will not expect you to know everything (although you may know more about the subject than they do!). If they ask you something and you’re unsure of the answer, just tell them that you will find out and let them know.
- Try to be clear and to the point. You may have only 15 minutes or less to get your point across. Try to keep a balance in ‘talking time’ between you and the MP.
- Take a briefing about the issue with you and leave it with your MP. It will give them something to refer back to and will be useful if you don’t get time to cover everything. The briefing should summarise the issue and include what you are asking your MP to do. If you need help preparing your briefing, get in touch with us using the details below.

Following up

After the meeting, write to your MP to thank them for seeing you. This gives you an opportunity to confirm what you discussed and what they have committed to do.

It’s worth keeping in mind that if you’ve asked your MP to write to someone for you, it may take some time for them to get a response. If you haven’t heard anything from them in three weeks then you can get in touch to ask them if there’s been any progress.