

# **Supporting document for report of the IPDD Working Group**

**Values, Principles and Standards for  
Participation, Democratic Innovations and  
Citizens' Assemblies**

**March 2022**

This supporting document provides further information on the values, principles and standards that the IPDD Working Group recommends are collectively adopted, as in the following recommendation:

### **1.1 Adopt values, principles and standards for institutionalising participatory and deliberative democracy**

Seek collective adoption of values, principles and standards for institutionalising participatory and deliberative democracy by Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament, local government and the Open Government steering group by summer 2022 and develop training options to embed these (see supporting document: *Values, Principles and Standards for Participation, Democratic Innovations and Citizens' Assemblies*).

The recommended principles enable participatory work to be done effectively, ethically, inclusively and sustainably. They draw on existing comparable work which will keep the Scottish Government in step with other leaders in participation and deliberation. We see this as the beginning of a discussion, to evolve these principles so they can be adopted by stakeholders across the system.

The Scottish Parliament staff represented on the Working Group see the potential of system wide values, principles and standards in this area and wish to explore this issue further as part of the work of the Citizen Participation & Public Petitions Committee.

## Values and principles

The values and principles set out in this report underpin the standards which follow. We advocate for the adoption of these values and principles to guide the development and delivery of all future participatory and deliberative democracy initiatives and processes in Scotland.

We advocate for these to be adopted across different levels of governance, including by the Scottish Parliament and local government - though we acknowledge that the mechanisms for delivery may differ. We consider them a starting point to be collaboratively developed and reviewed by all partners as confidence and understanding of participation evolves.

In the Citizens' Assembly section of this report, we outline standards which should link back to these values and principles.

The Scottish Parliament staff represented on the Working Group see the potential of system wide values, principles and standards in this area and wish to explore this issue further as part of the work of the Citizen Participation & Public Petitions Committee. The Scottish Parliament staff in the Working Group see the potential of system-wide values and principles in this area, and aim to explore this further as part of the work of the Citizen Participation & Public Petitions Committee.

## Values

To develop these values, the Working Group used Scotland's *National Performance Framework*<sup>1</sup> as a starting point, and adapted them with reference to previous participatory processes. Values are qualities or standards of behaviour which all involved should seek to live up to.

- **Kindness** - acknowledging the vulnerabilities and complexities of relationships to encourage meaningful connection and a sense of belonging between individuals, across differences and while recognising structural disadvantage<sup>2</sup>
- **Compassion** - developing understanding of other peoples' lives and perspectives, and approaching deliberation from a perspective of reducing harm, suffering and inequality

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<sup>1</sup> [Scottish Government, National Performance Framework](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Carnegie UK, The Practice of Kindness: learning from the Kindness Innovation Network and North Ayrshire](#)

- **Respect** - acknowledging that everyone deserves to be treated with care and politeness, even in disagreement, and that people's experience should be believed and their ideas and opinions listened to earnestly
- **Inclusion** - developing understanding of the ways in which people are included and excluded from power, spaces and places, and taking steps to foster greater inclusion and remove barriers which increase exclusion at all levels. From inception to conclusion, inclusion should be a guiding principle in decision-making and planning, with representatives of seldom-heard communities advising on best practice. During the process itself, mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that all members are able to participate equally. Resource should be allocated for equipment, individual support, and training.
- **Openness** - adopting an approach of sharing resources and information widely, of providing avenues for people to co-design and co-create processes and influence decision making, and to encourage engagement from the public in participatory processes

## Principles

To develop these principles, we used the OECD *Good practice principles for deliberative processes for public decision making* as a starting point, and considered the application of these in the Scottish context. Principles are rules or beliefs governing the behaviour and actions of all involved.

- **Purpose** - the purpose of a process should be framed in the format of a question written in plain language and presented with neutrality. This question should be linked to an issue of public concern and/or an area where new activity or policies are being considered. It should contain parameters to guide the process, while being broad enough to permit a range of possible and complex responses.
- **Accountability** - the recommendations from a process must be responded to by the commissioning body and a body with decision-making power on the topic within a pre-agreed time frame following the conclusion of proceedings. Proper consideration should be given and reasoning provided when recommendations are not taken on.

- **Accessibility** - any member of the public could take part in participatory processes by embedding best practice, as fundamental to all processes (supported by appropriate resource) and being proactive in offering further adjustments and evolving processes to adapt as guided by the voices of those with lived experience
- **Transparency** - a participatory process should be publicly announced and all aspects of a process must be transparent to the public, including but not limited to: remit setting; operation and delivery; evidence selection; and member recruitment. Information should be published during a process to enable the public to follow as it happens. Information should be accessible and in different formats. Evidence presented should be accessible to the public unless there is a sound reason for limitations.
- **Public engagement** - ensure that there are opportunities for the public to learn about, connect with and feed into processes, which may include design stages.
- **Equitable representation** - with regard to representative participatory processes like Citizens' Assemblies and mini-publics, members should be recruited from the general public in Scotland with the intention that members will demographically represent the population of the country. Members of certain marginalised demographics can be overrepresented in a process, with advice from experts, if it is likely that their demographic is or will be disproportionately impacted by the topic and decisions taken. This approach is necessary to counter the realities of systemic inequality and prevent the replication of inequalities in institutionalised processes. Recognised demographics which comprise less than 1% of the Scottish population can also be oversampled, as they may not otherwise be invited to participate. Non-representative participatory processes should prioritise and seek out the inclusion of participants with lived experience and/or people who will be most impacted by the decisions taken.
- **Integrity and balance** - processes should be free from partisan influence, although partisan individuals and organisations can be called to provide evidence. With regard to Citizens' Assemblies, processes should be subject to review by an Oversight Board to monitor integrity. Evidence presented during processes will be guided by a set of evidentiary standards.
- **Innovation and learning** - processes should be evaluated and fundamentally open to learning from experience and adaptation to new challenges. Processes may be revisited and new approaches developed on an ongoing basis.

Opportunities for deliberation should be embedded throughout a process and a variety of tools, techniques and communications should be used to assist participants as they progress through a process.

- **Empowerment** - participants should be actively supported to develop their skills, understanding and confidence throughout a process. Evidence-givers who provide information should engage in dialogue and approach participants as equals. Evidence provided by 'experts by learning' and 'experts by experience' should be considered equally. Participants should help define what they would like to gain from a process, and this should be facilitated as much as possible.
- **Flexibility** - we expect processes to adopt this set of principles as a starting point, but future processes can adopt additional principles which may suit their context.

## Citizens' Assemblies: Standards

Standards act as a benchmark which can inform the design and assessment of practice in line with principles and values. These are the recommended standards for upholding the values and principles of participatory and deliberative democracy in Scotland outlined in the first part of this report.

To develop these standards, Involve UK's *Standards for Citizens' Assemblies*<sup>3</sup> was used as a starting point, and adapted according to the values and principles outlined above and to reflect a broader range of participatory processes. For Citizens' Assemblies, scrutinising the achievement of these standards will form part of the remit of the Oversight Board (see below).

### **To uphold the principle of Purpose**

- The parameters of the process should be clearly defined at the start of the process and all participants made aware of this
- Sufficient time and resource is allocated to processes, proportionate to the purpose

### **To uphold the principle of Accountability**

- Consent of the body which has responsibility for implementing recommendations on the issue in question should be obtained before a process begins
- The responsible body should make a public commitment to consider the recommendations and publish a proportionate response

### **To uphold the principle of Inclusion**

- Accessibility and inclusion needs are preempted through seeking expert advice (including expertise by experience) to deliver current best practice
- Participants are provided with reasonable expenses and options for remuneration for their time considered
- Information provided to participants is accessible to all, including the provision of information in different formats as requested
- Processes are designed, led and facilitated by practitioners with relevant experience

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<sup>3</sup> [Involve, Standards for Citizens' Assemblies](#)

### **To uphold the principle of Transparency**

- All information pertaining to a process should be published online, with alternative formats available on request where possible (including budgets, methodology, evidence, outcomes and evaluation)
- The output of a process should be made publicly available

### **To uphold the principle of Public Engagement**

- Resource should be allocated to communications work taking place alongside a process
- Consideration should be given to how and when members of the wider public can become involved in a process, help to shape it, or share their views for consideration by participants

### **To uphold the principle of Equitable Representation**

- Marginalised communities who may be disproportionately impacted by decisions taken or the issue being considered should be represented equitably (for example, over-sampled), with input from relevant experts

### **To uphold the principle of Integrity**

- Information provided to participants is presented alongside contextual information which makes explicit any vested interests of the authors and the genesis of the information
- Anyone interacting with participants as they fulfil their role should not covertly influence or direct their deliberations or decision making (including facilitators and evidence-givers)

### **To uphold the principle of Innovation and learning**

- A variety of tools and methods are used during a process for participants to express their views and engage with the information presented
- Participatory processes are structured so that participants are supported through a stage of learning before they are asked to make decisions
- Evaluation of a process should be embedded in the reporting, and include recommendations for improvement in future processes

### **To uphold the principle of Empowerment**

- Participants have the opportunity to question evidence-givers and enter into dialogue with them
- The outputs of a process should be a decision or set of recommendations, which are co-written with participants



- Participants are supported to engage with decision makers and the general public after the recommendations have been published
- Decisions and recommendations should be arrived at collectively by participants, however dissenting voices should be included in reporting
- Participants are involved in presenting their recommendations or decisions to the decision-makers and given the opportunity to stay engaged with any continuing process after completion
- Participants should be provided avenues to express their views on the process and contribute to evaluation



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