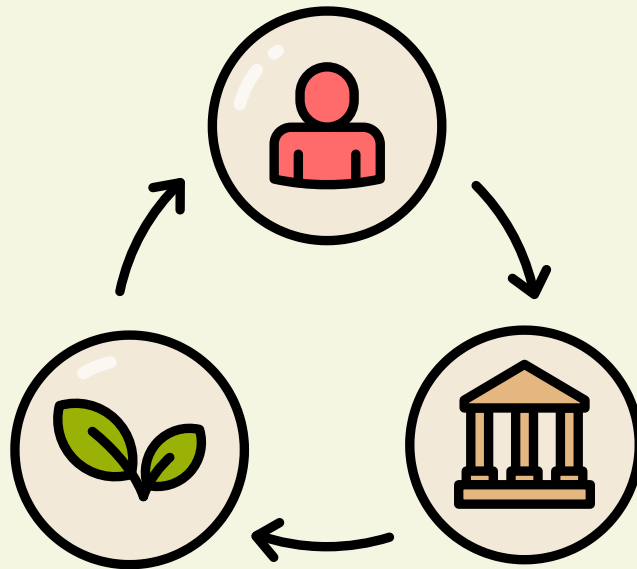


Contacting your elected representatives



Who are they?

Your elected representatives are your Member of Parliament (MP), Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) and your local Councillors.

You can contact them when you have a problem and this guide will help you find out whom to contact, when, and how to write an email to them.



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outside the box

Elected representatives

Councillors

Elected councillors will represent you on your local council. Local councils are responsible for making decisions about how money is spent to provide local public services.

This includes:

- Education, social care, housing, environment, waste, public transport, roads, library and leisure services.

Constituencies are split up into smaller areas called wards. In each ward there will be three or four Councillors. You can contact any of them.

MSPs

Every person in Scotland has eight Members of Scottish Parliament (MSPs) that they can contact:

- One MSP who represents people in a local area or constituency.
- Seven MSPs who represent all the people in a bigger region. You can contact any of them. It does not matter whether or not you voted for that person. Once they are elected, the MSP represents everyone in that area.

MPs

Every person in Scotland has one Member of Parliament (MP) that represents them and their constituency in the House of Commons. MPs will split their time between their constituency and Westminster.

How to find your elected representatives

You might not know who your MP, MSP or local Councillors are - but it is very easy to find out.

You find out who your MP is but putting in your postcode on [this website](#).

There is a similar website for finding out [your MSP](#).

Once you have put in your postcode, you will be able to find their contact details to get in touch via email, letter or phone.

To find out who your local Councillors are, you will need to go to your local Council website. Each Council website will have a dedicated section for putting in your postcode to find out who they are and how best to contact them.



How to correspond with elected representatives

When sending an email or letter to your MP or MSP you will want to include as much detail as you can in as few words as possible. The below diagram notes what information will be useful to put in your correspondence:

Dear MSP/MP/Councillor

Full name, address, post code
Contact number

Any reference numbers
Company details or account details

Any extenuating circumstances -
(illness, bereavement, health issues,
children, age, money issues)

Brief summary of what has happened
so far. Have you contacted anyone
else already?

What you would like to achieve from
the situation?

Members can only progress with casework for those living within their constituencies. Make sure you put your full address.

Company account numbers or any references will help cut down time and red tape.

Full details of any background context or important personal information that will help the MSP or MP stress your case.

A short, brief summary of events will help the MP or MSP progress with your case immediately and make enquiries on your behalf. It's helpful for them to know whom you have already contacted or spoken to on the matter.

What happens after you contact them

Once you have given the member's office all the details, they will make representations on your behalf.

The MP or MSP's office will make enquiries, usually via email, and will let you know when they receive a response.

Companies can usually take 20 working days to issue responses.

Elected members have access to hotlines and more direct contacts with a lot of companies and departments.

Once you have confirmation from your elected member that they are taking on your case on your behalf, you can let them take over for you.

NHS cases will require a consent form to be filled out. This allows for correspondence to be shared between the health board and your elected member. The NHS will not release any responses until this consent form is signed and received.

If you are contacting an elected member on behalf of a family member or friend, another consent form will need to be signed. This makes sure that the family member or friend has consented to you contacting and dealing with the elected member on their behalf.



What happens after you contact them

Caseworkers are employed by the MP or MSP and are usually located in the constituency office. Caseworkers are there to help you with your issue. They progress the case on your behalf and find out the relevant organisations or bodies that can help resolve your issues. Caseworkers will keep constituents updated on developments and either email, send a letter or call you to let you know when they have any updates.

Elected members mainly operate by email. This allows for quicker responses and for multiple caseworkers to help you at once. Elected members do also take on casework by communicating solely by phone or letter.

Most MPs and MSPs have weekly surgeries. These are short appointments where you can get more detailed and direct advice and help from them directly. Surgeries are often held locally in community spaces or by phone or video call.





Connecting Equalities is a Scottish Government funded project for Equalities and Human Rights. We work alongside diverse groups of older people connecting their everyday experiences to rights and equalities to help shape what matters to them for a good life.

To read more about the project and see our other resources check out our website:
<https://otbds.org/projects/connecting-equalities/>

