'A Positive Note' from Mind

How to send a positive message to your MP

Crafting your personal note

In the 2017 General Election, there were more mentions of mental health in party manifestos than any other condition in any other election since 1945. Together we can build on this momentum and achieve real change.

MPs receive so many petition cards and emails every day so it can be difficult to have your message noticed. Craftivism is a form of gentle activism that encourages quiet, reflective crafting to produce something beautiful and useful to give to your MP to encourage them to use their power for good.

A hand stitched bespoke envelope with your thoughtful handwritten note inside will attract attention from MPs and their staff. Help send an encouraging message to your MP to show your support for everyone experiencing a mental health problem.

What does an MP do?

As the elected representative for your local constituency, the role of your local MP is to represent your interests and concerns in the House of Commons. There are 650 constituencies in the UK and each of them is represented by a different MP.

Your MP can raise issues that matter to you in the House of Commons. They can ask questions of government ministers on your behalf. They can attend debates and vote on new laws. They can publicly support or highlight a particular campaign that you feel strongly about.

You can find out who your local MP is using the They Work For You website: www.theyworkforyou.com

You can find out more about MPs and how Parliament works at http://www.parliament.uk/about/

Contacting your MP

You can either post your ‘Positive Note’ to your MP, or meet them directly to talk about it. MPs really value hearing from constituents about the issues you care about. Sharing your experiences of the issue is the most effective way of getting your voice heard.
The easiest way to find out your MP's address is to go to their personal website. You can find this under your MP's ‘Profile’ section on the They Work For You website. Or you can search for your MP's name on Google and it will usually be one of the first websites listed on the first page. You will then usually find their address on the 'Contact' page of their website.

MPs usually have two offices: their Westminster office in Parliament, and their constituency office back in their local constituency. You can post your note to either office, but it is better to post it to your MP’s constituency office if they have one.

You could even hand deliver your note if you want to make a greater impact!

How to meet your MP

If you want to meet with your MP to deliver your note in person and talk about why mental health matters to you, you just need to call or email their local office to ask when their next ‘surgery’ is.

A surgery is a regular drop in session that gives MPs the chance to meet with their constituents. This is an informal way for people to speak with their local MPs, and a great way to get your issue noticed. Surgeries usually take place on a Friday, when most MPs are in their constituency. They are normally in the MP’s constituency office or in a public building nearby.

Some MPs book in appointments with constituents, which you may need to do – it will depend on your own MP’s set up. The MP’s diary manager will explain how your MP’s surgery works when you call your MP’s office. They are used to constituents calling them to arrange meetings, so you don’t need to be nervous!

Once you know when you can meet with your MP, it’s all about prepping for what you might want to say in the meeting.

How can I make my meetings effective?

- **Make it personal** – show why this issue is important to you. Share your own experiences if you feel comfortable doing so.
- **Remember that everyone is human** – try not to be daunted by who you are meeting.
- **Don’t assume that the people you’re meeting with will know about the issue** – they may genuinely be surprised to hear what you have to say, so start off slowly with an introduction.
- **Use the power of three.** It can help to think about the three most important messages that you want to get across. That way, even if you feel nervous in the meeting, you will be able to jog your memory and get your points across.