

As well as representing the views of their constituents in Parliament, MPs and MSPs also represent us by holding our governments to account.

At the UK Parliament in Westminster, MPs can question the government directly during debates and at Prime Minister's questions.

This takes place each Wednesday and gives MPs 30 minutes to quiz the Prime Minister about government decisions and constituents concerns.

MPs and members of the House of Lords can also take part in committees.

These are set up to consider government policy and scrutinise the work of the Government and its spending.

Committees have the power to question government ministers and the PM on their decisions and make recommendations.

Majority government rule is the most common type of government in Westminster.

When the government has the majority of MPs, it can be easier for them to pass legislation that reflects the policies for which they were elected, but that is provided the governing parties MPs all vote together.

This is where the Whip system comes in.

Each party appoints a group of MPs or Lords as party Whips with the responsibility to maintain party unity.

They do this by encouraging party members to vote the way their party wants.

At the Scottish Parliament, similar methods are used to hold the Scottish Government to account.

Every Thursday the First Minister spends 45 minutes answering MSPs about the performance of government during First Minister's questions.

This is an opportunity for members of the Scottish Parliament to highlight issues and for the opposition parties to put forward alternatives.

But MSPs from the governing party can also ask questions at this time, focussing on the successes of the government.

Scottish Parliament also has its own powerful committee system.

Committees are cross-party groups independent of the government.

They are responsible for proposing as well as scrutinising bills, taking evidence from witnesses and conducting enquiries.

Committees produce reports that make recommendations to the Scottish Government and other public bodies.

The Government must respond to the committee's recommendations, saying if they agree or not.

In Scotland, like in the UK Parliament, majority government and the whip system are also used for passing legislation in line with the policies they were elected for.

While a Scottish or UK government is in power, there are many ways in which our elected representatives can hold it to account, but it is ultimately voters who judge the performance of a government at elections, either choosing to show their support by re-electing them or registering their desire for change by backing another party.