

# FACT SHEET

## Tips for meeting with a Member of Parliament

Meeting with an MP can be a scary experience, but it can also be a very productive and informative experience. The more you do it the easier it will get. We have put together a few tips to help you along the way:

### 1. Setting up the meeting - try, try and try again

- Send the MP a written invite (email, fax, letter) with a request for a meeting.
- Follow-up with a phone call to make sure they got your correspondence and commit to a time to meet.
- Establish your authority. Tell them which organisation you are from, and make it clear that you are part of the Children's Bill Working Group representing a broad network of organisations.
- Specify which issues you wish to discuss.
- Arrange a time which is convenient for both you and the MP, and then find other members of the Working Group who are able to support you. Ideally, you should take two additional members, one to support you with the arguments and field questions, and one to take notes and keep track of time.
- Confirm the meeting by phone the day prior to the meeting.



**MPs are busy and they get numerous requests for meetings don't be put off if they are not immediately available.**

### 2. Preparation

- Know your arguments and reference them to the Bill carefully.
- Know your audience: what issues are important to them; what is the best tool to persuade your audience, 'personal stories' or statistics? (ask Lucy for the latest MP profile).
- Consult with other members of your advocacy sub-group, read latest briefings and minutes for update on MP positions.
- Prepare an agenda, and handout material for the MP. (See template agenda in box at the end of this Fact Sheet)

- Confer with other members of your delegation to confirm who is playing which role: chair, support, and scribe.
- Agree on what you want out of the meeting, and how you are going to handle the meeting.
- Arrange a meeting point.
- Plan time to go over agenda and roles before the meeting (plan to meet half an hour before) and debrief after the meeting, to go over the notes and write up the report.

### **3. Getting in to Parliament**

- Enter through the temporary visitors' entrance 90, Plein Street.
- It can take time to get through the security at Parliament, allow at least 10 minutes in case there is a queue, 15 minutes if it is your first visit to the complex.
- You will need to take identity documents.
- On your first visit they will take a digital photograph and enter your details on the security system, this can take a few minutes.
- They may want to confirm the visit with the MP, so have a contact number to hand.
- The complex is well sign posted, but the rooms can be hard to find, ask security in the entrance to the building for directions, they are very helpful and may take you right to the door.

### **4. During the meeting**

- BE ON TIME!
- Introduce everyone, including which organisations they represent, their expertise. It is vital to mention the Working Group and the number of organisations we represent.
- Run through the agenda quickly, and confirm the time available.
- Start to talk about the main issues.
- Keep it simple, outline the arguments and check their understanding, most of them are not experts.
- One of you should lead the arguments the other should take notes.
- Refer back to your argument sheet where necessary.
- Tick off which keys points your have presented if you are struggling to keep the MP focused.
- If the MP talks over you interrupt them using their name e.g. Mike if I could just stop you there, we are here to discuss the NPF
- Give them a chance to ask questions, particularly if they want clarification of the issues you are raising.

- Get a commitment of support, e.g. a promise to talk to other members, raise questions in the committee meetings, or vote for a particular clause.
- If they have questions you can't answer DON'T WORRY. Tell them you will check it out and call them back.
- They can refer to the topic later, ask them to read your document and give your contact details in case they have any questions.

## **5. After the meeting**

- Go for coffee with your delegation and go over the notes.
- Write up your notes, highlighting any difficult issues and include suggestions for possible next steps. Distribute to members of the working group.
- Follow-up with the MP, thank them for meeting with you, repeat your understanding of any commitments made and rebut any arguments you were unable to counter during the meeting, send them any information they requested immediately.

**Celebrate! Feel proud of what you have done and share your success with the rest of the Working Group.**

### **Template Agenda**

- 1. Welcome and introductions (mention the Working Group)**
- 2. Presentation of issues for MP's consideration**
- 3. Questions and responses from MP**
- 4. Any other issues MP would like to raise**
- 5. Summary of agreements and issues requiring follow-up**
- 6. Thanks and closure**