

How to... be a political mover and shaker

Do you realise how powerful you are as an active campaigner? By uniting with others, you can push world leaders in the right direction. And let's face it; they often need a shove to get them moving.

Elected politicians in the UK can have a massive influence on redressing global inequality and poverty; and the best way you can influence them, is through talking to your own MP.

Vote for me!

Your MP is your representative and they always want to hear from you, after all they don't get your vote by ignoring you.

The best part is you don't need to know your Brown from your Browne, or your Cameron from your Clegg.

You can find out who your MP is by visiting www.theyworkforyou.com or www.writetothem.com. The latter allows you to contact your MP, local Councillors and MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) through the website. Be aware however, that a personal letter will have more impact.

The battle for hearts and minds

You don't have to be a political expert – all you need is passion. Your passion is your biggest asset because what you tell them, or write to them about, acts as an indicator for what 'the people' think. Your efforts help build a picture of a constituency that is bothered and concerned. This makes your MP sit up and listen.

Be the speech writers

The Activism Team isn't giving out template letters anymore. Instead, we'll make sure you're clued up and rattled about the subject, and ask you to write using your zeal. But it is so important that you keep writing. MPs tell us that just 20 individual letters from constituents makes an issue a priority for them. To help you get the most out of your efforts, we'll alert you to the best times to contact your MP on a particular issue.

Be creative – get them involved

Why not really capture your MP's imagination by engaging them in all the great actions you take. Show them what it's all about with an invite to a stunt at the local Oxfam shop or a screening of *Sisters on the*



Planet; get them along to your next film party; take them a copy of *The Urgency of Now* – find ways of involving them however you choose to campaign.

Remember, the aim is to show that ordinary people like you – their potential voters – care about these issues.

TOP TIPS

1. Be yourself. It's you they want to listen to.
 2. Always ask them for something that demonstrates their support. Ask them for a signature; to take a stand; be photographed etc.
- MPs tell us that just 20 individual letters from constituents makes an issue a priority for them**
3. Be short and sweet. Keep letters to one page maximum.
 4. Become your MP's 'constituency assistant's' best friend; they control the diary! Be clear about what you want the MP to do and when.
 5. Do some homework. At www.theyworkforyou.com you can enter your postcode and get all the info you need about your MP, their areas of interest and their contact details.

Put your new skills to the test by following our latest guide to on how to change the world through politics www.oxfam.org.uk/manifesto.

Don't forget to tell us about the innovative ways you are involving your MP and how you have influenced his or her behaviour, email active@oxfam.org.uk.