Regional Equality Councils

20 June 2022

Background and Participants

Attended by groups from Central Scotland Regional Equality Council and Edinburgh & Lothian Regional Equality Council

The groups were asked the question, '*Have you ever engaged with the Parliament before*'

8 participants responded YES

7 participants responded NO

Previous engagement with Parliament

Never engaged with Parliament (Why?)	Engaged with Parliament (What?)
(Example) Didn't know where to start	(Example) Attended a CPG
	Through school /debate class
	Casework in the community
	As a tourist
	Festival of Politics
	Visit

Discussion

If you have never been involved in the work of the Parliament before, can you tell us why?

Connection Parliament –

During this workshop, we placed a picture of the Scottish Parliament on the wall around the room and asked the participants to place a sticky dot on how connected they felt to the Scottish Parliament, using a sliding scale between 0-10.

0 represented not feeling connected to The Scottish Parliament and 10 feeling very connected to the Scottish Parliament. The responses are below

7 participants placed the sticky dot on 0 on the scale.

1 participant placed the sticky dot on 1 on the scale.

1 participant placed the sticky dot on 7 on the scale.

3 participants placed the sticky dot on 8 on the scale.

2 participants placed the sticky dot on 9 on the scale.

3 participants placed the sticky dot on 10 on the scale.

Is there anything the Parliament is currently doing that you think would put you off working with us?/Barriers?

- Jargon – terms you don't understand
- Not familiar with system (MP or MSPs etc) Don't know who to speak to,
- Differing policies between parties, UK /Scotland
- Feeling like nothing will change anyway. – False promises.
- Lack of representation, i.e. ethnic minorities, disabilities etc. Physical engagement is difficult due to the distance, no direct interest.
- No easy access to building – Social Media, not savvy or language
- No interest – does not apply to them
- No issues they feel strongly about and not topic of interest.
- Lack of awareness – ways to communicate, who to speak to, topics
- Language barriers and Literacy/digital literacy.
- Not connected to MSPs – Devolved/Reserved
- No sessions with MSPs
- No trust, as you do not know them, fear to open up.
- Infrastructure – not enough opportunities to meet MSPs
- Lack of understandable language
- No connection to any of the political parties, ideologies

How do we need to change to make you more likely to take part in the work of Parliament?

- Constituency meetings every few months – not just one vote, then done. – Publicise more widely
- Need to develop a relationship with an MSP before feeling comfortable to share views.
- Plain English/information sessions in communities
- Clear information on possible outcomes from contacting your MSP, clear simple English
- More information sessions in school, community.
- More emphasis on teaching English to feel included
- Focus on grassroots groups
- More opportunity to meet MSPs
- More engaged all year round, not just at election time, they disappear, they need to be more engaged in their communities.

- MSPs need to tell me how I get more involved.
- Never met MSPs.
- Don't assume prior knowledge
- Assumed knowledge on who to speak to regarding – devolved/Reserved areas
- Quarterly feedback for MSPs, better advertising on what MSPs can do for you, who MSPs are locally.
- Education on councils/Scottish/UK powers
- Publicise what policies have went through and show how these changes have impacted on people
- Reviewing gaps in representation and why this is the case, should there be incentives for parties to be more representative?
- More external events regularly.
- Multi-cultural events. attract more people from different cultures.
- Outreach for MSPs, lack of representation, teaching early in schools.
- Triage system where and who to speak to/guide you to speak to MSP or MP
- More information sessions in schools/colleges
- Making sure there is transparency, what Politics have they been doing. Promises are made to win Elections.
- Better digital inclusivity, encouraging feedback.

Digital

I'd improve this engagement method by....	I like this engagement method because...
(Example) Not everyone has internet access	(Example) I can engage at a time that suits me
A lot of people do not know this, just the people that are already engaged digitally.	Maybe, they could be advertised on local council websites
How to reach the people that are not engaged digitally?	
A lot of groups that are not digitally literate.	
Access to BME – Elderly, digital not going to work, people would have to go to them in their communities to engage with them.	
Just had two years of digital with Pandemic, people on low incomes do not have devices, never going to get involved in digital due to these barriers.	

Accepting not everyone is digitally literate, it will take time and effort to adjust it to everyone's needs.	

Communities

I'd improve this engagement method by....	I like this engagement method because...
(Example) How do we ensure the "communities" you work with are not the "usual suspects"	**(Example) Going to places where people are comfortable and trusting**
Important to engage with different organisations/working with different communities**.**	These organisations often have 1 to 1 contact, so can assist each member to participate which is useful.
More we can do to incentivise the MSPs to do community engagement**.**	This section is very important.

Deliberative

I'd improve this engagement method by....	I like this engagement method because...
(Example) Why not just have MSPs do this?	**(Example) I like that people can be supported to explore all the aspects of an issue**
	Useful over a longer period, views can change, more true account of their opinions.
	Good way to engage, but not sure if the uptake.
	Useful to have more time, so educated about it and not just influenced by media etc.