

Writing to your MP

We contacted Hope for the future www.hfff.org.uk/ who provided this tailored strategy in contacting Preet Gill. This offers you 5 possible asks.

**Our advice would be to choose something you are passionate about!
Please get in touch if you think you would benefit from a chat.**

Tailored Strategy

As a Shadow Secretary of State, Preet is on the frontbench of the Labour opposition, so therefore is vocal in her scrutiny of the government, but must follow the Labour party line in keeping with her Ministerial role. Her remit for International Development means her focus is global in scope, and she seems to be highly aware of the devastating impacts of the climate crisis on the global south. As well as her national and international focus she does seem to also listen to and represent more local constituency issues too. The following asks build on the above understanding and give you some suggestions for specific actions you could initially ask Preet to take as you start to engage with her on climate issues.

Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill

<https://todayfortomorrow.org.uk/>

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (WFG) Bill is being led through Parliament by The Big Issue founder, Lord Bird, and is co-sponsored by Caroline Lucas MP. The Bill aims to “Challenge orthodox thinking by brokering sustainable solutions to social problems.” The Bill will require the UK government to:

- 1) Work to prevent problems, including the climate crisis, poverty and pandemics from happening, and not just deal in emergencies;
- 2) Give current and future generations a voice in decision-making, and protect them from global threats and;
- 3) Deliver a new, sustainable vision for the nation that prioritises our environmental, social, economic and cultural wellbeing.

Preet has not yet signed up as a supporter of the Bill, but she will likely be very interested in what it is proposing, having spoken about the importance of protecting future generations in the past. Unfortunately, all Private Members Bills have now been suspended from debate until further notice due to Covid-19, but this is still worth raising with Preet as they will return to parliament in future.

Possible Ask 1

You could ask Preet to formally support the WFG Bill and then attend and speak at future debates to show that support.

Housing efficiency

The high level of fuel poverty in Birmingham Edgbaston (and the city of Birmingham as a whole), is a clear mandate for the need to improve housing insulation for the health of local residents - as well as having the co-benefit for the climate in improving energy efficiency. Making our homes more energy efficient will play a huge part in helping reduce emissions from heating (you can read more about this here:

<https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/explainers/why-are-household-energy-efficiency-measures-important-for-tackling-climate-change/>

Around a fifth of the UK's carbon emissions come from heating buildings. At least 80% of the 29 million homes in the UK have natural gas powered boilers and they're amongst the worst insulated in Europe. The government's Committee on Climate Change has said that meeting the UK's climate targets means a near-complete elimination of emissions from UK buildings. Read more in the HFTF Policy Resource here:

<https://www.hfft.org.uk/policy-resources>

For new homes, the government has announced a ban on gas boilers in new builds from 2025, with homebuilders required to install low-carbon heating systems. The government's Future Homes Standard regulations will also require emissions from new homes to be 75-80% lower than current levels by 2025. This will be achieved through very high insulation standards and low carbon heating. The 75-80% target is down from an initial proposal of 80%.

For existing homes, the government's Green Homes Grant was launched in 2020 and provides significant grants for insulation work. Problems have arisen however with a lack of skilled tradespeople to undertake work and a lack of awareness of the scheme, reducing take-up.

Possible Ask 2

You could ask Preet to submit an oral question to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick MP, asking whether he will consider bringing forward the Future Homes Standard to 2023 or ideally earlier, and if he will consider a target of carbon neutral homes rather than the current target of 75-80% more efficient than today.

Possible Ask 3

You could ask Preet to publish information on her website and social media about the grant urging constituents to take-up the grants to install home insulation.

Possible Ask 4

Given that it is unclear whether there are enough installers in all parts of the country to undertake vital insulation work, you could ask Preet to commit to asking her constituents to contact her about their experiences with the grant scheme. She could then send these experiences to the Business Secretary and lobby the government on this issue if any problems are reported back to her.

COP26

The UK government is hosting the COP26 event in Glasgow, in November. With Preet's role as Secretary of State for International Development, she will be aware of the importance of the summit and will likely be open to raising the profile of climate action and pushing for ambitious targets and agreements to be made.

In the lead up to COP26, various Ministerial Meetings and Engagement Groups will be planned. "Build[ing] back better by protecting our planet" will be a focus, a possible suggestion for Preet would be to follow up on and scrutinise the progress and success.

Possible Ask 5

You could ask Preet to submit a written or oral question to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, George Eustice MP, and/or the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Kwasi Kwarteng MP, asking them to deliver an update on the progress of the Climate and Environment Ministers' meetings set up in preparation for COP26."

Christian Aid provide further advice on contacting your MP:

- acknowledge their increased workload.
- try to make it about something specific to your community.
- make it clear what you want your MP or councillor to do.
- remember to include your full name and address (so they know you're in their constituency)
- use your own words and make it personal;
- keep it short and to the point
- keep your message focused and clear;
- include supporting facts to back up your case;
- ask them to respond to you

You could use the New Deal for Climate Justice petition to help guide your letter writing. Visit <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/climate-justice-2021>

A few potential topics to raise are:

- Need to abolish charges for plastic, glass and can recycling (especially for all charities and churches)
- Birmingham's recycling record (lowest in the country)
<https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/birmingham-one-worst-recycling-rates-14057962>
- Climate and Ecology Emergency Bill Alliance - 109 supporting MP's, but not Preet Gill. Ask her to consider joining. <https://www.ceebill.uk/>
- Ask the government to invest more in new green technologies
- Push the government to get much stricter with their plans for carbon pricing. A tax on high carbon producing industries, you can learn more here:
<https://www.pinsentmasons.com/out-law/guides/carbon-pricing-and-the-drive-to-net-zero>
- Ask her to continue her good work in trying to end public financing of fossil fuels overseas
- Push the government to subsidise greener travel