

Scottish Disability Equality Forum

Leading Disability Equality in Scotland

Consultation

The Commission on Parliamentary Reform, Your Parliament, Your Voice

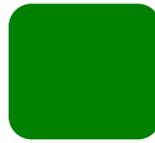
About Us

Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF) is a member-led organisation, representing individuals with any type of impairment, disability organisations, groups and individuals who share our values. We work to ensure the voice of disabled people is heard and acted upon. SDEF is involved in a wide range of work on a local and national level. We work to bring real change to the lives of disabled people, to inspire and to motivate others to be inclusive and informed in their attitudes towards disabled people and to bring the message of equality to all.

Our aim is to ensure that our members and wider public are as informed as possible about the issues affecting disabled people in Scotland. SDEF has launched a series of online 'hubs' which include information and advice on Inclusive Communication, Inclusive Design and Accessible Travel.

SDEF actively engages with its members so that we understand what the key issues are for disabled people in Scotland and hold events to give advice on disability and access related issues.

SDEF is also the umbrella body for the national network of Access Panels in Scotland. Access Panels can be found in all regions and are



made up of groups of disabled volunteers who work together to improve physical access and wider social inclusion in their local communities. We offer support and training opportunities to help them operate efficiently, link together as a network and learn from each other.

We work to the principles of positivity, promotion, and partnership, working collaboratively with partners to promote best practice, and achieve awareness of disability equality across Scotland.

About this Consultation

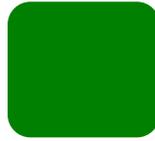
The Commission on Parliamentary Reform was launched by the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Government in October 2016.

The remit of the Commission is to consider how the Scottish Parliament:

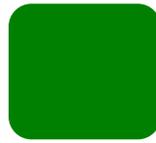
- Can increase its engagement with wider society and involve the public;
- Can clarify its identity, as distinct from the Scottish Government; and
- Can be assured that it has the rights 'checks and balances' to enable effective conduct of parliamentary business

The Commission wants to hear your views about how the Scottish Parliament is performing in these areas. It plans to engage with people across Scotland in a number of ways. Further information can be found at www.parliamentaryreform.scot

As part of its engagement activities, the Commission is launching a call for written views on a number of questions. You do not need to respond to every question and can focus your comments on the one part of the Commission's remit if you wish.



All written views received will help to inform the Commission before it considers its conclusions and recommendations.



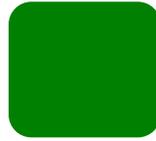
Part 1: Engagement

Engagement means how the Scottish Parliament involves people in holding the Scottish Government to account.

Question 1

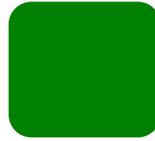
1A. Has the Scottish Parliament engaged effectively with the people of Scotland so far? Please give reasons for your answer

Yes and in particular at committee review and petition stage



1B. Has the Scottish Parliament engaged better with some groups or on some issues better than others? Please give reasons for your answer.

As regards impairment or disability in both physical and mental states, it is important for advocacy to be available to those who may have difficulty in clear expression of their condition



Question 2

What has been your experience of direct engagement with the Scottish Parliament? Think about if you have done any of the following:

How and why you engaged with the Parliament?

How easy it was to get involved?

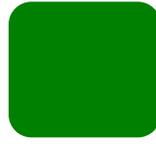
Did you receive the right information to get involved?

Did you engage in a way that suited you?

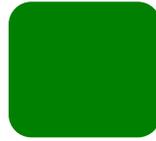
Were you listened to?

Do you feel your opinion had an influence on the decision the Parliament took?

Were you kept up to date with the issues after you engaged with the Parliament?



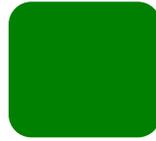
Yes



Question 3

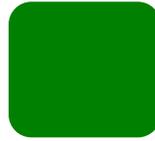
3A. How can the Scottish Parliament increase its engagement with people?

Ensure that those of impaired or disabled state can access constituency engagement with their MSP, either at office, at home or online



3B. How can the Scottish Parliament engage with people who don't show any interest in the Parliament?

By publicising success stories which prove the worth of engagement. A 'You said . .we did' approach



Part 2: Distinct Identity

Question 4

4A. Is it important that the Scottish Parliament is seen as separate from the Scottish Government or the UK Parliament and UK Government? Please give reasons for your answer

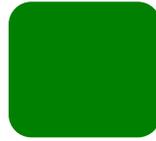
Think about the following in your answer:

Do you think the people get the Scottish Government confused with the Scottish Parliament? **Yes**

When the word Holyrood is used does this add to the confusion? **Yes**

Do you think people get the Scottish Government confused with the UK Government? **No**

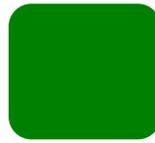
Do you think people get local Councils confused with the Scottish Government? **No**



Question 5

What should the Scottish Parliament do to strengthen its distinct identity?

Ensure that all people have access to on-line coverage of parliamentary business, via accessible library facilities



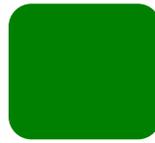
Part 3: Checks and balances

The term 'checks and balances' refers to the rules and procedures designed to prevent one institution – whether that is the Parliament, Government or Judiciary – from becoming too powerful. Some examples of the checks and balances in the Scottish political system include the 'check' of First Minister's Questions and parliamentary committees that hold Scottish Ministers to account for their policies and bills.

Question 6

Do any of the checks and balances need strengthened to allow the Scottish Parliament to hold the Scottish Government to account? Please give reasons for your answer.

It would be helpful if it was explained what is meant by checks & balances, and how/who is responsible for these and how they are brought into effect



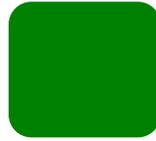
Question 7

Where in the policy or legislative process is the Scottish Parliament likely to have the most influence or impact in terms of improving Government policy or legislation? Please give reasons for your answer. In your answer, you may want to think about

Whether the parliamentary process allows enough time to efficiently scrutinise policies or legislation

Which part of the parliamentary process the Parliament should focus its scrutiny on? This could be before the legislation or policy is introduced to Parliament, or if it should be during or after it has been considered by Parliament.

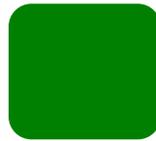
I wish that the Scottish parliament and government should be a coalition structure where by the existing inequitable disenfranchisement of FPTP is terminated. Coalition would have a minimum requirement of say, 10% of the vote



Question 8

What other factors impact on the effective conduct of parliamentary business and how can these be addressed?

Provide BSL at parliament live transmissions



What next?

SDEF will collect all the answers from all of our members and write a report. SDEF will give the report to the Commission on Parliamentary Reform. SDEF will make sure our members voices are heard.

Please give SDEF your answers before Wednesday 8 February 2017.