

# How to Prepare for a Meeting with your MP

## With Talking Points on the Eradication of Polio

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This month we are asking you to meet your MP. For some of you, this will be for the first time so we have given you a few tips below. These tips are also a good refresher for those who have met their MP before. A face-to-face meeting is the very best way to gain support from your MP, enabling a more memorable two-way discussion.

#### 1. Arranging a meeting

You can write, phone or email your MP's office to find out when they are available. But don't wait around for them to reply – follow up with a call, and be tenacious! Sometimes it takes a bit of persistence to pin them down. Remember to say who you are, where you live (so they know you're a constituent), and a summary of what you would like to discuss. Don't give too much detail at this stage or you won't have anything to talk about in your meeting!

#### 2. Do your research

While some MPs will be new to Parliament and to health issues like polio eradication, others will be quite knowledgeable and may have shown considerable support in the past. Check out their website, the Parliament website [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk), or <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/>. If you discover they have already supported eradication initiatives, do acknowledge it – everyone likes to be appreciated! If you are not sure, contact us in the office as we also track parliamentarians' engagement with our issues.

#### 3. Prepare for your meeting

Make sure you plan in advance how to structure your meeting. Are you going on your own or with other people? If you're going as a group, divide up who will speak about what. If you haven't done it before, meeting an MP can feel a bit daunting. Don't worry, it's perfectly natural to feel a bit nervous. Remember that MPs are just people, like you, and they need your support. Make sure you've read through these talking points, and you may find it useful to practice what you want to say.

#### 4. Be friendly!

Remember to greet your MP with a smile, thank them for taking the time to meet with you, and introduce yourself. Most MPs will be interested to know what motivates you to campaign on development issues. Consider having a short anecdote ready for the start of the meeting to engage them more personally – that can often work better than facts and figures. However, you'll probably have limited time, so get on to your main argument relatively quickly.

#### 6. Make an ask

MPs need specific actions to take following your discussion. Whether they agree with your argument or not, it is a good idea to leave the meeting having asked something you can follow up on. This month, we are asking for you MP to be a 'Polio Champion' and support the GPEI business case when it is published. You should be ready to get back in touch with more specific actions they can take on the issue in the new year: actions they could take include, asking Parliamentary Questions (PQs), writing to International Development Secretary Justine Greening, or taking part in a relevant debate.

#### 8. Follow up

Once the meeting is over, send an email or a letter to thank them for their time. If your MP is on social media, you can tweet them a short thank you message. Twitter is becoming an increasingly popular way for MPs to communicate with constituents. If you are not yet on twitter, do think about joining.

## Talking Points on the Eradication of Polio

The issue of Polio Eradication can be quite technical but don't worry, your MP will not expect you to be a policy expert. To help you build the main flow of your argument, below are some talking points you can use in your meeting.

### Talking points:

- Polio is a highly infectious, viral disease that mainly affects children under the age of 5.
- The next 3-4 years provide a unique opportunity to eradicate polio forever, reaping the benefit of decades of successful investment in combatting the disease across the world.
- Polio is now endemic in only two countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan, and a final push can genuinely finish the job.
- **We are on the verge of eradicating a human disease for the second time in history (the first was smallpox).**
- The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) is the global body charged with ensuring there is a plan to eradicate polio. They have a comprehensive, long-term strategy to address the ways in which we can deliver a polio-free world by 2019.
- Polio is an extremely infectious disease which, if allowed to return because of lack of resource or ambition, could come back to countries which have had no cases in many years. We could have as many as 200,000 cases in just 10 years, spread across the entire world.
- It was recently announced by the World Health Organisation that the amount required to achieve GPEI's Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan (the "Plan") will have to increase from \$5.5 billion to \$7 billion. **We have the right plan to succeed and experts know the resources needed. The shortfall of \$1.5 billion will have to come from donors, like the UK.** In 2013, the UK committed to contributing £300m to the Plan. A new ask of the UK government has yet to be finalised but it is RESULTS' view that at the very least, the UK should continue to show leadership, given the additional resources needed to beat the disease.
- The UK has shown leadership in eradicating polio. If we finish the job we will meet the ambition of the new Global Goals to leave no child behind, which is something that David Cameron explicitly committed to in New York recently as part of the launch of the Global Goals.
- Eradicating polio has a great return on investment. The infrastructure for delivering polio vaccinations are also strengthening other routine immunisations, and we have seen how countries have retrained and redeployed health workers to deliver other health interventions in countries where polio has been beaten, such as India.
- **Eradicating polio for good will leave a lasting legacy.**
- You can also take a copy of our new polio infographic with you so they can see the progress that has been made.

**If you have any more questions, please do not hesitate to contact Emily on [emily.cabon@results.org.uk](mailto:emily.cabon@results.org.uk)**