

## The 5 steps to meeting your MP

MPs are elected to represent you, so it's important that they hear from you. This government has a small majority in parliament, so they are more dependent than ever on the support of 'backbench' MPs. This gives MPs of all parties more influence over policy.

Taking the time and trouble to meet your MP in person is a really effective way of supporting the campaign.

### Step 1

Find out who your MP is

You can find your MP's name and contact details on the following website: [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com). If you don't have access to the internet, you can call the Commons Information Office on 020 7219 4272 (Monday to Friday 10am-4pm).

### Step 2

Contact your MP

You can contact your MP by phone, email or letter. Explain that you would like to meet them in connection with Traidcraft's Justice campaign.

Ask how long the appointment will be, as this will help you plan the meeting. The most likely days to meet your MP will be Friday to Sunday, when MPs spend time in their constituency.

If you are having difficulty getting your MP to agree to a meeting, or you just want a bit of support, contact Traidcraft's Campaigns team and we will do our best to help.

#### 3 top social media tips

**Before:** Use social media to tell people you are going to the meeting.

**During:** Take a photo to use on social media.

**After:** Talk about how the meeting went using the photo.

### Step 3

Plan the meeting

Find out as much as you can about your MP before the meeting. There is lots of useful information at [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com). Some MPs may be ministers, or shadow ministers. This means that they have a role in deciding policy for their party. Think about how you can make the Justice campaign relevant to their interests.

Read through Traidcraft's Justice campaign materials, and practice explaining the campaign to someone else. Think about why you support the campaign: telling your MP why you are involved will have a bigger impact. Take a copy of the report 'Justice: time to call in the law' and the MP briefing sheet to leave with your MP.

You don't have to go by yourself: if you can go as a group, it will show this is an issue that more people are concerned about. Remember to decide in advance who is going to talk first.

Double check where the meeting is taking place and make sure you know how to get there. Plan to arrive around 5 minutes early. MPs don't have a dress code, but you should look business-like to show you are serious.

## Step 4

At the meeting

Once you've made the introductions, the MP will expect you to outline your concerns.

**Brief background:** Explain that Traidcraft is a fair trade company but also wants to make sure all trade benefits people living in developing countries.

**The problem:** Trade and business can be good for people living in poverty, but some UK companies are getting away with actions in developing countries, which wouldn't be allowed here. Use examples in the Justice campaign report or you may have your own experiences to talk about. Your MP will not be an expert, so don't assume they have any prior knowledge.

**What Traidcraft is calling for:** Traidcraft thinks it should be possible to prosecute companies for serious harms caused overseas – things like deaths, serious injuries or pollution which damages health or livelihoods. This would involve changing the law.

**The opportunity is now:** The government is looking at introducing legislation to allow prosecutions of UK companies for fraud and corruption. Traidcraft wants this extended to include exploitation and abuse of people abroad.

### Tricky questions?

Your MP might ask you a question you don't know the answer to.

Don't worry, tell them you'll get back to them. After the meeting contact Traidcraft. We'll help you answer the question.

**What you want your MP to do:** Please ask your MP to write to the Attorney General and to the Secretary of State for Justice and ask them to look at including exploitation and abuse of people abroad in the legislation around corporate economic crimes. The MP briefing sheet has more information.

**Talk from your own experience:** Have you ever lived in a developing country, or have family links? Do you run your own business? Are you involved through your church? Making these connections will help your MP understand why you are involved in the campaign.

**Give your MP a copy of 'Justice: Time to call in the law' and the MP briefing sheet.**

Finally before you leave, you could ask your MP if they are willing to have a photo taken with you. This would be useful if you want to highlight your meeting in a newsletter or online.

## Step 5

After the meeting

Around a week after your meeting you should write to your MP to thank them for meeting with you. If your MP said they would look into something or you said you would get back to them on an issue, you can use this letter to remind them or pass on the information you promised.

**And last but not least...** Please tell Traidcraft how it went. It's really helpful to us to have feedback from MPs – just knowing that you have met with them is useful.

### Contact Traidcraft's Campaigns Team

To tell us about your MP visit – or if you have any questions before or after – contact us on 020 3752 5718 or [campaign@traidcraft.co.uk](mailto:campaign@traidcraft.co.uk) or Traidcraft 2:12 The Foundry, 17 Oval Way, London, SE11 5RR.