

The People's Panel: Community Resilience

**Research findings from People's Panel
members on community resilience
November 2022 to January 2023**

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Scottish Government

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Key findings

The 'People's Panel for Wellbeing: 2022 and beyond' was established with the aim to empower a diverse group of the public to come together and share their views over time. They provided their opinions, experiences, and ideas on the wellbeing of people in Scotland, alongside topics that were pertinent to specific policy areas. This approach to evidence gathering ensures that the in-depth realities of people's experiences are captured alongside other data sources, such as survey data, to help improve decisions and policies. This provides enhanced understanding of the wellbeing challenges faced by people in Scotland during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Twenty four people, with diverse experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, with representation across the [protected characteristics](#), took part in the panel. Discussions about community resilience were conducted across two panel events in November 2022 and January 2023. The key findings are:

Resilience awareness and planning

- When members were prompted to reflect on what 'community resilience' meant to them, they spoke about people and places and the idea of a community being a source of strength and support. It was also acknowledged that a 'community' can be hard to define and that being resilient at this moment in time, due to the compounding impacts of COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis, was difficult.
- When asked about their awareness of disruptions, emergencies or unexpected events, panel members tended to talk about personal difficulties that had financial implications, like a boiler breaking down. Global climate change and NHS pressures were also major concerns for the members.
- Some members preferred not to think about future emergencies as their own day-to-day problems were enough to cope with.
- When asked to reflect on the responsibility for emergencies, most were clear that the responsibility for emergencies should be shared between individuals, public services, the business sector and the third sector. Members were clear to make a distinction between having a responsibility (such as the government) and playing a supporting role (such as the third sector).

Household resilience in practice

- The most common action across the panel was to own a first aid kit. Other examples provided included: having some extra food supplies, checking weather forecasts, and owning items such as candles and a torch. In the main, these were fairly routine actions that did not require a lot of investment, knowledge or specialist skills.
- For a small number of members, there was some reluctance and resistance towards the idea of being asked to plan for future emergencies. This was related to attitudes towards the government and attitudes towards who and what organisation should be responsible for preparing households.
- Some were so overwhelmed by day to day pressures, dealing with the cost of living crisis and ongoing impacts of the pandemic, that they did not have the financial or emotional resources to prepare or invest in 'what if' items.
- Many saw the value of local communities. They were recognised as a source of information through speaking to neighbours, attending community cafes and local faith groups.
- Online community groups were also highlighted as a useful source of local information, allowing members to access timely information relating to their home towns.

Looking for help and support

- Members mostly used their family, social networks and the internet when looking for help and advice. A few went to advice centres and charitable organisations and had used foodbanks and solicitors.
- Some members talked about not seeking help because of feelings of stigma and shame. This was related to a number of reasons, including, feeling embarrassed, a perception that help seeking feels like a loss of independence, and feeling that they did not deserve the help as others were much worse off than them.

Helping people to help themselves

- In response to being asked what might help individuals and communities, members recommended tailored support and accessible information from Scottish Government and partners for particular people and communities. These included: disabled people, people living in poverty, people experiencing homelessness, older people, non-native English speakers, those without any access to the internet and refugees and asylum seekers.
- Suggestions for Scottish Government and partners to help households cope with emergencies included practical recommendations such as, providing free or subsidised kits or 'resilience boxes' and providing routine first aid training in schools, communities and workplaces.
- Considering longer-term preparation, it was suggested that regions of Scotland could be more self-sufficient in terms of growing food locally.
- Reflecting on how to engage with members of the public, and keep them informed during an emergency situation, the panel members felt there needed to be a balance between advice and action. For example, Scottish Government and partners explaining what they had done to prepare for emergencies and also what the public needed to do.
- In an emergency, members said they wanted up to date information localised to their area, and some spoke of the benefits of alerts and text messaging.
- While there was broad agreement that alert style messages are helpful, some members felt they should be reserved for reactive emergency situations only.

Summary

- The insights gathered over the panel events have been extensive. They are relevant to a range of policy areas and priorities in the Scottish Government.
- For example, the members' experiences and insights were considered in the tone and content of Scottish Government social media messaging. It prompted officials in the Scottish Government to adapt communication messages to be more relatable to those who may struggle to gather additional items in an emergency kit.

- The insights also helped to influence the content of a number of engagement events between community groups, voluntary sector organisations and statutory emergency responders between April and June 2023, as part of a Resilient Communities Conference programme.
- These findings align with wider research on community resilience that suggest cultural and demographic factors have a significant influence on how people and communities may plan, prepare and react to unexpected events, who they may turn to for assistance, and on people's attitudes towards seeking help.¹
- This research has also provided new perspectives on household resilience as people are dealing with the impacts of the pandemic and then the cost of living crisis.
- One of the key strengths of the panel, was in the way it provided a bridge between policymakers and the public. Gathering these diverse perspectives, enabled policymakers to gain valuable insights into the real-world challenges faced by Scottish communities.
- The principles of trust, respect and inclusivity were weaved throughout the panel setup and delivery (more details in the [Method section](#)). These foundational elements have allowed the panel to flourish as a platform for effective policy-making.

¹ For example: [Exploring Community Resilience - Carnegie UK Trust](#) and [Exploring Two Decades of Research in Community Resilience: A Content Analysis Across the International Literature - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

Introduction

The Scottish Government is committed to increased public participation in the policy making process. Inclusive approaches to participation are valuable. Hearing directly from the people of Scotland brings new, relevant insights in decision making and it creates a forum for people to question and challenge existing processes and assumptions. There can be positive benefits for those who contribute too, including learning new skills or knowledge, increased confidence and feeling valued.²

The 'People's Panel for Wellbeing: 2022 and beyond' was set up with the aim to enable members of the public to provide up-to-date and relevant views, opinions, experiences, and ideas on the wellbeing of people in Scotland. This panel specifically focused on the COVID-19 recovery period, whilst also addressing other significant issues such as the cost-of-living crisis and community resilience.

Three reports have been published that detail the main findings from the People's Panel events.³ This particular report focuses on discussions related to community resilience alongside details on the background and motivation for developing this People's Panel, how it was delivered and what impact it has had. Additionally, an independent evaluation on the Panel's work has been published.⁴

Background and Context

Since 2011, as set out in the [Christie Commission report](#)⁵ but also articulated through the Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#), the Scottish Government has been exploring ways of working with members of the public, to enhance policy development and delivery, and improve the quality of life and outcomes for the people of Scotland. Additionally, as a member of the [Open Government Partnership](#), the Scottish Government is working alongside governments across the world and committing to the values of openness, transparency, accountability and citizen participation.

For example, the Scottish Government employs a variety of approaches to engage the public in decision-making, such as: [citizen assemblies](#), [consultations](#) and [participatory budgeting](#). The Scottish Government has also introduced a new human rights-based Social Security system for Scotland, which emphasizes dignity and respect through collaboration with individuals who have lived experience.⁶ Building upon this positive practice, and as part of an Open Government commitment, the 'Participation Framework'

² [Participation Framework - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

³ The other two reports are: [People's Panel: Covid and 'People's Panel: Cost of Living'](#)

⁴ Evaluation report: <http://www.gov.scot/ISBN/9781835216613>

⁵ This report, published in 2011, set out a series of recommendations for the future delivery of public services that can improve the quality of life and outcomes for the people of Scotland.

⁶ In 2017, the Scottish Government set out that it will use the opportunities presented through devolution to develop a new Scottish system for Social Security based on the principles of dignity, respect and human rights: [Social security: policy position papers - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

was published in 2023.⁷ This sets out that people have the right to contribute to, and to influence, the decisions that affect their lives. Furthermore, it underscores that involving the people likely to be affected by these decisions will lead to improved decision-making. However, it is suggested that existing approaches to participation could be improved to be more inclusive, with a greater focus on diversity, accountability and evaluation.⁸

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government gathered a range of evidence on the virus and the protective measures. As the country entered a period of recovery from COVID-19, decision makers needed access to timely, robust and appropriate evidence to enhance recovery efforts. It became evident that understanding the realities of COVID-19 recovery directly from people was crucial. This led to the establishment of the 'People's Panel for Wellbeing: 2022 and Beyond' with the aim of ensuring direct participation and contributions from the people of Scotland. As such, this sort of participation adds depth and nuance and it provides pointers for further exploration, alongside other forms of research and a wider triangulated evidence base.

Aims and Outcomes

The People's Panel was established with two broad aims. These are:

- **To empower people in Scotland** to actively participate in a research panel where the outputs are shared with government.⁹
- **To test a participatory research model.** Drawing inspiration from the successful development of the Social Security Scotland Charter by individuals with lived experience¹⁰, the participants would receive capacity-building information to enhance their knowledge. Unlike the Charter groups, which had predefined policy questions, the People's Panel intended to address pressing issues as they arose, fostering dynamic and responsive discussions.

In addition, the People's Panel aspired to achieve two specific outcomes:

- Evidence showcasing the benefits of a particular **model of participation**.
- That the Scottish Government would make **informed decisions** on relevant policies and actions, fuelled by an **enhanced understanding of the wellbeing challenges** faced by people in Scotland during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁷ This framework provides a guide to good practice in participation work in Scottish Government [Participation Framework - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/participation-framework/pages/introduction.aspx)

⁸ [Open Government action plan 2021 to 2025 - commitment 5: participation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-government-action-plan-2021-to-2025/pages/commitment-5-participation.aspx)

⁹ It's worth noting that the term 'people' is intentionally used instead of 'citizens' to ensure inclusivity, encompassing anyone living in Scotland and avoiding exclusion.

¹⁰ [Social Security Scotland - Our Charter](https://www.gov.scot/publications/social-security-scotland-our-charter/pages/introduction.aspx)

Method – What we did

Recruitment

The goal was to recruit 30 adults living in Scotland with diverse experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring representation across the protected characteristics,¹¹ who could offer unique perspectives on wellbeing issues. Consideration was also given to intersectionality.¹² This means that individuals were selected based on the diversity of their experiences, which may have encompassed various social and personal identities. As such, this was not intended to be a representative sample of the Scottish population. The aim was to recruit people based on their breadth of experiences to provide rich, in-depth information. These lived experience perspectives can then be synthesized, alongside other evidence, to identify gaps or problem areas, formulate research questions and make better informed decisions.

Participants were identified in two ways:

1. **Recontact database.** Individuals who had taken part in two online surveys and had agreed to be contacted about further research.¹³

The Scottish Government research team emailed these individuals (around 2,500 people) a survey to gather their interest in joining the People's Panel. The survey included questions about their pandemic experiences, such as employment, housing, shielding, and compliance with guidance. Additionally, there were questions to identify the protected characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, and disability status. 834 surveys were returned and 793 individuals expressed their willingness to be considered for the panel. Potential members were then selected based on their experiences (e.g., shielding or job loss) and their response to protective measures (e.g., adherence to guidance). Random selection was conducted within these different categories.

2. **Through third sector organisations.** The Scottish Government research team also contacted a range of equality organisation to ensure representation of individuals with diverse protected characteristics. For example, this included individuals who might not have been able to complete an online survey due to not having access to digital devices.

29 members were invited to join the People's Panel, while an additional 31 individuals with closely matching experiences were placed on a reserve list. In cases where there was no response or a member withdrew, reserve members were invited to join the panel.

¹¹ [Protected characteristics | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/protected-characteristics)

¹² The concept of intersectionality refers to the lived reality of people who experience multiple and compounding inequalities. For example: [Using intersectionality to understand structural inequality in Scotland: evidence synthesis - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2020/06/Using-intersectionality-to-understand-structural-inequality-in-Scotland-evidence-synthesis-gov-scot.pdf)

¹³ The 2 surveys were: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and society: what matters to people in Scotland? - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2020/06/Coronavirus-COVID-19-and-society-what-matters-to-people-in-Scotland-gov-scot.pdf) and [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) impact on wellbeing: wave 3 - survey summary - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2020/06/Coronavirus-COVID-19-impact-on-wellbeing-wave-3-survey-summary-gov-scot.pdf)

One of the notable challenges was ensuring diverse representation within the panel. While efforts were made to include individuals from various backgrounds, there were segments of the population not included. For example, those who were under 16, or those who lived in a care home during the pandemic. However, for some groups of people the panel set up may not have been appropriate or it would have required facilitators with specific expertise.

A stakeholder advisory group was set up, including representation from colleagues working in the third sector across a range of equality organisations.¹⁴ Following two panel events, an information session was conducted for these stakeholders. During this session, initial findings were presented to them, and their opinions were sought on the panel's formation, including potential constraints and suggestions for improvements. There was also engagement with a 'critical friend' – this was an academic, with a background in public participation. Their role was to listen to the planned approach for the events and offer guidance and constructive critique.

Across the six People's Panel events, a total of 24 members participated, with attendee numbers ranging from 15 to 23 for each event. Following each event, panel members were presented with a shopping voucher worth £125 per session attended as compensation for their time.

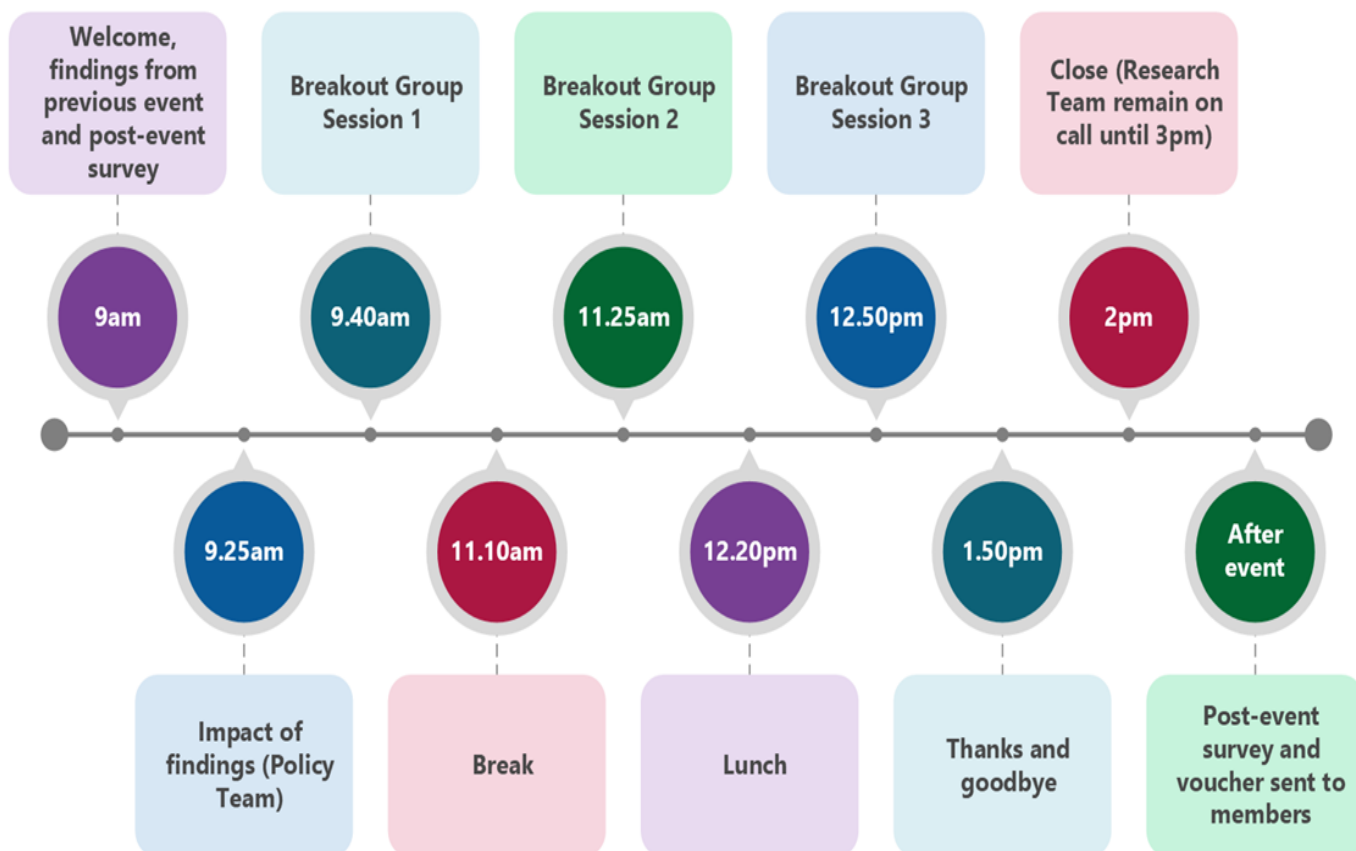
Panel Process

Two weeks before each online event, the research team initiated discussions with Scottish Government policy colleagues to identify pressing decision-making issues that would benefit from the input of lived experiences in order to impact policy outcomes. (See [appendix A](#) and [B](#) for the full list of People's Panel topics and timeline of how an event was organised).

Initially, a combination of whole panel sessions and breakout room sessions in smaller groups was planned. However, as the panel progressed, members expressed a strong preference for the smaller breakout room format. Consequently, the majority of discussions were conducted in this format. Figure 1 below details how each panel event was organised:

¹⁴ Stakeholders were approached, with the aim of trying to ensure representation across the equality groups. Knowledge of which stakeholders had an interest in pandemic related issues was built up from internal contacts and from stakeholders who responded to the consultation on the approach to establish the COVID-19 inquiry: [Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry: Analysis of the public and stakeholders views on the approach to establishing the public inquiry - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-published/scottish-covid-19-inquiry-analysis-of-the-public-and-stakeholders-views-on-the-approach-to-establishing-the-public-inquiry/)

Figure 1: Panel event timings and activities



Experienced facilitators from the research team and staff members from the Scottish Government Social Research profession facilitated the breakout sessions and took notes. See [appendix C](#) and [appendix D](#) for the facilitator guides and research questions.

Analysis

The analysis was conducted in two stages. After each People’s Panel event, the aim was to promptly deliver the information to Ministers and policy colleagues within two weeks of each event. To achieve this, the research team performed interim thematic analysis to identify key themes and impressions. The findings were also reported back to the members at each subsequent event. Following this, the research team carried out systematic analysis to identify themes, ideas, or opinions that may have been overlooked in the interim analysis.

This report illustrates the findings using quotes from the panel members. The quotes reflect various viewpoints, and provide insight into the kinds of discussions that were had at the panel events. Some views were shared across most of the panel members and some issues were more specific to a smaller group of people. However, it is important to highlight that it was not the aim here to achieve consensus or resolve differences, as might be appropriate in a deliberative process.

Descriptive terminology is used to add clarity on the views. For example, ‘some’ members or ‘many’. It was not the intention to quantify the members’ views, but it should be noted that in general, ‘many’ or ‘most’ members refers to views that were shared across a large section of the sample. Use of the term ‘some’ is used to reflect an idea or viewpoint but without specifying the number. Certain issues were more specific to a smaller sub-section of panel respondents but these are no less important just because fewer people experienced them

After each event, panel members were invited to complete a post-event survey to provide feedback on their experience with the panel. This provided the research team with instant feedback and data on topics such as trust and confidence, over time. See [appendix E](#) for a summary of these survey responses.

Participatory Approach

The goal was to facilitate and empower individuals with lived experience of the discussed topics to have their voices heard by the policymakers in the Scottish Government.

Therefore, the research approach was designed not only to collect people’s opinions but also to help members further develop their ideas and opinions throughout each event and over the course of all six events. This involved capacity-building for the members and careful facilitation to encourage deep thinking about the issues at hand. As the panel progressed, members became increasingly knowledgeable, leading to more relevant and informed responses. Their growing confidence also expanded the breadth and depth of their contributions.

Unlike deliberative democracy approaches¹⁵, the intention was not to seek a consensus of opinion on the subjects. Instead, the aim was to uncover contrasting experiences and unearth distinct and possibly innovative perspectives. The objective was to present these voices to decision-makers, prompting them to reflect deeply on the realities of people’s experiences.

Importantly, the research team sought to convey diverse views, ideas, and opinions on the issues that may not have otherwise surfaced or been given attention.

Trust, Relationships and Ethical Considerations

Becoming familiar with panel members, their needs and culture and any barriers to participation, including communication, were vital considerations for planning and delivering this panel.

¹⁵ [Institutionalising Participatory and Deliberative Democracy Working Group: report - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/institutionalising-participatory-and-deliberative-democracy-working-group-report/pages/12/index.aspx)

The subjects discussed during the People’s Panel events were challenging and emotionally charged. Given the sensitive nature of these conversations, it was crucial for the research team to establish positive relationships and trust with the members, prioritising their wellbeing throughout the process. See [appendix F](#) for a summary of the main ethical considerations.

Trust was fostered by maintaining transparency with the members. They were made aware of how the information gathered would be used to inform policy decisions alongside other forms of evidence. It was important to manage their expectations, ensuring that they understood that their input was one of many sources that policy teams might consider. Each event included a segment where the policy team from the previous event shared how the gathered information had been utilised, providing an opportunity to update members and further engage them in the policymaking process (See [appendix E](#) for post event survey scores covering trust).

Steps were taken to protect the wellbeing of everyone involved in the People’s Panel. Facilitators and notetakers were briefed before each event, and debriefing sessions were held afterward. Relevant support resources, such as mental health charities, cost of living assistance, or Citizens Advice, were provided during each session. It was identified in the first two sessions that it would be helpful to have a trained Mental Health First Aider¹⁶ on standby throughout the events. This was implemented from event 3 onwards. Moreover, facilitators of each breakout group created a safe space where members could feel supported during sensitive discussions.

Purpose of this report

This report was written in order to share with wider audiences how the panel was set up, and what was found out. It documents the panel approach and outcomes but it was not an underlying part of the panel process.

¹⁶ There are trained mental health first aiders (MHFAs) across Scottish Government directorates. They can provide on-site support and advice about where to find professional help. For example, [Scotland’s Mental Health First Aid \(smhfa.com\)](https://www.smhfa.com)

Research Findings

This report sets out the findings from the People’s Panel events on resilience and wellbeing. Scottish Government colleagues in the [Resilience Division](#) (a division that leads on emergency planning, response and recovery) wanted to consider panel members’ knowledge of, and views about the concept of resilience at a household and community level. Alongside this, they wanted to explore what the members’ awareness was of risks they face and whether they make plans for mitigation of these risks. Additionally, the Resilience Division wanted to delve further and explore how the Scottish Government can help households cope with emergencies and how to communicate with households about resilience to emergencies.

Prior to the breakout sessions, members were given an introduction to the idea of resilience from Scottish Government policy colleagues. Risks to resilience, were described in terms of emergencies, disruptions or unexpected events that might impact on their health, safety and wellbeing.

Discussions regarding resilience were covered at two People’s Panel events (event 4, November 2022 and event 5, January 2023). See appendix C for the discussion questions. The remainder of this report sets out the findings organised by the research questions across these two events.

Describing ‘community resilience’

The first discussion of event 4 was centred around asking the members to describe what ‘community resilience’ meant to them. The term resilience is used in the [Scottish Government National Performance Framework](#). This is a framework which sets out ‘national outcomes’ that reflect the values and aspirations of the people of Scotland, which can be measured to help track progress. These national outcomes include that people “live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe”.

The Scottish Government also has a definition of ‘community resilience’.¹⁷ However, it was important to gain a better understanding of what the members perceived as being a community, respecting the fact that this will differ among people with varying backgrounds, needs and circumstances.

¹⁷ Scottish Government definition of community resilience “Communities and individuals harnessing resources and expertise to help themselves prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, in a way that complements the work of the emergency responders.” [Building Resilient Communities | Ready Scotland](#)

Figure 2: Word cloud representing members views on what ‘community’ meant to them



Figure 2 is a visual summary of the members’ views on what the concept of community meant to them. The words are taken from the discussions that took place between the facilitators and the members during event four. As displayed in the image, the words are in different sizes. The bigger and bolder the text, the more often this was expressed by a panel member. So this included words such as: ‘online’, ‘sharing’ ‘neighbours’ ‘family’ and ‘people like me’. This highlights that the members’ concepts of community included thinking about the people that are close to them, such as their friends and family. It also included the idea that those people are like minded and they are brought together (in a place and online) through common interests. Some qualities of a community that were expressed included ‘caring’, ‘support’ and ‘reliance’.

“Community means knowing I can rely on another person. That makes me feel better and improves my mental health. It’s not just about sharing an occasional evening together, it’s bigger than that.”

It was also acknowledged that ‘community’ can be hard to define, people may belong to multiple communities and that it may not always have positive connotations.

“It’s hard to describe. It’s such a multi-layered thing. It’s everything from being people together, to being people together in particular groups, in particular places, in particular ways. The interactions between us as individuals. It’s the coming together. I like to think it’s when individuals become more than the sum of its parts.”

“It is a strange question [what does community mean to you]. It can be about people being thrown together according to where we live. It can be about shared interest. It can be good. It can also be exclusive, and this can be bad.”

When prompted to describe what resilience meant to them, the members tended to think about resilience on two levels; at a personal and at a community level. For example, at a community level, resilience was described as being the feature, or to use a member’s words, the “glue” that would enable recovery from an adverse situation.

“Resilience to me is, it is like a system. So if something breaks, the system keeps on, it continues on, you have got something in place.”

At an individual level, members described “bouncing back”, “persistence” and becoming stronger after a challenging situation.

Some members also felt that the term ‘resilience’ is sometimes overused, and it has become a bit of ‘buzzword’. For example, when it is used within official strategy documents without reflection on the connotations or meaning. Some members expressed a sense of exacerbation, and felt, given the current societal challenges, a negative reaction towards the term ‘resilience’.

“Life is hard enough with Covid and cost of living. All of these things affect communities so much. Then someone says, ‘be resilient’. It’s enough, it’s really enough.”

Resilience Awareness and Planning

In event 4 the members were asked to talk about what, if any, sorts of emergencies they were concerned about, what, if any, plans they had made if these things happened, and who they thought was responsible for coping with emergencies.

Please note, as set out in other People's Panel reports many panel members' lives had been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic and they were facing additional pressures, concerns and anxieties due to the cost of living crisis.¹⁸ As such, these findings reflect this.

This section presents the findings under the following themes:

Weather events and power outages

Unexpected expenses and rising costs

Shared responsibility

Weather events and power outages

In terms of their awareness, panel members' responses were influenced by their own circumstances and personal worries, and to some extent, by events that had already happened to them.

They were highly aware of the risk of bad weather, often seeing it as inevitable. This was because for some, it was a common event. Rural and island dwellers had particular concerns.

“We have disruptions because the ferries do not go or break down because of the weather.”

For many other members, they were most aware of bad weather leading to power outages and the heightened risk of flooding due to climate change.

“When we bought our flat the place was safe from flooding. The next property I'll be moving to is more at risk and I would need to protect myself from climate change. It's high on my risks.”

¹⁸ The other two reports are: [People's Panel: Covid and 'People's Panel: Cost of Living'](#)

Some members expressed a sense of climate anxiety, and the need for forward planning.

“There’s also floods and also droughts. We need to plan for this, for the impact of climate change.”

Members had a variety of fears connected to the potential impacts of outages, including the impact it could have on their ability to work or travel.

“I won’t be able to work if these conditions happen. If we have no power, I have no internet, if I have no internet I can’t work.”

Some feared potential isolation.

“My concern is not being able to use the phones. If the electricity goes down, we don’t have a phonenumber.”

Unexpected expenses and rising costs

For many, their awareness of emergencies were related to potential personal emergencies, or day-to-day problems that would mean an unexpected expense.

“I’ve just went nearly 2 weeks with no heating or hot water. My boiler was broken and I couldn’t get hold of my landlord to fix it.”

Some members had experienced family emergencies that caused unexpected expenses.

“My father had a stroke and is paralysed, [he lives in] India. It’s too expensive to get tickets.”

Members also anticipated future risks, compounded by the cost of living crisis.

“Every winter the slates come off the roof. The costs to repair them have gone through the roof, it is significant, a large amount of money, and it terrifies me.”

Shared responsibility

Members tended to agree that responsibility should be shared between individuals, governments, public services and the private sector, and that there was a role for business and the third sector. They discussed how effective it could be when all the agencies, third sector, government and individuals worked in partnership to take responsibility for emergencies.

Members largely thought that the responsibility for dealing with emergencies depended on the type of emergency. So, for example, some felt that their personal safety and the safety of their families was down to them.

“Personal responsibility for your own safety and well-being, you should not be dependent on the state for that.”

Members gave examples of personal safety, such as ensuring their car or home was ready for winter and adverse weather incidents.

For some though, the thought of being personally responsible was perceived to be a challenge.

“I feel that I am responsible for all aspects of my life and my family life, and it is a burden and it is very, very difficult to bear.”

It was suggested that as the role of government is to provide safety and protect citizens, then local and national governments should take responsibility for emergencies.

“We pay for the state and local government to be a service to us, to keep us safe, to be there for the emergencies, that is what they are paid for, to serve us.”

There was a difference in view in terms of how much the government should be involved. Some members believed the government should plan for all disruptions. Others felt that governments should only be responsible when lives were threatened.

“Local authorities and government, they should have plans in place no matter the emergency.”

Some members took it for granted that there were plans in place to deal with emergencies. As such, they were surprised to be asked to consider whose responsibility it was.

“We have always been led to believe it is the government’s place to manage an emergency.”

Given the current climate, following the pandemic and dealing with the cost of living crisis, some felt that governments should be taking more responsibility at this time.

“There is an emergency related to COVID so they, all types of government, local authorities, Scottish Government, UK government and the rest of the world, across the board, governments are not doing enough.”

Members felt that there was a role, note *not* a responsibility, for local communities, faith organisations and charities (collectively the third sector) in planning for emergencies. Members were clear that this sector should not have sole responsibility. Firstly, as they felt it was not appropriate, but also they felt that reliance on this sector could be ‘risky’ due to the sector’s financial pressures.

“But they [the third sector] can't meet all of society's problems. Relying on the third sector for resilience is risky. Third sector organisations are under financial pressure.”

Reflecting on the role of the community, members gave examples of when local communities could help during emergencies or disruptions.

“During the bin strike, with my neighbours, we organised and managed to keep the area quite clean.”

Members who lived in more remote parts of Scotland spoke about how essential the community is during an emergency situation.

“It would depend on where you live. If you live in the [name of island] you have to rely on the community as there aren't that many services.”

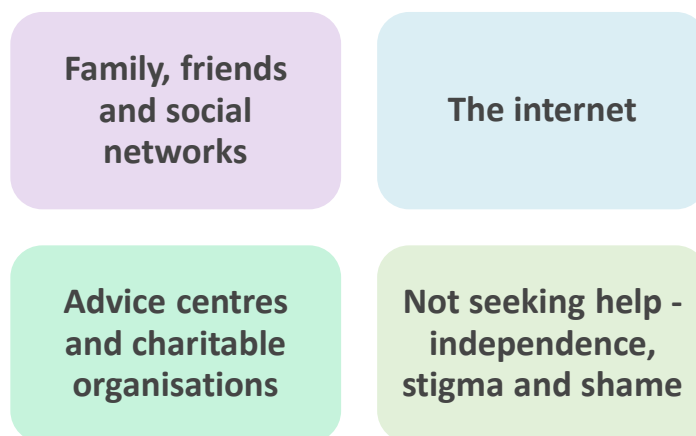
However, there was a degree of anger from some members about what role the community should play, when so many were facing such severe hardship.

“How can you band together as a community when so many of the community is below the poverty line. How do you expect them to be resilient and cope with cost of living.”

Looking for help and support

The members reflected on where they might access help and support when faced with emergencies, disruptions or unexpected events.

This section presents the findings under the following themes:



Family, friends and social networks

When asked what is the first port of call when looking for help and support in times of trouble, most participants indicated family, friends and other social networks.

“I get reassurance from my mum. I’m very heavily reliant on my family during crises for additional support.”

An example was provided where a member had tried other avenues but ended up seeking support from family when no other financial help was forthcoming.

“I found a private let, the landlord recommended I get in touch with the council for help with furnishings. The council wouldn’t help so I had to borrow from my parents.”

Some members did not have family available to help them. One enterprising member with no family support gave an example of building a social network to help in times of need.

“You seek it out. You make friends. I was in the climate change group through word of mouth. The more people I was engaging with the more likely to find out this information.”

The internet

People’s Panel members reported the internet as being a valuable source of help.

“First point of call is going online, usually Google, then down the rabbit hole.”

Although some members were concerned about digital exclusion and the poverty that stemmed from that.

“Digital exclusion is a big thing. Scottish Government have made a big dint in digital exclusion but not being able to access support online, that makes you poorer immediately.”

Another problem with relying on the internet was coverage. Some members lived in parts of the country where they could lose connection.

“I live in an area where internet is not great, the internet goes down.”

A further issue included the accessibility of website content.

“I don’t understand why websites that provide information do not have a read to me function, there are lots of disabilities where this would help.”

There were split views on the Scottish Government website. Some members singled out the Scottish Government website as “frustrating”.

“You need to have better triggers where web searches take you to that website. I don’t tend to come across Scottish Government websites on searches.”

Others had praise for the Scottish Government website content, particularly around accessibility.

“Scottish Government does a pretty good job of simplifying and making things easy to understand.”

Advice centres and charitable organisations

Third-sector support organisations were mentioned as an helpful source of help and support. Although some panel members said they had recently experienced problems with accessing such help due to high demand.

Panel members also discussed using various other helplines, and charitable organisations for help and support.

Members had accessed support and help from foodbanks, and not just for food.

“Some foodbanks also have clothes. Or if you have data and Wi-Fi problems foodbanks can sometimes help too.”

Not seeking help – independence, stigma and shame

Some People’s Panel members spoke about not seeking help. This was for a variety of reasons. For some, it was about losing independence.

“But, for me, asking for help feels a little bit like losing my independence. This might be a generational thing. A lot of older people don’t like asking for help.”

Others simply did not like asking for help.

“I do find it hard to ask for help. It’s not about losing my independence, but, it’s just something in me.”

Some members talked of not accessing formal help because they would feel shame.

“I don’t discuss it due to the embarrassment and stigma associated with seeking help financially, or accessing services.”

Another discussion centred on members not asking for help because they felt that others are so much worse off than them.

“Where I grew up, in [town] you were always surrounded by people so much worse off. Now, there’s a part of me that feels I’m undeserving of support.”

Household resilience in practice

In event 5 the aim was to explore how practical it was for households to prepare for emergencies and disruptions, and to find out what the members believed they can do to help them cope with the impact of an emergency.

Before the members went into their discussion groups, a member of the Scottish Government Resilience Division set out the context for this work. This included information about the role of governments and other public services in Scotland in planning for and coping with emergencies, and the role that the public and communities can also play.¹⁹ The idea of the ideal 'resilient household' was raised in order to investigate if this model was realistic for this group of people.

A [resilient household](#) was described as one that:

- ✓ Stayed informed
- ✓ Followed advice given
- ✓ Made a household plan
- ✓ Had an emergency kit
- ✓ Gets skills
- ✓ Gets connected

The panel members' responses were covered in the following themes:



¹⁹ For example: [Advice for emergencies in Scotland \(ready.scot\)](#)

Staying informed

The majority of members reported keeping up to date with news, and weather reports in particular. They used a combination of TV, radio, the internet and social media. Social media was particularly useful for members who did not watch the news or buy a newspaper.

“I don’t buy newspapers or watch the news, it has to come to my phone or social media.”

Members wanted quick and frequent access to information about adverse weather.

“For adverse weather it is important to have that information communicated and updated as often as possible. TV weather reports are not broken-down hour by hour and that is useful to plan the day or week ahead. That [the internet] is just how we get our information now.”

Members also described being proactive, and had found ways in which they could be informed directly of incidents by signing up to alerts and updates.

“I’ve signed up to flood alerts as the causeways near me can get blocked.”

In deciding which sources to use to stay informed, members raised the topic of trust. For example, there was some consideration given to which sources were ‘official’ and ‘safe’. In some cases a tendency not to trust particular sources appeared to reflect a wider mistrust of mainstream media.

“I have a tendency to mistrust. I think there is a collusion of information from all the channels, they all say the same thing and don’t give the right information”.

Preparation and planning

‘Household resilience’ was perceived as being related to personal needs and circumstances. This meant that the members varied considerably in their approach to emergency planning.

“You learn what works for you, and it’s an ongoing process to prevent such emergencies.”

Some of the members provided clear examples of their advance planning. They spoke about strategies that are practical for them, including things that they own should there be

an unexpected emergency, or behaviours that they routinely engage in to help keep them informed. The most common action was to own a first aid kit.

Other examples provided included: having some extra food supplies, having spare candles, checking weather forecasts, keeping spare toilet rolls, having alternative heating sources and power banks, and owning a torch. In the main, these were fairly routine actions that did not require a lot of investment, knowledge or specialist skills.

“We are prepared for about 2 weeks...anything beyond that becomes an issue because it involves financial investment.”

Some members, particularly those in rural areas, were well prepared because they were used to dealing with adverse weather and risks.

“I’m exposed to storms so very prepared. Got a go-bag ready²⁰. Shoes near bed in case of broken glass from storms or in the remote event of an earthquakes. I’ve got torches in my bedside table in case of power cuts.”

However, this level of preparation was not a common strategy, nor very practical for the majority of members.

It was not only geographical and weather related risks that encouraged preparation. For some members, it was their anxiety and worry, which meant they had taken steps to build up supplies.

“On the supermarket shelves quite often there is no paracetamol, which is not good for my paranoia. My mental health is not great, and I feel I need things for that because of so many shortages”.

Members who are carers or have health needs also spoke of being prepared for specific health related emergencies.

“Making sure phones are charged, basic things. Partner keeping a semi-packed backpack ready, making sure everything there for partner to take it to hospital. You become more vigilant and confident through emergencies”.

²⁰ This is an emergency kit: [Emergency kits - mygov.scot](https://mygov.scot)

Reluctance and resistance

For a small number of members, household resilience was not practical due to some wider resistance towards the idea of planning for emergencies.

“Why does Scottish Government want us to be ready when it’s not ready itself? To put pressure on us to have candles, batteries and so on in the house, it’s the wrong thing to be talking about and, sorry to say, a bit of a waste of time. Having candles and batteries is the last thing on my mind”.

As described above, feelings of resistance may stem from someone’s attitude towards who and what organisation should be responsible for preparing households (as discussed in the [earlier section](#)).

Amongst some other members, it was more of a reluctance, stemming from either not wanting to live in an ‘emergency ready state’, or the opinion that living in a city means emergency planning is less applicable to them.

“They [the measures for resilience] seem quite sensible and useful but they’re not things that will really apply to me in a flat in [city], but still good to be aware of.”

Another reason, as noted in the next section, was the view that emergency related issues are seen as less of a priority than current, pressing concerns about cost of living.

Coping capabilities

Many members were limited in the things they felt they could do to help them cope. Some were so overwhelmed dealing with ongoing day-to-day issues that emergency planning did not feel viable.

Ongoing impacts from the pandemic, and dealing with the cost of living crisis, meant members did not have the resources (financial and emotional) to think about emergency planning.

“The way things are just now, cost of living, energy, food prices, it’s a lot to ask just now of people to also prepare for emergencies”.

Many spoke of the cost of living crisis as a significant barrier to being able to cope, with a need to prioritise everyday living expenses over investing in ‘*what if*’ items.

“All of this is financially tied – it is tied to household financial capacity. Do they [households] have the means to prepare? If they don’t have this, the conversation is completely irrelevant.”

Whilst some members talked about the benefits of items such as emergency kits, the cost of these was a barrier.

“Kits like these are not cheap – not affordable with cost of living. It’s choosing to eat or buy something I may never need.”

Some members were uncertain whether they had the knowledge or skills to cope with the impact of an emergency.

“Not something I have ever thought about, don’t know what emergencies I would face, apart from things you just have to deal with when it happens”.

“We had some severe weather a few weeks back. I was terrified. It made me realise how unprepared our house was but I wouldn’t know how to prepare if that makes sense.”

This member was unsure what skills would be needed or if they had any.

“Don’t know if I have any skills. I can’t first aid, I’m terrible at DIY. Not sure I’d be much use in an emergency to anybody.”

Consequently, education and training was suggested as a way to proactively prepare the public for emergency situations. It was suggested that first aid training should be provided in schools and workplaces and that the Scottish Government could play a key role in the delivery of an educational programme.

“Maybe Scottish Government could do a series of things in towns and cities for first aiders and organisations. I have done stuff in the past but because of costs they [organisation previously worked for] have pulled it back from me.”

The value of the local community

Most members talked about the value of the local community for help in emergencies. This included members getting to know neighbours and getting/giving help when needed.

“Even with just a bit of contact, you get to know people’s situations. And then you know, if there is an emergency, they come into your mind, and you know they might need some help.”

The local community was a source of information, with members describing speaking to their neighbours but also the role of community cafes and local faith and community organisations.

As displayed in [Figure 2](#), earlier in the report, online communities, including social media networks, were also discussed as playing a key role in providing members with reactive information about local issues in a timely way.

“In my social circle it’s a case of one person sees it and tells their networks.”

For members who had anxieties about going out because of COVID-19, these online communities were seen as particularly important.

“Online communities should be growing. There are people who will never be able to go back to how it was. Some of us can’t go out anywhere unless we are willing to take the risk.”

However, there were also members who had problems with their neighbours and those who did not feel they had a strong local community. Some felt that the pandemic had affected their local community.

“I’ve lived in a small social housing scheme for 12 years. We all know each other, we talk to each other on the street, we try to help each other as best as we can. But it’s been very different during the pandemic, keep our distance and shout at each other across gardens. Covid has put limits on people’s community.”

Some felt that the ‘community spirit’ was not what it used to be, others described living in more urban environments where they did not know their neighbours.

“My parents where they live they have neighbours’ keys and know everyone’s name. I now live in the city in a block of flats with so many other people and I couldn’t tell you any of their names.”

Helping people to help themselves

In event 5, the aim was to explore what People's Panel members thought could be done, either by the Scottish Government or by partners to help people be more resilient. Then, members were also asked if they had any ideas about the best way to communicate these ideas to the general public.

This section presents the findings under the following themes:



Tailored support

Members felt that certain communities needed more tailored and accessible information from the Scottish Government and partners. This included support for particular people and communities which members identified as: people who are disabled, older people, rural communities, those living in poverty, people experiencing homelessness, non-native English speakers, asylum seekers and those who do not have access to the internet.

“Scottish Government has been good at giving devices, enabling better connectivity but there are still many people in vulnerable groups who don't have the resources to go to a website and become aware. I'd like to see more about how we disseminate information to vulnerable groups and people not on the internet, or maybe even with no access to radios and TVs.”

A localised approach to communication was also favoured by members, including directing people to local sources of support.

“We need to think of differences in areas in terms of information given. For example, Glasgow versus Highlands. The Government knows what is best through research but it needs to be interpreted by community leaders in local areas.”

To help tackle financial barriers, the idea of providing subsidised emergency kits was suggested. These could include essential items such as information on what to do, first aid kits and power banks and could function like the 'Baby Box'.²¹

“It could be done the same way as the baby box in Scotland, so that every house has a backpack of items that also has a small booklet that explains everything in terms of flooding, in terms of any other emergency, emergency contact details, a small first aid kit and basic information on how to use it. Maybe a power bank too.”

Other communities in need of tailored support included those with language and cultural barriers, and people who are experiencing homelessness.

“It’s not just communities affected by poverty, but differences in languages. Some just aren’t part of society in the same way. Asylum seekers are kept out of society and have no way to do all of this. The way people with addictions need support, the homeless community have no way to do this and have to rely on others doing it for them”.

Practical recommendations

Members provided a number of practical recommendations and ideas on how Scottish Government and partners can help them to deal with emergencies.

This included suggestions to make local public services more efficient and better connected, although issues around industrial action were also noted.

“This could be a lot better or households could be more prepared if local services were more joined up. But all public services are on strike – so are we alone in this?”

It was felt that better access to information is required, including from local councils, and that this information needs to be available in other languages.

“It’s the first time I’ve seen ready.scot. It’s really good! But it’s the first time I’ve seen it. Why is this? I’m tech savvy, I’m aware and it’s never reached me – why is that? I think government need to force that message through”.

Some participants were keen on expanding first aid community resources, such as providing Automated External Defibrillator (AED) devices in town centres.

²¹ In Scotland, all new-born babies are given a box of essential items [Scotland's Baby Boxes - mygov.scot](https://www.mygov.scot/scotland-baby-boxes)

“We have training in my work so staff know how to use AED devices. Some villages have multiple devices for 10,000 people. But we need to have it more in town centres”.

Considering longer-term preparation, it was suggested that regions of Scotland could be more self-sufficient.

“It could be possible for the island to be self-sufficient if the Government gave some help. This would allow the island to be prepared for disaster. The local council has been very poor at encouraging crofting and growing food locally”.

It was also suggested that educating people at an early age and not being afraid of talking about difficult subjects was important.

“British and Scottish culture is very centred around not hearing about unpleasant things. There needs to be realistic education, but we have idealistic education. We need to have more honest conversations. I don’t know what is needed from school level, but there is a reluctance to address the bad stuff”.

Preparing practically and mentally for emergencies

The members suggested that communications should be aimed at helping people to prepare, both practically and mentally, for emergencies.

Emergency-specific information with clear information on who is responsible for what action was important to members. The timing was also discussed, with the benefits and challenges of advance warning raised.

“Talk about timeframe, how long it is expected to last. What are the authorities going to do and what are you expected to do”.

Being prepared was not just about practical steps, members also felt that messaging which encourages people to stay calm is important. This member provided an example.

“Don’t panic. There are resources to help you, information that you can get.”

Members felt the tone and language of information and communications would play an important role in how information would be received. They recognised that fear would not be effective and that trust would play a role in how receptive someone was to the message.

“I do not think people like being frightened. So I would hope that something could be done in such a way. It is a tricky one, I think I would be very careful in wording it”.

Proactive and reactive communications

The issues that the members focused on, when communicating with the public during emergencies, included: the length of information, the timing of information, accessibility and message content.

While some People’s Panel members wanted brief information that was ‘short and factual’ during emergencies, others sought more detailed information but they were clear that it should be easy to follow.

“Clear information that is easy to follow. Simple steps broken down into manageable chunks”.

Most members were looking for information during emergencies which will provide the most up-to-date information in real time, localised to their area. Alerts or text messages were considered to be a popular way of communicating with the public, allowing information to be shared easily and without relying on an internet connection.

“Some form of using mobile phone emergency alert system is really useful, services like flood alert are vital for people like me and the fact it’s a text message means I can set it up for neighbours. These need publicising more”.

Members suggested that initial alert messages should notify of the emergency, and should then be followed up with more detailed information.

“For the initial message, it should be calm and clear. Not using abbreviations, exactly what message you want. You could follow it up with more detailed messages but the initial one should just be an alert”.

In addition, members highlighted the importance of providing updated information, and the need to be transparent about the progress of the recovery operations. A lack of transparency and openness caused some frustration among individuals.

“When people start to get frustrated, when people had the 7 days outage, they said it would take 2 days and then they found more things wrong. Don’t sugar coat it, if you tell people that it’s going to be 2 days and then after that another 3 days, it really flattens people”.

While there was broad agreement alert style messages are helpful, some members felt they should be reserved for reactive emergency situations, and should not be used to communicate other information to the public.

“I wouldn’t want to get messages about things that I wouldn’t need to take action on. Keep it for emergency situations, do not over use it”.

Other means of communication that were considered useful by members in communicating information, included newsletters, flyers and posters. These formats were thought to be useful as part of proactive or planned information distribution. There were parallels drawn to how the Government communicated with people during the pandemic.

“It is also reminiscent of some of the stuff we got from Covid, when they started sending out big mailing campaigns, maybe this is something that needs to be on paper for people, it is something that you can ignore immediately and then come back at the later date, it would be less immediately overwhelming.”

Ideas to encourage engagement

People’s Panel members shared additional recommendations which they believed could encourage engagement from the public. These recommendations centred around three areas: advice and action, trust, and creative communications.

Some members want to see a balance between action and advice:

“Meeting us halfway is a good way of putting it. Explaining what the government has done is the number one message, and explaining to people what they can do should be the number two message, even little things, for example, is your phone charged.”

Members also pointed out the relationship between trust and taking action. That is, trust in the information provided by the Scottish and UK Government, and trust in the media to provide impartial and unbiased information. Some members cited the communication around the pandemic as the reason for this.

“Personally, I feel that governments made such massive mistakes through the pandemic. It’s going to be hard to gain that trust back, and it is not only the Scottish Government but also the UK Government”.

This lack of trust had implications for some members, in terms of trusting the government in future emergencies. One member reflected that the success of future communications could be undermined by a lack of trust.

“But a lot of people do not trust government, and what they had to say about the pandemic. I am not sure that leaflets through the doors or more campaigns for the telly would be so effective”.

People’s Panel members also encouraged creative methods to engage with the public that would help information be more memorable. Members cited some examples of positive communication they felt had worked well.

“From the communication point of view, I remember from the Covid times washing hands while singing “Happy Birthday”, and I still remember that, that is an example of the proper way of communicating guidance”.

Summary

- The insights gathered over the panel events have been extensive. They are relevant to a range of policy areas and priorities in the Scottish Government.
- For example, the members' experiences and insights were considered in the tone and content of Scottish Government social media messaging. It prompted officials in the Scottish Government to adapt communication messages to be more relatable to those who may struggle to gather additional items in an emergency kit.
- The insights also helped to influence the content of a number of engagement events between community groups, voluntary sector organisations and statutory emergency responders between April and June 2023, as part of a Resilient Communities Conference programme.
- These findings align with wider research on community resilience that suggest cultural and demographic factors have a significant influence on how people and communities may plan, prepare and react to unexpected events, and on people's attitudes towards seeking help.²²
- This research has also provided new perspectives on household resilience as people are dealing with the impacts of the pandemic and then the cost of living crisis.
- One of the key strengths of the panel, was in the way it provided a bridge between policymakers and the public. Gathering these diverse perspectives, enabled policymakers to gain valuable insights into the real-world challenges faced by Scottish communities.
- The principles of trust, respect and inclusivity were weaved throughout the panel setup and delivery (more details in the [Method section](#)). These foundational elements have allowed the panel to flourish as a platform for effective policy-making.

²² For example: [Exploring Community Resilience - Carnegie UK Trust](#) and [Exploring Two Decades of Research in Community Resilience: A Content Analysis Across the International Literature - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

Appendix A: Timeline of Events

Event 1: June 10 2022

- Introduction to the People's Panel (how it will work, who is asking the questions and how the findings will be used), ground rules and housekeeping
- Information session: Scottish Government's (SG) approach to addressing COVID-19 harms
- Group session 1: Members' experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Group session 2: Motivations for joining the People's Panel and what members want to get out of taking part

Event 2: 24 June 2022

- Findings from Event 1 and the follow up survey
- Information session: Current SG protective behaviour guidelines and polling results
- Group session 1: What makes people feel safe and unsafe around COVID-19 and protective behaviours
- Information session: SG ventilation plans
- Group session 2: Cost of living crisis and what it means to members

Event 3: 23 September 2022

- Findings from Event 2 and the follow up survey
- Impact session: How the findings have been used so far
- Group session 1: The impact of the cost of living crisis on members' behaviour and health and wellbeing
- Group session 2: Attitudes towards COVID-19 and potential protective measures in the autumn and winter
- Group session 3: Members' views on the new ventilation guidelines

Event 4: 18 November 2022

- Findings from Event 3 and the follow up survey
- Impact session: How the findings have been used so far
- Information session: CO2 monitors
- Group session 1: CO2 monitors and the pressures on the NHS
- Information session: Resilience
- Group session 2: Resilience
- Group session 3: Accessing help in times of trouble

Event 5: 27 January 2023

- Findings from Event 4 and the follow up survey
- Impact session: How the findings have been used so far
- Information session: coping with emergencies
- Group session 1: What would help members cope with emergencies
- Group session 2: How should SG communicate about coping with emergencies

Event 6: 24 March 2023

- Impact session: How the findings have been used across all the events
- Thank you sessions from policy teams, volunteers and the research team
- Group session 1: How members feel about COVID-19 now and for the future
- Group session 2: Open session for members to talk about their priorities
- Group session 3: Highlights and lowlights of being members of the People's panel

Appendix B: Timeline of how an event runs



Appendix C: Small group discussion questions on resilience topics

Event 4

Research Questions

- Research Question 1: What do this group understand by the term community?
- Research Question 2: To what extent are this group aware of risks to their health, safety and wellbeing and how does this translate into planning for emergencies?

Group session: Resilience

Session questions

- How would you describe 'community' and 'resilience' in a few words? (Prompts: use your own words, please say whatever comes into your head first)
- We now want to talk about disruptions, unexpected events or emergencies that could impact on your health, safety and wellbeing. What, if any, sorts of emergencies are you concerned about?
- What, if any, plans have you made to help you if these things happen?
- Who do you think is responsible for coping with emergencies?

Event 5

Research Questions

- Research Question 1: What aspects of household resilience are practical for this group of people?
- Research Question 2: What do this group believe they can do to help them cope with the impact of an emergency?
- Research Question 3: How can Scottish Government and partners help households to help themselves cope with emergencies?

Group session: What would help members cope with emergencies

Session questions

- How aware were you of these [measures to take to be a resilient household, such as creating a household plan, having an emergency kit]? Prompt: Which of these make sense to you, and which don't?

- Which of these are do-able and not do-able for you and why?
- How would you go about finding information about potential disruptions?
- What skills would you like to get to help during emergencies?
- What do you think the benefits of knowing your neighbours and others in your area are for resilience?
- Which do you think would help and which would not help?
Follow-up:
 - Which would make the most difference to you and why?
 - Which, if any, have you done in the past?
- What would help you to do these things? Prompts: Knowledge, support, resources, motivation
- What would stop you doing these things?
- What other things could help you cope with an emergency? (e.g. a power cut)
- What if anything could you do to help others?

Group session: How should SG communicate about coping with emergencies

Session questions

- In your own words what do you think is the main message people need to get about coping in emergencies?
Follow-up:
 - What information do you think people need?
- Where are you most likely to go to find helpful information yourself?
- What sort of information are you most likely to use? Prompts: social media, videos, images with text)
- What sort of information is likely to make you take action?

Appendix D: General briefing for facilitators/notetakers – an example

This is an extract from the briefing that was sent to Scottish Government facilitators:

Please note: Use of preferred pronouns

Please note: We have told people that they can walk about and come and go.

Please note: There is a debrief appointment for next week but if you need to talk to the research team before then please get in touch.

If someone gets upset

We've had experience of some members becoming upset, some of the issues are sensitive and bring out strong emotions. [research member] has trained as a mental health first aider and is the first port of call if anyone is looking for emotional support.

So if it happens

1. Acknowledge their emotion and offer sympathy as appropriate
2. Ask them if they want to continue (they may want to be heard)
3. If they do want to continue, support them to say what they need to say
4. If they don't want to continue ask them if they want to have a break (acknowledge them when they come back and try to bring them back into the group). Or if they want to leave the event completely and in both cases also ask if they want to talk to [research team member].

Offensive remarks or behaviour

If someone makes a remark that is offensive please in the first instance interrupt them, and repeat the 'Safe space and inclusive' mantra (see below ...all people in Scotland are welcome and respected, whatever their background, current circumstances and opinions or words to that effect).

If it persists and you need to exclude them please click on the three dots by their name and you should be able to block them. Then let the research team know in our Teams chat and we will deal with them. If you feel able please apologise to the others in the group and move on.

At each session:

Welcome your guests, introduce yourself and ask them to introduce themselves one by one, telling them that using a false name is fine.

If you have a note-taker introduce them and tell members he/she/they will be writing down what they say. If not tell them you are recording and ask if they have any objections, if they do then I'm afraid you'll have to say that they can't take part as we need to record.

Make a promise to them to use plain English and tell them you won't use and government jargon. If you use jargon words, for example, 'inclusive' (see below) explain what it means. Go through Ground rules (these will have been explained to them but just to remind them).

Cameras on if they are ok with it.

Mute when they are not talking

Hands up if you want to talk.

Safe space and inclusive – what we mean by that is ...all people in Scotland are welcome and respected, whatever their background, current circumstances and opinions. Please respect each-others opinions, listen to other people, talk in turn don't tell anyone outside the event what anyone else has said and please don't say anything that might be disrespectful to other groups of people.

Please note: This being qualitative work the wording of the questions is not vital, they are just a guide; the most important thing is that you understand what we are trying to get evidence on and use your skills to get it.

Third-person technique

As some of the subjects are sensitive we want to give members the opportunity to tell their stories in the third-person. As such I will go over this with them but would encourage you to stress it in the sessions.

Appendix E: Post-event survey scores

The post event survey included scaling questions, with respondents asked to rate their views on a scale of 1-10. The mean score is reported. The higher the score the more positive the rating. Not all questions were included each time, and the survey additionally had some practical and open questions.²³

Question	Mean scores at each event ²⁴					
[On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 means not at all and 10 means completely):]	Event 1	Event 2	Event 3	Event 4	Event 5	Event 6
At the event how well do you think you understood the following:						
How the panel will work	8.5	9.3	9.5	9.6	9.8	-
How we will report what you say to Ministers and Policy makers	7.7	8.9	9.5	9.5	9.4	-
How the information collected from the Panel so far has been used	-	-	8.8	9.1	9.2	-
At the event did you feel able to raise issues that are important to you?	8.3	8.9	9.6	9.4	9.1	9.5
How confident do you feel that your personal information will be kept confidential?	9.4 ²⁵	9.3	9.3	9.8	9.6	9.8
At the event did you feel you were respected by:						
The research team	9.8	9.6	9.9	10.0	10.0	10.0
Other panel members	8.3	9.4	9.9	9.8	9.9	9.8
The speakers	-	-	-	9.6	9.7	10.0
Are you looking forward to the next event?	8.3	9.1	9.6	9.3	9.5	-

²³ The post event survey had additional questions around members' preferences around small groups, the number of discussion sessions, voucher preferences, length of the event and number of breaks, and ideas for new things to do in the events and for the final event. There was an open question for further clarification if members did not feel able to raise important issues. The surveys also included open questions on how members had found each event, what they would like to talk about next time, and a question in the 5th event survey on the concept of household resilience.

²⁴ Number of survey respondents – event 1 = 13, event 2 = 15, event 3 = 13, event 4 = 18, event 5 = 21, event 6 = 11

²⁵ Event 1 question 'How confident do you feel that your personal information will be kept confidential by the research team'. Events 2 – 5 the question was 'How confident do you feel that your personal information will be kept confidential'.

At the event how comfortable did you feel:						
Using Teams	7.3	8.7	8.8	9.5	9.6	9.4
Talking in the smaller group sessions	8.4	9.3	9.8	9.9	9.8	9.8
Talking in the whole panel sessions	6.8	7.1	7.4	7.6	7.1	7.6
Asking questions in the smaller group sessions	8.5	9.4	9.8	9.7	9.7	9.9
Asking questions in the whole panel sessions	6.8	7.3	7.3	7.1	6.5	7.6

To what extent do you feel you trust:						
The research team	9.1	9.6	9.9	9.8	9.9	10.0
Other panel members	6.9	9.3	9.5	9.7	9.8	9.8

At the event we had Scottish Government policy makers telling you what they have done with information produced at the last event. To what extent do you think the information produced by the panel has been used?	-	-	-	7.9	8.2	-
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Additional one-off questions were asked following events 1,2 and 6. These were scaling questions with respondents asked to rate their views on a scale of 1-10. The mean score is reported.

Event	Question	Mean Score
	[On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 means not at all and 10 means completely):]	
1	At the event how well do you think you understood what the Scottish Government are doing for COVID recovery?	5.7
	At the event did you feel able to share your pandemic story?	8.9
	How confident do you feel that your personal information will be kept confidential by other panel members?	7.3
2	At the event how well do you think you understood the following things:	
	The presentation from The Scottish Government on their communications and marketing plans	8.6
	The presentation from The Scottish Government on ventilation COVID Recovery	8.7
	How we will report what you say	8.0
		9.1
6	To what extent do you think the following:	
	The People's Panel has had an impact on decisions made in the Scottish Government	8.4
	The People's Panel's work will continue to have an impact on policy makers and Ministers in the Scottish Government	8.2

Appendix F: Ethics

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed. In summary:

1. **Scottish Government Social Research Ethical Sensitivity Checklist:** The ethical foundation of the study was established by addressing ethical considerations, which commenced with the comprehensive completion of the Scottish Government Social Research Ethical Sensitivity Checklist. This ensured that the study was conducted with the highest ethical standards and upheld the principles of responsible research conduct.
2. **Informed Consent:** Prior to their involvement in the People's Panel, all participating members were informed about the purpose and nature of the research. They were provided with a clear and thorough understanding of the study's objectives, methodologies, and potential outcomes. Informed consent was obtained from each member, indicating their voluntary willingness to participate in the study based on a well-informed decision.
3. **Right to Withdraw:** Members were not only informed about their participation but also explicitly made aware of their right to withdraw from the research at any point. This was granted without the requirement to provide a reason, and it was underscored that their decision to withdraw would have no negative repercussions whatsoever.
4. **Data Protection Compliance:** Recognising the importance of safeguarding personal information, the study adhered to the guidelines outlined by the UK General Data Protection Regulations. All personal data and information collected from the members were treated with the utmost care and stored securely to prevent unauthorised access or breaches.
5. **Ethical Principles Governing Social Research:** The research was conducted in alignment with the ethical principles that underpin social research. These principles encompassed respect for individual autonomy, ensuring beneficence, upholding non-maleficence, and promoting justice throughout the research process.
6. **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, stringent measures were implemented. The only individuals who had access to the identities and personal characteristics of the members were the designated research team members.
7. **Anonymization of Data:** The study anonymized all members' information and data before incorporating it into subsequent reports.



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