



# The English UK lobbying toolkit

Practical campaigning tips for English UK members

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## English UK's public affairs campaign

Awareness of the importance of our ELT sector has risen during the past few years thanks to everyone's hard work, and we need this momentum to continue.

It is important that we keep up the pressure to remind ministers, opinion-formers and stakeholders of the importance of international students coming here from all over the world to learn English. The English UK team is working hard to do this, but we still need your help to update individual MPs and influence grassroots opinion.

What are we working for? Our full campaign aims are below, but in general we are looking for a visa regime which is straightforward for short-stay students, makes it as easy as possible for junior groups to travel, and meets the industry demand for seasonal staff. We are also working towards wider changes which will increase the UK's attractiveness to international students.

We encourage members to lobby their MPs, assembly members and prospective parliamentary candidates, and to use social and traditional media to share positive and engaging stories about our industry and the people who come here to study.

Some members are already doing this very successfully, and we have created this lobbying toolkit to help you get started.

### **What do we want to achieve?**

1. Offer visa-free study travel for students from EU/ EEA countries.
2. Continue ID card travel for EU/ EEA teenagers on short courses in the UK, or create a passport free joint travel document for group travel for students aged 18 and under
3. Create a light-touch, flexible, short-term study visa for up to a year with no time restrictions for all ELT students.
4. Allow all students already studying in the UK to apply for a new visa for further study without leaving the country.
5. All English language providers to be accredited and recognise Accreditation UK on all visa routes.
6. Ensure EEA nationals essential to staff ELT centres during summer peak periods are not prevented from returning annually by visa rules or salary thresholds.
7. Restore work rights of up to 20 hours a week for 18+ students on ELT courses with all accredited providers.
8. Maintain Erasmus+ relationships and funding, including for short-term teacher training.

Please do what you can to campaign with us and let us know what you're doing. Don't forget to share your successes and tell us if we can help with any problems.

[publicaffairs@englishuk.com](mailto:publicaffairs@englishuk.com)  
[englishuk.com/campaigning](http://englishuk.com/campaigning)

## Working with opinion-formers

### Contact your local MP/ MSP/ AM

Start with the representative of the constituency in which your centre is based, but you can also contact the representative covering your home address. It's also worth nurturing a relationship with the main opposition candidate in your constituency.

Find your representative here:

- [www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps](http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps)
- [www.parliament.scot/msps](http://www.parliament.scot/msps)
- [www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgMemberIndex](http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgMemberIndex)

### Arranging a meeting

Contact your representative's office and explain your language centre is in their constituency and that you would like to discuss issues affecting it, ideally on site. You can use our template letter below for this. If you don't get a response within a couple of weeks, follow up until you do.

You can also visit your representative's surgery, but only if you have a specific problem.

Research your representative. Have they been an English language teacher? What are their interests? Use [www.theyworkforyou.com/mps](http://www.theyworkforyou.com/mps)

Prepare for the meeting: try to get homestay hosts, staff and students involved to talk to your representative. Consider working with other local English UK member centres.

Finally, invite your local media (local representatives love publicity) but in case they don't come, be ready to take good photographs and prepare a short press statement to send out afterwards.

### During the meeting

- ✓ Be positive
- ✓ Use the English UK infographic to explain the size and importance of the UK ELT industry
- ✓ Talk about what your centre brings to the local and community life
- ✓ Emphasise the quality of UK ELT
- ✓ Be prepared to answer tricky questions about student visa abuse, bogus colleges and so on.
- ✓ Highlight challenges your centre faces and ask what their party/ the Government plans to do to help businesses like yours
- ✓ Introduce the MP to students, homestay hosts and staff
- ✓ Remember to ask the MP to do your 'ask' – and offer to help them as well.
- ✓ Take photos and agree a quote for a press release, your website and social media (even if a journalist attended your meeting).

### **What should you ask for?**

Your representative will expect you to have at least one objective for the meeting. We would like you to ask them to work for:

- A supportive immigration regime for ELT, including visa-free study travel for students from EU/EEA countries, ID card travel or group travel document for under-18s, flexible study visa of up to one year, and in-country applications for further study visas
- Accreditation of all English language providers and recognition of Accreditation UK on all visa routes
- Immigration rules which allow EEA nationals needed during summer peak periods are not prevented from returning annually by visa rules or salary thresholds
- Restoration of work rights of up to 10 hours a week for 18+ students on ELT courses with all accredited providers.
- Maintenance of the Erasmus+ relationships and funding, including for short-term teacher training

### **Following up and relationship building**

Your aim is to build a working relationship with your representative and their staff as well as getting them to lobby for you. That may mean you supporting them too, for instance by helping provide content for constituency newsletters or sourcing case histories on how government initiatives are affecting constituents.

Directly after the meeting

- Thank them for coming, confirm action points and ask them to keep you informed on progress
- Write your press release, upload it to your website and post on social media. Also send it to local newspapers and radio and your representative's office.

In the following weeks and months

- Follow up on your ask
- Keep your representative informed of any developments
- Consider organising a wider meeting of local ELT centres and the local representative
- Invite the representative to your centre for events and try to publicise these on your website, social media and with press releases.

### **Tell English UK about it**

We are lobbying government, civil servants, ministers and MPs ourselves and with other industry groups and it is important to co-ordinate our efforts.

Please let us know about progress on meeting your representatives. How helpful were they? And tell us if they write letters on your behalf or report back from ministers. It's also useful to know if your representative is particularly supportive as we are always looking out for friendly influencers.

Please contact [publicaffairs@englishuk.com](mailto:publicaffairs@englishuk.com)

## Template letter to parliamentary candidates

Dear [NAME],

Supporting the English language teaching industry in your constituency

I am the [TITLE] of [CENTRE NAME], an accredited English language teaching centre in your constituency. We employ at least [XX] staff and indirectly support other jobs through teaching around [XX] students each year, most of whom stay in local homes and boost the incomes of those families.

We and our trade association, English UK, are concerned that our industry will suffer serious harm if post-Brexit immigration arrangements do not take its needs into account and I would like to discuss this with you.

The UK's English language teaching (ELT) industry is one of the world's biggest, bringing around 550,000 students here each year, 60% from the EU.

The most recent analysis by Capital Economics for English UK showed that in 2017 our industry supported 37,500 jobs, adding around £1.4bn to the economy. That's a higher value to the UK than our fishing industry.

[INSERT THE RELEVANT REGIONAL PARAGRAPH HERE]

The benefits from ELT are more than financial. Students develop a strong affinity to the UK, which will contribute and support our global relationships outside the EU. A very high percentage return for higher-level study at one of our world-class universities, for work, or for a holiday. Many succeed in their own countries, with the potential to influence partnerships with the UK at the highest levels.

Our challenge is that ELT is a maturing market. The UK faces increasing competition from the USA, Australia, Canada, Ireland and Malta, which have simple, friendly visa policies. All these financial, employment and other benefits may be at risk if we don't get our immigration regulations right.

A supportive immigration regime for ELT, including visa-free study travel for students from EU/EEA countries, ID card travel or group travel document for under-18s, flexible study visa of up to one year, and in-country applications for further study visas

- Accreditation of all English language providers and recognition of Accreditation UK on all visa routes
- Immigration rules which allow EU teaching staff needed during summer peak periods are not prevented from returning annual by visa rules or salary thresholds
- Restoration of work rights of up to 10 hours a week for 18+ students on ELT courses with all accredited providers.
- Maintenance of the Erasmus+ relationships and funding, including for short-term teacher training.

Could we meet to discuss this? I would like to welcome you to our centre where you could meet our staff and students, but would be happy to come to your constituency office.

Please contact me if you require any more information.

Yours sincerely, [NAME]

## Regional paragraphs for your letter

Not sure which region you're in? Visit [englishuk.com/campaigning](https://englishuk.com/campaigning) for a helpful map.

### **North East**

In our region alone, ELT students support 710 jobs of which 70 are in teaching centres. The gross value added to our region by ELT was £32m, of which £3m is the direct effect of students' spending on their courses. The rest comes from spending on suppliers, by ELT employees, and by the leisure spending of students and their visitors during their stay in the UK.

### **North West**

In our region alone, 2,910 jobs are supported by ELT students of which 550 are in ELT centres. The gross value added to our region by ELT was £120m, of which £20m is the direct effect of students' spending on their courses. The rest comes from spending on suppliers, by ELT employees, and by the leisure spending of students and their visitors during their stay in the UK.

### **Yorkshire and The Humber**

In our region alone, 2,020 jobs are supported by ELT students, of which 440 are in the teaching centres. The gross value added to our region by ELT was £84m, of which £16m is the direct effect of students' spending on their courses. The rest comes from spending on suppliers, by ELT employees, and by the leisure spending of students and their visitors during their stay in the UK.

### **East Midlands**

In our region alone, 2,020 jobs are supported by ELT students of which 160 are in ELT centres. The gross value added to our region by ELT was £64m, of which £6m is the direct effect of students' spending on their courses. The rest comes from spending on suppliers, by ELT employees, and by the leisure spending of students and their visitors during their stay in the UK.

### **West Midlands**

In our region alone, 1840 jobs are supported by ELT students of which 290 are in ELT centres. The gross value added to our region by ELT was £79m, of which £11m is the direct effect of students' spending on their courses. The rest comes from spending on suppliers, by ELT employees, and by the leisure spending of students and their visitors during their stay in the UK.

### **East**

In our region alone, 2,970 jobs are supported by ELT students of which 720 are in ELT centres. The gross value added to our region by ELT was £116m, of which £26m is the direct effect of students' spending on their courses. The rest comes from spending on suppliers, by ELT employees, and by the leisure spending of students and their visitors during their stay in the UK.

### **London**

In our region alone, 7810 jobs are supported by ELT students of which 2,100 are in ELT centres. The gross value added to our region by ELT was £310m, of which £75m is the direct effect of students' spending on their courses. The rest comes from spending on suppliers, by ELT employees, and by the leisure spending of students and their visitors during their stay in the UK.

### **South East (including Oxford)**

In our region alone, 7230 jobs are supported by ELT students of which 2140 are in ELT centres. The gross value added to our region by ELT was £275m, of which £77m is the direct effect of students' spending on their courses. The rest comes from spending on suppliers, by ELT employees, and by the leisure spending of students and their visitors during their stay in the UK.

### **South West (including Bournemouth)**

In our region alone, 4270 jobs are supported by ELT students of which 1,510 are in ELT centres. The gross value added to our region by ELT was £164m, of which £54m is the direct effect of students' spending on their courses. The rest comes from spending on suppliers, by ELT employees, and by the leisure spending of students and their visitors during their stay in the UK.

### **Wales**

In our region alone, 1300 jobs are supported by ELT students of which 330 are in ELT centres. The gross value added to our region by ELT was £52m, of which £12m is the direct effect of students' spending on their courses. The rest comes from spending on suppliers, by ELT employees, and by the leisure spending of students and their visitors during their stay in the UK.

### **Scotland**

In our region alone, 2560 jobs are supported by ELT students, of which 390 are in ELT centres. The gross value added to our region by ELT was £110m, of which £14m is the direct effect of students' spending on their courses. The rest comes from spending on suppliers, by ELT employees, and by the leisure spending of students and their visitors during their stay in the UK.

### **Northern Ireland**

In our region alone, 540 jobs are supported by ELT students of which 90 are in ELT centres. The gross value added to our region by ELT was £23m, of which £3m is the direct effect of students' spending on their courses. The rest comes from spending on suppliers, by ELT employees, and by the leisure spending of students and their visitors during their stay in the UK.



# Building a positive media profile

## Why work on your media profile?

It will help both your centre and the wider industry to have positive content and stories on social and local media, especially at a time when immigration is at the top of the political agenda.

Raising your profile with the media and within the local community will help people understand the benefits your centre brings. Building a relationship with the local media also means that if there is an unhelpful story about our sector or your centre, you are likely to have a friendly journalist willing to put your side of the story.

It's easier than you might think

Most newspapers and radio stations have a small team of staff who rarely get out of the office to cover stories. This means contacts who provide good tip-offs, good press releases – and crucially, good photographs – stand a high chance of getting their story used.

## Six steps to using local media

1. Do some research

Look at your local paper and its website, listen to your local radio station. What kind of stories do they cover? Are there phone-in/ drivetime programmes? Look for names of journalists and producers.

2. Get in touch (with a good reason)

You could ask to comment on a current story, invite them to an event or an MP's visit, or have a press release (see below) and photo for them.

3. Tell them what the story is

This could be through a good clear email or a press release. The more work you do (and the more realistic you are) the better your chances that it will be used.

4. Make sure your story is interesting

Newspapers and radio stations need to entertain their audience. For instance, if your story is about visa problems affecting your centre, talk about the impact this might have on jobs or homestay hosts.

5. Always include a photo

Photos bring life to a piece and grab a reader's attention so may make the difference between a story being published or not. Make sure it's good and high-resolution. If your representative visits, make sure they meet staff members/ homestay hosts/ students who are happy to be named and photographed.

6. Keep up contact

Try to build a relationship by supplying nice stories or useful quotes regularly. Ways of doing this might be to run regular charity events, where staff/ students help the local community, or for you/a staff member to become a media "expert" on something.

## Writing a press release

Writing a good press release takes a bit of work.

Before you start, think about your audience – what will catch the reader's eye? Could you make what you want to say more relevant or interesting? You don't want journalists to routinely bin your emails.

1. Make sure your release includes the big five: Who? What? Where? When? Why?
2. Try to tell most of the story in the first three paragraphs.
3. Add some lively quotes.
4. Explain what your centre is and its value to the local community.
5. Include good photographs.

## Using social media

Many ELT centres use this to connect with students, but it's also a brilliant way of connecting with your local community and media.

- Upload press releases to your website and use Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn to publicise them.
- Follow/interact with local businesses and community activists across social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook and Instagram).
- Follow local journalists, MPs, councillors and stakeholders on Twitter – they are likely to

follow you back (so can see what you're doing) and you can also contact them via direct message.

- Keep an eye on what everyone else is posting – can you join threads and conversations and build up a following?
- Include relevant, industry hashtags on Twitter such as [#UKELT](#) and [#intled](#)
- Include the handle for your local representatives when sharing news of their visit on Twitter,
- include our handles [@englishuk](#) and we can retweet you

## Tell us about your triumphs

If you get a great story into your local paper, website or radio station, share it with us using:

[publicaffairs@englishuk.com](mailto:publicaffairs@englishuk.com)  
[englishuk.com/campaigning](http://englishuk.com/campaigning)