

This leaflet explains the role of your Member of Parliament (MP), how they may be able to help you and how you can contact him or her.

The Role of an MP

MPs have responsibilities to three main groups: their constituents, Parliament and their political party.

One MP is elected to the House of Commons by each of the UK's 600+ constituencies. MPs' duties in Parliament include participating in debates and voting on legislation and other matters. They may also be members of committees examining new laws or the work of government departments. Some have a role as a minister in government or a spokesperson in opposition.

MPs can help their constituents by advising on problems (particularly those that arise from the work of government departments), representing the concerns of their constituents in Parliament and acting as a figurehead for the local area.

MPs usually support their party by voting with its leadership in the House of Commons and acting as a representative for the party in their constituency.

Who is My MP?

If you know your full postcode and have internet access, you can find out who your local MP is from: <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/commons/>

Alternatively, you can call the House of Commons Information Office on 020 7219 4272.

How to Contact Your MP

It is often best to contact your MP first in writing; letters, faxes or emails enable you to explain things clearly and in detail so that your MP can consider your problem carefully before trying to help you.

You can write to any MP at:

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

All MPs have Westminster offices or have arrangements for their mail to be dealt with or redirected when they are away from London, so it is much better to write to them there, rather than to their constituency office or home address.

You can telephone any MP's Westminster office through the Parliament switchboard on 020 7219 3000. If an MP has an office in their constituency, you should be able to find the telephone number in the local phone directory under "Members of Parliament".

Not all MPs have published email addresses, but you can send messages to most MPs through a form using the list at:

www.parliament.uk/directories/hciolists/alms.cfm

This list also provides links to MPs' websites.

Most MPs hold 'surgeries' in their constituencies where local people can bring their problems. To find out the dates of surgeries and to arrange an appointment you should call your MP's office either at Westminster or in the constituency.

How can your MP help?

MPs are generous with their help and advice, and they will generally try to assist their constituents with a wide range of problems. There is no job description for an MP and it is up to an individual MP which cases they take on. However, MPs are more likely to be able to help with problems concerning central government services such as:

- **Benefits, pensions, national insurance**, and other matters dealt with by the Department for Work and Pensions;
- **Immigration** and other problems dealt with by the Home Office;
- **Tax problems** involving the HM Revenue and Customs
- Problems with the **NHS**;
- Problems with the **Child Support Agency**;
- **School grants and closures**

Problems with local authority services can be raised with a local councillor. Also, in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland some services are the responsibility of devolved assemblies and it may be better to contact your local member of these bodies.

Your MP will generally do everything he or she can to help constituents but will not be able to support every cause and may feel that they are not the best person to help. If they are unable to help they may refer you to someone more appropriate such as a local councillor, the local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) or another local organisation. For legal advice, you may be referred to a solicitor.



You should always raise your problem with your own local MP rather than any other. There is one MP for each constituency and they are there to represent the interests of all their constituents, not just the people who voted for them.

There are a number of ways an MP may be able to help you. They can simply provide advice or can write letters on your behalf to officials or Ministers. They may, on your behalf, be able to refer a case of maladministration to the **Parliamentary Ombudsman**.

If appropriate, your MP can choose to raise your case in the House of Commons through a **parliamentary question**, in an **adjournment debate** or in an **early day motion**. MPs can also present **petitions** on behalf of constituents.

Further Information

More information on the role of an MP can be found in the HCIO's factsheet *You and Your MP*. This can be found on the internet at:
http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_publications_and_archives/factsheets.cfm

Contacts

For information about the House of Commons:

House of Commons Information Office
House of Commons, London SW1A 2TT
Tel:**020-7219 4272**
E-mail:hcinfo@parliament.uk
www.parliament.uk/directories/hcio.cfm
Fax:**020-7219 5839**

Information for schools, teachers and young people:

Education Service
House of Commons, London SW1A 2TT
Tel:**020-7219 4496**
E-mail:education@parliament.uk
www.explore.parliament.uk
Fax:**020-7219 0818**

For information about the House of Lords:

House of Lords Information Office
House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW
Tel:**020-7219 3107**
E-mail:hinfo@parliament.uk
Fax:**020-7219 0620**

For the archives of both Houses:

Parliamentary Archives
House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW
Tel:**020-7219 3074**
E-mail:archives@parliament.uk
Fax:**020-7219 2570**

Other Useful Numbers

To contact MPs/Peers:	020 7219 3000
Conservative Party:	020 7222 9000
Labour Party:	0870 5900 200
Liberal Democrat Party:	020 7222 7999
Plaid Cymru:	029 2064 6000
Scottish National Party:	0131 525 8900
European Parliament:	020 7227 4300
Typetalk (for hard of hearing)	0870 240 9598