

Member of Parliament

People of a constituency (a particular area) elect members of parliament to represent them in that parliament. Most members of parliament are members of a political party, but a few are independent.

The Work

There are 2 different parliaments. You could be a:

- **Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP)** – meeting in Edinburgh, during normal office hours
- **Member of Parliament (MP)** – meeting in the House of Commons at Westminster in London, usually starting in the afternoon and continuing into the evening and night.

In any case, you could be:

- taking part in debates and making speeches
- asking questions in Parliament and voting on proposed new laws
- meeting constituents to discuss their problems
- answering letters and emails from constituents
- speaking at public meetings and events in your constituency and elsewhere
- giving interviews to newspapers, radio and television
- campaigning locally and nationally for yourself and your party.

Pay

Current salaries for MPs are as follows:

- MSP – £67,662 a year (as of 1 April 2023).
- MP – £86,584 a year (as of 1 April 2023).

You would get an extra payment if you had a special responsibility, such as being a party 'whip'.

You also get payments for certain staff and office costs and expenses.

Conditions

- You would work many additional hours, including evenings and weekends.
- You have to travel a lot, at home and sometimes abroad.
- You may have to live in London during the week.
- You often work under pressure, and you may have to make difficult or unpopular decisions.
- You have to do a lot of background reading and research.

Getting In

- You do not need to have formal qualifications, but many have a degree (SCQF Levels 9-10) or a

professional qualification.

- Most members go into parliament after another career, often in law, economics, journalism or trade union work.
- Entry is very competitive: local people must elect you.
- If you want to represent a political party, the party nationally must approve you and the constituency party must select you before you stand for election.
- Before being selected you would normally need long experience of working for the party, either paid or unpaid, and you may have been a local councillor or political researcher.
- It helps to attend party conferences and events and to network with party staff members.
- You must be at least 18 and eligible to vote in elections for the parliament you are trying to enter.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- well informed about current affairs
- able to speak well in public
- able to 'think on your feet'
- confident and ambitious
- able to talk to people from all backgrounds
- willing to stick by unpopular decisions
- able to work under pressure and to meet deadlines
- of smart appearance
- resilient.

You should have:

- strong political beliefs
- a good memory for facts, figures, faces and names
- an enquiring mind
- negotiating and problem solving skills
- a lot of stamina.

Training

Most parties run training courses on subjects such as election law and procedures, public speaking and personal presentation.

Getting On

- With experience, you could move on to become a party 'whip' (ensuring that fellow members follow party policy) or a spokesperson on a particular subject.
- If your party is in government you could become a junior minister or cabinet member.
- You could lose your job at any election, but if you do, you will probably be able to use your contacts to find a related job, perhaps in the media or as a business consultant.

More Information

Each parliament deals with different issues. These are summarised below.

[The Scottish Parliament](#) passes laws on domestic matters including health, education, housing, transport, local government, justice, agriculture and fisheries, the environment and economic development, sports and the arts, and some aspects of taxation.

[The UK Parliament](#) passes laws on matters such as defence, taxation, welfare benefits, energy and immigration, as well as domestic affairs for England and sometimes Wales. It also has responsibility for UK foreign policy.

You can find a list of Scottish Political Parties below.

- [Scottish Conservatives](#)
- [Scottish Green Party](#)
- [Scottish Labour Party](#)
- [Scottish Liberal Democrats](#)
- [Scottish National Party](#)
- [Scottish Socialist Party](#)
- [Reform UK Scotland](#)

Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.