

TIME FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

LOCAL LOBBYING

Direct contact with politicians is a powerful way to achieve lasting change – and it's far easier than you might think. This resource is a basic introduction to face-to-face, telephone, letter and email lobbying. To get your copy of our *Local Lobbyist* pack, which includes further top tips, as well as advice for lobbying the European Parliament and those in Wales and Scotland, contact the Christian Aid Campaigns team on 020 7523 2264 or email us at campaigns@christian-aid.org

Face to face

- Meetings with constituents make a real impact on politicians. Don't be put off by this list of tips – we know that meetings can be daunting so we're helping you to feel well equipped. Remember that your elected representatives are unlikely to be experts on Christian Aid's issues – you probably know more than they do.
- Arrange an appointment well in advance.
- Research your elected representative before meeting them – www.theyworkforyou.com is a good place to find out more about their interests, committees they sit on and their voting records. Most will have their own website, too.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask and be ready to counter negative arguments. Use the resources in this pack to help you.
- Do your best to speak as an individual – mention your support of Christian Aid but make sure that you voice your personal concerns as a constituent.
- If you are going in a group of constituents, meet beforehand to divide up the questions so you present a united front.
- You might not have a very long meeting slot, perhaps around 15 minutes, so keep questions and conversations snappy and focused.
- Before the meeting, email campaigns@christian-aid.org for a copy of the latest parliamentary briefing. Hand over a copy at the meeting.
- Leave your elected representative with something to do. This is very important. The parliamentary briefing will usually include this request, which could ask them to write to their party leader, sign an 'Early Day Motion'¹ or vote in a particular way on a piece of legislation.
- After the meeting, write a letter or send an email to thank them for their time, reiterating some of the points made. Remind them of anything they offered to do.
- Contact Christian Aid's Campaigns team to let us know who you met and what they committed to.

Endnotes

¹ A kind of petition tabled by a group of MPs calling for a debate on a particular subject. While rarely debated, EDMs allow MPs to canvass how much support there is for an issue

Telephone

- Follow the tips overleaf to help you prepare for a telephone conversation.
- Keep your conversation short and polite.
- Explain clearly what your concerns are and what you would like your elected representative to do.
- If you get through to an answering machine, leave a short, clear message including your name and contact number.

Letters and emails

Many elected representatives find email the easiest way to communicate with voters. However, a personal letter has much greater impact when it lands on their desk.

- Include your full name and address.
- Use your own words and make it personal, writing from your experience.
- Keep it short and stick to a single issue – one side of A4 is enough.
- If writing by hand, make sure it's legible. Always sign a printed letter.
- Offer constructive points, not just criticism.
- Including a quote from the elected representative or their party can help make your point.
- Bullet-pointing arguments and backing up with facts is helpful.
- Be clear what you want your elected representative to do.
- Ask for a reply.

Sample letter

Dear (enter their name here)

My name is XXXX and I am a constituent in XXXX. Climate change is a key concern for me and I am writing to let you know what you can do in Parliament to help tackle this important issue.

As a committed global poverty campaigner, I am concerned to know that the government will do all it can to ensure that a fair, ambitious and binding global climate change agreement is reached as soon as possible.

Already more than 300,000 people a year die as a result of climate change – victims of weather-related disasters or conditions linked to environmental degradation such as malnutrition, diarrhoea and malaria. That number will go up unless our new government promotes ambitious policies at home and on the international stage.

I would like to know what your position is on these issues and what the government is doing to press for an ambitious global deal. I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely
[Your name and address]