

Communities Conference 2025



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Join In

Gabh Pàirt



PACT's Communities Approach themes:



Parliamentary
awareness



Community
engagement



Confidence
and capacity



Accessibility



Increase
diversity

Parliamentary awareness



PACT will work to ensure we have the resources and capacity to support communities to participate in Parliament and communicating the availability of these resources.



Workshop feedback:

We were told the importance of making sure that any parliamentary awareness resources are **clear, accessible** and **visually engaging**.

We were told to prioritise **local, face to face engagement** and try to reach beyond traditional audiences.

We were told the power of **civic education** and of showing the impact of **participation** in the work of Parliament.

Actions:

- Over the next year PACT will work with colleagues in the **Public Engagement Services Office** (PESO) and **Parliament Communications Office** (PCO) to review existing resources and create new resources and initiatives to broaden awareness of the work of Parliament and how to get involved.
- PACT will review their **communications strategy** ensuring that it meets the need of key stakeholders and complements wider Parliament communications.

Next steps:

- We will use this feedback to support the roll out of the above actions, in particular as we develop new resources and initiatives to broaden parliamentary awareness.

Community engagement



PACT will aim to strengthen our community development approach; by committing time and resources to proactively scoping and researching excluded and marginalised communities, identifying missing voices, (whether by geography, identity or shared interest), building relationships and establishing new connections.

Workshop feedback:

There was broad support for the idea of visiting all 32 **local authority areas** and a strong endorsement of the 8 **community led events**.

Ideas included the **use of MSP offices**, the creation of a **contact database** and the use of existing tools like ALISS to organise these visits and events.

Actions:

- We will visit each of the **32 local authority areas** in Scotland at least once per year to meet with key anchor and infrastructure bodies with the aim of reaching grass roots organisations, marginalised and excluded communities and developing an understanding of key issues in the area with a view, for example, to supporting **committee participation**.
- 8 of the visits outlined in the above action will involve working in **partnership** with community groups to run one event in each parliamentary region over the next year. These events will be **community led** and provide an opportunity for local people to set the agenda, meet their elected representatives and tell Parliament what the key issues are in their area.

Next steps:

- We will plan and deliver these visits and events over **12 months** from September and incorporate this feedback in to the planning process.
- We will give **frequent updates** throughout the year via our newsletter.

Confidence and capacity



PACT will increase our understanding of communities' needs through our community development work.



Workshop feedback:

We were told that **demonstrating impact** needed to be something that was followed and tracked over time with **regular feedback** and updates, reflecting both identity and place.

Any future communities initiatives should ensure they reach more **quiet and vulnerable voices** and involve Parliament and MSPs going to communities as well as communities being invited into Parliament.

Actions:

- We will design an **impact framework** that will help us to track, evaluate, understand and communicate the impact of people's participation in Parliamentary work
- We will deliver an **annual communities initiative** (such as a conference) to share knowledge and learn from the third, charitable and voluntary sector.

Next steps:

- We will incorporate this feedback into the design of our impact framework and future communities initiatives.

Accessibility



PACT will embed best practice by exploring our accessibility through partnership work with key stakeholders.



Workshop feedback:

We were told that best practice included **early planning**, checklists for committees and **better promotion** of the availability of alternative formats.

We were also told of the importance of **transparency** and **flexibility** in the methods used to support participation.

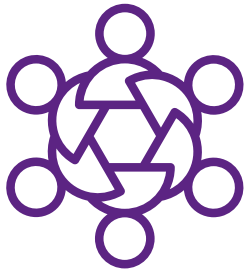
Actions:

- We will work with relevant colleagues across the Parliament to embed best practice in ensuring the work of PACT is available in a range of **alternative formats**.
- We will continue to explore and embed innovative and alternative **participation options** including through digital participation, deliberative democracy, participation without MSPs and ways for communities to influence committee work programmes.

Next steps:

- We will incorporate this feedback into our **best practice work** with colleagues in relation to alternative formats and as we explore and embed our options for participation.

Increase diversity



PACT will develop a better understanding of what we do well, where the gaps are and what we can improve.



Workshop feedback:

We were told that engagement is often issue based rather than relationship led and can often feel **tokenistic or extractive**. This has an impact on diversity.

We were encouraged to meet people where they are, develop long term partnerships and ensure staff are trained in **racial literacy** and **cultural competency**.

Actions:

- We will use the knowledge and experience gained through **community development work** to influence the development of the Parliament's Public Engagement Strategy and increase the diversity of voices engaged in scrutiny.
- We will work with **partner organisations**, with input from children and young people to incorporate the UNCRC into the work of the Scottish Parliament.

Next steps:

- We will feed these views into the development of the Parliament's **Public Engagement strategy** as well as PACT's own working practices.
- We will explore racial literacy and cultural competency **training** for PACT staff over the next 12 months.