

people, but it is an MP's job to listen to the views of constituents and to represent them, and this is a good way to hold them to account.

Before you go to meet your MP, it is important to be as prepared as possible on the issue that you would like to discuss.

Our website may be useful: www.christianconcern.com

Please don't forget to pray for God's leading and favour before you go.

Building a relationship with your MP

Whilst writing to your MP or visiting them about a specific issue can be useful, it is also good for Christians and churches to build long-term relationships with their MPs.

Informing your MP of the ongoing work of your church and inviting them to events helps to keep them aware of the church's role in the community. The church's views on both local and national issues may then be more influential.

It is important that we thank our MPs when they act in accordance with Christian values and honour them for the work that they do.

Christian Concern and its sister organisation, the **Christian Legal Centre**, work to put the hope of Christ at the heart of the nation. If you would like to receive email updates from us or join one of our high-profile campaigns, please visit our website for further details.

www.christianconcern.com

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HOW TO:

ENGAGE WITH YOUR MP



Engaging With Politics

We have the privilege in the United Kingdom of being able to participate in the political process on both a local and a national level.

As Christians, we are called to stand for the truth of the Gospel in our nation. This involves both praying for our leaders and engaging with them when necessary.

Engaging With Your MP

Christians can be a significant voice in the community, and connecting with your local MP is a key way to make that voice heard.

MPs have responsibilities to three main groups: to their constituents, to Parliament and to their political party. MPs represent their constituents in Parliament and act as a figurehead for the local area.

MPs will generally try to assist their constituents with a wide range of problems. They may be able to offer you advice or to write letters on your behalf to officials or Ministers. They are able to ask parliamentary questions in the House of Commons, or mention issues in debates. MPs can also present petitions on behalf of constituents.



MPs will typically help with problems concerning Central Government services, but may also be contacted about problems within the constituency if the local authority is proving unhelpful. Problems with local authority services should normally be raised with a local councillor first.

Finding Your MP

You can find out the name of your MP and their contact details (including e-mail address) on the Parliament website: www.parliament.uk

Alternatively, check your local phone book, or phone the House of Commons switchboard (020 7219 3000) and ask them for your MP's details.

You can see how your MP voted and which debates they have taken part in at: www.theyworkforyou.com

Writing To Your MP

You can write to your MP by post, email or fax. It is best practice to write to an MP's Westminster office rather than their constituency office.

Gather as much information as you can before writing, as your MP is likely to be more responsive if you show that you have

properly researched your subject.

Christian Concern is likely to have resources on a range of relevant topics, so please see our website for further details (see below).

Making letters individual by including local as well as national issues and by sharing your own experiences make them more likely to be read by your MP

Phoning Your MP

If you have a simple question, phoning might get a faster response than writing. You can phone the House of Commons switchboard on (020) 7219 3000 and ask for your MP by name.

Meeting Your MP

Many MPs hold constituency surgeries at least once a week (often on a Friday or Saturday), and these provide an excellent opportunity to meet with them in person and discuss your concerns.

To find out the dates of surgeries and to arrange an appointment, you should call your MP's constituency office.

Attending an MP's surgery may seem intimidating to many

