

LOBBY ELEMENT: MEETING DELIVERY

- ten things to remember in the meeting

Not too long	Ask at the start how much time the MP has got – and/or check with their staff member beforehand. Plan your presentation accordingly. If it sounds as though they have lots of time, don't use it all up unless vital.
Keep them involved	You have come to discuss an issue, not lecture the MP about it. Make sure that you don't let your enthusiasm for the issue become a one-sided conversation. Use experiential techniques if appropriate.
Recognise tiredness & boredom	The MP may well be tired. Pick up the signs (snoring, irrational comments...) and focus down to the key points. Maybe even suggest a further meeting if things seem to be getting nowhere. Learn to read signs that MPs have stopped listening. Change the focus onto them; introduce something lighter.....
Follow the lead but stick to the knitting	If the MP wants to talk about something – even irrelevant to the topic – humour them and then try and massage the conversation back to the topic.
Illustrate and justify	When possible, bring issues to life with stories involving people, preferably real people from their Electorate. Don't make exaggerated claims which sound unbelievable and can't be justified.
Stay safe	Avoid entering the MPs danger zone/s.
Know your stuff	Only admit to ignorance if comprehensively cornered. If they ask a question, try and avoid saying that you don't know.
Cope with aggression	The MP may simply loathe the message – or the messenger. Do what comes naturally and won't destroy a potential lobby relationship forever. If possible, maintain your cool and follow rational argument, focusing on the most powerful and irrefutable facts. Be aware that a threat can backfire.
Leave your message	Never leave the MP empty-handed. Prepare something which fits in with your message and reinforces key points. Work through a pre-prepared document which reinforces key points and leave it for the MP to consider...
Make a hit	Leave the MP with some action to undertake. And negotiate yourself the ability to keep the channels of communication open. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow up the meeting with a thank you note or phone call.• Forward any information which the MP requests.• Keep in touch with them from time to time.• Ask them to do something for you which is achievable and keeps you in their mind – and make it easy for them to show support.• Don't plague them with phone calls.