

Six ways to engage with Journalists and MPs

How to engage a journalist	
1.	Choose the right journalist. Be aware of politics and affiliations. Look at what the journalist has written before. Do they have a personal interest in your feature?
2.	Always phone – don't email. Many emails end up in the recycling bin without even being opened. Contact journalists in the morning to avoid afternoon deadlines.
3.	View your issue in terms of a news story. Is there a controversial element? Do you have a piece of information which is not yet public information? Journalists are after an exclusive. Local news needs to be transferable to a national level.
4.	Humanise the story – individual stories are engaging for the reader.
5.	Don't give up. Be clever and work on different angles to attract attention. Keep pestering journalist contacts.
6.	Don't oversell or mislead your journalist. They will not be your friend in the future.

How to engage a politician	
1.	It is essential to phone and not email. This way you can develop a relationship with staff that can represent your requests to the MP.
2.	Emails are allocated to three folders: Diary Appointment, Constituency Problem and Campaign Issue. Have a clear motivation of why you are contacting the MP.
3.	Focus your issue and streamline your campaign. Don't assume the MP will have in depth knowledge. You are the expert.
4.	Research your target MPs. What have they done in the past and what are they doing now?
5.	Explain how your ideas/issues link into the bigger political agenda.
6.	Engage with the MPs constituents – relate your cause to their constituency.