

UK Youth Parliament

Stop Plastic Pollution Pack



**STOP
PLASTIC POLLUTION**



United Kingdom

Youth Parliament
MAKING OUR MARK

Why are we campaigning to stop plastic pollution?

In 2020's Make Your Mark ballot young people voted both plastic pollution and climate change in the the top 5 devolved/UK issues for the coming year. UK Youth Parliament will be campaigning to address climate change at the UK level with a particular focus on making sure that we stop non-essential single use plastics by 2025.

Plastic pollution and climate change more broadly are issues with global impact. We are proud that UK Youth Parliament has a nationwide network of young people working for change. That's why we have partnered with Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace to make sure that you can take part in meaningful action to address this issue locally, nationally and globally.

How to use this pack

In this pack you will find the information you need to get set up to take part in our campaign actions over the next year. Work through this pack with your youth worker, local youth council or youth group. This pack contains:

1. On overview of our campaign actions over the next year.
2. More detail and resources to help you take part in each of the actions.
3. Information, tips and tricks that will make sure you're set up to take part in an effective campaign to end plastic pollution.
4. A number of hyperlinks are embedded in this pack. It is designed to be used on a device rather than printed.

What will our campaign look like?

We've mapped out opportunities for Members of Youth Parliament to engage with this campaign over the course of the year. Check page 3 for the infographic.

UK Youth Parliament + Friends of the Earth + GreenPeace

Stop Plastic Pollution

Stopping non-essential single use plastics by 2025 and making sure young people's voices are heard at COP26.



March/April 21

Form a campaign coordination group who will mobilise young people in their areas and advise on when we should get involved/which particular parts of the Bill we should advocate for

www.byc.org.uk

April 21

Establish how much support there is for the Plastic Pollution Bill among MPs; young people write to their local MP and report back on their response

May/July 21

Meet local MPs; ask them to submit Parliamentary questions or speak in debates focussing on amendments to the Environment Bill. The exact ask will depend on when the Government brings the Environment Bill to Parliament.

Depending on the parliamentary timetable - we will have a day of action when Parliament votes on amendments to the Environment Bill relating to plastic pollution (hopefully taken from the Plastic Pollution Bill)

Sept/Oct 21

Take part in UK Youth Parliament/ Greenpeace event on plastic pollution and designed to inspire young people to take action targeted at COP26.

Stop Plastic Pollution

Campaign Detail

This campaign will follow the Plastic Pollution Bill (this is a Presentation Bill - this means that we won't be campaigning to have the whole thing made law, but will be working with politicians to try to have bits of it included in different laws. You can find out more about it here: <https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2019-21/plasticpollution.html>) Although we have campaign actions planned out over the course of 2021/22 the nature of the Parliamentary calendar at the moment means we will occasionally have to respond quickly in advocating for change. In March/April we will kick off our campaign by forming a Campaign Steering Group who will mobilise young people in their areas and advise on when we should get involved/which particular aspects of the Bill we should advocate for.

1. April 21 - Launch a letter writing campaign asking MYPs to write to their local MP to scope out cross-party support for the Plastic Pollution Bill.
2. May/July 21 - Encourage MYPs to meet with their local MPs and ask them to submit Parliamentary questions or speak in debates focussing on amendments to the Environment Bill. The exact ask will depend on when the Government brings the Environment Bill to Parliament. BYC will provide briefings closer to the time.
3. Dependent on parliamentary timetable - we will have a day of action when Parliament votes on amendments to the Environment Bill relating to plastic pollution (hopefully taken from the Plastic Pollution Bill)
4. Sept/Oct 21 - We will run an event partnering with Greenpeace on plastic pollution and designed to inspire young people to take action targeted at COP26. We will share resources from Greenpeace following this event which will support young people to run events in their communities/schools to create further action around COP26.

Plastic pollution facts and statistics.

Stopping plastic pollution won't be possible without also reducing plastic production. Sadly, end of life solutions like litter picks and recycling are not enough: government must reduce the amount of plastics produced in the first place and make reuse the easiest option for everyone.

The good news is that new laws are being written in the Environment Bill right now: Friends of the Earth are calling on government to seize this historic opportunity and turn the tide on the plastics crisis by setting laws that turn off the tap of plastic pollution. A first step towards achieving this is to end the use of non-essential single use plastics by 2025. Here are some statistics that help us think about the current picture when it comes to plastic pollution and some of the ways this might be linked to the climate crisis. You can use these facts when you're speaking with your peers or decision makers about the campaign.

- By 2050 plastic in the oceans will outweigh fish, weighing at least 937 million tons of plastic to 895 million tons of fish, if plastic pollution continues at current rates (www.businessinsider.com/plastic-in-ocean-outweighs-fish-evidence-report-2017-1)
- The average Briton's annual plastic waste includes 242 plastic bottles, 109 single-use coffee cups and 209 crisp packets (www.circularonline.co.uk/news/poll-reveals-typical-brits-annual-waste/)
- Every day approximately 8 million pieces of plastic pollution find their way into our oceans. (OSPAR, 2009)
- 12 million tonnes of plastic are poured into the ocean every year. (Eunomia, 2016)
- Plastics consistently make up 80% of all marine debris studied. (IUCN, 2020)
- There may now be around 5.25 trillion macro and microplastic pieces floating in the open ocean. Weighing up to 269,000 tonnes. (Eriksen, 2014)

- 100,000 marine mammals and turtles and 1 million sea birds are killed by marine plastic pollution annually. (*UK Government, 2018*)
- Approx 5,000 items of marine plastic pollution have been found per mile of beach in the UK. (*Marine Conservation Society, 2016*)
- Producing one tonne of plastic generates up to 2.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide. (*Material Economics, 2018*)
- Plastic production has been forecast to grow by 60% by 2030 and to treble by 2050. (*Center for International Environmental Law, 2019*)
- Less than a third of all plastic in the UK is recycled. (*PlasticsEurope, 2020*)
- 63% of people want to reduce their consumption of plastic and 77% want the government to take more action to protect the ocean (*Surfers against Sewage, May 2020*).



Forming a campaign coordination group

The nature of campaigning for something to be made law is that we're going to have to be dynamic. We can guess roughly when the government might want to talk about climate change and plastic pollution, but we'll never know for sure until a couple of weeks ahead of time. Because of this, we're forming a small group of Members of Youth Parliament to join our UK campaign coordination group. If you are in a youth council, school, or youth group we would recommend forming your own group to support you.

It will be this group's job to react to what's happening at UK Parliament, steer and mobilise young people in their areas and make sure the voices of young people are heard on this issue.

Writing to your MP

We are partnering with Friends of the Earth, who are working with a broad coalition of charities, to try to get the government to put an end date on single use plastic into law. They've done this by putting forward something called a Presentation Bill. Our campaign won't aim to get this entire Bill made law, but we will be working to have parts of it included in different laws over the course of the year. In order to make that happen we need to know which MPs support us and which don't. That's why we're asking you to write a letter to your MP asking them to support our campaign.

Who's my MP and how do I contact them?

The UK is split up into 650 different constituencies each of which is represented by a Member of Parliament. This MP is elected by the people who live in that area to represent them at Parliament. If you are a part of a Youth Council, make sure you're contacting all of the MPs in your area and not just one or two.

We know that contacting your MP for the first time can be

intimidating, especially if you don't know who they are or what they're interested in! Here are some links that might be helpful before you get in touch:

- They Work for You: Type in your postcode on this website (www.theyworkforyou.com/) and you'll get loads of info about who your MP is and what they've done in Parliament in the past.
- Parliament website: You can get loads more information about your MP by visiting Parliament's website (<https://members.parliament.uk/>) and typing in your postcode.

Mapping our progress

We've created a map on our website to show how the campaign is progressing and show the actions you've taken to support it. We need you to:

- Tells us once you've written to your MP by [completing this short form by the end April](#)
- When you get a reply tell us if they support or are against action on plastic pollution or are against action; [complete this short form](#)
- See how the campaign is progressing, which MPs have replied, and if they support more action on plastic pollution, by checking [our map](#)
We can then use this information in our campaigning throughout the rest of the year.

Letter template to write to MP

We have worked with Friends of the Earth to create a letter template for engaging with your MP. This document is a living document and will change as we engage with different opportunities at Parliament to influence the Government to take action on plastic pollution. However, it provides important guidance for writing a letter to your MP anytime.

We know from experience that personalised letters are much more likely to get the attention and interest of MPs,

which is why we have written guidelines for you rather than a full template: don't hesitate to write a sentence or two in your letter about why plastics and climate change affect your and your local area.

As we move through our campaign we will keep the letter updated with key information for you to pass on to your MP: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1u8FKz-Szkcn5M6vOa-_jjWinKEaCL20nuaxeqmgDbIE/edit

Meeting with MPs

If your MP writes back to you to let you know that they would like to meet with you, don't be intimidated. This is a fantastic opportunity to make sure young people's voices are heard when it comes to plastic pollution!

Because this campaign is dynamic, what we want to ask for when we meet with MPs might be different as the year goes on. If you're not sure what you should talk about when you go to meet your MP, reach out to your steering group member, to the member of the campaign coordination group for your area or to BYC directly.

As part of our campaign we're working with Greenpeace to provide you with resources to work for effective change. Here are some of their tips on how to meet with your MP (you can read more here: www.greenpeace.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Lets-Lobby-our-MPs.pdf):

1. **Make your ask clear:** Whatever you're asking your MP to do, make it clear.
2. **Keep it local:** Politicians want to hear how issues are affecting your community. Whatever the issue, try to make it relevant to your community's daily life.
3. **Use logic and emotion:** Several well chosen facts combined with the personal reasons you care make for a compelling communication.
4. **Be concise:** Sharing the most important points is more impactful than overloading them with information.

5. **Be polite and positive:** Politicians are more likely to listen.
6. **Ask to be kept updated:** You'll want to know the outcome of the work they're doing at Parliament.
7. **Get creative:** Drawings, photos or artwork can be unique ways to grab your MP's attention.

COP26 Event with Greenpeace

In November 2021 the UK will be hosting COP26 which will provide a unique opportunity for us to shape the future of international work to address the climate crisis. We will be hosting an event with Greenpeace which will equip you to engage with COP26 and make sure that young people's voices are heard by decision makers when it comes to their deliberations on plastic pollution.

What is COP26?

The COP26 event is a global United Nations summit about climate change and how countries are planning to tackle it. COP stands for Conference of the Parties, and will be attended by countries that signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) - a treaty agreed in 1994. The 2021 meeting will be the 26th meeting, which is why it's called COP26.

The last conference, COP25, was held in Madrid, Spain, in November 2019 with Greta Thunberg giving a big speech at the event. The COP meeting in Madrid finished with lots of big issues unresolved, but an agreement was made about cutting carbon dioxide - a gas that causes global warming. Each nation agreed to devise a plan to cut their carbon emissions by the time of this year's conference in Glasgow.

What are we going to do?

In the Autumn we will host an event with Greenpeace, hear from inspiring people and learn what we can do to address plastic pollution through COP26. We'll then be sending you out to campaign in your own communities and work to make sure young people's voices are heard at the conference.

Keep an eye out for more details over the summer!

Letting us know what you've achieved

We know that you are going to achieve some amazing things through our campaigning together this year. In order to make sure we can share your best ideas and your achievements please use this surveymonkey to let us know about anything you're particularly proud of:

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/JQCY7XY

This will help us measure our impact and share campaign ideas across our network.



The British Youth Council 2021

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