

How can I get my council to pass a motion in support of the Nuclear Ban Treaty?



This guide provides an overview of tactics you can use to lobby your council to support the Nuclear Ban

While it's tempting to send a letter or e-mail straight to your local Mayor, it's often more effective to go through connections you may already have in your council.

Here's a rough step-by-step guide to getting a motion discussed at your local council:

Do your research

1. Find out your council's political makeup. Most have a ruling party that forms a cabinet and sets the policy agenda. You will have to adjust your tactics depending upon this.
2. Find your council's forward plan, which lists the key decisions they are focussing upon in the month ahead and will help you decide whether it is an opportune moment to bring forward a motion.
3. Research whether any councillors are natural allies and have expressed support for TPNW or nuclear disarmament.
4. Check whether any councillors are health professionals, because this may align them to Medact's work.

Contact a councillor

1. **Do you know a councillor on your local council?** If you don't, consider who you may know that does and ask to be put in touch with them.
2. Contact them to ask for a chat and **see if they would consider proposing a motion to the council** to endorse the ICAN Cities Appeal or Mayors for Peace, in favour of the TPNW.
3. When getting in contact you can:
 - a. use [our template email](#)
 - b. attach [our briefing on the health and environmental impacts of nuclear weapons](#)
4. Or you can find the details of the councillor's next online surgery meeting on the council's website and book an appointment.
5. Even better if you're able to explain why **this is a local issue** that people care about! Perhaps nuclear weapons convoys travel nearby your area, your town has a history of peace activism, or your town is twinned with one affected by nuclear weapons.

Meeting a councillor

1. Councillors are very busy so be clear and concise.
2. Establish yourself as a reliable source of information - draw upon your experience & perspective as a health worker.
3. Try to discuss & ask:
 - What the TPNW is & why it is important from a health perspective
 - Why local authorities should sign up to the TPNW
 - Will there be space at the next full council meeting and inclination from the council executive, to discuss a motion on the TPNW? [Here is a template motion you can suggest they use.](#)
 - How do other councillors view nuclear weapons? Are there obvious allies who could second the motion?
 - Will anyone try to oppose the motion and if so, how should you attempt persuading them?
 - Would it be possible to contact their groups member secretary to request a speaking slot at their next party meeting? This could be a good opportunity to persuade the party to vote in favour of the motion as a bloc.

Getting a motion discussed at a council meeting

1. If the councillor is on board, **ask them to speak to others** who may support the motion.
2. The motion must be moved by a councillor and 'seconded' by another, and the councillor will most likely need to **give a speech to accompany the motion**.
3. You can volunteer to help the councillor write their speech or provide support with the key messages about why the council should support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
4. The motion must be voted through with a majority, and so may need cross-party support.
5. You'll need to be aware of the political calendar. Because of the pandemic, things are slower, so it's important to be persistent and patient!

Escalation tactics

If you don't have much luck trying to contact your local council, whether it's that they don't respond at all or that they respond negatively, don't give up! There are many creative ways to escalate the pressure that you are putting on them, best attempted with others.

Some ideas for the ways you can put additional pressure on the relevant decision-maker:

1. Write an open letter addressed to the official, and get others in the health community in your local area to sign it.
2. Publicise a petition for local residents to sign to hand in to the official.
3. Organise an online day of action on social media.
4. Depending on the situation with the coronavirus, organise an action outside a relevant local institution or landmark.
5. Involve the local MP in the matter.
6. Contact the local press to publicise your actions, or write a comment piece.
7. Ask individual sympathetic local councillors to [sign up to a separate appeal](#).

What more can you do if your council has signed up to the Cities Appeal?

Councils joining the Cities Appeal is a brilliant first step - and there's more that you can ask them to do!

1. They can write to the foreign minister to **inform the government of the council or city's decision**, and urge them to engage with the TPNW.
2. They can **contact the press** or issue a press release to announce, and explain, their decision.
3. They can **let local residents know about the decision** by distributing leaflets about it, or holding an event or exhibition about the TPNW and the city/ town's history of peace activism.
4. They can **divest public funds** from companies that produce nuclear weapons.

Remember, if you are going to take action in your local area, please let us know! We can link you up with others in your area, or other members who may be able to support you. E-mail office@medact.org

Medact is a membership organisation of health professionals committed to a safer, fairer and better world.

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