

**HOW TO:**



**LOBBY  
YOUR LOCAL  
MP ON  
CARBON  
PRICING**

**BY THE ZERO CARBON  
CAMPAIGN**

## **LOBBYING:**

**PERSUADING ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES TO USE THEIR POWER TO EFFECT MEANINGFUL CHANGE.**

## **CONTENTS:**

- 1. WHAT IS LOBBYING?**
- 2. HOW DOES IT WORK?**
- 3. TIPS & RESOURCES**
- 4. ABOUT THE ZERO CARBON CAMPAIGN**

**T**he production of greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fossil fuels is the single biggest driver of global heating. The majority of economists and environmental experts agree that putting a price on this pollution should be a central pillar of any Governments' strategy to tackle it. Yet the majority of carbon (and equivalent greenhouse gas) emissions that the UK produces remain 'unpriced', and even where costs are attached to pollution, the allocation of free pollution permits enables the majority of these costs to be avoided.

So why haven't polluters been made to pay their fair share?

One reason is that, all too often, the interests of the fossil fuel industry have been given precedence over the concerns of ordinary people. Another is that politicians have never been faced with a mass movement of public support in favour of making polluters pay. Until now.

Elected representatives won't be moved to take action to secure stronger commitments on carbon pricing from the Government, unless they are convinced that their constituents' support it.

That's why we need your help. We need to demonstrate that pricing pollution isn't just an idea confined to economists and policy wonks; that it can command widespread support from people across society - and that there are clear steps that politicians' can take to help secure its introduction.

We have taken some steps to prove that this is the case, including getting 108,000 signatures on our [carbon pricing petition](#) which triggered a [debate](#) in Parliament, but there is always more work to be done.

This guide is intended to help you understand what lobbying is and how it works, so that you can join our mission to ensure that pollution is fairly and effectively priced wherever it occurs.

Izzy Goldstein

**Senior Campaign Manager, Zero Carbon**

[zeroc.org.uk](http://zeroc.org.uk)

# WHAT IS LOBBYING?

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**L**obbying is when an individual or a group tries to persuade an elected representative to use their decision-making power to support a policy or campaign. Sometimes lobbying is criticised as a mechanism that allows powerful groups (like fossil fuel companies) to influence laws and regulations at the expense of the public interest. This certainly can be true - but lobbying can also be a positive force for policy change.

A healthy democracy is one where the public feel that their concerns are being listened to and voiced via their elected representatives. Lobbying helps ensure that this is the case, by establishing a channel of communication through which constituents can make MPs aware of the change they want to see, and the action that is required to bring that change into being.

Lobbying is also an extremely effective campaign tactic, because it helps to demonstrate to elected representatives the breadth of support that exists for any particular issue. After all, change flows from people coming together to call for action.

**“CHANGE FLOWS FROM PEOPLE COMING TOGETHER TO CALL FOR ACTION.”**

For this reason, lobbying is most effective when it is conducted by lots of people and groups at the same time. That’s why we’ve brought together people, businesses and organisations from across our society to participate in a drive to push carbon pricing further up the Government’s agenda. After all, individually we are one drop, but together, we are an Ocean (thanks to Ryunosuke Satoro for that particular gem).

# HOW DOES IT WORK?

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**L**obbying starts with selecting a target and working out how best to reach them. The core questions to ask are: **Who** has the power to help bring about the change I want to see? **What** is going to influence them to support my perspective? and **How** can I gain access to them?

## Who

The answers to these questions will be different depending on the policy or campaign you are supporting, but when it comes to carbon pricing; the best place to start is with your local elected member of parliament (MP).

This is because carbon pricing is decided and legislated for (i.e. passed into law) at a national level (the government and civil service work to formulate policy - which is then debated, scrutinised and approved by Parliament).

That's not to say it isn't useful to lobby other targets too. MPs' willingness to vote in favour of stronger carbon pricing will depend on the policy receiving support of many actors across society: including businesses, civil society organisations, industry, and trade unions.

Local authorities also have an important role to play in influencing national government on carbon pricing. It's likely that your local council officers may already be in contact with your MP - so contacting them is never a bad place to start.

## What

There are a variety of different ways you can lobby your MP, from contacting them through social media, to emailing them, to phoning their local constituency offices. These all have benefits and drawbacks, but when it comes to lobbying on carbon pricing, we think letter writing is best place to start. Why? Because MPs receive hundreds of messages via email, phone and social media everyday, but original,

well-informed letters from passionate constituents are less easy to come by.

We have developed a template for you to use when creating a lobbying letter or email (you can find this in the 'tips and resources' section, or download it [here](#) as a standalone PDF). But if you really want your letter to stand out, then it's best to take the time to personalise your writing. Here are some useful tips to help you maximise your impact:

**Include your own perspective** - the more local the better. MP's will be especially interested in hearing real-life examples of how carbon pricing could benefit their constituents and community. Local councils around the country are taking action to reduce their carbon emissions, from reducing pollution, to cutting waste, to saving energy, to "greening" transport and housing; some have even pledged to shift to 100% clean energy by 2050. You could personalise your letter by referencing the work going on in your local area, and make the case for carbon pricing as a way of incentivising and funding these and other climate-friendly programmes. You could also include anecdotes about how carbon pricing could help you live a more eco-friendly lifestyle: by making climate-friendly energy more affordable for your household, or funding more energy efficient infrastructure in your local area.

**Highlight the role that carbon pricing can play in preserving the planet and protecting our health** - carbon pricing isn't just about reducing emissions (although that is a very important part of it). It can also help incentivise nature restoration - for example by using the money raised to pay land managers for storing or 'sequestering' carbon in their land and trees - and it can drive a whole load of additional benefits. This includes tackling air pollution, which the WHO estimates kills more than 7 million people each year. If you're looking for examples to help illustrate this point then you could also include reference to Georgia Elliot-Smith's landmark [legal case](#) to force incinerators to pay for the 6.6 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions they currently pump into the atmosphere every year free of charge. Or you could reference [Paid to Pollute's](#) work to take Government to court over their ongoing provision of fossil fuel subsidies - including the £13.6bn that have issued since the Paris Agreement was signed.

**Tailor the letter to your MPs interests** - if your MP has recently raised climate change or 'net zero' related issues during Parliamentary debates and questions, or spoken out in public about these issues, then you should make reference to this in your letter. You could also reference their previous voting record on environmental issues, and check to see if they hold a related post within Parliament (for example, a seat on an environment-focused [select committee](#) or [APPG](#)).

**Remind your MP of what's in it for them** - whether it's improved popularity among constituents or recognition as a climate champion, it's important to make it clear how your MP stands to benefit from speaking up in favour of carbon pricing. Where possible, you should include relevant examples and statistics as evidence of support for climate action, including how many people in their constituency signed our [carbon pricing petition](#) (hint: public opinion research goes a long way).

## How

Once you've worked your magic on the letter and it's ready to go, you should send it to their Parliamentary office in Westminster via the following address:

[YOUR MP'S TITLE AND FULL NAME]  
House of Commons,  
London,  
SW1A 0AA



# RESOURCES

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We know crafting a letter to your MP is a tall order, so we've put together a list of useful resources to help make it easier for you to plan and execute your lobbying:

*Identifying your MPs and local councillors:*

- **WriteToThem** - just enter your postcode [here](#) and [WriteToThem.com](https://www.writetothem.com) will display a list of your local elected representatives.

*Including your own perspective:*

- **How climate friendly is your area?** - Input your postcode [here](#) to find out about action to cut greenhouse gas emissions in your area.
- **UK100** - you can see if your local council has made the pledge to shift to 100% clean energy [here](#).

*Tailoring to your MPs interest:*

- **TheyWorkForYou** - search your MPs name on [TheyWorkForYou.com](https://www.theyworkforyou.com) to reveal their contribution to Parliamentary debates and questions, as well as their record on recent votes.
- **UK Parliament website** - search your MPs name on [UK Parliament](https://www.parliament.uk) to find out about their current and previous posts.

*Reminding your MP of what's in it for them:*

- **Public insights** - you can find useful polling, survey, results and articles about attitudes to climate change on [YouGov's](#) database. Our [public opinion research](#) is a good source of evidence on attitudes towards carbon pricing, as are the recent reports by the [Climate Assembly UK](#) and Think Tank [Bright Blue](#).



- **Advocacy in your local area** - local newspapers are a great source of information on climate advocacy within your community. A quick search of 'climate action in [YOUR POSTCODE] in Google News could throw up some strong examples to include in your letter.
- **Hope for the Future** - you can find more tips for cultivating strong relationships with your local representatives at [Hope for the Future](#). You can also watch their training workshops on carbon pricing [here](#).

*Letter template:*

[YOUR FULL NAME AND ADDRESS]

[YOUR MPs TITLE AND FULL NAME]

House of Commons,  
London,  
SW1A 0AA

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ MP,

I am writing to you regarding the Government's plans to tackle climate change. In 2019, Parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of adopting a target to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. However - as the Committee on Climate Change highlighted in their [analysis](#) of the Government's Net Zero Strategy - there is still a lot of work to do this decade to ensure that we deliver on our ambitious emissions reductions targets. This includes taking steps to align the UK's tax system with the net zero agenda, and to facilitate public participation in the net zero transition.

The UK, with our historic emissions record - and as COP 26 President - has an obligation to continue pushing other jurisdictions to go further and faster in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, and providing the financial support for them to do so. But this will not be effective unless our own Government delivers on its promise to pursue a green economic recovery from COVID-19, and implements the changes that are required to help everyone transition towards a low-carbon economy in a way that is both fair and equitable.

We urgently need to introduce policies that can drive decarbonisation across all sectors of our economy in a way that builds back better for people and planet. This includes taking stronger action on both domestic and international carbon pricing, to ensure that polluters pay for the damage they do. Just 22% of global greenhouse gas emissions have a price attached, and the average carbon price is just \$2USD. Meanwhile, the British Government continues to issue fossil fuel subsidies, totalling £13.4bn between 2016-2020 (OECD, 2021).

The good news is that policies such as carbon pricing - as well as driving substantial emissions reductions - can also be politically popular. This has been made clear in opinion polling, demonstrating that 94% of the British Public support the introduction of a carbon price (The Climate Consensus, 2021). It has also been demonstrated in a recent petition from the Zero Carbon Campaign, which received over 108,000 signatures and called for the introduction of stronger, fairer and more consistent carbon pricing that recycles revenue to support people through the net zero transition.

This is a cause I believe in because [INSERT YOUR THOUGHTS HERE]. By introducing stronger and more consistent carbon pricing, we can unravel the relationship between profit and pollution, and give ourselves a passing chance of addressing the climate crisis and achieving the targets laid out in the Paris Agreement.

For the sake of your constituents, their families, and for future generations - I urge you to become an advocate for this cause. I'd love it if you would consider raising awareness about the petition, writing to the Prime Minister, Chancellor or Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to express your support, and by tabling one of the following questions:

- When this Government will commit to a) aligning UK carbon pricing with our net zero target, including i) price per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>, and ii) the volume of emissions that are covered
- How this Government intends to support low-income and vulnerable households through the net zero transition, including through issuing changes to the social welfare system

- What progress has been made to phase out fossil fuel subsidies since the UK committed to do so over a decade ago?
- At what point will the Government accept that the waste strategy is not having desired impact on recycling rates, and commit to an incineration tax?
- What measures will be taken to advance the global carbon pricing agenda as part of our ongoing COP26 Presidency?
- Will the Government commit to ring-fencing revenues from the UK's Emissions Trading System and investing them in furthering the net zero transition.

I look forward to hearing back from you.

Your name and signature.

# ABOUT THE ZERO CARBON CAMPAIGN

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**T**he Zero Carbon Campaign was founded in July 2019 following the announcement of the Government's 2050 'net zero' commitment. We are calling for the UK Government to implement stronger and more consistent carbon pricing across more of the economy - because we don't think we're going to effectively address climate change without it.

In January 2020, we formed the Zero Carbon Commission to develop a proposal for implementing a fair and effective carbon pricing policy in the UK, and have been campaigning for support ever since. You can find out more about our work, our commission's proposals and what you can do to help, at [zeroc.org.uk](https://zeroc.org.uk).

