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A “how to” guide to meeting with your MP to talk about NHS pay

Right now, the single most effective way to help our campaign for an early and significant pay rise for NHS staff is to speak with your MP directly, either as an individual or as part of a group such as your local RCM branch. This guide will help you do that.

Your MP and how to contact them

The first step is to get hold of your MP’s contact details. You can do this using the [Find Your MP](#) page on the UK Parliament’s website. Input the MP’s name, your postcode or the name of the constituency and all their available contact information should pop up.

The best way to contact their office is to call them. Tell them that you are a constituent, that you are a local midwife, or maternity support worker, and that you would like to have a virtual meeting with the MP to discuss NHS pay. If you plan to meet as part of a group, let them know. With many MPs and staff working from home, you may have to leave a voicemail.

Setting up the meeting

If you plan to speak to your MP as part of a group, such as your local branch, it may be that you don’t all live in the same constituency. In that case, just make a judgement call. You may wish to approach the MP in whose constituency a local maternity unit is located, or you may opt to approach several MPs for meetings on the basis that women from each of their constituencies use a particular local maternity unit.

If you approach several MPs, this will increase the chance that one will come back quickly and have availability in their diary. Whichever option you choose, just ensure there is at the very least one person in the group who is a constituent, ideally a few.

Ahead of the meeting, tell them which platform you use for virtual meetings (Skype, Zoom, Teams, etc.) but be prepared to use an alternative one. You may also need to wait as the the MP’s staff may want to confirm things with the MP, but remember that an MP should want to meet constituents and most will welcome the opportunity.

Meeting the MP – what to do & say

If there is a group of you on the call, work out in advance who will be the main person speaking on your side, or perhaps divide up the points you want to get across between different people. Different MPs have different styles. Some may ask lots of questions; others may want to focus on listening to what you have to say.

The main points you will want to make are:

1. Tell them about how your pay has been held down for years and even frozen completely in some years. NHS staff are worse off now than they were only a few years ago – because prices have risen faster than your pay. If you are happy to talk about how that has affected you, please do – that kind of personal experience strengthens what you have to say.
2. Tell them what it has been like to work in the NHS during the pandemic. We are not asking for a pay rise as a reward for what staff have done during the pandemic but what has happened over the past year has really shown the value of the work the NHS does – and the incredible value of the work of NHS staff.
3. Say you support the RCM's call for an early and significant pay rise for NHS staff, and ask them if they support that too.
4. Finally, whether or not they support a pay rise, ask them to write to the Health & Social Care Secretary (Matt Hancock) and the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak) to ask on your behalf for an early and significant pay rise for NHS staff.

It is useful to have them commit to do something after the meeting – and to write to you about it, so ask for them to let you know what the Health & Social Care Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer have to say when they reply.

And that is it!

For some, it may seem daunting to meet your MP face-to-face. For others, it won't seem daunting at all. But remember that the vast majority of MPs will welcome the opportunity to speak with you and to hear from you.

Constituents speaking face-to-face with your MP, albeit virtually, is the single most effective thing you can do.

And finally: if you need any help, advice, guidance, or you just want to let us know that a meeting is happening or what an MP had to say, email us at publicaffairs@rcm.org.uk