

How to meet with your MP – Talking points

Meeting your MP is probably the single most important thing you can do for the campaign. MPs need to hear about the issues that affect you and others in the community, in order to properly represent you. This includes the real experiences of their constituents who've been affected by the current ban on assisted dying. MPs are accountable to their constituents – don't forget it's their job to listen to you. And it works – MPs have changed their minds after hearing from people like you.

How to make appointment

All MPs host regular surgeries in the local area (usually on Fridays), where you can make an appointment. You will get approximately 20 minutes for your slot. You can contact your MP by email, phone or by letter to request to meet them. All MPs contact details can be found on the Parliament website: <https://members.parliament.uk/members/Commons>

You will probably be in touch with one of their members of staff, so it's worth keeping them on your side. Let them know you are getting in touch to request a meeting to discuss the law on assisted dying, briefly outlining any personal experience you have and including your address so that they know you live in the constituency. You don't need to go into a lot of detail, as you'll have plenty of opportunity to do that when you meet face-to-face.

What to say when you meet your MP

- **Your experience:** If you've had personal experience of the current law not working, such as if you are living with a terminal illness, or someone close to you wanted the choice of an assisted death, be human and tell that story. Let them understand the practical and emotional hurdles and difficulties you face. This is the most important thing to focus on in your meeting.
- **Our position:** Be clear that assisted dying refers to a terminally ill, mentally competent adult, requesting life ending medication from a doctor in their final months, subject to safeguards.
- **Why the current law isn't working:** If your own experience doesn't touch on this, you can explain that some dying people are opting to travel abroad for an assisted death (one Brit every 8 days); others are suffering as they die despite good palliative care (17 dying people a day); while some dying people are taking matters into their own hands in this country (300 terminally ill people end their own lives in England a year). Refer to examples such as the recent high profile cases of Ann Whaley or Mavis Eccleston if you can, to help illustrate these problems. (More info on Dignity in Dying website).
- **What we are calling for:** An inquiry into the problems with the current law on assisted dying. We need to fully understand what harms the blanket ban on assisted dying is causing. An inquiry into the state of the law allows the government to examine all available evidence, so that officials fully understand the problem we're facing. This means you don't need to convince your MP to completely support an assisted dying law (although it's great if they do), at this stage we just need them to agree that the current law isn't working and must be examined further.

Remember, you don't need to be an expert. They won't expect you to have all the facts or answers and they will treat this meeting differently to a meeting with a policy expert in Parliament. Don't be afraid to say that you don't know the answer to something, but you'll get back to them with more information. Always be polite and informative, and remember to have fun!