

Engaging Your MP

Nationality and Borders Bill



The Church of Scotland



The
United
Reformed
Church

The **Methodist** Church 

 **BAPTISTS
TOGETHER**



A GUIDE TO

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WHY CONTACT MY MP

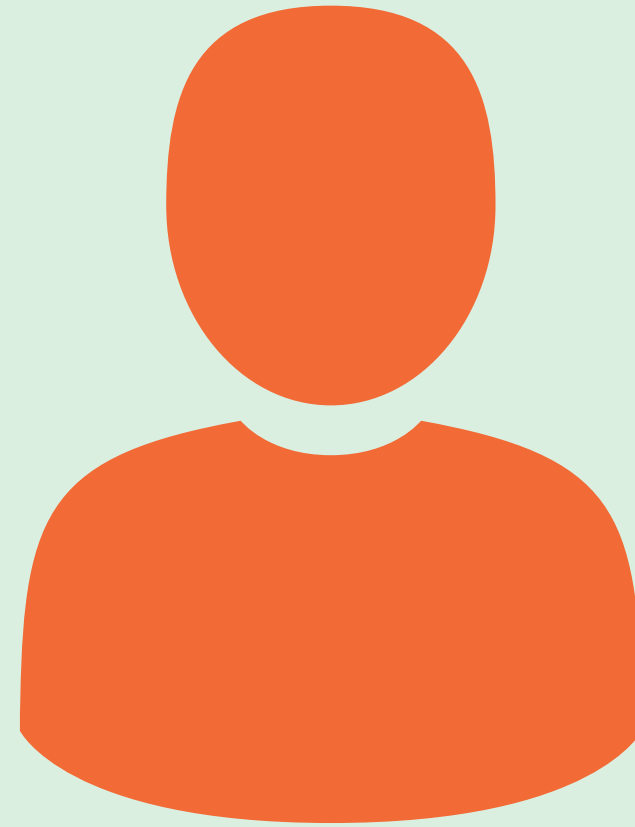
6 REASONS

1. If your MP is a Conservative, they have a key role to play in shaping their own party's approach to this policy. If they are an opposition MP, their support is crucial in amplifying the influence of proposals and amendments to the bill.
2. There are MPs across the UK and in different parties who want to see a better approach, and there are others who are open to being persuaded – you could persuade them.
3. Your MP represents your interest in Parliament so it is important that they hear from you and others who believe that asylum seekers and refugees enrich communities.
4. Many MPs will have heard from the small, but vocal, minority who oppose a compassionate approach to refugees. It is therefore important to amplify the voices of those with lived experience of the asylum system. The more you can show wide support from voters in their constituency, the more impact it will have.
5. All MPs have the chance to vote on the Nationality and Borders Bill and to propose changes. They have the power to shape Government approach towards refugees and asylum seekers and speak up for these groups in a way which is effective, fair and humane.
6. It is important for MPs to hear about why their constituents are motivated to speak out. Sharing your faith perspective plays a key role in engaging a constructive conversation around the Bill.

GETTING TO KNOW MY MP

WHAT IS AN MP?

A Member of Parliament (MP) is the elected representative for an area of the United Kingdom called a constituency. An MP has to balance the demands of representing the people of their constituency (even if they don't agree with you), supporting the goals of their political party and following issues that are important to them as an individual.



FIND YOUR MP

[Click here to find out who your MP is, their contact details including their email address, and how to access their website here.](#) Bear in mind that if you are contacting an MP on behalf of a congregation, the church family may be made up of several different constituencies. In which case it is worth contacting all the MPs who represent your congregation.

RESEARCH YOUR MP

If you're contacting your MP for the first time, you should do some research about your MP, including their party's position and whether they have said anything before on asylum or refugee issues. You can do this by looking at their voting record, questions they've asked, or just their social media feed.

[Click here to find their voting record here.](#)

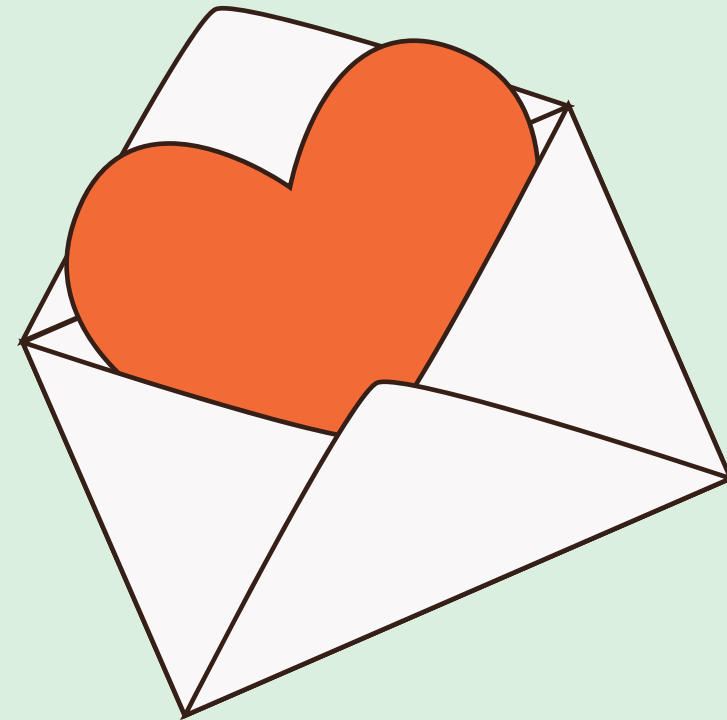


WRITING TO MY MP

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Writing a letter to your MP is a great way to open up a channel of communication and to set out your concerns around the Nationality and Borders Bill.

A letter that feels genuine and personal will carry more weight with MPs. Try to describe your experience of forming friendships with refugees, meeting refugees in your community or your own experience of navigating the asylum system. Note why these experiences make you want to see change.



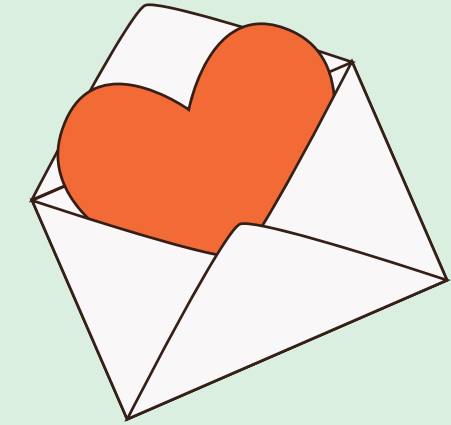
GET STARTED

Whilst personalising your letter is very important, it can be difficult to know where to start. [Click here to find useful template letter you can use to help you structure your correspondence.](#)

When you write to your MP, you may not receive a reply straight away. You can always follow up with your MP's constituency office by phone. Check out their website for up-to-date contact details. Be polite but persistent.

WRITING TO MY MP

THINGS TO INCLUDE



As well as your personal experience and views, you may want to raise:

- The positive contributions that asylum seekers and refugees make to congregations and communities.
- That many legal experts believe the proposals breach obligations of the UN Refugee Convention, and will cause harm and suffering to those escaping from war or persecution
- The lack of safe and legal routes for people seeking asylum to get to the UK
- The importance of giving people who are seeking asylum the chance to integrate, by learning English and having opportunities to make friends and contribute to society.
- The UK only takes a tiny proportion of people who have been forced to leave their homes; as a wealthy country with welcoming communities we have capacity for more kindness and compassion.
- Any review of the asylum process should listen to the experts: asylum seekers themselves.
- An invitation to meet in person to discuss things further.

MEETING MY MP

FACE TO FACE

After you've made contact with your MP, organising a meeting in person can be the most effective way of forming relationships with them. It can give them a powerful insight into your congregation and its priorities for the community. So it is a great idea to include an invitation to meet in person in your initial letter.

THE EVENT

This is an opportunity for the MP to meet your church family and hear about the life of the church. This could take many different forms:

- Hosting a public meeting where the MP can answer questions.
- Inviting your MP to speak at or participate in a ['Show Your Heart'](#) unveiling event.
- Having a smaller meeting with the MP where you can raise specific and focused concerns. You may want to invite individuals with lived-experience of the asylum system to this conversation.



MEETING MY MP

APPROACHING THE MEETING

It is best to arrive at your meeting with very clear messages you want to convey ([use resources, such as our briefing information on the Bill to help communicate them.](#))

1. Be clear on the actions you are asking the MP to take. This could be publicly stating their support on social media, asking a question in parliament, or writing to the Home Secretary.
2. [Click here to find our latest action points here.](#)
3. [Click here to see more advice on organising a meeting with your MP here](#)
4. Organise to take photos of the event – make sure you have the permission of all those involved.



BASED IN SCOTLAND?

CONTACT YOUR MSP AS WELL

As well as writing to your MP, you could also write to your MSPs to let them know about your concerns with the Bill and ask them to use their influence to make Scotland a welcoming place for refugees.

Although the issues in the Bill are Reserved (under the control over the UK Parliament at Westminster) a lot of issues relating to asylum and refugee integration, including education, health, housing and support, are the responsibility of the Scottish Parliament. Scottish faith groups have supported and been part of the delivery of the Scottish Government's New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy.

The Nationality and Borders Bill includes a power that would allow the Home Secretary to overrule decisions made by the Scottish Parliament (and the Welsh Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly). Clause 67 raises serious questions about devolution and how it would be inappropriate for a minister in one Government to have powers to overrule ministers accountable to a democratically elected Parliament in a different part of the United Kingdom.

HOW DID IT GO?

AFTER YOU HAVE MET YOUR MP

- Write to thank your MP for meeting you and follow up on anything you discussed.
- Publicise the event on social media, ideally using photos and the hashtags [#meetyourmp](#), [#togetherwithrefugees](#) and [#whoweare](#).
- Let us know how the meeting went at enquiries@jointpublicissues.org.uk or [click here to fill out our response form here](#).
- Consider writing up a report and sharing it with your local press.