

## Meeting your candidates

As constituents and voters we all have the power to shape and influence the political process through lobbying our MPs or candidates. Lobbying can bring about real change and succeed in putting tax justice at the very top of the political agenda.

If it's your first time in meeting an MP or candidate don't worry! Remember that as a voter, your views are important to them and they'll be keen to meet you.

### Finding your candidates

- If you don't already know, find out which constituency you're in, who your current MP is and who the other candidates are. Remember that boundaries may have changed since the last election so it's worth just double checking!
- To find out your consistency and candidates tap in your postcode here: [www.yournextmp.com](http://www.yournextmp.com)
- Your current local MP may run drop-in surgeries that work either on a first come first served basis, or will ask you to make an appointment first. It's a good idea to turn up as early as you can to drop in sessions.
- You should be able to find details of any surgeries in your local newspapers, or by calling up the MPs office.
- Candidates are unlikely to have surgeries but if you call their office they should be willing to meet with you.
- It's a good idea to prepare a few questions that you'd like them to answer before the meeting, and also to find out a bit about them too. You can do this at [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) or by simply googling their name.
- Our suggested questions are
  - Big companies use tax havens to siphon profits out of the UK and poor countries and the rest of us pick up the tab. Do you think they should break down their published accounts by country, so it's easier to spot who's dodging their taxes?
  - We need to deal with the deficit created by bailing out the banks during the financial crisis. Do you support a new Robin Hood Tax on banking transactions, which could raise billions extra for spending both at home and abroad?



### At the meeting

- Say hello, introduce yourself and then explain why you're there: you're really concerned about tax justice and want to find out where they stand on it.
- It may be slightly intimidating to meet an MP but please don't worry, they are human like the rest of us (even though sometimes they may not act like it!) They won't expect you to be an expert on tax justice with detailed policy knowledge, and there's actually a good chance you'll know more about it than they do! If they do ask you any questions you can't answer, just offer to get back to them later with it.
- The most important thing in the meeting is to convey your concern and the need for them to take action. As such try and build a relationship with them and don't be too confrontational.
- See if you can get them to commit to an action, like writing to their party leader, blogging about the issue, or having their photo taken wearing a tax justice rosette.
- Bring along some literature on the issues to show them. We can provide you with this.
- It's important to remember when meeting a candidate that in accordance with charity law, ActionAid does not endorse any particular party or candidate or seek to persuade members of the public to vote for or against a candidate or a political party. Our aim is to raise awareness of international development issues with all candidates, whatever party they represent.

### After the meeting

- After the meeting, it's a good idea to write a follow up email or letter that thanks them for their time, and which briefly outlines the outcomes of the meeting especially if you got them to agree to any follow up actions.
- Don't forget to let us know how the meeting went!
- If you'd like to write a blog post on your meeting, let us know and we may be able to publish it on the ActionAid website.

## Remember

If you have any questions or would like some advice feel free to contact us at:  
[campaign@actionaid.org](mailto:campaign@actionaid.org) or 01460 23 8047