

Engaging with local councillors

Who to contact?

Not every area has the same local government structure. In some areas responsibilities are split between the county and district councils. In other areas, there is a single, unitary authority.

There will be between one and three councillors for your local area. You can find out who your local councillors are on your council's website or the [Write to Them website](#) simply by entering your postcode.

As well as your local councillor, you may wish to contact the relevant cabinet member. Each councillor in the cabinet is responsible for a different area of policy. A list should be available on the council's website.

How to contact them?

It is up to you whether to write to them by letter or by email. Just make sure you include your postcode, either at the top of the letter or as part of the subject line of the email. This helps them identify you as being in their ward.

Be aware that most councillors have jobs outside of their role as a councillor and have many calls on their time. Be succinct and clear about what you would like them to do and why.

Like MPs, local councillors hold regular drop-in 'surgeries' for the people they represent to raise issues with them. Details of when and where these are will be on the council's website. Councils also invite delegations to present to their meetings and take part in a Q&A.

However, depending on the issue you want to raise, arranging a specific meeting or visit to the charity is usually a better way to engage with local councillors.

Local councillors like to attend events that are also photo opportunities, which they can use with the local press or on their own blogs. Think about what suitable activities they could do with your organisation or which volunteers they might be interested to meet.

Focus on local issues, how what you do improves the lives of local people in the area and what is within their power as a councillor to support that.

What next?

Stay in contact with them and invite them to events that you run that may be of interest to them. Proactively building a good relationship with them will help you call on them later should you need their help in a crisis.

Inviting your local councillor to events during [Volunteers' Week](#) (1 to 7 June) is a good place to start.

National Council for Voluntary Organisations

Society Building, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL

T: 020 7713 6161 F: 020 7713 6300 E: ncvo@ncvo-vol.org.uk W: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England. Registration no. 198344. Registered charity no. 225922. Registered office as above.