The Scottish Parliament
Welcome

Please make yourself comfortable and complete the first survey (link in the chat)

It is anonymous, it is not a test, and to help us evaluate your experience.

If you need any help with the survey please ask a member of the team
Welcome

Donald Cameron MSP, Convener of Covid-19 Committee
What priorities should shape the Scottish Government's approach to COVID-19 restrictions and strategy in 2021?
Meet the team: Facilitators

Gillian Baxendine
Alistair Stoddart
Ewan Masson
Kate Smith
Hayley Forrester
Leoncha Leavy
Meet the team: Behind the Scenes

Lena Phalen

Rachel Hunter

Claire Phale

Anne Jepson
How did you get here?

The Sortition Foundation has sent 1,000s of random invitations to addresses across Scotland over the last 2 years.

At some point you, along with over 1,500 others, responded to that invitation but perhaps did not get selected.

You agreed to be contacted in the future should another opportunity come up…
How did you get here?

… it did! In December you got an email or text message inviting you to apply to be a part of this Citizens’ Panel.

Over 350 people applied.

You were randomly selected to be part of this panel that aims to be broadly representative of the Scottish Population!
Where are you calling from?

What priorities should shape the Scottish Government's approach to COVID-19 restrictions and strategy in 2021?
Getting to Know Each Other

You are going to be put into breakout rooms in pairs:

• What is your name?

• Where are you from?

• What word comes to mind when you think of the Scottish Parliament?
Getting to Know Each Other

Tell the group about your partner:

• What is their name?

• Where are they from?

• What word comes to mind when they think of the Scottish Parliament?
5 minute screen break
Welcome to the Scottish Parliament
Fàilte gu Pàrlamaid na h-Alba
Devolved powers: The Scotland Act 1998

Agriculture, forestry & fisheries
Culture & creative industries
Education and training
Environment and Planning
Health and Social services

Housing
Justice
Local Government
Social Work
Sport
Transport
Devolved powers: The Scotland Act 1998

- Air Weapons
- Borrowing powers
- Drink driving alcohol limits
- Scottish representation on boards of the BBC and Crown Estate
- Landfill Tax
- Scottish rate of income tax
- Land & Buildings Transaction Tax
Devolved powers: The Scotland Act 1998

- Air Passenger Duty/Aggregates levy
- Partial VAT
- Income tax (inc rates and thresholds)
- LG Franchise & SP elections
- Onshore Oil & Gas
- Employment programmes
- Transport (inc road signs and BTP)
- Welfare (inc control over some benefits)
- Crown Estate Scotland
- The Crown Estate Scotland
Reserved Powers

Broadcasting
Constitution
Defence and Security
Economic and monetary policy
Employment
Energy regulation
Foreign Affairs
Immigration
Trade and industry
Social Security
What is the role of the Scottish Parliament?

- Represents the people of Scotland
- Creates Legislation (laws) on devolved matters
- Holds the Scottish Government to account
Scottish Parliament

• Makes laws on devolved matters
• Debates issues affecting Scotland
• Holds the Scottish Government to account
• Is headed by Presiding Officer

Scottish Government

• Proposes and implements laws for Scotland
• Makes & implements policy on devolved matters
• Proposes the Scottish budget
• Is headed by First Minister
What is a Committee?

Cross party group of MSP’s

Scrutinise Bills brought forward by Government

Conduct inquiries in to policy areas within their remit
Covid-19 Committee

Donald Cameron - Convener
Maurice Corry
Stuart McMillan

Monica Lennon – Deputy Convener
Annabelle Ewing
Mark Ruskell

Willie Coffey
John Mason
Beatrice Wishart
COVID 19 Committee

To consider and report on the Scottish Government’s response to COVID-19 including:

- The operation of powers under the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act and the Coronavirus Act
- Secondary legislation arising from the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act
- Other legislation in relation to the response to COVID-19.
Parliamentary scrutiny in a crisis

Timeline for normal parliamentary scrutiny

1. Committee exists
2. Inquiry/Bill/area of concern identified
3. Call for Views
4. Engagement visits, outreach, community meetings, other activity
5. Evidence sessions
6. Committee considers evidence
7. Recommendations made
8. Report Published

Timeline for parliamentary scrutiny in a crisis

1. New committee formed
2. Legislation/area of concern identified
3. Evidence sessions
4. Recommendations made
5. Report published
Scrutiny of Legislation

Primary Legislation (Bills) - 3 to 4 months

Introducing Tougher Restrictions
4 January  
Parliament recalled during recess
Government statement explaining a lockdown and that all areas needed to move to level 4

5 January  
Secondary legislation made

8 January  
Secondary legislation comes into force

Covid-19 Committee recalled to take evidence from the Scottish Government

12 January  
Legislation goes to Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee to report on

14 January  
Covid-19 Committee examines secondary legislation and reports on it

20 January  
Legislation to be examined by the Parliament and voted on (TBC).

5 Feb  
Deadline for examination of the legislation

Secondary Legislation – 40 days

An Act of Parliament

Emergency Powers 28 days
Any Questions?
What can the Scottish Government do to stop COVID-19? Devolved Power

- Public health, education, policing, transport all devolved
- Governments initially aligned on response
- Divergence – evidence of devolved powers being used: education, Levels and restrictions (politics)
- Co-ordination – COBR, MIGs (devolved ministers involved) → 2 Cabinet Committees (devolved ministers not involved)
- Chief Medical Officers, Science, Academic collaboration, testing, vaccinations
What has the Government said about the impact of COVID-19? “Four Harms of COVID-19”

• Strategic Framework published in October 2020
• 1 – Direct Harms: Suppress the virus – protection levels
• 2 – Indirect Health harms: remobilisation of health services
• 3 – Social harms: tackling existing inequalities, protecting those on low income, support mental health,
• 4 – harm to business and national economic harm
Four Harms of COVID-19

• Scottish Government COVID-19 Advisory Group
• Social Renewal Advisory Board – set up June 2020
• ScotPHO – led by Public Health Scotland. Community vulnerability maps (April 2020) (SIMD)
Scotland’s Wellbeing: the Impact of COVID-19

“COVID-19 impacts have been (and are likely to continue to be) borne unequally, are expected to widen many existing inequalities and produce disproportionate impacts for some groups that already face particular challenges”
Any Questions?
Developing ‘conversation guidelines’

“Everyone here has something to contribute; we want you to think about how best to help that happen – What ‘conversation guidelines’ can help us to ensure that everyone can contribute?”
CONVERSATION GUIDELINES

Your are going to be put into breakout rooms in small groups:

• Take a couple of minutes to write your ideas for conversation guidelines

• Discuss with the group

• Merge, redraft, prioritise and ready to share with whole group
things to consider when assessing the evidence, arguments and claims presented to you

Dr Oliver Escobar
Senior Lecturer in Public Policy
University of Edinburgh
Why deliberation matters

- **Imagine** a world where decisions are taken on the basis of the best available evidence, examined through careful public deliberation.

- Deliberation is a **special form of communication:**
  - it invites us to participate with an open mind,
  - attentive to evidence and reasons,
  - and respectful of the perspectives of others.

- But deliberation is difficult in many contexts of political and community life, and that is why **spaces like this** are designed to be different.

- In sum, deliberation is a form of communication where people weight **evidence and perspectives** in order to make good decisions.
What is evidence?

• Like in a parliamentary committee, an important part of your role will be to assess the evidence presented to you, so that you can reach informed conclusions

• What is evidence? In a nutshell: knowledge that is used to support a perspective, argument or claim

• There are different forms of evidence, which you may weight differently depending on the context; for example:
  • evidence based on lived or practical experience
  • evidence based on scientific research
  • evidence based on local knowledge
  • evidence based on technical expertise
Being aware of our biases

• Good speakers ...
  • Offer persuasive arguments
  • Draw on good quality evidence
  • Have an engaging style

• Different styles of presentation can influence how we receive the evidence, regardless of its quality
  • So it’s important to see beyond communication styles: don’t let the style cloud the substance!

• When listening to presentations and arguments, be aware of some of our typical biases:
  • inoculation bias: when we ignore points that challenge our perspective
  • confirmation bias: when we only hear the points that confirm our perspective

• Misinformation and Disinformation – Being mindful of the multiplication of noise, falsehoods and biases in public life – Attention to sources and motives
Working together to assess evidence

- **Evidence does not ‘speak for itself’**, it needs to be interpreted, placed in context, related to other evidence ...  
  - So, evidence does not necessarily tell us what to do, but it can help develop informed opinions through group deliberation
- Sometimes **the same evidence can support competing arguments**
- How to interpret contradictory scientific evidence?  
  - Examining the credibility of the sources  
  - Asking experts to explain the contested evidence  
  - Examining the quality of the studies
- **Diversity matters as much as expertise**  
  - When dealing with public issues, having a diversity of perspectives is as important as having specialist knowledge  
  - Work together to make sense of the evidence; for example, agree that there is no such thing as a stupid question
- **Best of luck with your deliberations!**
Deciding on Deliberation Tips

Your are going to be put into breakout rooms in small groups:

• Take a couple of minutes to write your ideas for deliberation tips

• Discuss with the group

• Merge, redraft, prioritise and ready to share with whole group
Lunch
12.30-2.00
Sharing experiences of the pandemic

Aim: Discussion on 2020 pandemic experiences, sharing your experiences and coming up with key themes within small groups.
What Parliament Committees have learned about impact of Covid-19 on Scotland

Health & Sport
• There was a lack of preparation (i.e. PPE)
• Social Care staff are undervalued as compared to NHS staff
• Lockdowns have significant effects on people’s physical and mental health

Equalities & Human Rights
• Pre existing inequalities have been exacerbated by the pandemic
• Those most affected by the pandemic are least able to make their voices heard
• Inclusive communication is crucial to ensure everyone is able to understand information related to the pandemic

Education & Skills
• The shift towards online learning has been a challenge for pupils, parents, teachers and schools
• The pandemic delayed the implementation of the expansion of funded childcare and impacted on what childcare options were available

Economy
• There has been a huge negative impact on businesses
• There has been a huge negative impact on young people’s education and employment opportunities
• Business support should be from the ground and tailored to the local economy
What Parliament Committees have learned about impact of Covid-19 on Scotland

Rural Economy & Connectivity
• Significant impact on travel patterns and the use of public transport, active travel etc.
• Highlighted to crucial importance of people having good digital connectivity
• Resulted in a positive reinforcement of local food supply chains

Local Government & Communities
• Local Government services and key workers have been at the front line
• Communities are resilient and different voluntary & “official” groups can come together during a crisis
• Homelessness was almost “abolished” in early lockdown

Social Security
• The Committee has called on the UK Government to retain a temporary increase to Universal Credit and review the eligibility of 16 & 17 year olds
• The Committee have called on the Scottish Government and COSLA to promote and raise awareness of the Scottish Welfare Fund

Culture & Tourism
• Tourism and Hospitality were the two sectors hardest hit by the Pandemic
• The parts of Scotland most exposed to declines in activity in these sectors are mostly Rural
• Scotland’s labour market remains somewhat “frozen” given the continued operation of furlough support
What Parliament Committees have learned about impact of Covid-19 on Scotland

Environment, Climate Change & Land Reform
• Focus should be on a Green Recovery which should ‘build a more resilient, just and healthy society’

Public Petitions Committee
• Essentially people are looking to refine national guidance in areas that COVID regulations are adversely affecting their lives, in a significant way

Public Audit Committee
• The impact of COVID-19 has come up in nearly every audit report that the Committee has considered
Ideas for actions in 2021 based on experiences in 2020

- Small groups
- Turn the issues into actions

Example:

Issue: Poor communications on restrictions
Action: Clearer and inclusive communication
Next steps

We will write up the actions on the online discussion site.

We will send a link to the discussion site on Tuesday

Your task is to discuss and rate the ideas

We will also post a space to answer unanswered questions
Next week

Learning about the issues and hearing from experts