

**During the Demonstration from noon until 4pm at Old Palace Yard on  
Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009  
Medical Herbalists will undertake a Mass Lobby of their MPs between  
2.00 and 4pm**

What to do before the mass lobby

**1. Arrange to meet your MP on the day**

You can turn up at Westminster any time that the House of Commons is sitting and request a meeting with your MP.<sup>1</sup> However, you should do everything you can in advance to arrange a meeting with your MP. This will also involve less queuing for you. The lobby starts at 2.30pm but we are hoping to get a publicity photo before we go into the Houses of Parliament where photos are *not* allowed. The security requirements for entering Parliament take some time (airport type scanners) and some queuing so we should start the process from 2pm onward, in groups.

The best way to contact your MP is to write to him or her at the House of Commons, Westminster, London, SW1A 0AA. Most MPs also use email, and should treat emails in the same manner as a letter. You can find out your MP's email address at the following website: <http://www.parliament.uk/directories/hciolists/alms.cfm>. Remember to give your home address even in an email, as MPs have a strict rule about dealing only with their own constituents.

**2. Try to get your local radio/TV/newspapers interested in the mass lobby**

Also attached to the email is a model press release you can use. If you are going to use it, send it as soon as possible – that way they might cover the story before and after the event.

**3. Try to get the national media interested in the mass lobby**

If you have any contacts with national radio/TV/newspapers please pass the information on to them. I will be sending out a national press release but there is no substitute for the personal touch.

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<sup>1</sup> An MP should regard you as a constituent whether or not you voted for them.

## What to do on the day of the mass lobby

### **1. Take with you any correspondence from your MP confirming you have a meeting.**

This may shorten the amount of time you have to queue.

### **2. Be prepared if you are taking children**

Bored children to make their own entertainment! There may be journalists present and although some are pro choice in health matters, others will be looking for an opportunity to criticise us.

### **4. Enter through the St Stephen's entrance**

Go in through St Stephen's entrance. You will be stopped in the Cromwell Green search area. Proceed as directed until you reach Central Lobby - the central point in the Palace between the House of Lords and House of Commons.

### **5a. What to do if you have a meeting arranged**

There is a limit of 100 lobbyists at any one time in the Central Lobby.

Before you queue for the security check, inform a police officer or steward that you have a meeting arranged with your MP and show them any correspondence your MP has sent to you. This should allow you to go straight into the security checking area without queuing with the general public for tours of Parliament. Your MP or their staff will usually come to meet you in Central Lobby. You need to go to the desk in Central Lobby and ask the attendants to telephone your MP's office.

### **5b. What to do if you do not have a meeting arranged**

If your MP has agreed to meet you, but not given you any details of where and when, or if you have not already arranged a meeting with your MP, you will need to queue outside St Stephen's entrance. Start at 2pm for this as it can take half an hour, depending on luck.

The police will only allow 100 people, including lobbyists and other visitors, into Central Lobby at any one time. Pass through the security check and proceed to Central Lobby. Once there, go to the desk and ask for "a green card". This is a request for your MP to come and meet you and should be filled in and returned as directed. It is important that you make clear statement your reason for visiting on the card.

This is very important because, if you do not manage to meet with your MP, the card will then be sent on to him or her. Your MP should then respond directly to you and the more he or she knows about why you were at Westminster, the better.

The desk staff will take the card and officials will be asked to look for your MP and let him or her know that you are asking to meet with them. You should wait around for a

while, but don't forget that your colleague lobbyists with firm appointments to meet their MP will also be waiting, so you should be prepared to give up waiting after 20 minutes or so in order to let them in.

### **6. Tight Security**

You will have to go through 'airport type' security to gain access to Parliament - on a busy day this can take at least 15 minutes - and you may need to queue until there is space. You do NOT need any identification documents. Check that you do not have anything that could be construed as an offensive weapon on or with you (eg penknife) and do not wear slogans on clothing, for some reason they don't allow it.

### **7. Disabled Access**

If you are disabled, please telephone the Serjeant<sup>2</sup>-at-Arms' office at the House of Commons, who will advise you of procedures for entering the building. (Phone 0207 219 3000 and ask the switchboard to put you through to the Serjeant's office). The Serjeant's office do allow some parking where required by disabled people, but individuals will need to verify this with the office. It is usual for one of your MPs' staff to accompany you once you enter the building. You will need to arrange this with your MP in advance. Please let me know if you have any special ambulatory needs or require any assistance.

### **8. Meeting your MP**

Use a meeting with your MP to try to:

- Give them the information they need about the Herbal Medicine issue,
- Influence their views with your own knowledge and concerns for both the public's protection and the profession's safety record.
- Explain to them that many of their constituents, some of whom are your patients, want herbalists to be Statutorily Regulated.
- Ask them to raise your concerns with any relevant Ministers by meeting them and by writing to them.
- Ask them to take appropriate action to show that they support your view.

It is best to be as brief, clear and courteous as possible. If they send their researcher instead, treat them in the same way. However, they may send their researcher on ahead of them if they are in the middle of something, and come to you a bit later.

You should thank him or her for taking the time to see you, establish how much time they have, make two or three key points and - most importantly - ask them to follow up the meeting. Briefing notes are useful but make sure you point out how the issues directly affect you, your business, your patients and your family.

Do not be surprised if your MP only has a small amount of time to spare you. MPs

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<sup>2</sup> Yes, this is the correct spelling!

will be very busy on the day, so don't take it personally. But make the most of the time you have with them.

After the mass lobby

**1. Stay in contact with your MP**

Continue to try and meet your MP in their constituency to follow up on what action they have taken or to raise the concerns with MPs you are unable to meet with on the day.

**2. Follow up any local or national media interest**

Have a great day!

(This help sheet is based on one produced by the union Amicus.)