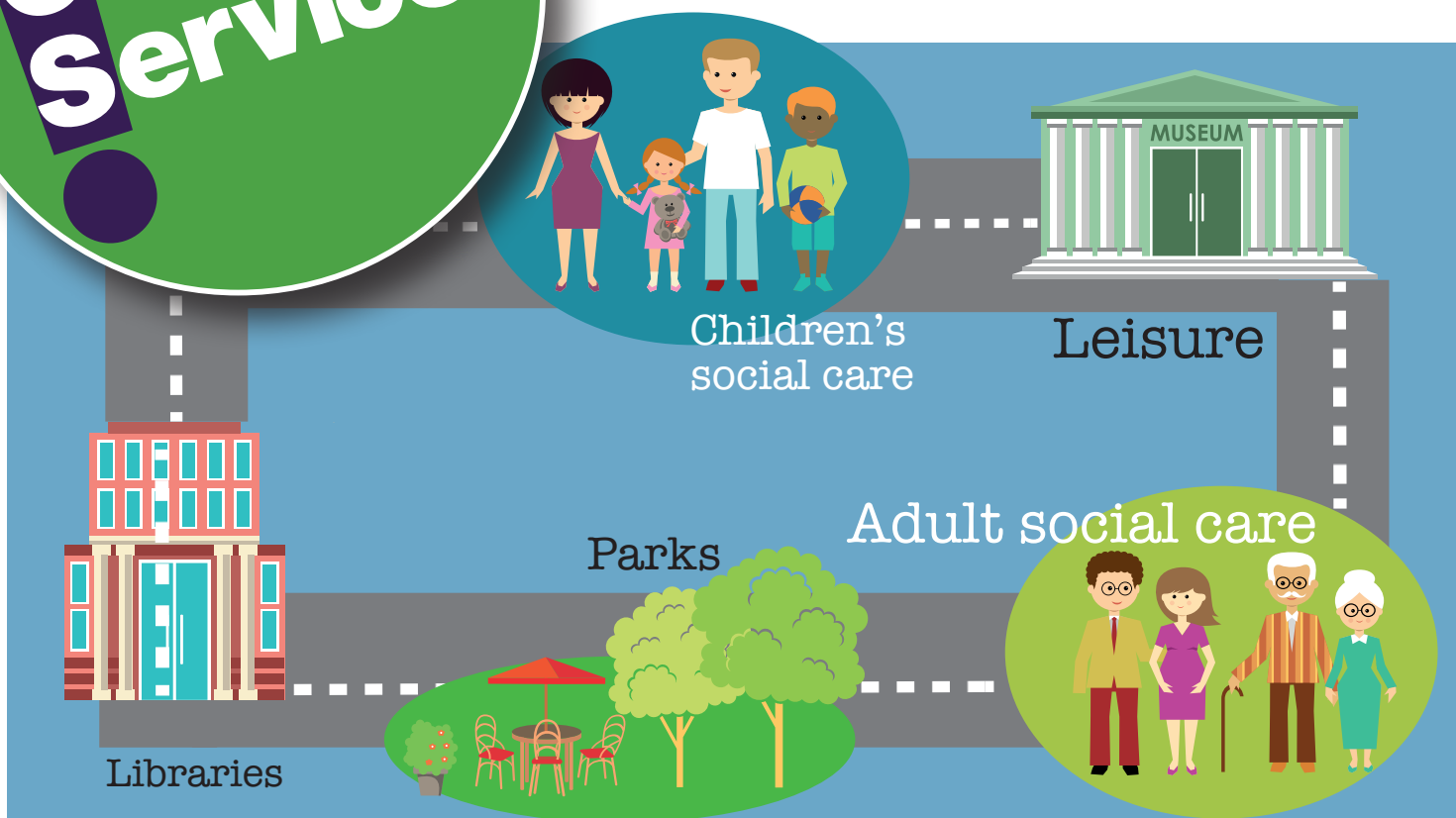




LOBBYING GUIDE



It's time to end government spending cuts

UNISON is campaigning to end Westminster's savage spending cuts. These cuts are disastrous for councils across the UK and for the people who work in them. Cuts have caused thousands of people to lose their jobs and councils are struggling to meet the needs of local communities. It's UNISON members who are picking up the pieces – overworked, under pressure and under-valued. Enough is enough.

UNISON is campaigning for the Government to increase the money that they give to councils. But to campaign effectively we need your help.

Lobby your MP!

We are asking every UNISON member to contact their MP to put pressure on the Government to increase the money that they give your council to provide services and keep jobs safe.

It is a good time to put pressure on MPs. We want to make sure they hear our demands before the Government announces its budget in November.

You, our members, can make a huge difference. UNISON has 600,000 members working in local government. It only takes about ten letters for a politician to start to take notice. Imagine the impact even if only 10% of members like you make contact. Your voice as an individual voter is powerful.

UNISON is running a national campaign to Save Our Local Services by investing more money into councils, but local lobbying is extremely effective. Politicians will tend to give more attention to a visit or a letter from a constituent than from an organisation – even those they support. Few politicians have such large majorities that they can take voters for granted, and most want a reputation as a good MP. Your visit or letter could make all the difference in influencing what issues your MP decides to focus on.

How do I contact my MP?

You can phone their office, visit their surgery, write to them by letter or email, or contact them on Facebook or Twitter.

You can ask to attend their local surgery or ask for a meeting.



Surgery and contact details are usually available from your MP's website or local library. Or you can contact them direct via <https://www.writetothem.com/>

Let your local UNISON branch know you are going so they can support you if needed.

Some key points to remember:

- Let them know you live in their constituency
- Be polite and keep your message short
- Make sure the information you provide is factually accurate. (You can provide a link to our latest report on council cuts)
- Stick to one issue, funding cuts, to avoid over burdening or confusing your MP
- Be clear about what you are asking them to do – call on Government to increase funding for local councils
- Ask for a reply
- Make sure you include your name, address and telephone number in any correspondence
- Write in your own individual style – personal communications have more impact than standard letters.
- Send a copy of any reply from your MP to UNISON at SOS@unison.co.uk
- Tweet @unisondamage once you've seen your MP and tag them! If you can get a photo with them too – even better.

unison.org.uk/saveourservices

What arguments can I use?

It's important to tell your MP your story. Let them know how cuts in your council are affecting you at work and at home as well as the people who rely on council services.

But you can also tell them about UNISON's latest survey of over 21,000 members working in councils and schools called "Councils at Breaking Point". Here are some of the key findings:

- Nine in ten council workers are not confident in the financial future of their council
- Eight in ten are not confident about the future of local services
- Only 14% think that the vulnerable are safe and cared for

But our members are also at breaking point

- 83% say that budget cuts in the past two years have had an impact on their ability to do the job the best they can
- 89% say that budget cuts have had a negative impact on staff morale
- Most people say their workload is unmanageable, jobs have been cut and that they do not feel secure in their job.
- 60% work beyond their contracted hours

If all this sounds familiar to you, you can help us campaign today by getting in touch with your local UNISON branch and asking them to support you to lobby your MP. Find out more about the campaign at unison.org.uk/saveourservices

Without more money, services will continue to be overstretched and neighbourhoods will decline. The vulnerable will be put at further risk and the workforce will suffer as skilled and experienced staff continue to leave as stress levels skyrocket.

Tell your friends and colleagues about UNISON's campaign to end the cuts and encourage them to join UNISON if they are not already a member
join.unison.org.uk

