**Putting your case to your MP**

**Find out about your MP**

MPs do not always accept their party’s position.

You may be able to persuade them if they understand the impact a policy has on their constituents especially in the run up to a General Election.

Try and find out about your MP’s views. You can use the internet to search for information or visit [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com) or [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) or <http://www.publicwhip.org.uk/>

You can phone the House of Commons information desk on 020 7219 4272.

**Write to your MP**

Here are some tips for an effective letter to your MP.

* Keep the letter brief, ideally no more than one side of A4.
* Avoid jargon and write in your own words. Be sure to make your letter personal and explain how and why this issue relates to you, as a constituent.
* The impact of your letter will be increased if it is personal and different to 50 others on your MP’s desk on the same issue.
* Request that your letter is forwarded to Nicky Morgan the Secretary of State for Education. That way the Secretary of State and their civil servants are reminded of the issue as well as your MP. By convention, a letter forwarded by an MP to a minister must receive a reply. You can use the reply for your local publicity.
* Keep a copy of your letter and ask for a reply.

Regular contact with your MP makes sense as part of a long-term communications plan. Keep them updated through the year on your campaign and make a point of sending newsletters and inviting them to attend meetings at your workplace. Even if they don’t attend, they’ll remember that you invited them.

Contact your MP [Link to <https://www.writetothem.com>]

# Meet your MP

All MPs, even ministers, hold regular “surgeries” where they listen to constituents’ concerns – usually on a weekly basis. To find out when and where your MP’s surgery takes place, check your local paper for details, or phone your MP in the House of Commons on 0207 219 3000.

Arrange the meeting in advance – don’t just turn up unprepared – and let your MP know in advance what you would like to discuss.

Tell your MP who will be coming and why this issue is important to them. Between two and four people is a good size. It will do your cause no good at all if the meeting is too big for your MP to hear you all.

Be professional – arrive early for your meeting, thank your MP for agreeing to see you and stick to the agreed time limit. You may only get a brief meeting, so prepare carefully and decide which issues are the most relevant.

Don’t worry if you don’t cover every point you hoped to make, you can cover them in a thank you note.

Your MP is unlikely to be an expert on all areas of government policy or fully understand the consequences of policy. Be prepared to explain the issues and the background, but make it relevant to your constituency.

Have a pre-prepared piece of information that you can leave with your MP that makes your case.

Be prepared to answer questions, not just ask them. After all, a successful dialogue is never one-sided. Offer solutions, rather than being wholly negative.

Suggest to your MP aware that you are willing to act as a local resource on the issues discussed. This offer is likely to please and surprise your MP, as it will set you apart from other campaigners who may only want to “take” from their MP.

Invite your MP to any campaign/rallies that are being held, and make sure you invite your local newspaper photographer along.

End the meeting by recapping on the points you have both agreed to undertake.

Send a follow-up letter within a week to 10 days. Make it short and cordial, re-iterating what was said in the meeting, and suggesting that you continue to meet periodically.

Remember you are trying to build a long-term relationship, so be positive, polite and friendly.

You are the expert on the campaign issues so don’t be overawed by your MP.

# What should you ask your MP to do?

* Write to the Secretary of State for Education
* Ask a written or parliamentary question
* Initiate a short debate
* Speak in a government or opposition debate
* Participate in local events such as speaking at a meeting; accepting a copy of the joint NUS/TUC and UNISON recommendations and research findings; helping with publicity such as speaking to the local media and showing that they understand and care about the importance of the careers service.
* Suggest that your MP visits your organisation to pledge their support for the joint campaign.

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| **Key issues**  NUS, TUC and UNISON believe that excellent careers information, advice and guidance is vital for young people to be able to make informed choices about their future. We want the next government to invest in a truly national careers system that delivers impartial careers information, advice and guidance from school age to retirement, focusing on skills not just careers. |

We want the next government to invest in and deliver a universal careers service which focuses on delivering tailored careers IAG at key intervention points during a person’s education and working life. This should be coupled with substantive careers education linked to the National Curriculum and the focus of all new provision should address skills, not just careers.

To achieve a universal careers IAG and careers education provision requires that the Department for Education (DfE), Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) collaborate together.

Although views on Connexions as a service were mixed, there remains compelling evidence on the value of face to face guidance and the value of early intervention. The National Careers Service which is currently delivering careers provision in England is broken up into a number of regions and the service itself is delivered by contractors who bid to deliver the service in the region. This means that provision can differ from region to region, and that service delivery can be affected by the market as contractors will need to be seen as value for money. The service requires consistency, stability of funding streams and access to careers guidance there should be no post code lottery.

Access to independent and impartial advice is essential. Employers often come into schools, colleges and universities to talk about different jobs that exist. Although in many circumstances this is useful way to learn about a role or industry, often the engagement isn’t meaningful or its happening too late when decisions about further study or training have already been made. In the case of FE colleges, students are concerned that employers are starting to have too much influence over some areas of their course content.

Careers advisors and careers professions are highly skilled, trained in universally recognised qualifications and operate within a set of competencies in the same way as any other profession. Teachers are already over stretched and overburdened, plus often their experiences more often than not come from a very specific route into their chosen profession