

Scottish Parliament 25th Anniversary Regional Programme of Community Engagement



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



Executive summary



Join In

Gabh Pàirt

This is a summary of the full report which you can find at parliament.scot/communities

Introduction

To mark the 25th Anniversary of the Scottish Parliament the Presiding Officer led a regional programme of visits all over Scotland. The Parliament worked in collaboration with the communities we visited to address the challenge of how we involve more people in the work of their Parliament.

Our approach included:

- **Partnership working** which valued the skills and expertise of individuals, communities and organisations, including listening to their priorities and what they needed from the Parliament.
- Meetings that were in person in the community, aiming to be **friendly, informal** and **inclusive**.
- Creating an environment where people felt that we were genuinely working and **learning together**.
- Producing information for the event in a style that was **approachable**, informal and user friendly.
- **Warm up** and **scoping visits** to support participants.
- Considering individual and group needs and tried to put measures in place to **support** and **encourage** everyone to feel able to attend.
- Ensuring that all those attending, including MSPs knew of the format and **what to expect**.



Who was involved?



905

people



179

community
organisations



29

community
hosts



43

MSPs



9

schools



5

MYSPs



1

college

What did those attending think?



I think the sentiment is that the Parliament really is the **people's parliament**. Sometimes parliaments can feel a bit closed off and “elite”. The event really showed young people that they are important as people and residents of Scotland.

Enthusiasm and **community** were the key words for me of the day. And our community know that Parliament is **accessible** to them, and would like to be involved more, including Parliament engaging more with communities.

The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience of meeting “real life” politicians and the opportunity of having their **concerns and opinions listened to**. They are still talking about the visit weeks on and gained so much **confidence** from participating.



What we learned

What people told us was working well:



They valued having a Parliament in Scotland that was **accessible** to them



There is **pride** in the Scottish Parliament



The Parliament offers hope for a **better future**

People told us what they wanted from their Parliament to make it easier for them to get involved:

- **Engagement in communities:** People want to see the Parliament in communities – with more opportunities to **meet MSPs** and **get involved** in ways that are in-person, informal, friendly and in community settings.
- **Awareness:** People often didn't understand the **role of Parliament**, and the **relevance** to them and their lives and how they could get involved.
- **Build confidence:** People said they **don't feel confident** to get involved, for example that the Parliament wasn't 'for them' or 'for people like them'. And when they did, they didn't feel that they were listened to, or that they would be **judged**.
- **Accessibility:** People told us that when they had accessed information about the Parliament, they had found that it could be inaccessible, with **alienating** language and **jargon**, and that reports were too long. They said that there needed to be information and opportunities in a wider range of formats.
- **Increase diversity:** People felt that Parliament was not a place for them and needed to take more **proactive steps** to include a **wider range** of people. They did not see people like them represented in Parliament.

This feedback will help the Parliament to shape how it will work with people in the future and has been invaluable at knowing what people want from their Parliament.