



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Making the Scottish Parliament work for you

This leaflet tells you
how to have your
say in the Scottish
Parliament.



The Scottish Parliament

The Scottish Parliament can make laws about lots of things that matter to people in Scotland. These things are called devolved matters. Here are some of the things the Scottish Parliament can make laws about.

- Health
- Housing
- Social work
- Police and fire services
- Transport
- Education and training
- Sport
- Music, theatre and dance
- Gaelic
- Farming, forestry and fishing



There are some things that the Scottish Parliament cannot make laws about. The laws about these things are made in London at the United Kingdom (UK) Parliament. These things are called reserved matters.

Here are some of the things that only the **UK Parliament** can make laws about.

- **Taxes**
- **Defence (the army, navy and air force)**
- **Employment laws and the benefits system**
- **Gambling and the National Lottery**
- **Immigration (who can come to live in the UK)**



The Scottish Parliament can talk about any subject, even the things that it cannot make laws about.

Members of the Scottish Parliament

There are 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs). Most adults who live in Scotland can vote in an election to decide who their MSPs will be. Scottish Parliament elections are held every 4 years.

Wherever you live in Scotland, you have 8 MSPs who can speak for you. One MSP was elected for the constituency, or local area you live in. The other 7 MSPs were elected for the region, or bigger area that you live in. You can contact any of your 8 MSPs as they are all there to work for you.



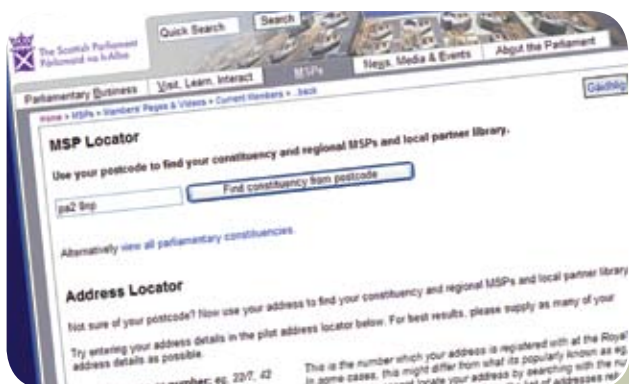
Picture:
MSPs in the
Scottish Parliament
Debating Chamber

Why should I get involved?

To help the Scottish Parliament work better for the people of Scotland, the MSPs need to know what you think about the things that matter to you.

To find out who your 8 MSPs are:

- **Phone Public Information on 0800 092 7500**
- **Look on the website**
www.scottish.parliament.uk/msp
- **Text your postcode to 07786 209 888.**



Picture:
Look on the website

Picture:
Text your postcode



Picture:
Call Public Information

10 ways to find out more about the Parliament

- 1. You can visit the Scottish Parliament building in Edinburgh.**
- 2. You can have a tour of the Scottish Parliament.**

Tours are not on every day and you need to book a place. You can do this by phoning 0800 092 7600.
- 3. You can watch a debate or a Question Time session in the Debating Chamber.**

You need to book a seat in the public gallery. You can do this by phoning 0800 092 7600.
- 4. You can watch a debate or a committee meeting online.**

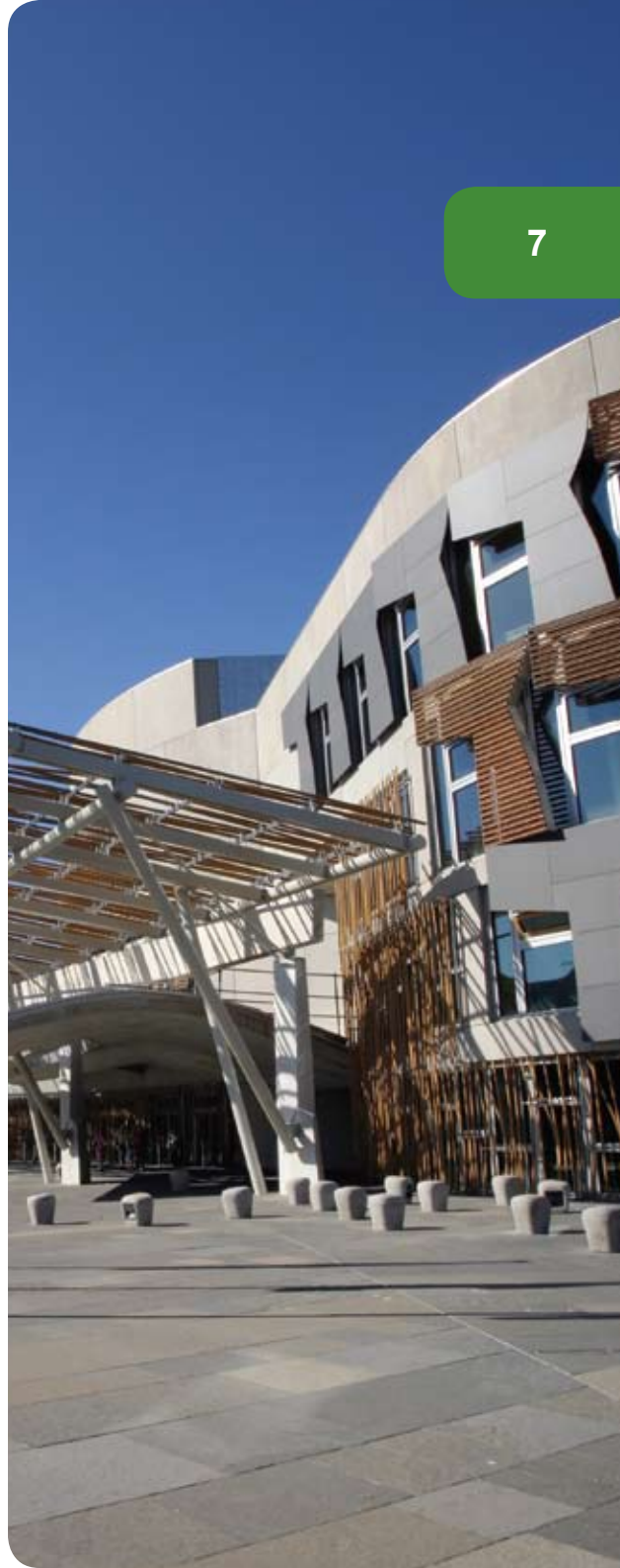
You can watch what happens in the Scottish Parliament on the internet. Go to www.holyrood.tv
- 5. You can ask one of your MSPs to come and talk to your community group.**



Picture:
Visitors on a tour
of the Scottish
Parliament

- 6. You can come to one of our events or open days.**
- 7. You can look on our website:**
www.scottish.parliament.uk
The website tells you about MSPs and what the Scottish Parliament is doing.
- 8. You can go to your local partner library.**
There are 80 partner libraries in Scotland. You can go onto our website or email your MSP from a partner library.
- 9. You can contact Public Information.**
Public Information can tell you who your MSPs are or answer your questions about the Scottish Parliament.
Phone 0800 092 7500
Email sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk
Text 07786 209 888
- 10. Students can book a visit to our education centre.**
We also have education teams who can visit your school.

Picture:
The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh



10 ways to get involved

1. **Vote in the Scottish Parliament elections.**

You can vote if you are over 18 and your name is on the electoral register (the voters' roll). Contact your local council to find out how to register to vote. You can see a copy of the electoral register at your local library.

2. **Write to, email or telephone one of your MSPs.**

3. **Speak to an MSP at a local surgery.**

A surgery is when an MSP spends time in a local building, like a supermarket or community centre. People can come and talk to the MSP. You can get details of local surgeries from your library.



Picture:
A ballot box
for votes



Picture:
An MSP talks to
local people

4. Give evidence to a committee.

A committee is a small group of MSPs who look at subjects in detail. They often “call for evidence”. This means that anyone else who is interested in the subject can write in and say what they think.

5. Go to a committee event.

Committees meet all over Scotland so that lots of people can have their say. Your local newspaper will have details of committee events coming to your area.

6. Join a Cross-Party Group.

If you join a Cross-Party Group you can meet MSPs and other people who are interested in the same thing as you. You can see a list of Cross-Party Groups on our website.



Picture:
MSPs and
members of
the public at a
committee event
at the Scottish
Parliament

7. Start a petition.

You can start a petition, asking the Scottish Parliament to look at something. A petition is a paper that says what you want to happen or want to change. You sign it and other people who agree with you sign it too. You can start a petition on the website or you can write it out.

8. Sign someone else's online petition.

You can add your name to a petition about something you agree with. You can find a list of online petitions on our website:

<http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk>

9. Hold an event or information display.

You can ask one of your MSPs to support you to have an information stand or event at the Scottish Parliament about something that is important to you.

10. Stand for election.

You can stand for election to become an MSP if you are over 18. This means that you tell people what you think and ask them to vote for you at a Scottish Parliament election. You do not need to belong to a political party, although most people who stand for election do. You can find out more about standing for election at: www.electoralcommission.org.uk



Picture:
A petition to the
Scottish Parliament

What words mean

Constituency:

Scotland has 73 small areas called Scottish Parliament constituencies. One person is elected as the MSP for each constituency.

Devolved matters:

These are things that the Scottish Parliament can make laws about.

Election:

This is when people vote for who they want to run the country.

Electoral register:

This is a list of people who can vote in an election. You can see the list at your local library.

MSP:

This is short for Member of the Scottish Parliament. People vote for MSPs to speak for them in the Scottish Parliament.

Region:

Scotland has 8 big areas called Scottish Parliament regions. Seven people are elected as regional MSPs for each region.

Reserved matters:

These are things that the Scottish Parliament cannot make laws about.



How can I find out more?

Public Information

Public Information can tell you about what happens in the Scottish Parliament and how you can have your say.

-  **Address: Public Information**
The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP
-  **Telephone: 0800 092 7500**
Textphone: 0800 092 7100
Text: 07786 209 888
-  **Email: sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk**
-  **Website: www.scottish.parliament.uk**

Visitor Services

Visitor Services can help you book tickets or tours.

-  **Address: Visitor Services**
The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP
-  **Telephone: 0800 092 7600**
Textphone: 0800 092 7100
-  **Email: sp.bookings@scottish.parliament.uk**
-  **Website: www.scottish.parliament.uk**

To book your child (6 weeks to 5 years old) into the crèche when you visit the Scottish Parliament, please call 0131 348 6192 or email creche@scottish.parliament.uk

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would like the words in this
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language.