

A guide to meeting your political representative

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for anyone who is interested in meeting their local political representative to raise awareness about secondary breast cancer.

In England this will be your Member of Parliament (MP). In Scotland and Wales health is devolved. This means it is the responsibility of the Scottish and Welsh parliaments. Therefore it would be best to contact your Member of Scottish Parliament (MSP) or Welsh Assembly Member (AM) if you live in Scotland or Wales.

This guide includes all the information you will need to make the meeting a success.



What impact can meeting my local politician have?

Arranging a meeting with your local MP, MSP or AM to talk about your experiences of secondary breast cancer is one of the most effective ways to raise the issue of the disease. It will help encourage them to champion improved care and support for people living with secondary breast cancer in Parliament or the Assembly.

How do I contact them?

Arranging a meeting with your MP, MSP or AM is simple. We have set up [this quick and easy form](#). All you need do is enter your postcode and it will automatically create an email to them.

This email will be much more effective and you will be much more likely to secure a meeting if you personalise it to reflect you and your story.

Where and when is a meeting likely to take place?

The meeting will depend on when you are both available, although it will most likely take place on a Friday in England and Wales or Monday or Friday in Scotland as this is when MPs, AMs and MSPs are in their constituencies.

What should I talk about?

Tell your story and share your experiences

Your MP, MSP or AM will be interested in hearing your story and increasing their understanding of secondary breast cancer. This could be your personal experience of secondary breast cancer that of someone close to you or simply your understanding of the issues surrounding secondary breast cancer.

Issues in your local area

Local politicians are really interested in issues that relate specifically to their local area or constituency, so it is a good idea to keep this in mind when thinking about what you want to say.

Please contact campaigns@breastcancercare.org.uk if you would like information about your local area. This could include whether your local NHS Trust is recording the number of patients with secondary breast cancer or if the NHS Trust or Health Board has trained specialist nurses for people with secondary breast cancer.

Breast Cancer Care's Secondary. Not Second Rate Campaign

Breast Cancer Care's *Secondary. Not Second Rate* campaign found that the care and support for people living with secondary breast cancer isn't good enough. The research showed that:

- The information needs of people with secondary breast cancer were not being met, leaving them feeling isolated and unsupported
- The needs of patients were not being assessed at key points to plan their care, from diagnosis and as their treatment changes
- People with secondary breast cancer were far less likely to have a clinical nurse specialist than those with primary breast cancer

See [here](#) for a summary of the campaign and a full list of recommendations to share with you MP, MSP or AM.

You may like to ask them if they would be happy to tweet (**#SecondaryNotSecondRate**) their support or put out a press release afterwards. We can support you on this by providing a template press release.

Please let us know if you've had a meeting with your local MP, MSP or AM and how it went!

Making the most of your meeting

Once you've had confirmation of a meeting date and time, it's a good idea to make sure you know what you want to say and what you're hoping for. You may want to:

- Get in touch with us, we will be able to help you think about what you want to say and provide local information
- Write down your key points, stats and facts to make sure you cover everything. Consider printing a short summary of your main points to leave behind.

Is there anything else to consider?

You may like to consider raising awareness of secondary breast cancer further by sending a press release detailing the meeting to your local newspaper – if you do want to do this, it is something we can help you with.

If you would like further advice or information don't hesitate to get in touch with us at campaigns@breastcancercare.org.uk.