

Write to your local MP

Is there an environmental issue that really concerns you? Maybe it's climate change, maybe it's the amount of litter in your local area, or maybe it's fast fashion. What can you do about it? There may be actions that you and your family can take in your daily lives to make a difference, but often, the problems the planet faces are the kind that can't be fixed by individuals. They need to be addressed by the people in power.



Use your power!

The good news is that as a young person, you don't need to feel powerless. You have a voice and you are absolutely entitled to use it! One of the best ways to get your concerns and ideas heard by the people who have the power is to write to your local Member of Parliament (MP).

It's the job of every MP to represent their constituents in parliament - and you are one of their constituents! MPs are there to hold the government to account, so if there's something you think needs fixing, your local MP needs to know about it.

You don't just have to write to them, either. You can also call them or even visit one of their regular constituency surgeries to discuss your concerns face-to-face with your MP. It doesn't matter which party they are from - they are there to listen to their constituents - and that applies even if you're not old enough to vote yet. In fact, letters from young people often have even more impact.

MPs are there to question the government on things they're not doing very well, so your letter could help give them the reason to ask some of those questions. If lots of people write to their MP about the same issue, that puts a lot of pressure on them to ask the government why they're not doing better.

You can find out who your local MP is and how to contact them by visiting www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-an-mp-or-lord/contact-your-mp/.

Writing your letter

Whilst you can contact your MP by email, a letter is much more effective, especially if you write it by hand. Make sure that your letter is clear and gets your point across. Avoid being rude - there's no reason why your MP should have to put up with abuse. Always give your name and address, because it's important for your MP to know that you're a real person who lives in their constituency. It would be a good idea to state your age too (and if you'd like to, your school, college or university too), so the MP knows the letter is coming from a young person.

You should at the very least receive a reply from them, and if you're not happy with the response, then write again! You can also keep in touch with your MP to find out how they have been sharing your concerns in parliament.

Want to apply more pressure?

Why not try to encourage your friends to write to your MP too (if they live in the same constituency), or to their own local MP if they live elsewhere. This could be particularly effective if you can encourage your class, or even your whole school to write letters too!

You might not think you're making a difference, but you will definitely be delivering your message loud and clear to your MP - and if enough people do that, it can bring about real change!