

Connect

*A guide to engaging
with your MSPs*

scotland
evangelical alliance
together making Jesus known



The Evangelical Alliance longs to see Christians engaging with their MSPs in a productive and loving way...

... but we recognise sometimes it can be difficult to know where to start.

We hope that this resource will help you to begin to build relationships with your MSPs and encourage you to pray for and support them as they represent you in the Scottish Parliament.

You will find a few ways that you can get in touch with your MSPs and how you can get to know them better, as they also get to know you and the hope that you have for your community and for Scotland.

We want Christians to be known as ‘good news’ people in every sphere. We believe that the greatest way to show our representatives the love of Jesus is by praying for them and with them as 1 Timothy 2:1-4 commands:

“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”

So, before you begin, take a moment to pray for your MSP. Then read on and start the journey to getting to know your MSP better.



Why should we be engaging with our MSPs?



The Bible instructs us to respect people in authority. 1 Peter 2:17 says: “Respect everyone, and love the family of believers. Fear God, and respect the king.”

The word of God tells us to love our political leaders too. Mark 12:31 commands that we love our neighbours, including those from whom we differ. While Jesus talks of people of different religious backgrounds being our neighbours, those of different political persuasions are our neighbours too.

We are to love everyone, even people we disagree with – and sometimes especially people we disagree with. And we’re called to love our MSPs, even if we don’t always agree with the decisions that they make.

As we love our MSPs, let’s get to know them. Then when we share with them our Christian perspectives, they will already know and understand us. When you think about it, you’re more likely to take constructive criticism from someone you know well than from a complete stranger. When our MSPs know us as people of love who build them up, they will hear us when we offer an alternative perspective.

Don’t forget: God wants to see all people saved, including our MSPs. Let’s reach out to them in love with the news of the greatest love.

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Who are my MSPs?



To build a relationship with your MSP you have to know who he or she is.

Did you know that you have eight MSPs representing you in Holyrood? The Additional Member System used to elect members of the Scottish Parliament results in one MSP being elected for each of the 73 constituencies in Scotland and a further seven MSPs being elected to represent each of the eight larger regions that Scotland is divided into. These eight MSPs will be from a range of parties.

Your constituency MSP will have a more in-depth knowledge of your local area, but this does not mean you should neglect the other seven MSPs who represent you. In parliament, the voices and votes of all MSPs are counted equal, regardless of whether they are constituency MSPs or regional MSPs; and you have a right to engage with all of them.

The Scottish Parliament provides resources which make it easy for you to find out who your representatives are. On the parliament website, enter your postcode and find out which MSPs represent you. Then get in touch.

www.parliament.scot



How do I connect with my MSP?



You can use the Scottish Parliament website to find the contact details for your MSP. Alternatively, [writetothem.com](https://www.writetothem.com) is a helpful website that makes emailing your representatives easy.

You can also check your MSP's website or social media accounts for the date, time and venue of their constituency surgeries. These are times when you can drop in to see your MSP without having to make an appointment.

Your MSPs are ordinary people, so you don't have to be afraid to approach them. Start by introducing yourself; they want to get to know their constituents. You can mention your job, the church you go to, and the community projects with which you are involved.

Make sure you communicate a positive message in your conversation, something that will encourage your MSP, before you go on to voice any opinions or complaints that you might have.

Some questions to consider in any interaction that you have with your MSP, whether that be online or in person are:

- Is what I am saying constructive?
- Would I speak to a colleague the way I speak to my MSP?
- Is this how I want Christians to be perceived?
- Am I representing my church well?

How can you support your MSPs practically?



Pray for them

Begin to support your MSPs by bringing them before God's throne of grace. In addition to your personal prayers, you could hold church prayer meetings specifically for your political leaders.

Email them

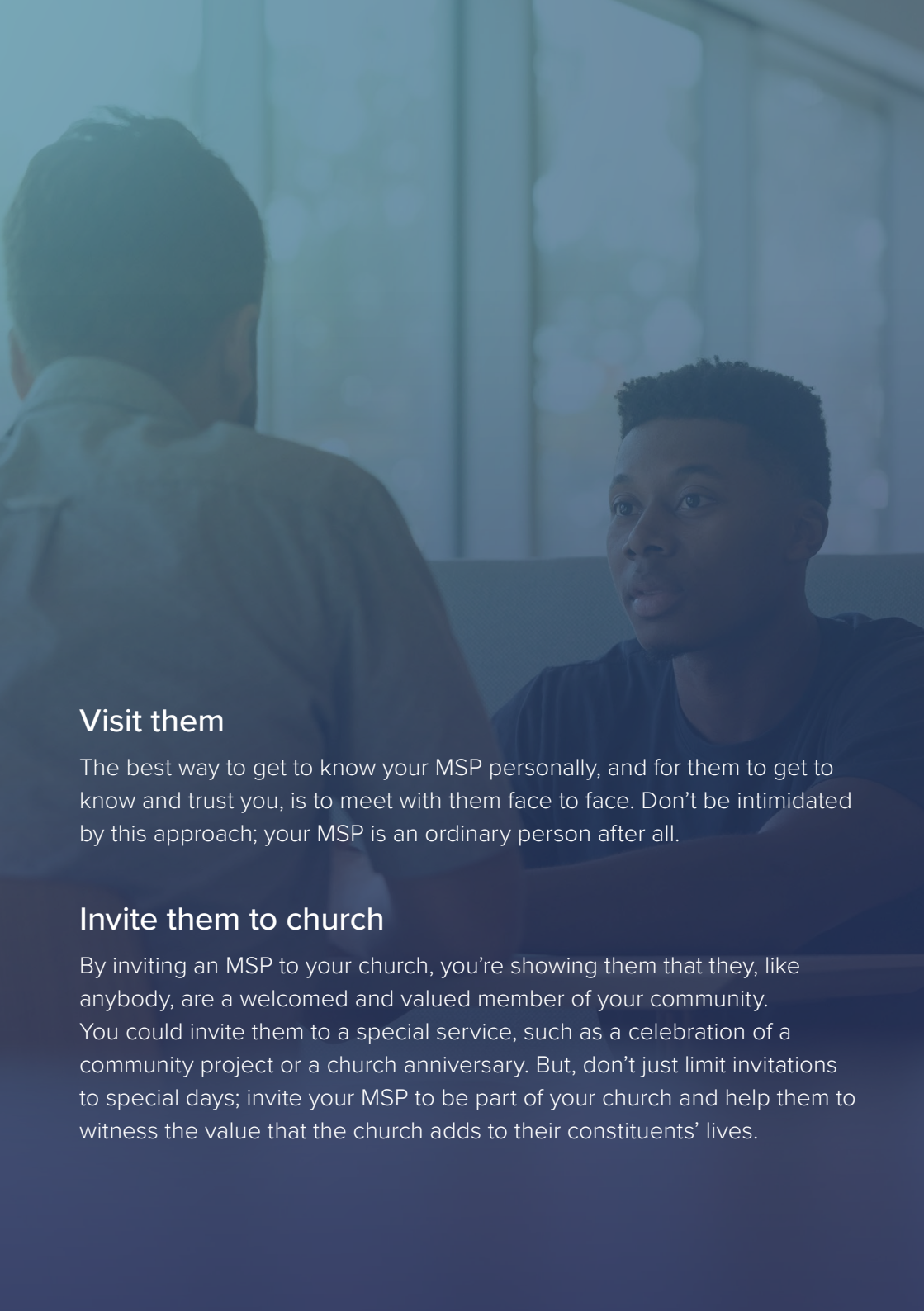
It's good to be in regular contact with your MSPs and sending an email is the easiest way to be. Get into the habit of sending an email to your MSP to encourage them, not only when you have a complaint. You could let your MSP know that you are praying for them, and you could also ask for specific prayer points to share with your church. You may be surprised by how much your MSP would appreciate this.

Take them a gift

Being an MSP is stressful, and the overtime and community work that MSPs do can often go underappreciated. So, why not give your MSP some baked goods or a small gift, to show your appreciation for the effort they are making?

Send them a card

Like an email, a letter or card can be used to encourage your MSP, and it is more likely to be remembered. Lots of MSPs put cards up in their office as reminders of the support and encouragement they receive from their constituents.



Visit them

The best way to get to know your MSP personally, and for them to get to know and trust you, is to meet with them face to face. Don't be intimidated by this approach; your MSP is an ordinary person after all.

Invite them to church

By inviting an MSP to your church, you're showing them that they, like anybody, are a welcomed and valued member of your community. You could invite them to a special service, such as a celebration of a community project or a church anniversary. But, don't just limit invitations to special days; invite your MSP to be part of your church and help them to witness the value that the church adds to their constituents' lives.

May we be *one*
so that the *world* will know

Since 1846 we've been a trusted voice in society,
uniting the church for the sake of the gospel.

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Blair Court, 100 Borron Street, Port Dundas, Glasgow, G4 9XE

T 0141 353 0150 | **E** scotland@eauk.org | **W** eauk.org

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Registered Office: 176 Copenhagen Street, London, N1 0ST