

Democracy Matters

Your Community. Your Ideas. Your Future.



Local Governance Review

Easy Read information and questions

This guide was produced by Glasgow Disability Alliance (gda.scot) using pictures from inspiredservices.org.uk

About the Local Governance Review.



Governance is the way that rules and systems are organised and put into place. Usually this is done by people in power.



Democracy is where people have an equal say in making decisions. For example, voting to choose an MP, MSP or councillor.

A **community** is a group of people who live in the same local area.



A **community of interest** is a group of people who share similar experiences, like disabled people, or black and minority ethnic people.

The Scottish Government wants to make changes to the ways decisions are made in communities.

The **Local Governance Review** will look at how power, responsibility and resources are shared with government and with communities. The review is called **Democracy Matters** and will run for 6 months until November 2018.



The Scottish Government wants to hear what people think. This document gives you information about the review and the possible changes to the way important decisions are made. You can give your ideas for making it easier to get involved in making decisions in your community.



This document has 4 different parts.



1. Information about the review.
2. More information about getting involved.
3. How communities could be more in control.
4. What the Scottish Government needs to know.



1. Information about the Local Governance Review.

Lots of people make decisions for us. Some examples are:

- Members of Parliament (MP)
- Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSP)
- Local Councillors
- Public services workers, like doctors, police, and social workers.



The decisions they make affect our lives in all sorts of ways. For example, social care, helping us to stay safe and healthy, or helping us to get work.

Different **communities** and **communities of interest** think that ordinary people should be able to get involved in making decisions about their lives and the services their community needs.



Some people in communities already get involved in ways to decide what will help their community, area, or town. For example, we have:



- **Community Development Trusts** – these give communities support to have more control over local decisions.

- **Housing Associations** – these provide housing and community support.



- **Participatory Budgeting** – this is a way to have a say over how public money is used in your area.



All of these are examples of local **democracy**. But there are many barriers that stop some groups being included in local decision making. Disabled people, black and minority ethnic people and those living in poverty often find it difficult to get involved.

Power in Scotland must work in a way that involves and benefits everyone. The **local governance review** will look at what needs to change to enable national and local government to deliver the greatest benefit to Scotland's different places.

The Scottish Government want people and communities to be supported to take on more power and responsibility.



The Scottish Government wants to hear your voice and the voices of your friends and neighbours. They want to find out what local communities think about having more power.



The Scottish Government thinks communities being more in control will be exciting and improve people's lives. They want to know what you think about these things:



- Communities having a stronger voice when decisions are taken.
- Communities having powers and resources to use as they think best.
- Local areas or communities of interest taking on more power.
- What your community needs to make this a success.
- How we can make sure any changes help people be more equal and support difference.



The questions in this paper will help begin a conversation in communities about the kind of changes they think are needed. The Scottish Government wants to hear as many voices as possible. This includes people who often find it difficult to take part, like disabled people.

Find out more.

Our web page has information about Scotland's public services and how decisions are made. You can find out how else you can be involved in the review. www.gov.scot/democracymatters



You can email us at democracymatters@gov.scot



You can send a letter to this simple address:
“freepost DEMOCRACY MATTERS”
(please use capital letters).



We will share what we hear so you can find out the kind of changes people most want. We will share different ideas at events later in 2018. Everyone who took part will be invited to attend to tell us what makes most sense for their community.



We will also work with councils, public services and local organisations to find out what they think is needed to make a difference.



If new laws are needed to make the changes happen, we will ask the public about this next year.

Please get involved. You can help to make Scotland a better place for all.

2. Getting involved in making decisions about your community.



Many people get involved in making decisions that affect their lives and the services they need.

Some people do not get involved in making decisions in their communities. This may be because they find it difficult to get involved.

It could be because they feel they are not allowed to get involved.



We may need to have different ways to make decisions in different communities.

The Scottish Government want to understand what types and sizes of community make sense to people. Making decisions in the community can be difficult. The Scottish Government want to hear what you think would work.

About your community – Question 1.

Local could mean a large town, a village, or neighbourhood.

- **Tell us what ‘local’ means to you and your community.**

A large rectangular area with horizontal dotted lines for writing.



The Scottish Government wants to explore how public services, councils and the Government can better support local decision making.

Some examples of groups that take action and make decisions in communities are:

- council area committees
- area partnerships
- community councils
- development trusts
- community based housing associations
- community led groups and organisations



There are other ways that communities can get involved in making decisions:

➤ **Community action planning**

This is a way that people can get involved in making plans for what might happen in their community.



➤ **Participatory Budgeting**

This is a new way for people to get together to make decisions on how to spend money for their community.



These different ways could be developed to support more people to get involved in making decisions about community and public services.



That might include sharing powers or resources differently between the Scottish Government, councils and communities. It may need more local governance or other ways to get involved.





4. Important things for the Scottish Government to know if communities are to take more control.

The questions we have asked here will not have covered everything that will need to be explored.

We want to give you a chance to tell us about anything else you feel is important.



We also want to give you a chance to ask any questions that will help you to stay involved in the review discussions.

What the Scottish Government should know.

- Tell us about any other ideas you have or things you think we should know about local decision making.**

- If you would like to know more, or if you have any questions, please tell us here.**



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