

# Lobbying Toolkit

Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) have the power to shape the lives of people living in Scotland by influencing policy and spending.

MSPs and MPs are our elected representatives, and we can contact them to bring attention to any problems and issues affecting us.

Contacting your MSP/MP is an important aspect of our democracy, and it is much easier than you may think.

We have developed this quick and helpful guide to give you the information you need to contact your representative.

## Who do I contact?

Find your local representatives for local councils, the Scottish Parliament and Westminster at: [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com).

MSPs in the Scottish Parliament oversee matters including health, justice, the economy, education, and some aspects of welfare.

MPs in the Westminster Parliament in London oversee matters including defence, foreign affairs, and immigration.

In the context of epilepsy care in Scotland, you should contact your MSP.

## How do I contact?

There are many ways you can contact your representative. You can write an email or letter, use social media, call them, and even meet them in person.



## What can my MSP do for me?

### At the Scottish Parliament, your MSP can:

- Ask a question to the debating chamber.
- Write to a Government Minister on your behalf.
- Join the Cross-Party Group on Epilepsy.
- Submit a motion on a topic to initiate debate or propose a course of action.

### In your area, your MSP can:

- Attend a local campaign meeting.
- Contact official bodies, such as the local council, to try and get your issue resolved.

## Some helpful do's and don'ts for contacting your MSP

### Do

- ✓ Stick to one issue
- ✓ Keep it short
- ✓ Include a personal story
- ✓ Give an instruction to the MSP, asking them to do something on your behalf - for example write to a Minister or local authority
- ✓ Ask for a reply
- ✓ Use bullet points to highlight your argument
- ✓ Include your full contact details (name, full address, phone, email)

### Don't

- ✗ Write to other MSPs, only your elected representative can work on your issue.
- ✗ Contact the wrong person. Your MP will not be able to help you with most health issues as it is a matter that is devolved to the Scottish Government and is within the remit of MSPs.



## Meeting with your MSP

MSPs regularly hold constituency surgeries. These provide the opportunity for constituents to raise issues to their MSP in person.

They will give you a chance to talk to your representative about how epilepsy affects your life and what you need to feel better supported.

Dates for local constituency surgeries are often posted on MSP's social media pages.

## How do I organise a meeting?

### 1. Give your MSP's office a call

You can find your MSP's contact details at: [www.parliament.scot/msps](http://www.parliament.scot/msps). Alternatively, you can call the Scottish Government switchboard on 0300 244 4000 and ask for your MSP by name.

Ask when your MSP's next surgery is. Sometimes, these could be held on an open, first-come, first-served basis or there may be an appointment system. If an appointment system is in operation, ask to book a slot and tell the person what particular topic or subject you'd like to discuss with your MSP.

### 2. Prepare to meet your MSP

It is important to have a clear idea of what you want to talk to your MSP about.

What epilepsy related issues are you particularly concerned about? What do you need to feel better supported?

Epilepsy Scotland's website has a policy blog which posts information on current policy topics. Your MSP will not expect you to be an expert; all you need to do is tell them your concerns about epilepsy and the issues you face and ask them to do something to show their support, such as raise your matter with a Minister.

### 3. After the meeting

You can follow the meeting up with a letter thanking your MSP for their time, confirming what you talked about and what action they agreed to take. If they said they would do something on your behalf, you can always follow up a few weeks later to see if they've made any progress.

## Need more support? Contact us!

Epilepsy Scotland have a dedicated Helpline and Information team who can support you with any further information you require and a policy team who can help you to contact your local representative.



**Freephone helpline: 0808 800 2200**

Email: [contact@epilepsyscotland.org.uk](mailto:contact@epilepsyscotland.org.uk)

48 Govan Road, Glasgow, G51 1JL

[www.epilepsyscotland.org.uk](http://www.epilepsyscotland.org.uk)



[/epilepsyscotland](https://www.facebook.com/epilepsyscotland)



[/epilepsy\\_scotland](https://www.tiktok.com/@epilepsy_scotland)



[/epilepsy\\_scot](https://twitter.com/epilepsy_scot)



[/Epilepsy\\_Scotland](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Epilepsy_Scotland)



[/epilepsyscotland](https://www.instagram.com/epilepsyscotland)