

The People's Panel: Community Resilience Report



Easy Read version

Introduction: The People's Panel



The Scottish Government wants to involve people when making decisions. This means better decisions for the people. It can also help people to learn new skills, become more confident and feel valued.



The 'People's Panel for Wellbeing: 2022 and beyond' was set up for people to tell us their views, experiences, and ideas on the wellbeing of people in Scotland.



This panel looked at the COVID-19 recovery period. It also looked at other issues such as the cost of living crisis and how to make communities stronger.



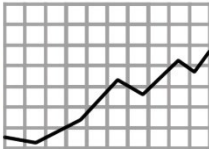
Three reports will be published about what the People's Panel found out about these issues. This report is about community resilience.

Aims of the People's Panel

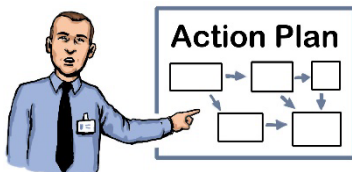
The People's Panel was set up with two main aims. These are:



- **To give people of Scotland more power.** People can take part in a research panel and the results are shared with government.



- **To test a new way of doing research.** People would be part of a new way of getting information and dealing with issues like COVID-19.



This would help the Scottish Government make the best decisions when dealing with these issues in future.

Recruitment



We asked 30 adults living in Scotland to become the People’s Panel. People were picked because of their different backgrounds and experiences. This meant we would get a range of different views.



We tried to include as many different people as possible. Some groups were not included, like people under 16 or people who lived in care homes during the pandemic.



Just under 800 people said they wanted to join the panel. We picked 29 people from this group. There was also a reserve list.



There were six People’s Panel events. They were all held online and a total of 24 members took part. Members were given a shopping voucher worth £125 per event for giving their time.

The Panel Process

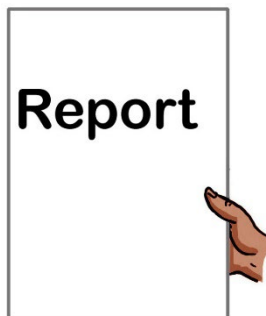


The research team asked the Scottish Government which issues they wanted the Panel to discuss. At the events, these issues were discussed involving the whole panel and in smaller groups.



Staff from the research team and the Scottish Government took notes on what was said by the Panel members.

Looking at what was said

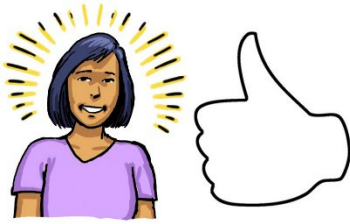


After each People's Panel event, the research team looked at the main things people talked about. They then gave a report of the results to the Scottish Government.



Panel members were asked to complete a survey. This was to find out what the panel members thought about each event and if they were happy to continue.

Trust and Relationships



The issues discussed could be challenging and emotional. It was important to have good relationships with panel members. We made sure their wellbeing was looked after.



Members were told clearly how their information would be used to make decisions. The members were told how their views from the previous event had been used and what changes had been made.



We protected the wellbeing of everyone involved in the People's Panel. We had contact details for support services like mental health charities and Citizens Advice.



A Mental Health First Aider was available. We tried to create safe spaces where members could feel supported during difficult discussions.

Community Resilience Panel - main findings



24 people with different backgrounds and experiences took part in this panel. There were two panel events. The main findings are:

Understanding resilience



Panel members were asked what 'community resilience' meant to them. They said it meant the people and places in a community were connected and supportive.



People said that it can be hard to know what a 'community' is. It is also hard for communities to deal with things like COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis.



When asked about life's emergencies, people talked about personal problems like a boiler breaking down. Global climate change and NHS pressures were also discussed.



Some members preferred not to think about future emergencies. They felt their day-to-day problems were enough to cope with.



Most people thought the responsibility for emergencies should be shared between people, public services, businesses, and voluntary organisations.

Resilience at home



Many panel members said they had a first aid kit at home. Others bought extra food, checked weather forecasts, and got candles and a torch. These were cheap and easy things to do.



Some did not like being asked to plan for future emergencies. They thought that should be the government's responsibility.



Some were too busy with every day pressures like dealing with the cost of living crisis and the pandemic. They did not have time to prepare for future emergencies.



Many saw the importance of local communities. They share information through speaking to neighbours, going to community cafes and local faith groups.



Online community groups were also useful for getting local information.

Looking for help and support



Many panel members looked for help and advice from their family, social groups and the internet. A few went to advice centres, charities and had used foodbanks.

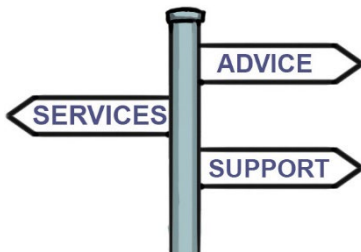


Some said they did not look for help because they felt embarrassed. They thought needing help meant a loss of independence. They thought they did not deserve help as others were much worse off.

Helping people to help themselves



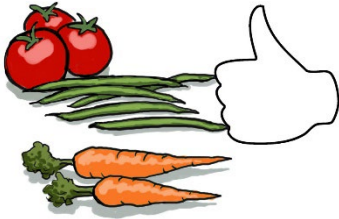
Panel members thought that support and accessible information from the Scottish Government would be the best way to help people and communities.



The information should be aimed at groups that need it most. This includes disabled people, people living in poverty, older people, non-English speakers, refugees, and asylum seekers.



People said that households should be given free emergency kits. They also said there should be regular first aid training in schools, communities, and workplaces.



It was suggested that some areas of Scotland could be better prepared for emergencies if they grew more food locally.



People said the public should be given better information during an emergency. The Scottish Government should explain what they had done to prepare and what the public needed to do.

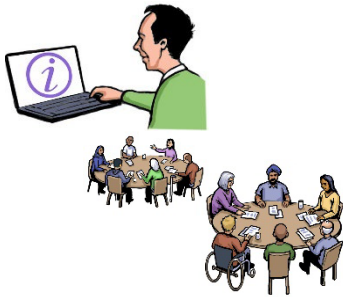


People said they wanted up to date information about their local area. They said it would be good to get text alerts and messages about emergency situations.

Summary



The Panel member's experiences have given us a lot of information to work with.



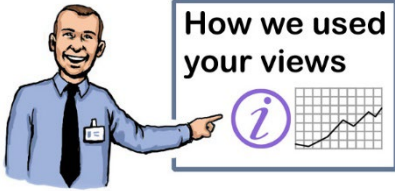
The Scottish Government used what they learned to help make better messages on social media.



This research tells us how different people and communities deal with emergencies.



This has also given us new information about how people are dealing with the pandemic and the cost of living crisis.



These views helped the Government to understand the challenges faced by Scottish communities. This will be very useful when making future decisions.



The Government will learn from the success of the People's Panel. We will look at how to involve the public more in making important decisions and dealing with serious issues.