

Democracy
Matters

Democracy Matters

The title 'Democracy Matters' is rendered in a large, bold font. 'Democracy' is in green and 'Matters' is in blue. The letters are filled with icons representing various groups of people: a person with a cane, a person in a wheelchair, a person with a stroller, a person with a speech bubble, and a person with a speech bubble on a brick wall.

Your Community. Your Ideas. Your Future.

Holding a conversation in your community

People across Scotland are being invited to join in a conversation about how communities want to be involved in taking decisions about a wide range of Scotland's public services.

You can take part in this conversation either on-line or face-to-face:

- Join an on-line discussion: information about how join is on the website: **www.gov.scot/democracymatters**
- Send us your views by email to democracymatters@gov.scot
- Hold a conversation in your community

This is a short guide to help you hold a conversation in your community about Democracy Matters.

However you are involved in your community, if you want to bring people together to start a conversation about Democracy Matters, this guide has information to help make that happen. It offers practical ideas to help you hold a community conversation, including how to use the supporting Democracy Matters material, and gives you information on where to send the results of the conversation.

How do we start a conversation in our community about Democracy Matters?

If you need some money to hold a community conversation to discuss Democracy Matters, small voluntary organisations and community groups can apply to the *Democracy Matters: Community Engagement Fund*. Information about the fund and a short application form are available at the Democracy Matters website.

Grants of between £100 - £300 are available from a total fund of £30,000 to cover the costs of holding a community event to discuss Democracy Matters. These costs could include the hire of a venue, publicity, printing out the information material, transport to the venue, translation services, food and refreshments, organising a crèche: whatever you need to help you hold a successful meeting at which all members of your community can take part.

We encourage you to apply to the fund as soon as you can; grants will be awarded on a weekly basis. The last date for applications is Friday 14th September 2018. An organisation or group can apply for more than one grant if the Democracy Matters event involves different people. Community groups without a constitution or bank account can still receive funding, but the application has to be made by another body on their behalf.

Where should we hold a community conversation?

A conversation could be held in any community venue. Think about choosing somewhere that will allow as many people as possible to take part, for example that:

- is accessible for people who are wheelchair users, or people who find walking difficult.
- has facilities for people with a hearing impairment, like a PA system or induction loop.
- has a safe space where children could play unsupervised, so parents can come along with their children if there is no crèche.

When should we have the conversation?

The conversation starts at the end of May. As the conversations build across Scotland, we hope a wide range of ideas and proposals for how communities want to make decisions in the future will develop. Regional events are planned for the autumn at which those ideas for community decision-making will be discussed in more detail. More information on the regional events will be sent to people who respond to Democracy Matters and will be advertised on the Democracy Matters website www.gov.scot/democracymatters by the end of October.

How long should the conversation last?

As a rough guide we recommend you plan for a meeting that allows at least an hour and a half to discuss the Democracy Matters questions. If you hold a conversation that involves a large group, you should plan to allow more time.

To help plan the meeting, below is a suggested agenda.

A suggested agenda for a community conversation

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Discuss and agree 'rules for a good conversation'
3. Show animated film
4. Time to read information material
5. Group discussion about Democracy Matters questions
6. Agree how conversation material will be sent to Scottish Government
7. Close the meeting and thank everyone for coming

Is there any information to help guide the conversation?

Yes, there is a range of information to help you have a community conversation:

- Democracy Matters asks five questions, with some information. We would like these questions to be the focus of the conversation.
- We have produced a short animated film which describes what Democracy Matters is all about.
- There is a guide which describes how decisions are taken about public services in Scotland.
- There is a guide to facilitating a good conversation which suggests how to make sure the conversation is productive and allows everyone's voice to be heard.

**This information is available at the Democracy Matters weblink:
www.gov.scot/democracymatters**

We encourage you to share the information in a way that everybody can understand. If you need further guidance on inclusive communication, this can be accessed here:
<http://includeusall.org.uk/>.

Do we need other equipment or material?

If you want to show the animated film at your community conversation, you will need a laptop, and a projector if people can't see your screen.

Flip chart paper and stands can be useful so that everyone can see what is being recorded.

How can we send the record of the conversation to the Scottish Government?

You can send the material you use to record the community conversation in a variety of ways. You can send all the paperwork by post, or you can photograph it (or write it up) and send it by email.

We will be bringing together the results of all the conversations across Scotland. It is important the information you send responds clearly to the questions so the results can be easily understood.

Please send the results of your conversations either via email to ... democracymatters@gov.scot

Or via freepost to ... "freepost DEMOCRACY MATTERS" (please remember to use capital letters).

And please include a completed Respondents Information Form, available on the website.

Aim to send the results of your conversation by 31 October 2018. This will help inform what we discuss at the regional events.