

Local campaigner toolkit

Time to Test Summer Challenge

This handy guide sets out simple steps to campaign in your local area to make sure all bowel cancer patients are tested at diagnosis for Lynch syndrome. There are three simple ways to get involved and make positive change happen. By campaigning together locally we can make a real difference and ensure all bowel cancer patients are tested for Lynch syndrome no matter where they live.

You can also check out our [Time to Test Campaigner Briefing](#) which sets out everything you need to know about improving identification of Lynch syndrome. Before you start, find out if your hospital is testing all bowel cancer patients for this genetic condition.

Top tips

Speak to the people with the power - the people who make the decisions and can bring about change need to know the extent of the problem to be able to change it.

Inspire your local community - if you can demonstrate that the problem is felt by others in your local area, you're more likely to be listened to.

Bring people together - try to get all the right people together to discuss the issue.

Step 1 – Contact the people with the power

Members of Parliament are elected to represent the interests of constituents like you and having their support can really help. They can be useful in contacting and influencing local decision makers or getting publicity for your campaign.

Contact your MP - Use our online tool to [email your MP](#) and ask them to raise their concerns with your local health bodies. If your first email doesn't get a response, be persistent and chase it up with a second email or phone call.

Meet your MP - Meeting decision makers is one of the best ways to get your message across so it's worth asking for a meeting with your MP. Always do your research by finding out their responsibilities and their interests to enable you to engage with them effectively. Find out more about your local MP using [‘They work for you’](#).

Not getting a satisfactory response from your MP?

Contact your Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) – CCGs are the local budget holders for health services and should be funding local hospitals to carry out Lynch syndrome testing. They have a duty to involve their patients, carers, and the public in decisions about the services they fund.

[Use this template](#) to send an email or write a letter to explain the problem and how it's affecting local people. Find their contact details on the [NHS Choices website](#).

Contact your local Healthwatch - Healthwatch gives patients and members of the public the opportunity to influence how local health and care decisions are made. You can [contact your Healthwatch](#) to tell them that all bowel cancer patients aren't being tested for Lynch syndrome despite clinical guidance. Why not use our handy [template letter](#)?

Step 2 – Inspire others locally to join the campaign

If you've contacted local decision makers and had a disappointing response, it's time to inspire others to get on board with your campaign. The more people raising the problem of Lynch syndrome testing, the more pressure it will put on local health bodies to act.

Social media - using social media platforms is a great way to spread the word about your campaign. Twitter and Facebook can be used to contact decision makers, other local groups or build a network of supporters in your local area. Use #TimeToTest and don't forget to tag us [@bowelcanceruk](#).

Online activity - write a blog or post comments on online message boards and send an email to friends and family asking them to support your campaign.

YouTube - make a short video about why this is so important to you and upload it to YouTube. You can share the link to your video using Facebook or Twitter.

Step 3 – Make noise publicly

If decision makers still aren't listening, use the media as a last resort to publicise the problem and encourage more people to join the campaign and take action.

Use local media – contact your local newspaper, radio station or TV station to raise the issue. Write to the editor of your local newspaper using our [template letter](#). We'll even give you some tips for approaching the media.

Don't forget we're here to support you if you need it, so please get in touch at campaigns@bowelcanceruk.org.uk if you'd like any advice on the steps listed here or to request additional resources, like a template press release.