



Meet your MP

A guide for GPMA members



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Why meet your MP?



Make your MP aware of your contribution to the local economy, skills and employment.

MPs can help you achieve your business objectives on a local scale - from solving local planning issues to recruiting local staff.

Promote the industry on a national level, raise business obstacles and make wider change happen.

MPs can help you achieve your business objectives on a national scale - from changes to the tax regime to promoting manufacturing in schools. They are more likely to raise national issues, and GPMA campaign issues, that have a local angle you have raised.

It can also be great publicity, helping spread the word about your products and services.

Step 1.

Who is your MP?



Identify your local MP

- Use www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/
- Enter your businesses' postcode to find the right MP.
- If you are requesting the MP visit your business, make sure you use your company postcode, not your home postcode (you may live in a different constituency).
- An MP is only likely to visit a business in their constituency.

The website will also tell you...

- Whether the MP is from the Government party or from an opposition party. In either case, they are able to raise your concerns with Government. Opposition MPs do help influence policy and make changes to legislation, and may be opinion formers.
- Your MP's position in the party. If they are a Minister or Whip they cannot join the APPG Graphics & Print Media.

Step 2.

Get in touch

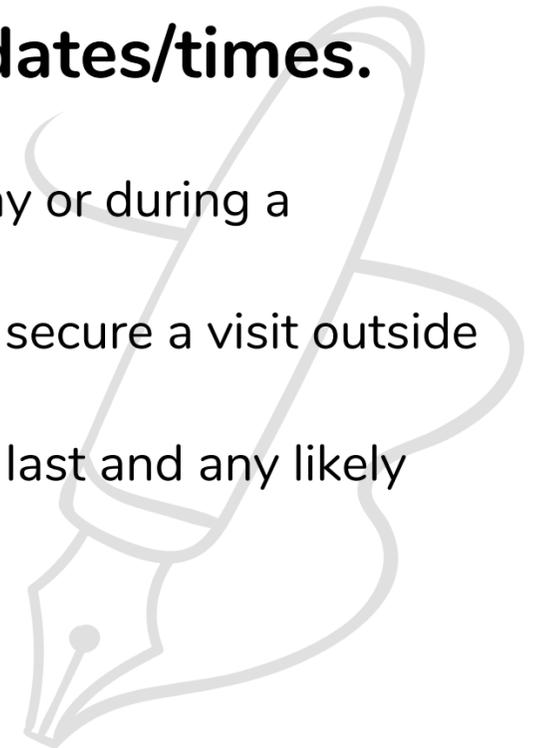


Write to your MP at their local constituency office to request a visit

- If you have a 'hook' the MP might be more likely to attend - for example, new premises/machinery/apprentices or a business anniversary.
- Indicate that you will hope to receive local news coverage/good quality photos from the visit
- Carys or David can draft this for you.

Wait to hear from the MP's staff and allow them to suggest dates/times.

- It's likely they'll suggest a Friday or during a Parliamentary recess.
- It is unlikely you will be able to secure a visit outside of these times.
- Confirm how long the visit will last and any likely talking points.



Step 3.

Planning the visit



Find out about the MP and their interests

- www.parliament.uk
- The MP's own website and social media platforms
- www.theyworkforyou.com
- Or you can ask Carys or David to prepare a biography of the MP for you

Plan the visit

- 45-1 hour is normal for an MP's visit, so decide in advance what you want them to see and hear in in the time available.
- A premises tour, followed by an informal chat over tea/coffee, often works well.
- Decide who is going to meet the MP and brief them in advance.
- The MP should meet staff and apprentices as well as Directors and owners.
- Don't forget to let all staff know that the visit will be taking place.
- Why not ask you local newspaper to send a reporter/photographer along?

Step 4.

During the visit



What to do

- Make sure the MP is aware of what you have planned for the visit.
- Make the MP aware of any health and safety considerations.
- Ensure they are dressed appropriately.
- Show the MP how things work, production processes and what staff actually do on a daily basis.
- If there's an opportunity for the MP to safely try something out, let them have a go!
- Where possible, show results and finished products.
- Don't forget to take photos (see page 10 for tips)

What to talk about

- The MP may never have been inside a premises before, and know little about the industry. Keep it simple and avoid technical jargon!
- Don't be party political, avoid taking sides and stick to the relevant issues.
- Success stories - particularly regarding staff.



Key talking point - your local impact.

You are ideally placed to engage your MP, who will be interested in the local picture and much more likely to listen to a constituent business owner than a national policy officer!

For example, you could talk about:

- How many people you employ from the local area.
- Different types/levels of jobs you provide, both skilled and unskilled.
- Apprenticeships, training and work experience offered.
- How long you've been in business.
- What you do - your services and customer offer.
- Sustainability initiatives.
- Your customer/client base, especially locally and any high-profile customers you have.
- Local partnerships you have.
- Community engagement/volunteering/fundraising you do.



Key talking point - the bigger picture.

As well as your local contribution, use the opportunity to share your industry or sector's national contribution.

Don't forget that most MPs rely on paper-based flyers during election campaigns - this is a great talking point!

For example, you could mention:

- The UK printing sector is an important economic contributor nationally, with a turnover of £11.6bn, Gross Value Added of £4.8bn and employing around 105,000 people in 7,400 companies.
- Print is largely produced using sustainable materials; it is predominantly paper-based, 80% of which is sourced from European forests - 1,500 football pitches every day!
- Campaigns including print are 67% more effective at delivering new customers than those without.
- The coatings sector – including printing ink manufacturing - directly contributes £4 billion a year to the UK economy.
- The coatings sector is a net exporter and 300,000 people are involved in manufacturing, applying or using coatings in the UK.

Check your trade association website for the latest research, policy and messaging.



Top tips - getting good photos.

The better the photos, the more likely they are to be used by local press and by the MP and press on social media. Take several good quality groups photos of the MP with staff but also be sure to take action shots of the MP getting involved.

Things to remember:

- Try to reflect the 'hook' you used to invite the MP - e.g. if there's new equipment, include it in shot.
- Take pictures from a variety of distances and angles.
- Action shots of the MP talking to staff, inspecting equipment, handling products, etc are highly effective.
- Ask the MP to hold some of your products. If you make personalisation products, why not make some with the MPs' name in advance?
- The more visual the better, e.g. the factory floor is better than an office.
- High visibility jackets and hard hats add visual interest.
- If light is poor inside, then outside in front of a company logo, products being packed or branded transport can also work.

Step 5.

At the end of the visit



What to do

- Give your MP a copy of any relevant policy briefings from the GPMA website www.gpma.org.uk
- Ask the MP for a quote you can add to a press release which you will send to them and the local press.
- Ask the MP to join the APPG Graphics & Print Media (they will not be able to do so if they are a Minister or Whip).
- Tell them it is important that the Group has members like them, who understand print and the importance of local/small business.
- Ask the MP to take any other supportive actions you've identified (contact Carys or David or your trade association for more ideas).

Step 6.

After the visit



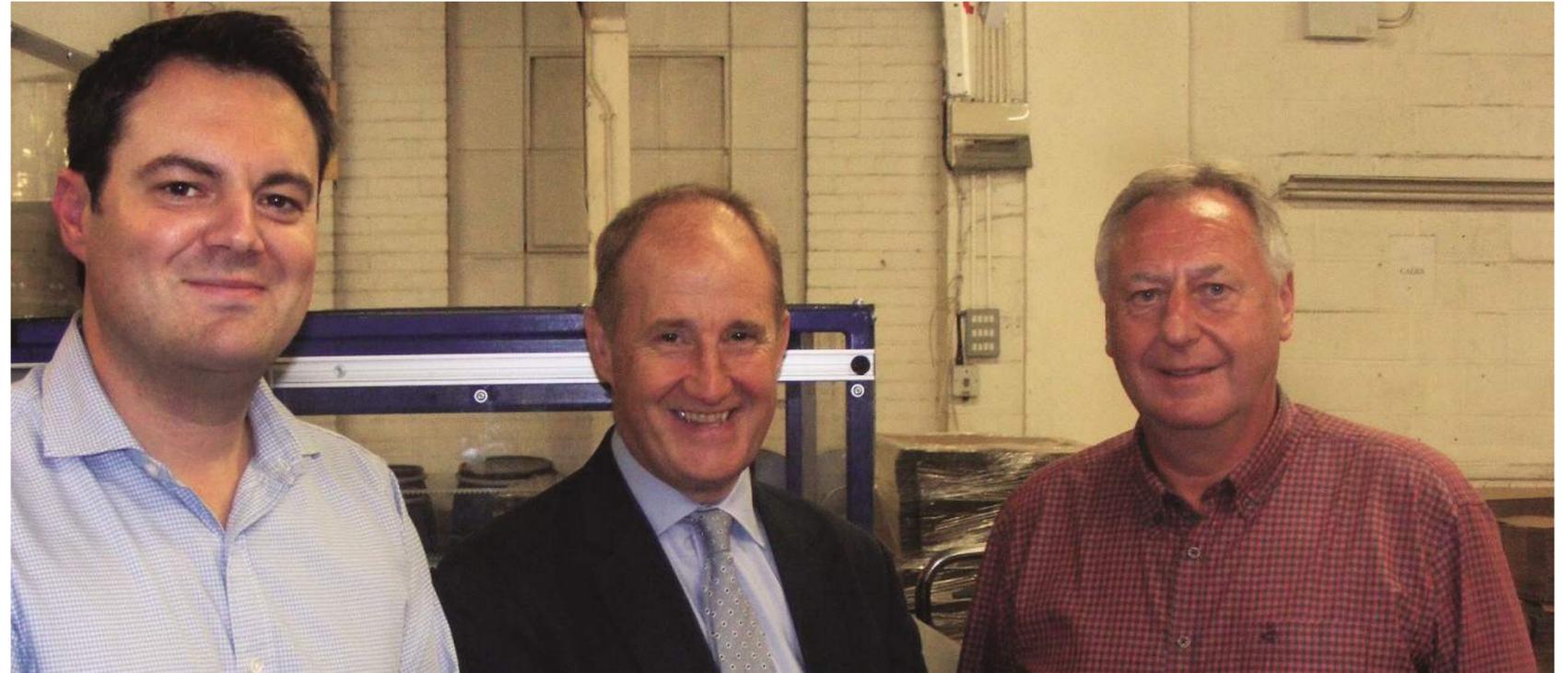
Immediately

- Send a press release and photos to the MP and to your local press.
- Post a thank you message and photo on your business' social media channels, and tag the MP.

Within a day or two

- Send the MP an email thanking them for their time.
- Supply any information you've promised to provide.
- Remind the MP of any support/action they promised to take.
- Going forward, share positive news from your company, tag them in social media and keep them updated. The more positive info you share and regular conversations you have, the easier it is to raise areas of concern or ask for help later.

Case study



"We wanted to mark our recent significant investment in new equipment, so we felt it would be a good opportunity to invite our local MP, Kevin Hollinrake, in for a visit. Kevin met management and staff, and took a real interest in how businesses like ours can innovate with new technology, as well as providing long standing services and employment in the local area.

We now have a relationship with Kevin, who has also joined the APPG Print as a result of his visit. By collaboration such as this he will represent the interests of our business and the print industry as a whole in Parliament."

James Buffoni, Managing Director, Ryedale Group, Kirbymoorside, York

About the GPMA



The Graphics and Print Media Alliance (GPMA) is an alliance of trade associations representing companies operating in the graphics and print media industry supply chain.

Between them, the trade associations represent some 3,471 companies, the majority of which are SMEs. Combined they have an annual turnover of £15 billion and employ 106,000 people.

The objective of the GPMA is to represent the interests of companies operating in the printing industry supply chain. Together we have tremendous potential to act as the co-ordinated voice of business when talking to policy-makers, and great value in terms of quickly disseminating messages about Government policy to our members.

Do you have any **questions?**

Contact us anytime! We can help set up your MP visits.

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