

Give your MP a ring about the NHS Bill!



Whilst MPs get thousands of emails every week, they receive far fewer phone calls. This is an important chance for you to be heard as a constituent with views they need to listen to - you're far more difficult to ignore on the phone. It can seem intimidating but these kinds of calls are almost always very calm and pleasant - even fun! A small bit of prep goes a long way to making you feel confident enough to pick up the phone...

✓ Top tips:

- Always be polite but don't be afraid to explain why this is a very personal issue that you care about deeply
- Don't go into a lot of detail - the call doesn't need to last more than a few minutes - the important thing is that they get the message that people are so worried about the bill they are picking up the phone to complain (having said that - if they are up for a chat don't be afraid to keep the conversation going)
- Tell them you are campaigning in their constituency to protect the NHS and you will be telling others about the response you get
- Take notes on what they say and make sure you get them to commit to responding by email or writing and leave your contact details

📖 Before the call:

- If you don't know, confirm who your MP is by entering your postcode here: <https://members.parliament.uk/members/Commons>
- Once you find them you should be able to see their contact numbers listed - if it's not there a quick google should help
- Check how they voted on the first vote on the Health & Care Bill - as a guide, all Conservatives voted for the bill except Esther McVey, Andrew Lewer & Phillip Davies: <https://votes.parliament.uk/Votes/Commons/Division/1081#noes>
- Decide what you want to say and have a quick practice - just speak it out loud to yourself or a friend or family member if they're around - it'll help you collect your thoughts
- Remember to be nice and friendly. Even if they disagree with you - you're more likely to get a fair hearing if you're polite!

💡 What to say!

The opening:

- Say hello, introduce yourself, let them know you're a constituent and say that you'd like to speak to the MP about the Health & Care Bill
- The phone will probably be answered by someone in their team and they'll probably tell the MP isn't available. Ask if they'll pass on your message

- Tell them why you care about the NHS:
 - Do you have a short personal story about your recent interactions with the health service? Something like, “Last month I was in for my 6 month check following treatment and the staff were so great - but so obviously exhausted” or “when my mum died two years ago the NHS team caring for her couldn’t have done more for us”
 - Maybe you or a family member works in the NHS?
 - Any kind of personal, emotional story helps to cut through the normal political debate about money and stats
- And say that you are really worried - after ten years of reorganisation and underfunding, with accelerating privatisation and the strain of the pandemic - that this bill is the last thing the NHS needs

Your key points:

- You want to make between one and three key points about why you want them to vote against the bill. You can find more on the bill here, but some top lines are:
 - The power it would hand to private healthcare corporations to shape NHS decisions
 - The lack of transparency in how contracts can be awarded to private companies
 - The concentration of power in Westminster
 - The lack of democratic accountability in the new structures and lack of local patient representation on decision making bodies
 - The threat of a growing postcode lottery for care across the country
- Make your points briefly and clearly - then give them a chance to respond. Listen to what they say but if they argue with you, be firm. The government doesn’t have a good track record of keeping its word - so any assurances that the bill isn’t going to undermine the NHS are not very convincing.

Wrapping up:

- End with a repetition that you are really worried about the impact of this dangerous bill - and ask that the MP votes it down
- Ask that the MP responds to you by email to confirm what their position is
- Thank them for their time!

Notes

There are some amendments being proposed that could make this terrible bill less bad - but we still think the safest thing for the NHS is for MPs to vote against it as a whole. To read more about amendments, and also more details on the dangers of the legislation, you can check out this article from Byline Times:

<https://bylinetimes.com/2021/10/19/trojan-horse-legislation-turning-the-nhs-into-a-28bn-profit-opportunity>

If you do end up calling your MP - we’d love to hear from you! Drop us an email at hello@justtreatment.org and let us know how it went.

