

LOBBY ELEMENT: SUBMISSION WRITING

Know where the issue is at and where it is going

Are you raising an issue **cold**, or inputting to an **established** process?

Cold – organise your information and arguments to get the issue on the agenda; aim to touch a raw political nerve.

Established – Has the issue got to Parliament or is it with officials? What is driving the review? What are they really prepared to move on? Organise your information and arguments accordingly.

Know the audience

Write to the level of understanding of the likely audience – both immediate (e.g. back-bench politicians on a Select Committee) and ultimate (e.g. Minister and their advisers). You need to know whose minds you are trying to move.

Talk yourselves up

Start the submission with information on who you or the submitting organisation are; who you represent; why your viewpoint is particularly valid.

Quality or quantity?

Is the priority to produce lots of (similar) submissions or a few special ones? Or a mixture of both? Where does your submission fit into that?

Focus on your special message

What are you uniquely or specially experienced to write about? Can it be backed up by facts or figures? Does it link to a specific amendment or change? – if so, try and detail that.

Work to your strengths

If you have stories to tell, tell them. If you speak better than you write, keep it simple and perform in front of the Committee.

If submitting to a Parliamentary Select Committee, you must state in the submission or cover letter that you wish to speak to your submission – otherwise you may lose the chance.

Make it look as good as it sounds

Aim for 4 pages maximum, with other material put in appendices.

Summarise and use bullet points.

Use visuals and white space effectively.

Make it look professional.

Keep it (quite) short and sweet

Write using clear language.

Tell the truth.

Be constructive – and present amendments etc. in as detailed a way as you can.

Present your argument in a logical order that flows well.

Offer constructive criticism

Don't get personal about the people who will be looking at the submission.

Keep something back

For Select Committees, and most others, you are allowed to present a supplementary submission. This can contain in-depth information on an issue important to you, and/or new information on an issue already raised.

If you plan to do an oral submission, keep something back to raise in your oral submission.