web www.wagingpeace.info
email info@wagingpeace.info

Waging Peace: 5 steps to *contacting your MP*

STEP 1: Who is my MP?

Everyone in the UK has an MP (member of Parliament). Each MP represents an area called a **constituency**. MP's have office hours and they want to hear from you. Sometimes you may want to write to your MP. Other times you may want to meet them in their local office.

Appointments are usually needed however some MPs have drop-in office hours called clinics or an **MP surgery**. This is simply a one-to-one meeting with your MP. To find *YOUR* MP, click on the link below and enter your UK postcode.

https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/

STEP 2: When should I contact my MP?

You could contact your MP:

- If you feel you have been treated unfairly by a government office or agency
- To let your MP know about a problem affecting people in your local area
- To ask your MP to support a particular campaign that you feel strongly about
- Your MP is not always the best person to help with an issue. Before you contact your MP, please seek advice on who else may be able to help: https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-an-mp-or-lord/who-should-i-contact/

STEP 3: How do I contact my MP?

Writing a letter or email is an excellent way to get your message across and begin to develop a good working relationship with members of Parliament. For every person who sends a letter or email, MPs will assume there are many more who are likeminded. A letter may carry more weight than an email, though a personalised email is fine too.

You can write to MPs at:
[Their Name], House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Email addresses for MPs can be found at:
http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/

DO:

- ✓ Keep it short. One side of A4 is more than enough
- ✓ Consider handwriting the letter to emphasise its individuality
- ✓ Explain why the issue matters to you
- ✓ Include your full name and address so they know you are their constituent
- ✓ Use bullet points to highlight your concerns or key messages
- ✓ Make it clear what you would like them to do
- ✓ Ask for a reply - If you do not receive a reply, or the reply you receive does not sufficiently answer the points you make, you will need to write again. Often the second letter will be the more productive.

DON'T:

- × Don't lobby on more than one issue in a single letter or email
- × Don't criticise the person you are writing to or make threats
- × Try not to use a template letter/email or copy a letter/email sent by someone else as this reduces its impact and risks discrediting not only your letter or email but also the correspondence sent by others

STEP 4: The start of a beautiful relationship?

Follow up after your meeting is just as important. You need to keep the relationship with your MP going. In a period when you are not focusing on a specific campaign issue, you can still gain long-term awareness and hopefully future support from MPs if you keep your MP informed of other activities – for example forwarding them Waging Peace's reports and materials relating to Sudan, asking them to put your key points on their website or in their blogs, inviting your MP to Sudanese community meetings or events.

DO:

- ✓ Thank your MP!
- ✓ Send a copy of your notes, including a record of action points
- ✓ Invite your MP to speak at a relevant event
- ✓ Mention the good work of your MP in your newsletter or on social media

STEP 5: More information about contacting your MP

Follow this link to learn more about contacting your MP
https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-your-mp/