

Your guide to...

WRITING A LETTER

View the full toolkit at kit.riveractionuk.com

This guide aims to provide an overview of letter writing as a campaigning strategy, and signpost to useful resources.

Writing a letter or email to local officials and representatives is a direct and formal way to express concerns and demand action. It is an opportunity to directly address those in positions of authority. The personalised and diligent nature of a letter allows for the recipient to resonate more deeply and stands out amidst the sea of digital communications.

WHAT CHANGE SHOULD I BE ASKING IN MY LETTER?

For letter writing to be an effective campaigning strategy it is important that the person you are writing to is in a position to enact the desired change, influence the relevant decision making process, or be responsible for addressing the issue.

For example, local councils, mayors, and local MP's have certain powers and responsibilities that allow them to govern and enact change at the local level. This includes local planning applications, waste management, and public services and infrastructure. They want to know how their constituents feel about issues that they are responsible for.

You can find out who your local representatives are by visiting your local council website, or for MP's check the [parliament website](#).

Water companies also often have local departments and queries offices, however the letter will likely be handled by an administrative or query related team, rather than someone in a position of authority. You can find the contact details for your water and sewage company from the [Water UK website](#).

See this [template letter](#) to send to your water company.

FIVE TIPS FOR WRITING A LETTER:

1 Asks

Outline clear, concise demands or questions. What are you asking the recipient to do? What do you want to know? By demanding answers you put pressure on the recipient. The manner in which they respond can give great ammunition to a campaign.

2 Information

Include a small amount of background information to back up the demand.

3 Impact

Emphasise how the issue impacts you, and the extent of the impact across the community to add a personal touch. Use emotive and urgent language.

4 Length and structures

Start by explaining why you are writing, and go on to clearly outline the issue, impact and conclude with your demands. Keep the letter coherent and concise to add impactfulness.

5 Requests

Politely requesting a response or commitment to action can apply pressure to the recipient and add credibility to your letter.

You can download our template letter to your local representatives [here](#).

You can download our template letter to your water company [here](#).







Useful resources:

- [What your MP can do for you](#)
- [Organising a letter writing campaign](#)
- [How to write a letter to a politician](#)

NEXT STEPS





After sending your letter, it's important to stay proactive and continue your efforts whether you receive a response or not.

If you do receive a response:

-  **Acknowledge and thank:**
Start by acknowledging the response and thanking the recipient for their time. This helps maintain a positive relationship.
-  **Analyse the response**
Carefully review the content of the response. Look for any commitments, promises, or actions they mention.
-  **Follow up**
If the response includes promises or commitments, follow up periodically to check on the progress. Send polite reminders if necessary.
-  **Share the response**
Share the response with your community, social media, and campaign group. This can help to build momentum and inform others about the position of the authority or company.
-  **Analyse the response**
Carefully review the content of the response. Look for any commitments, promises, or actions they mention.
-  **Escalation and Further Actions**
Depending on the response you can consider escalating the issue to higher authorities, releasing it to the media, or even organising some **campaigning** if it's an unsatisfactory response.

More on next page

If you do not receive a response:

-  **Send a Follow-Up Letter**
Wait for a reasonable period, typically two to three weeks, before sending a follow-up letter. Politely reiterate your concerns and request a response.
-  **Escalate the Issue**
If there's still no response, consider escalating the issue. Contact higher authorities, local media, or public forums to highlight the lack of response. **Social media** platforms such as twitter are also great for raising awareness and holding people to account.
-  **Engage the Community**
Mobilise your community to send additional letters or emails. A larger volume of correspondence can put more pressure on the recipient to respond and act.
-  **Persistence**
Keep up the pressure to ensure you get a reply of satisfactory standard. Whilst it might seem to no avail, pressuring those responsible and holding them accountable is a key part of the fight to rescue our rivers. If you think that they are in breach of your legal rights, such as the freedom of information act, have a look at our **legal rights** section.