

Getting your MP Involved

MPs represent the interests and needs of the local people (constituents) in Parliament. They can help raise local issues there and can influence local decision makers.

BUT they can only raise issues IF they know about them. Involving your MP in a campaign for SUDEP Action can help raise awareness & prompt change both locally & nationally.

What your MP can do

Locally

- Go to meetings and launch events (advanced notice needed)
- Speak to Local organisations & authorities to raise your concerns
- Visit local services eg: Epilepsy clinics or the SUDEP Action office to see what is being done or what could be done regarding epilepsy services and care



Nationally

- Ask questions or raise concerns in the House of Commons
- Sign Early Day Motions (EDMs) which are ways MPs show support for issues, such as the Epilepsy Deaths Register
- Write to a government minister to show support for a particular issue or raise a concern (eg: the Health Minister)
- Join the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Epilepsy. A group of MPs, Charities and other interested parties who tackle issues surrounding epilepsy

Who is my MP?

Visit <http://www.parliament.uk> and search for 'Find My MP' or contact the House of Commons Information Office on 020 7219 4272.

Contacting your MP

Sending a personalised, concise letter to your MP can effectively draw their attention to an issue, concern or question.

Below is our advice on how to make an impression:

- DO -

- Stick to one issue / campaign
- Stay to the point to keep their attention
- Use a personal experience (if you feel able to)
- Try to use some evidence, facts or statistics to support your thoughts
- Give an instruction (so they have an action to focus on)
- Ask that they reply
- Let us at SUDEP Action know so we can help & see how you get on



- DONT -

- Write to other MPs - MPs can only help their own constituents
- Go off topic or cover too many things
- Forget to include your contact details
- Use inappropriate language - remember you want their help
- Forget they are busy so may take time to reply

Visiting your MP



This may seem scary, but with some planning, this can be a great way to get your message across to your MP.

MPs often hold local surgeries which are a great way to introduce them to what you want to discuss. You may be able to find out details of this via your MP's website.

Steps to organising your visit

Contact your MP's office

You may be able to find this information via your MP's website, if not give them a call.

Ask when their next local surgery is, and if you need an appointment to attend.

If so, book a time and outline briefly what you want to discuss.

Prepare for the meeting

Make brief notes on the ideas & key messages you want to discuss. Get any leaflets or other resources ready.

Visit our website or contact us for our latest information on our campaigns. REMEMBER - your MP won't expect you to be an expert on your topic but will expect you to be clear and to the point.

Afterwards

You may want to write to thank your MP after the meeting, reminding them of your discussion & any actions they agreed to take.

Don't forget to let us at SUDEP Action know as we love to hear about your work supporting us & raising awareness.

Social Media advice

Social media is a great way to quickly raise awareness of a campaign or issue.

Some things to consider before you do are:

- Remember to only contact your own MP
- Use social media to follow up & thank your MP for their support (after writing to them first)
- Keep your posts short and positive - avoid bombarding them with information
- Encourage your MP to follow SUDEP Action on Facebook & Twitter so they can stay informed and show their support
- Is there a specific hashtag or way to reference why you are contacting them? eg: #epilepsydebate if so make sure you use it in your posts

Other hints and tips

Take photos of anything you do linked to your MP (eg: meetings, lobbying, attending debates)

Tell your MP if they can use your story / photos to show the work they are doing locally. This can help raise awareness. SUDEP Action can help provide press releases for them too.

Ask your friends & relatives to also get involved - make sure you fully explain the purpose of their involvement first though



For more information about MPs and Parliament in general visit: www.parliament.co.uk

For more information about SUDEP Action and our current campaigns visit: www.sudep.org

SUDEP Action

Making every epilepsy death count

SUDEP Action & SUDEP Action Scotland are the working names of Epilepsy Bereaved
Registered charity 1050459 (England & Wales), SC045208 (Scotland).