

How to engage MPs



What are your experiences?

- Have any of you got relationships with your MPs already?
- Have they come to your events?
- Do they support your campaigns?
- What challenges have you experienced?



Fairtrade in the current political climate

- Living Income campaign
- Brexit
- New Prime Minister and cabinet



Fairtrade APPG – a campaigner success story

- Our All Party Parliamentary Group was founded in 2015 because of the calls of campaigners in West Yorkshire!
- They got in touch with their MP, Holly Lynch MP (Labour), and asked her if she would be interested in forming the group
- She got in touch with us to help organise the group
- The group now has more than 150 MPs and Peers on its mailing list
- 80 MPs came to our last reception in Fortnight this year



campaigner impact

- Our campaigners have been integral in many of our political campaigns since.
- Last year we got 4000 Fairtrade supporters write to their MP to ask for their support on the second reading of the Trade & Customs Bills
 - A whopping 98% of MPs received an email from a Fairtrade supporter in January
 - Our trade democracy amendment got debated, but unfortunately lost by 30 votes!
- We got over 50,000 signatures for our most recent petition!



What you can do locally

- **Aside from taking part in our online actions there are other local actions you can take to raise Fairtrade in Parliament, including:**
 1. Organise local hustings or ask questions at hustings organised by others
 2. Invite MPs to your events. They love a photo opportunity! Try and organise these events for Fridays and Saturdays when MPs will be in their constituencies
 3. Attend MP surgeries, which are normally held on Fridays somewhere in the constituency. Information is likely to be on their website
 4. Start a local petition, either aimed at business or your MP. If it is aimed at business, you can ask your MP to support and promote it
 5. Tell local press about what you're up to, politicians (or the people who work for them) will stay up to date with the local papers

Get in touch with your MP

- The simplest way to locate your MP is by visiting the official Parliament UK website, where you can type in your postcode or MP's name into the 'Find your MP' search bar.
 - This will lead you to a page with their email and phone number
- Make your ask, be it a meeting or an event invitation, really clear
 - Try to include the title and date of the event in the subject line.
- Keep it short and polite!
- Your email should include the main areas that you wish to discuss with them and why it is relevant for them.
- Really play up the community aspect of the event, as MPs love an opportunity to take photos at a community event (so take banners and banana suits!)
- Send the request early, as their diaries will get full quickly

Get in touch with your MP cont.

- If you do not receive a response within a few working days you can call their office so a member of staff prioritises your request
 - Call the constituency officer number and ask for the diary manager
- You could also consider tweeting them to get their attention!

From: Angharad Hopkinson <angharad.hopkinson@fairtrade.org.uk>

Sent: Thursday, June 20, 2019 2:19 pm

To: jeremy.purvis@parliament.uk

Subject: Fairtrade APPG invite - 16 July

Dear Fairtrade APPG members and friends,

We would like to invite you to our next APPG meeting - **A Living Income for Cocoa Farmers – what will it take?** - on the topic of living incomes in the cocoa sector on **16 July 11am - 12pm in Room A, 1 Parliament Street.**

Following on from the launch of the *Fairtrade Foundation's* campaign, *She Deserves*, join the APPG for presentations and discussion to explore the issues in more depth.

- Why is it that so many cocoa producers still live in extreme poverty, despite the booming chocolate industry?
- What is a 'living income' and how is it calculated?
- What more could the UK government do to support change in the cocoa sector?

The event will be chaired by Holly Lynch MP, Fairtrade APPG Co-Chair, who will discuss the role that MPs can play in achieving living incomes in cocoa.

Speakers will include:

- Sophi Tranchell, Divine Chocolate, to share her insights of sourcing fair cocoa
- Sally Smith, International Development Researcher, to share her experiences of having conducted a living income benchmark study in Ghana
- David Taylor, Fairtrade Foundation, to discuss the She Deserves campaign asks

Spaces are limited, so please do RSVP to Angharad.hopkinson@fairtrade.org.uk by 12 July.

We hope to see you there,

Angharad Hopkinson

Fairtrade Foundation, Fairtrade APPG Secretariat



Meeting your MP

- Do your homework! You can look up what committees they're in, what APPGs they support and even what they've spoken about in Parliament
- As with the email, it's best to keep the meeting short and sweet
- MPs are busy people, so get to the point quickly and try and keep it relevant
- It is important to have really clear asks and actions that you hope to get out of it and try and tie it back to your local community
- If it is something that we are campaigning on nationally, please do take one of our briefings, which you can find on our website or email me
- You could also take a Fairtrade treat!
- After the meeting you should send an email to thank them for their time and to clarify what steps they agreed to take
- And please let us know what happens!

Things to ask for

- There are a range of things you can ask for when meeting your MP, such as:
 - Sponsoring or supporting amendments to a Bill
 - Raising an issue privately with a minister
 - Lobbying internally for changes to their own party's policies
 - Putting down a Parliamentary Question, written or oral
 - Sponsoring or sign an Early Day Motion (a Parliamentary petition)
 - Tweeting support for our campaigns
 - Attending a Fairtrade national event, such as our Fortnight Reception
 - Becoming a Fairtrade APPG officer
 - Helping you lobby local business to use more Fairtrade products



Questions?