

WE ARE WASPI WE WANT JUSTICE

HOW TO LOBBY YOUR MP

WHAT IS LOBBYING?

The word 'lobbying' comes from the process of MPs gathering in the lobbies of the House of Commons and it really just means a form of communication with an MP about an issue a constituent wants the MP to pursue on their behalf. MPs can be lobbied in person, by letter, by email or by telephoning them. We all have a democratic right to lobby our own constituency MPs. Lobbying is the process of contacting and attempting to influence your own constituency MP either individually or in a group (with fellow constituents). **Many individuals and pressure groups use this as a means of getting support for their issue or campaign and by doing so can put pressure on the government to bring about change.**

WHO CAN LOBBY?

For the sake of clarity, only constituents are entitled to lobby their own MP so you can't ask to lobby an MP who is not your constituency MP. Only your own MP can act on your behalf.

HOW TO LOBBY

Be well prepared in advance so you can put across your issues as clearly as possible (you may not be given much time). There is further information in this pack to help you with putting your points across and counter arguments are on www.waspi.co.uk should your MP not be supportive.

Take copies of any relevant paperwork with you. You can always leave letters and further information about individual cases in your constituency with the MP rather than trying to cover everything at the face to face meeting.

Have a clear idea of what your expectations are in advance of your meeting.

If you are in a group it would be useful to plan who is doing/saying what. It might be best to have a main spokesperson or different people dealing with different topics and a note taker is useful. Agree this in advance.

It would be worth doing some research on your MP in advance so you are aware of their voting pattern (and also what they look like so you recognise them). The website www.theyworkforyou.com is a useful source of information or try your MP's own website.

DURING THE MEETING

Please refer to the information in this document and the links on www.waspi.co.uk to make the most of your meeting

Also, as stated above, if you are part of a group, each have a role to play and get someone to take notes.

Do not just talk AT your MP, but make sure there is ample time for the MP to respond in full - and make it a discussion rather than just a lecture.

Leave any relevant documentation that you do not have time to cover with your MP and request a response to it.

THE MAIN DISCUSSION POINTS

- We are not against equalization.
- We are not asking for the State Pension Age to be put back to age 60.
- We protest about the lack of/lateness of notification and the resulting speed of implementation.
- Very few women were informed of the increase in their SPA after the 1995 Act. Refer to the Freedom of Information Request document (on our website) and tell your MP the date it states that you should have received your letter. Tell your MP your age at that date and how much notice this letter (received or not) would have given you. This is a contentious point as MPs and Ministers consistently deny that women were not informed. Take a copy of the document to show him/her.
- Remind your MP that there was then a further increase in 2011 of months to your SPA.
- Ask your MP if s/he would consider this to be enough notice – considering the Government in the updated version (8 May 2015) of Policy Paper '2010 to 2015 Government Policy: State Pension Age' states: 'Any future changes to State Pension age will, as now, require primary legislation and will be subject to the full scrutiny of Parliament. The review will seek to give individuals affected by changes to their State Pension age *at least 10 years' notice*'.

- If your MP mentions publication in the press, talk about your personal circumstances at the time (bringing up your family, working, etc) and point out your age in 1995 and how 'pensions' at that age were not your immediate priority – as 60 was a long way away and life was busy. Also, it was not published in mainstream media.
- If your MP says it was YOUR responsibility to get a pension forecast, ask him why you would have felt the need to do this much before you were getting to what you expected your SPA to be (60). Without knowing about increases to your SPA you assumed it was the same (60) as it had been for 70 years.
- If your MP mentions it was an EU Directive: there were no time limits set for implementation and Europe has different SPAs in different countries.
- Mention that the campaign is NOT just about the 18 months max. increase that the Government consistently refers to. We are campaigning about both the 1995 Act and the 2011 Act.
- Tell your MP about how much money you are losing from age 60 until your SPA.
- If you have savings or a personal pension, tell your MP that you did as the Government has told us for years: to save for your old age in order to be able to enjoy it. Ask your MP why you should now be further 'punished' by having to use those savings simply to exist.
- If your MP suggests that you can claim benefits: ask him/her about how s/he would feel about claiming benefit at our age and be sent on training courses? Point out that even contribution-based Jobseekers Allowance (which lasts only 6 months) takes into account any small income you may have from a personal pension and reduces the amount of JSA. After 6 months it will become income-based JSA and this takes into account savings also.
- Tell your MP what WASPI is campaigning for: fair transitional arrangements e.g. a bridging pension to provide an income from age 60 years to new State Pension Age. WASPI has the support of the APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group), whose purpose is 'to hold the government to account regarding the issue of transitional arrangements to compensate 1950s-born women who are affected by changes to the State Pension Age'.
- Tell your MP this must NOT be means-tested. We have ALL paid in and those of us who have managed to save should not be punished again
- If your MP tells you that 'there is no money' point out that there is ALWAYS money and that 'where there is a will, there is a way'.
- Ask your MP to support you/us/WASPI, to put his/her weight behind the campaign and to make representations to Ros Altmann (Pensions Minister) Stephen Crabb (Secretary of State for Work and Pensions), George Osborne (Chancellor of the Exchequer) and the (candidates for) Prime Minister on your behalf.

Further information on www.waspi.co.uk

AFTER THE MEETING

Follow up your meeting with an email or letter thanking your MP for seeing you and outlining the main points of the discussion and also your expectations of your MP as a result of your meeting.