



# Meet your MP guide

Care For Equality  
Campaign

Leonard  
Cheshire



## Why we're campaigning on social care

Good social care can bring opportunity, improve quality of life, and enable people to live with dignity and independence. Care can include support for everyday tasks like washing or eating, and also helps disabled people connect with their communities. Good care can widen disabled people's opportunities, helping them access education, work and social activities.

But years of low funding alongside the impact of the pandemic has meant at least 1.6 million people don't get the care and support they need. After years of delays, the government has committed to bring forward plans to reform social care this year. We need to make sure that these plans fully include disabled people and support them to access high quality care.

## What can you do to help?

We're asking you to meet your MP and let them know why disabled people need to be at the heart of social care reforms. We want you to share why you think it's important that disabled people can get the care that they need to live independently. And share any experiences of social care that you, your friends or your family have had or have heard about. This is a great opportunity to make your voice heard!

Taking the time to meet your MP can really make a difference. MPs want to make sure they are representing people like you who live in their constituency. By sharing why social care matters to you, you can make it a local issue that matters to them.

We're more than happy to help you prepare for this meeting and answer any questions you have. You can request a call with us by emailing [campaigning@leonardcheshire.org](mailto:campaigning@leonardcheshire.org)



# Read our four key steps to meeting your MP

## 1. Set up a meeting with your MP

MPs will usually only meet with their own constituents. Find out who your MP is by entering your postcode on this website: [members.parliament.uk/members/commons](https://members.parliament.uk/members/commons). This will tell you who your MP is and provides their constituency office contact information. Some MPs will call meetings with their constituents 'surgeries', so watch out for that term.

Now, it's time to set up the meeting. Call or write to your MP's office, letting them know that you'd like to meet your MP and what you'd like to discuss. Tell the MP's office if you'd like the meeting to take place in person, or if you'd prefer to speak to them using a phone or video call. Make sure you let them know that you're a constituent, and find out how long your meeting will be, so you can plan accordingly. You can also let the MP's office know if you have any accessibility requirements when you get in touch. Once the meeting is set up, let us know the date and if you'd like any further support ahead of the meeting.

## 2. Prepare yourself for the meeting

Plan how you'd like to tell your MP that social care for disabled people matters to you. You might find it helpful to make some notes about the most important things you want to say to your MP, and any examples or experiences you want to share. This can be really helpful to guide you at the meeting and ensure you don't forget any points.

It's worth doing some research on your MP before you meet them. One thing you can do is look at if your MP has shown an interest in social care before. You might find this information on their website, or by searching their speeches in parliament on [www.theyworkforyou.com](https://www.theyworkforyou.com). If you feel like your MP has done a good job speaking about social care, make sure you let them know – everyone loves positive feedback! You can also find out what your MP's roles and responsibilities are. This will be on your MP's own website, or on [members.parliament.uk/members/commons](https://members.parliament.uk/members/commons).

Once you know what you want to say, take some time to practise. It's normal to be a little nervous meeting your MP for the first time. To help with nerves, you could practise what you're going to say with someone else. Remember to keep it brief and clear, but don't be afraid to show your feelings. If you'd like to practise what you'd like to say with us, do get in touch.



## Key points to raise

Don't forget that your MP is there to represent you, so they will be interested in your ideas and your experiences – that's the most important thing to share. Here are a few suggestions of key points you could raise:

- Social care is a vital public service, which enables people to live as independently as they choose. Many disabled people rely on care and support for help with everyday tasks, like washing, dressing, and eating and to be able to access their community. Social care also plays a key role in supporting people getting into, or staying in, work, learning, and volunteering.
- Working-age disabled adults make up one in three people accessing social care. Over half of adult social care funding in England is spent on care for working-age disabled adults.<sup>1</sup>
- Many disabled people cannot access the support they need to live as they choose. This is because of low funding and increased demand for social care. In England, at least 1.6 million people cannot access the care that they need, and social care faces a funding gap of £6 billion.<sup>2</sup> The system must also build in greater choice and personalisation of care.

- Reforms to social care must urgently be brought forward. The needs of working-age disabled adults must be at the heart of any long-term plan for social care. To achieve this, the government must develop the plan in partnership with disabled people to understand their views and needs.
- To make sure people can access the support that they need now, the government must immediately invest in social care.



<sup>1</sup> The Health Foundation, Social Care for Adults aged 18-64, <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/social-care-for-adults-aged-18-64> , accessed 16/06/21

<sup>2</sup> Local Government Association, LGA: social care providers face more than £6bn in extra COVID-19 costs, <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/lga-social-care-providers-face-more-ps6bn-extra-covid-19-costs> , accessed 16/16/21

### 3. Meeting your MP

Here are some top tips to remember when you're meeting your MP:

- **Share your experience:** MPs want to hear from their constituents. Telling them your story is a great way to show what social care means to you. Focus on your experiences, the experiences of your friends and family, or the stories you have read about social care for disabled people. This will make the issues feel real to the MP and get them involved.
- **Thank your MP:** MPs aren't often thanked for their work and are often incredibly busy. They will really appreciate you taking the time to thank them for meeting you, and you can use this as a chance to show off your research and thank them for actions they have taken in the past.
- **Be ready for a discussion:** MPs may disagree with what you ask them to do and may have arguments against what you're suggesting. Keep calm, and make sure you've prepared to respond to what they might suggest. If you're not sure what to say, let your MP know you'll get back to them – it's a good reason to follow up with them after the meeting.

**Have a clear ask:** MPs are often very busy and are keen to know what specific action they can take to address your concerns. If you're not sure what to request, we suggest asking your MP to call on the government to put disabled people at the heart of social care reforms. They can do this through writing to the government or asking a question in parliament. Your MP could also raise awareness about social care for disabled people, by publishing articles or press releases.

### 4. Following up after the meeting

Well done! By meeting your MP, you've helped put good social care for disabled people on the agenda. This is a really big achievement, and the first thing you should do is recognise how well you've done.

Send your MP a follow up message after the meeting, thanking them for their time and sharing any further thoughts or information. If your MP agreed to do something, you can also use this chance to remind them and ask them to let you know once they've done it.

Please let us know how the meeting went, and if your MP agreed to take any actions. You might also want to share your thoughts on social media about how the meeting went and encourage other people to meet their MPs to discuss social care – make sure to share this guide with them! If you're posting online, use **#CareForEquality** and tag us on Twitter **@LclImpact**.

## Contact

If you need further information we're more than happy to help. If you have met with your MP, we'd also love to know how you got on and if they agreed to speak out on social care.

For further information, or to let us know how you get on, please email **[campaigning@leonardcheshire.org](mailto:campaigning@leonardcheshire.org)**

# Care for Equality

Voice your support for urgent social care reform, to ensure equality for all. For more information about the **#CareForEquality** campaign and how to get involved please visit [leonardcheshire.org](http://leonardcheshire.org)

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