



**Speak up  
for Care**

# Member Campaigning and Engagement Toolkit

Working with our not-for-profit  
members to Speak Up For Care

**NCF**  
THE NATIONAL CARE FORUM



Updated July 2024

# Contents

**Speak up  
for Care**

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How the Speak Up For Campaign Works.....</b>	<b>4-7</b>
Resources.....	4-5
Amplifying the voices of people.....	6
Supporting wider campaigns and initiatives.....	7
<b>Engaging with the media.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Parliamentary &amp; Local Government Engagement.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Finding your local MP.....	9
Finding your local councillors.....	9
Contacting MPs .....	9-10
Engaging with MPs & councillors.....	10-12
<b>Rules for lobbying &amp; campaigning.....</b>	<b>13-15</b>



## Introduction

Thank you for supporting Speak Up For Care. We have created this toolkit and resources in collaboration with our members following the publication of our social care must-haves for the new government.

It's so vital that our members, up and down the country, join together so that we have a strong, united voice that speaks up for those working in care and those drawing upon care so everyone in parliament and in each constituency hears what we have to say.

Together we want social care to be:

- A doorstep issue for MPs and local councillors
- One of the top priorities of the new government in its first 100 days and beyond
- Better understood by the general public



# How the Speak Up For Care campaign works

The logo consists of a dark blue speech bubble with a yellow outline. Inside the bubble, the words "Speak up" are in white, and "for Care" is in yellow.

## Speak Up For Care

Our Speak Up For Care campaign is designed to encourage providers, the people they support and employ, and their wider families, to use their voices to call for reform of adult social care and highlight its inherent value. The first 100 parliamentary days of the new government will be critical to influencing the policy direction of the new government. Ideally, we want to see visits from politicians to care settings and individuals drawing on care and support as well as care workers. We also want to generate more content featuring the views and opinions of people drawing on care and support and care workers that we can use to strengthen our wider influencing work. Engagement in parliament will also be important and we will seek to involve our members, and the people they employ and support in this.

## Resources

We have created several assets to inspire you, your staff and those receiving your care when thinking about how they can add their voices and join us in Speaking Up For Care. These are purely suggestions and are not intended to be followed to the word, more intended to provide you with ideas and framework for communications so feel free to adapt with your own specific concerns as you wish.

## How the Speak Up For Care campaign works

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for Care**

The suggested assets we've made available in the toolkit are:

- Letter from your provider organisation to your local MP or councillors
- Letter from a care worker to their local MP or councillors
- Letter from a care manager to their local MP or councillors
- Letter from someone receiving your care to their local MP or councillors. This can also be adapted to be sent from a family member, friend or loved one of someone in receipt of care
- Easy read format letter from someone receiving your care to their local MP or councillor
- Easy read format guidance for letter from someone receiving your care to their local MP or councillors
- Letter from your provider organisation to the local media
- Content about the campaign for you to add to your organisation's website to encourage your staff, those receiving your care, and your supporters in the local community to get involved
- Suggested social media posts to help you reach local MPs, councillors and the media
- Social media visual assets

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## Amplifying the voices of people

We want to amplify the voices of the people you support and employ as part of Speak Up For Care. Please do send us case studies, stories, videos, pictures and quotes from these people as this will strengthen our collective voice and calls for reform. These can also be shared on social media with the hashtag '#SpeakUpForCare'. We can also work with you to interview and record the views of the people you support and work with. A few examples of what this might look like can be seen from our work during the election campaign:

- An interview with Isaac Samuels about how social care enables him to live the life he wants to live.
- The work Oaklea has done to ensure that people with learning disabilities and autistic people can vote this election as part of the My Vote, My Voice campaign. First time voters, Sarah and Matt in their own words.
- The thoughts and opinions of the Brandon Adventurers on the party manifestos.
- Ella Deakin-Price, Inclusion Assistant at Community Integrated Care, on why it's important for people to vote.

If you are interested, please email  
[Victoria.Garratt@nationalcareforum.org.uk](mailto:Victoria.Garratt@nationalcareforum.org.uk).

## How the Speak Up For Care campaign works

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### **Supporting wider campaigns and initiatives**

Keep checking back on our [Speak Up For Care campaign page](#) to see other campaigns we are supporting and encouraging members to share and participate in.





# Engaging with the media

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## **Regional Media**

Engaging with local media could be a good way of influencing local councillors and local MPs. This could include local papers, magazines, radio, community organisations etc.

Local media is a good place to reflect on your thoughts, opportunities and key areas you would like new government to focus on and the impact this will make to your service and people you support. It may also allow you to platform their stories and experiences of care, and what needs to change.

Engagement with local media also allows your organisation to place itself as a key organisation at the heart of civil society in your community – something that local politicians need to take heed of.





## **Finding your local MP**

You can identify your current local MP by using the [UK Parliament website](#) and entering your postcode.

## **Finding your local councillors**

You can identify your local councillors by going to your local authority website where there will be a section where you can search for your councillors by postcode and find contact details. If you need to identify which local authority you are part of, enter your postcode on the '[Find your local councillors](#)' tool on the gov.uk website. This will direct you to the relevant local authority website.

## **Contacting MPs**

Every MP has a public facing email address, which you can find on their profile page on the [UK Parliament website](#). This may also list a constituency level email address as well. However, these inboxes can receive a huge amount of correspondence, meaning it can be slow for MPs to respond. MP offices will also have constituency and parliamentary staff – if you can find these email addresses, you may have more success in getting a response to your email. You can either send a letter as an email or attach it as a Word document or PDF. You may also want to post your letter to your MP's constituency office, with many organisations finding this 'old school' method more effective in soliciting a response.

## **Contacting MPs cont/d**

In any correspondence, ensure you include your postcode as MPs may filter emails out which can't be confirmed as coming from a constituent.

As well as using the letter templates we've created, you could also look up whether your MP is part of an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) and/or whether they sit on one of the Parliamentary Select Committees, as well as what have they said or voted for in the past about social care.

The website <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/> is a useful resource to understanding your MP's voting records, what they have said in the House of Commons, and whether they are members of any APPGs and Select Committees.

## **Engaging with MPs and Councillors**

While there are a few different ways to engage with local councillors and MPs, the most effective is for them to visit one of your services as we've suggested in our letter templates.

A visit to your service will help them understand the work you do and the problems you face as a business.



## Engaging with MPs and Councillors cont/d

MPs and Councillors are often keen to show they're engaged with the local community and care about local issues, therefore, visiting a care service is likely to be very appealing to them. We would encourage providers to think about how politicians might visit people living in services based in the community – such as supported housing and day services – as well as residential care services. Before a visit takes place, there are a few things to think through.

### 1. **Put together an agenda**

Having a pre-agreed structure to the visit to get the best use out of the time. This will also help minimise disruption to your team and people you support. Some time should be included for a tour, meeting members of your staff and also people receiving care but you should ensure that people using your service are happy for a visit to take place and are enabled to have their voices heard.

### 2. **Communications**

Politicians will be keen to let local stakeholders and the general public know that they have visited your service. Agreeing in advance whether photos can be taken and scheduling time to take them during the visit is a good idea. These can be shared with your supporters and on your social media channels. You also might want to think about inviting a local journalist along to cover the visit. It would also be advisable to agree wording for any social media posts with the MP beforehand.

## Engaging with MPs and Councillors cont/d

### 3. Present your local data

Be armed with the facts and figures specific to your area so that you can highlight the key issues as they relate to your area as it will be different to other areas and regions and so localise the information to make it relevant. The Care and Support alliance will be running a campaign that will allow this information to be shared easily – we will share with members once ready.

In the meantime, you can look at the following sources for data:

- Skills for Care workforce data
- Local government information on social care access – see your local council website
- AMHP mapping mental health provision and mental health workforce
- NPC local needs database
- Local Government Inform - local area benchmarking tool database
- National Statistics and Trends from the King's Fund



## Rules for Lobbying and Campaigning

Outside of an election period, the Charity Commission for England and Wales has specific guidance on campaigning and political activity for charitable organisations:

[Campaigning and political activity guidance for charities \(CC9\)](#). The short version is that charities should not be party-political.

The Charity Commission uses the term 'political activity' to describe activities or campaigning to change or influence policies or decisions taken by:

- national, devolved, local or overseas government
- public bodies including international organisations such as the UN and World Bank, and national or local organisations such as regulators or NHS Trusts

For example, a charity for homeless people would be engaging in political activity if it argued for a change in the policy and law on how social housing is allocated because of the impact of the current system on homeless people.



## Rules for Lobbying and Campaigning cont/d

You may work with different people to take part in political activity, such as:

- politicians, political candidates or public servants
- the public to obtain support or opposition for a change

Charities can take part in political activity that supports their purpose – e.g. a social care provider campaigning and lobbying government for more funding for social care system to enable providers to deliver care and support services effectively. However, political activity must not become the reason for the charity's existence. Charities must remain independent and must not give their support or funding to a political party – i.e. making the purpose of their activities to encourage support for a specific party. Nevertheless, charities can support a policy that is supported by a political party or candidate. Some examples of legitimate campaigning and lobbying could include engaging with MPs or other political figures, taking part in policy discussions at a party conference, or asking an MP or councillor to speak at an event your charity has organised. In short, while not all NCF members will be registered charities, as not-for-profit organisations we would advise that they adopt a non-party political approach to campaigning and lobbying.



## Rules for Lobbying and Campaigning cont/d

Please do read the full [CCg Charity Commission guidance](#).

**In an election period**, additional rules apply which can be found at the following links:

- Charity Commission: [Charities, Elections and Referendums guidance](#)
- Electoral Commission guidance on [non-party campaigners](#) during parliamentary general election
- Electoral Commission general guidance on [non-party campaigners](#)
- Useful [summary from Bond](#) explaining campaigning rules under the lobbying act during an election period.
- Resource from Bates Wells on [using your charity's voice effectively in run-up to an election](#)

