

Lobbying Guide

Thanks so much for your support with this campaign! If you're reading this, you're probably hoping to try and meet with parliamentary candidates in your area to ask them to support the Tax Dodging Bill. Or maybe you've already got meetings booked in? This guide is to help you prepare to meet the candidates and field tricky questions, but you'll also need help from these resources below (they're online at www.taxdodgingbill.org.uk/do-more)

- Action Pack (to give an overview of everything)
- Political briefing (to give your candidates)
- Our 'Do More' web page (to arrange a meeting & link up with local campaigners)

Preparing for your meeting

- If you have a Local Coordinator, and other people are coming to the meeting with you, it's worth having a short meeting to prepare or even a chat over the telephone. Decide who will say what, in what order, and get someone to be a photographer if your candidate agrees to a picture.
- Do some research. Search online for each of the candidates that you're going to meet with; take a look at their web pages, and their Wikipedia entry if they have them. If you're meeting your current MP you can see their full voting record and other information on www.theyworkforyou.com Use your research to find their parties' position on tax dodging and try and imagine why the candidates you're meeting might support or oppose the Tax Dodging Bill – this will help you pitch it to them well.
- Read through the Frequently Asked Questions page on our website: www.taxdodgingbill.org.uk/FAQ and take a look at the suggested answers to some tricky questions on page 3-4 of this guide.
- Familiarise yourself with the Political Briefing and make sure you understand the basics of the new law we want to see as part of the Tax Dodging Bill. You don't need to be an expert (and the person you're talking to won't be either) but you do need a basic overall idea.
- You can leave the Political Briefing with your candidates for them to digest, and it contains contact details for Tax Dodging Bill advocacy experts in case they have further questions you can't answer.

Key talking points

The problem: We all pay our tax. But companies like Amazon, Google and Starbucks can get away without paying their fair share.

The impact: Every year the UK and developing countries lose billions of pounds to corporate tax dodging. This means that governments – here and in some of the world's poorest countries – are losing out on taxes which could be used to fight poverty.

The solution: We want all political parties to pledge to introduce a Tax Dodging Bill in the first 100 days after the election to fight poverty in the UK and developing countries. The details of what we want this to include are in the Political Briefing.

Make it personal: Say why you particularly care about tax dodging – it might be the basic unfairness or the need for government money to tackle poverty.

Highlight public anger: 73% want the next UK Government to legislate to discourage UK companies from avoiding tax in developing countries, and 82% want greater penalties against UK companies which avoid tax.

It's a cross party issue: Voters of all leanings are angry about tax dodging, and all the political leaders are talking about it being a problem. The Tax Dodging Bill is a challenge for a race to the top – we want all the parties to commit to bring in this law if they get in.

What exactly can your candidates do?

- Express support for a Tax Dodging Bill themselves.
- Contact their party leaders to push for the party to commit to introducing a Tax Dodging Bill in the first 100 days after the 2015 general election.
- Have a photo taken with a Tax Dodging Bill Poster (you'll find one in the Action Pack), then tweet the picture to show their support.
- Promote the campaign on their website or in local media.

Try to make sure they agree to some concrete action before the meeting ends. Then afterwards email to thank them for meeting you, reminding them of the actions they agreed to take and asking them to let you know what they do. If you took a picture you can attach this to the email you send them.

Afterwards, don't forget to tell us how the meeting went by filling in the form at
www.taxdodgingbill.org.uk/feedback

Tricky questions (and our suggested answers)

Q – Won’t the current “Google Tax” proposal mean we don’t need a Tax Dodging Bill?

The proposed “Google Tax” will be a positive step, but doesn’t not go far enough to tackle tax dodging in the UK and the world’s poorer countries. The current proposal doesn’t not cover the broad range of measures needed, which are proposed in the Tax Dodging Bill. For example, we need still need to make sure the UK’s tax system doesn’t encourage big companies to avoid tax in poor countries and to make the UK’s tax system more transparent and tougher on tax dodgers. That is why we need a Tax Dodging Bill.

Q - The government is already doing enough to tackle tax dodging

Over the last few years the government has taken action on tax dodging following pressure from tax campaigners, but it has not gone far enough in tackling tax dodging by multinational companies. Much more needs to be done before we have a fair tax system where all companies pay their fair share. All political parties need to commit to do more.

Q - Isn’t the Tax Dodging Bill anti-business?

No, it’s not. The Tax Dodging Bill would have no direct impact on most small /local businesses that don’t have operations in other countries or don’t benefit from big tax breaks. In fact, it might help make things fairer by levelling the playing field for smaller businesses. At present it is often large multinational companies that are most able to avoid paying tax - by making the bigger companies pay their fair share they will have less of an advantage over smaller or more responsible businesses that already pay their fair share.

Responsible businesses are also increasingly seeing the need for action to make the tax system fairer. For example, the following businesses signed up to support the Tax Dodging Bill on the day it launched: Mid Counties Co-operative, Unity Trust Bank, the Phone Co-op and Co-operative Energy.

Q - What impact will the Tax Dodging Bill have on economic growth?

It is hugely difficult to assess the impact on economic growth largely due to the financial secrecy of large companies, which is one of the problems the Tax Dodging Bill seeks to address. In many cases the UK government has also not analysed the impact of the current tax loopholes and tax breaks on UK economic growth, which is why we are calling for a review of the social and economic benefits of the largest corporate tax breaks.

Q - In order to grow the UK economy, shouldn't our focus be on lowering tax rates not making some companies pay even more tax? If we lowered our tax rates, wouldn't people be incentivised to pay their taxes without needing complex changes to tax law?

The current government has already cut the corporate tax rate from 28% to 20%, the lowest rate in the G8, but some companies are still paying little or no tax in this country. With such low tax rates it is even more vital that the tax rules are effective in making companies pay their fair share.

Q - Wouldn't strengthening developing countries tax authorities and tackling corruption be more effective in ensuring companies pay their fair share of taxes?

Strengthening tax authorities and tackling corruption is important and something we support. But the tax authorities in poorer countries can only ensure they are getting their fair share from multinational companies if the rules are in place to allow them to tax the profits of those companies. In the UK we have a responsibility to the world's poorest people to ensure the UK's tax system doesn't encourage UK companies to avoid tax in developing countries.

The scale of corruption is also actually much smaller than most people imagine. According to research from the respected US think tank Global Financial Integrity only 3% of illegal flows of money out of countries (illicit financial flows) are due to corruption by government officials, compared to 65% from corporate tax dodging.

Q - Why should the UK worry about tax- dodging in other countries? It's not our responsibility.

The UK government has a responsibility to ensure that our tax rules do not deprive the world's poorer countries of vitally needed funds. Failure to do this is at odds with the UK government's efforts to tackle global poverty. The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) strongly recognises that low-income countries do not want to be aid dependent, and has said for example that "tax avoidance and evasion undermine developing countries' ability to provide public services and increase their reliance on aid". In the long term, ensuring developing countries are able to raise tax effectively can reduce their reliance on UK aid.

By weakening its rules which deter the use of tax havens, the UK is also inviting other countries to do the same. In the end, we'll all lose out. As the International Monetary Fund's (IMF's) Managing Director Christine Lagarde said recently, tax competition between countries is: "By definition, a race to the bottom [which] leaves everyone at the bottom."

In contrast, the Tax Dodging Bill campaign is calling for a race to the top on tax. We want parties in the UK to compete with each other to do the most to tackle tax dodging. By leading the way, we can encourage other countries to follow.