

How does the Citizens' Panel on Public Participation work?

Earlier this year, the Citizens' Panel on Public Participation (CPPPC) launched an inquiry into public participation, looking at how people's voices are heard in the work of the Parliament.

A Citizens' Panel, comprised of 19 people broadly reflecting the demographic make-up of Scotland, met in Holyrood throughout October and November to deliberate how the Scottish Parliament can best work with people and communities to ensure their needs are reflected in its work.

Throughout the sittings, the Citizen's Panel heard from MSPs, Scottish Parliament officials, third-sector organisations and leading academics about democracy and public participation to help facilitate discussion and inform their findings.

The Citizens' Panel made 17 recommendations on improving how Holyrood's work involves, reflects, and meets the needs of the full range of communities it represents, focusing on improving engagement for those currently under-represented.

Recommendations from the panel include improving community engagement, how the Parliament uses deliberative democracy, public involvement in Parliamentary business and the way Parliament communicates and educates the public on its work, specifically:

- Removing barriers to participation so that everyone has an equal opportunity to be involved in the work of the Parliament
- Legislating to embed deliberative democracy within the Parliamentary process
- Scheduling specific time in the debating Chamber for individual public questions to be asked
- Giving the Presiding Officer the power to compel MSPs to give a direct answer to all questions asked

Five of the panellist's, Gillian Ruane, Paul MacDonald, John Sultman, Maria Schwarz and Ronnie Paterson presented their findings to the CPPPC this week.

The Citizens' Panel recommendations have now gone out to public consultation for a period of eight weeks on the Scottish Parliament's [Your Priorities](#) platform.



Maria Schwarz

Maria Schwarz (28) is a scientist from Edinburgh and a member of the panel.

She said: "The Citizens' Panel was a great opportunity to have the needs of people like me, such as my friends and colleagues, heard."