

Amicus Guide to lobbying your MP

The TUC lobby on the 18th of February is your chance to get our message heard. Thousands of public sector workers across the country are going to be meeting MPs and taking action to protect our pensions. Follow the guidelines below to make sure that your campaign is as effective as possible. When you've decided what you want to do on the 18th contact the Amicus press office on 0207 420 8900 and they'll contact the media in your area to maximise publicity.

When 'lobbying' an MP, there are a few things you should do and perhaps shouldn't do to ensure you are being effective.

- To 'lobby' an MP is to meet them at the House of Commons or their Constituency Office and urge them to do something on your behalf, i.e. support a campaign you agree with, take up a personal concern/grievance or to discuss a matter of policy.
- Any UK citizen can meet their MP at the House of Commons by going into the main building, entering the area called Central Lobby and placing a request to speak to their MP with one of the attendants who work there. It is much better to meet an MP having booked in advance.
- It's often best to meet your MP on Fridays and Mondays when they should be holding constituency surgeries, which are designed specifically so that they can meet voters.
- the constituency office at any time throughout the week to find out the surgery times and make an appointment. Why not arrange to have the MP visit your workplace. MPs should be available throughout the weekend to meet constituents.
- Be polite and courteous. Never threaten an MP with a phrase like 'I will never vote for you again if...'. Although it might be tempting they hear that all the time and it isn't wise.
- Be clear in telling them about why you have travelled to see them at the House of Commons or constituency office. Don't assume they know everything about your case/issue.
- Write down in A-B-C form what you want them to understand and what you want them to do.
- By all means give them letters and information relating to your case or campaign that they can read later on but never hand over original documents. They have been known to go missing!
- MPs meet many people in a week and receive many letters, e-mails and phone calls from people. They can meet someone and have a good meeting but you need to ensure there is a clear result and action from that meeting. Ask them specifically, 'What are you going to do on my behalf?' Whether it is to write to a Minister, company, local council or whatever, don't leave them without them giving you a firm commitment to ACT on your behalf.
- Follow up your visit with a letter of thanks, providing further information on your case or concern and make contact within a fortnight, asking for any progress, although please be patient.

Using the Campaign Pack

- Amicus has provided a campaign pack, which will go to each Amicus region. In it we have supplied a regionally based newsletter which gives full details of how the changes in the provision of public sector pensions will affect you and why.
- We have also provided posters, stickers and leaflets. Make sure that Amicus is seen as the leading union on this issue by putting the posters up on Union notice boards and other places where you have agreement.
- The packs also contain recruitment literature – now has never been a better time to get out there and recruit on the back of an issue.
- Postcards for MPs have also been produced and addressed to the House of Commons. Make sure you fill in your details and those of your MP and send them off. Make sure your workmates also send postcards. Nothing concentrates the mind, especially in election year, if a politician begins to get a big mail bag from local people on an important national issue like public sector pensions.