

**September 2020**



## **Push government to do more at COP26: lobby your MP**

In November, the UK will host the Glasgow climate talks – COP26. This is a huge opportunity to push the government on their climate ambition and to meet their international responsibilities. Read this guide to find out how to lobby your MP and push the government harder in the lead up to COP26.

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The Glasgow climate talks are crucial for us to come together as a network and call on the UK government to end all support for coal, oil and gas at home and abroad. That means no more digging up coal, no more pumping oil or gas and no more funding of fossil fuel projects overseas. As the hosts of this year's talks, the UK government's climate record will be under more scrutiny than ever. We'll be ready to push them harder and to highlight where their action does not match their rhetoric.

One way to push them harder is by making sure your MPs know you want an end to fossil fuel support. MPs can take your views to the House of Commons and put added pressure on the government to listen.

Follow this step-by-step guide to find out how.

## Meeting your MP: a step-by-step guide

### Step 1: Ask to meet your MP

You can do this by sending them an email on behalf of your group – we've written a [template email](#) to get you started. You'll likely be meeting your MP online. Your MP will let you know how to meet them virtually via a digital platform like [Zoom](#).

Remember that MPs must prioritise people from their constituency. It's great to go along as a group to show your strength, but make sure at least one person is from the area they represent.

### Step 2: Prepare

It's a good idea for your group to meet (virtually) a few days before the meeting to prepare. You'll want to agree on your agenda and decide who will say what. Spend some time researching your MP online to understand more about who they are and what they stand for.

You may want to read our COP26 campaign guide to find out more about what we're calling for as a network.

Remember, you don't need to be an expert on a subject to speak to your MP about it – your role is to raise issues you care about and ask them to represent your voice in Parliament.

As this is likely to be an online call, make sure to practice using the technology ahead of time – including testing your microphone and webcam.

### Step 3: The meeting

You'll probably have about 15 minutes for your meeting. Here's a suggested agenda of what this could look like:

1. **Introductions:** Quickly introduce yourselves and the group you are representing. Remind them that you're here to talk to them about how the UK government can play its part in tackling the climate crisis by ending support for coal, oil and gas at home and abroad.
2. **Problem:** Explain why support for coal, oil and gas contributes to the climate crisis and that a fast and fair transition is urgently needed for emissions to reach near zero. [Use briefings on 4 fossil fuel cases from Friends of the Earth to help bolster your arguments.](#)
3. **Solution:** Explain that converting support for fossil fuels to renewables and green industry is a huge opportunity that would bring improvements to health, the environment, and local communities. For example, a transition to renewables would improve air quality and provide new jobs. ?
4. **Ask:** It's important to tailor your approach based on what you know about your MP. You may have a good idea of what makes your MP tick based on previous exchanges. If not, you can find out from looking at their social media and their voting record. They might be interested and/or weak on a specific issue that is within the policy demands, so make sure you are aware and feed this into any conversations. Ask your MP to take the issues you raise forwards on your behalf. Specifically:
  - o If they're **Conservative**, ask them to write to the Prime Minister and COP President Alok Sharma, asking them to end support for fossil fuels, starting by stopping the Whitehaven coal mine, withdrawing funding from the Mozambique LNG project, ending Heathrow expansion, and refusing permission for the Cambo oil field.
  - o If they're **Labour**, ask them to contact their party leaders asking them to push for an end to fossil fuels, specifically by stopping the Whitehaven coal mine, withdrawing funding from the Mozambique LNG project, ending Heathrow expansion, and refusing permission for the Cambo oil field.
  - o For **other parties**, you should also press them to make ending support for fossil fuels at home and abroad a priority for their party. You could also highlight where the party is strong or weak on some of the asks.
5. **Thank you:** Thank your MP for their time, and re-state the commitment they have made. Before you go, ask to take a photo of everyone on the call so you can use it on social media afterwards (make sure everyone has their webcams on!).

### Step 4: Follow up

After the meeting, email your MP to thank them for their time, re-state again what they committed to during the meeting, and attach any further information they might find useful.

Post a photo on your social media platforms using the hashtag #TakeClimateAction and tag the MP so they can see it too. And finally, email? [climateaction@foe.co.uk](mailto:climateaction@foe.co.uk)? to let us know how it went!

## If you have your MP's support

Because of our efforts to lobby MPs last autumn, we know that some have been supportive and open to conversations and others have a closed door. Lobbying MPs is only one route to creating change – you can also call on your MP to take other actions.

You may have an MP who is either very publicly already on side, or who you've spoken with before and you know agrees with your demands. If that's the case, this is an opportunity to push them further. You could ask them to show support by:

- Publicly supporting or sharing some of our asks on their social media accounts.
- Speaking to fellow MPs about how they can push for change together.
- Championing your demands in parliament or within their party.
- Asking them what they think their party/the government needs to see to commit to ending support for fossil fuels.
- Joining the [Global Day of Action on Saturday 6 November](#).
- Asking them to table parliamentary questions about ending support for fossil fuels.

It could also be worth discussing how your group could work with them to help gain attention for the campaign.

## If your MP is not on board

Some MPs may be unresponsive either by not replying to emails or refusing a meeting. We know this can be frustrating, but don't give up. Try:

- Calling the office to follow up on your email.
- Tagging them in a message on social media – and be persistent. MPs can be sensitive to getting a bad reputation publicly.

MPs are less likely to be holding drop-in surgeries due to COVID-19, so find out what alternatives they have and attend those.

If your MP is in complete disagreement with you, ask them to fulfil their duty as your representative in parliament by sending your demands on to the Prime Minister or their party leader.

The information you gain from an MP being opposed is valuable. We're aware not everyone agrees with us, and if we can understand why, it's easier to figure out how to speak to them. Try and understand what, from their point of view, are the big sticking points. It's helpful if you can feed this

back to us via your regional contact (or emailing? [climateaction@foe.co.uk](mailto:climateaction@foe.co.uk)). We can then use it to update messaging and provide counterarguments for your next meeting.

Remember – changing someone’s mind takes time, so don’t lose heart!

### **Support**

We have a useful? [guide on lobbying](#)? outlining 5 ways to lobby which we recommend you look at before meeting or writing to your MP.

If you need additional support, please get in touch with your regional contact at Friends of the Earth – they’ll be able to help advise on the next steps and approach. Alternatively, email [climateaction@foe.co.uk](mailto:climateaction@foe.co.uk).