

HOW TO HOLD A SUCCESSFUL MEETING



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Successful meetings can be the deciding factor in gaining support for Votes at 16. Meetings give decision makers a chance to start thinking about whether they are going to support you or not. Having good negotiation skills, a clear and concise message, and being confident are all very important in gaining support for Votes at 16.

This guide will help you do all these things and make sure you're well prepared for your meeting!

SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE YOUR MEETING

Be Prepared: Think about your meeting beforehand ensures you make the most of it when it happens.

Be strict with time: Allow yourself plenty of time before the actual meeting date. During this time make sure you meet up frequently to work out and practice what you will say and how you will present your campaign.

Prepare: After you have worked out what you are saying about all the issues, put it all together before the meeting, and divide it into small sections. Try and make each section as precise, concise, clear, well structured and as brief as possible. Make sure all group members are clear on what you are asking for.

Personal testimony: We found that talking about your personal experience can strengthen your argument and make a real impact. Hearing about your experience helps people relate to your cause. Make sure you know what parts of your personal experience you feel happy to talk about. It might be good to practice your testimony with someone before the meeting. It is important that you only talk about personal information that you are comfortable sharing.

Roles: If you are meeting as a group, allocate different roles (like a chair and timekeeper) and different sections of what you will say, to the members of the group.

Anticipate: Work out different problems that you think might arise at the meeting (for example if the decision maker is not listening properly, or if you run out of time) and work out how you would deal with this. Also, think about what kind of barriers might be raised by decision makers during your meeting and how you will respond to those.

Practice: Practice the presentation and if possible, invite an expert on presentation skills to come and listen to you and give feedback.

Take control: Make sure you take control of your meeting and that you get your message across. If not, your meeting may be directed by someone else's agenda instead of yours.

HOW TO BE CALM AND COLLECTED ON THE DAY

Keeping calm on the day of your meeting is important as it will help you to get your points across clearly and help the meeting run smoothly. On the day of your meeting it is important to:

BE FRIENDLY:

This is important as people are more likely to listen to what you have to say if they feel as though you are being nice. It shows them you are genuine.

TELL THE PERSON YOU APPRECIATE THEY HAVE TAKEN THE TIME TO MEET YOU:

This shows that you respect the opportunity the person you are meeting has given you to discuss the issue.

MAKE EYE CONTACT:

Making eye contact is a good way to show that you are confident about what you are saying and comfortable enough to explain what your issue is and its importance.

SPEAK CLEARLY:

Clear speaking ensures that people hear and understand what you are saying. If they don't understand the points you are making, they are unlikely to support your issues.

PAUSE AFTER YOU SAY THINGS:

This gives people the chance to take in and process any information you have said and given them. This also helps them to better understand the issue and so are more likely to support it.

TO TRY NOT TO SPEAK TOO FAST:

Again, it's important that the person or people that you are meeting understand the points you are making. Speaking too fast makes it difficult to hear what you're saying and also suggests you're very nervous. It's okay to be a little bit nervous, but remember, confidence is key.

BE POLITE IF YOU HAVE TO INTERRUPT ANYONE:

Being impolite is considered disrespectful and people respond negatively when they feel that someone has been rude. It's important to be polite so that you can gain further support.

TALK ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THE ISSUE:

Showing the human side of issues help people to better understand just how much they affect young people, and how much they care about them.

MAKE SURE YOU STICK TO THE TIME:

Everyone's time is valuable and sticking to time demonstrates that you know this. It also helps you stick to the key points you have to make and not to go off on a tangent.

HOW TO NEGOTIATE

Here are some tips on how you can become an expert negotiator and ensure that you build support for Votes at 16.

- 1 Know What You Want:** Any skilled negotiator knows what they want from the start of the meeting. Do you want your MP to talk about votes at 16 in Parliament or your local journalist write an article? You need to break down exactly what you want and by when.
- 2 Do Your Research:** Before going to the meeting make sure you know as much as you can about the person you are speaking to. Google them and see if they have any interest in the issue.
- 3 Rehearse Your Opening:** Make certain that you know exactly what it is you want to say. Use your family and friends and try to win them over.
- 4 Ask Powerful Questions:** Asking powerful questions is an essential skill for every negotiator. For example, asking “Why do you think 16 and 17 year olds should be denied the vote, despite paying tax?” is a more punchy way of saying “Why don’t you support lowering the voting age?”
- 5 Don’t be Afraid to Challenge:** Listen carefully to what is being said, be curious and ask for clarification on points.
- 6 Listen:** Make sure to listen to what is being said. It sounds like an obvious point but if you don’t listen carefully it is easy to mishear and misjudge.
- 7 Be Polite and Friendly:** Even if the person you are speaking to disagrees with you make sure you are polite and friendly. Building up a positive relationship could mean that they change their mind over time.