

# Connect

*A guide to engaging  
with MPs*



**evangelical alliance**  
together making Jesus known



## The Evangelical Alliance longs to see Christians engaging with their public representatives in a productive and encouraging way...

... but we recognise that sometimes it can be difficult to know where to start. We hope that this resource will help you begin to build relationships with your MPs and encourage you to pray for and support them as they represent you. You will find a choice of ways to get in touch with your MP and the most effective way to engage with them on matters that you care about.

In the wake of the COVID pandemic, in many cases, just like us, MPs are overstretched and dismayed by the gravity of the health, economic and social crisis in front of us. What better time for Christians and church leaders to step up to the task of encouraging our elected leaders and be salt and light in this difficult time. We long for Christians to be known as 'good news' people in every sphere. At this time, we have an opportunity to become active citizens who engage with their political representatives in a way that fosters trust, encouragement and partnership as well as share the hope that we have in Jesus.

We believe that the church has all the infrastructures and structures in place to be at the grassroots of rebuilding lives and communities as we navigate the years ahead. We have the human resources and by the power of the Spirit, the heart to love and the heart to serve. We have unique relational networks and by following the example of Jesus, we know how to care for the isolated, the vulnerable, and the broken. At this time, connecting with our MPs could both be an opportunity for the gospel, as well as a chance for Christians in your area to be known as people of sacrificial love.

## Why should we engage with our MPs?

### Our voices matter

Everyone has a worldview shaped by beliefs, attitudes and experiences. Christians in the UK hold a worldview that is shaped by the authority of the Bible. In modern society we hear many different voices and views, some of which stand at odds with our biblical perspective. We may feel intimidated or irrelevant in conversations about how society should function and the rules that govern our nation.

However, there are approximately 2 million evangelical Christians in the UK and as a significant group we should understand that our voices matters in how our nation is governed. Instead of passively allowing other voices and worldviews to shape our national values and laws, we can all be positive active citizens in conversations about issues that matter to us.

### The Bible instructs us to respect people in authority

Romans 13:1 says, "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established."

What better reason to connect with our elected representatives than to put God's word into action by giving respect to their leadership role and office.

### The Bible instructs us to love people who differ from us

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.

## As Christians we are called to seek the welfare of the city

Jeremiah 29:7 instructs us to seek the peace and prosperity of the city wherever we live. Surely this is a call to activities and conversations that make life better for all in our society.

## As Christians we are called to stand out by our actions

1 Peter 2:12 says “Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us”.

Living ‘good’ lives and treating our public representatives with love and respect could lead to people coming to know Jesus for themselves. It might be helpful to mentally frame our engagement in this way. As you reach out with kindness and encouragement, your MP may ask why you treat them this way. Have an answer prepared that points them to Jesus. You can tell them about Jesus, the one who sacrificed everything in order to reach out to us.

**Don’t forget: God wants to see all people saved, including our public representatives. Let’s reach out to them and show them what good news looks and feels like.**

## How to get started

**To be politically engaged, we don’t necessarily have to join a political party, start a campaign group or march in protest rallies. One of the simplest ways to be actively engaged in public debate is to connect with your local public representatives.**

As children of God we should engage with our public representatives to show them gratitude for their service, praise them when they do something well and get to know them as people, not just politicians. When our public representative knows us as people marked by respect and love, they will hear us when we offer an alternative perspective.

We believe that one of the greatest ways to show support to our representatives is by praying for them regularly and with them when possible, 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 public representatives**. Then read on and start the journey to getting to know how to engage better with your public representatives.



## What are the different kinds of public representatives in the UK?

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### Councillors

There are around 11,930 local councils across the UK. According to the latest figures that are roughly 20,000 councillors in England, 1,277 in Scotland, 1,254 in Wales and 462 in Northern Ireland. Examples of what Councils are responsible for include, local planning, parks and leisure, off street parking and registration of births, deaths and marriages. This is not an exhaustive list. You can find out who your local councillors are, here:

<https://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-councillors>

### MPs

Members of Parliament sit in the House of Commons (or the House of Lords) in Westminster, representing the interests of their constituents in the UK. In the 2019 General Election, 650 MPs were elected, representing constituencies across the UK. MPs have offices in their constituency, where individuals can discuss issues with them. You can find out who your MP is here: <https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>

### National representatives

In addition to above, Scotland have MSPs, Wales have MSs, and Northern Ireland MLAs. You can find out more about these on each nations own Connect resource. You can also find your local representative here:

<https://www.writetothem.com/>

## Who should I contact?

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**It is not always clear who is best to contact about what issues. Generally, contact your local councillor about local services, facilities and planning. If your local councillor is not able to help you, they will gladly direct you to your local MPs.**

Contact your local MPs for any issue that is governed by law such as education, health, and justice. Your local MP will be happy to hear your concerns about all issues even if it is not their area of interest. Sometimes it is worth checking out which MPs are members of the committees or all-party groups that are relevant to your issue as these MPs will have a particular interest in and understanding of the issue that concerns you. You can speak to MPs outside of your constituency if you feel they have more interest or expertise on the issue, but as you're not their constituent there isn't a guarantee they will reply.

You should also contact your local MP if you have an issue that is governed centrally by Westminster such as national security or the UK tax system.

[writetothem.com](https://www.writetothem.com) is a helpful website that makes emailing your representatives easy. You can also check your public representative'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 public representative without having to make an appointment.



## How do I connect with my public representative?

Your public representatives are ordinary people, so there is no need to be anxious to approach them. Start by introducing yourself; councillors and MPs 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.

It is important to contact public representatives regardless of what party they belong to. By engaging with councillors MPs from across the political spectrum you can have a wider conversation and get a full perspective of the issue from a variety of angles. You may be surprised by where you find common ground and support for your issue!

**As a Christian, you can be distinctive in the way you approach your public representative by making sure you communicate a positive message in your conversation, something that will encourage them, before you go on to voice any opinions or complaints that you might have. This small gesture will speak volumes about the difference being a follower of Jesus makes.**

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

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

## How can you support your public representatives practically?

### Pray for them

Begin to support your public representatives by bringing them before God's throne of grace. In addition to your personal prayers, you could encourage your church leaders to include public representatives in your church's regular prayer rota.

### Email them

It's good to be in regular contact with your public representatives and sending an email is the easiest way to do so. Practice the habit of sending an email to your public representative to encourage them, not only when you have a complaint or concern. You could let your public representative know that you are praying for them, and ask for specific prayer points to share with your church. You may be surprised by how much your public representative appreciates this.

### Send them a card

A letter or card can be used to encourage your public representative, and unlike an email it is more likely to be remembered. Lots of public representatives 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 public representative 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; after all, your public representative is an ordinary person.

## Take them a gift

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

## Invite them to church

By inviting a public representative 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 at Christmas or Easter, or perhaps a church anniversary. But, don't just limit invitations to special days; invite your public representative to be part of your church and help them to witness the value that the church adds to their constituents' lives.

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so that the *world* will know

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uniting the church for the sake of the gospel.

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