

# Involving the public in making new laws

Technical report & supplementary  
Documents

Research Study Conducted for  
The Cabinet Office/COI



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# Introduction

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Ipsos MORI were commissioned by the Cabinet Office and the COI to run a day-long deliberative workshop event in London. The research was designed to explore three key issues:

- Public priorities for the Government's legislative programme for 2008-9 (that is, the programme after the forthcoming one);
- Whether and how people would like to be consulted on the annual legislative programme in the future; and
- How people could best be consulted on a range of individual bills.

The workshop took place on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> October at the Cabinet Office buildings. A total of 76 people took part and their profile was reflective of the UK adult population in terms of demographics, behaviours and attitudes. They were recruited by Ipsos MORI recruiters from nine areas across the UK.

This document is supplementary to the research findings and contains the technical information and research materials used in the process. The documents and their purposes are outlined below:

**Recruitment Approach:** This document outlines how we approached recruited participants.

**Topic Guide:** This document outlines the structure of the event.

**Pre-task booklet:** The booklet of questions sent to participants prior to the event. This introduced some of the key themes for the day and presented questions to get them thinking about the issues, and considering their opinions in advance of the day.

**Plenary presentations:** In the plenary sessions (where all participants were brought together) we provided some key information in the form of PowerPoint presentations. Ipsos MORI put these materials together to provide simplified information on the legislative programme and methods for public involvement, to help make the main issues more tangible and facilitate discussions. Some of these include Ipsos MORI data on public opinion based on recent opinion polls.

**Stimulus material:** Ipsos MORI drew together a number of case study examples, from national and international practice, showing how members of the public could be involved in decision making and law making. We also provided a simplified version of three bills to discuss. In both cases, these examples were important to facilitate more detailed discussion, and clarify the issues involved.

Participants were also encouraged to suggest other options and ideas around involvement in law-making.

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*Checked & Approved:*

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*Bobby Duffy*

*Checked & Approved:*

.....  
*Louise Skowron*

# Recruitment Approach

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## **How were people selected to take part in the event?**

76 participants were recruited to be reflective of the UK adult population based on demographic and attitudinal quotas. Recruitment used experienced face to face recruiters who recruited people in each of the nine selected areas across the UK:

Birmingham (plus areas of Midlands incl. Wolverhampton & Worcester)  
Devon (Exeter)  
Eastbourne  
Liverpool  
London  
Northern Ireland (Belfast, Co. Antrim/Co. Down)  
Scotland (Edinburgh & Ayrshire)  
Wales (Cardiff & Aberystwyth)  
York (incl. parts of North Yorkshire)

These areas were selected to give UK wide coverage but also to provide a range of catchment areas including cities, towns and smaller villages.

## **What will the regional recruitment be a good reflection of?**

We set a number of quotas to ensure that the recruitment was a good reflection of the general public as a whole, including key demographic questions on age, gender, socio-economic group, etc. We also asked attitudinal questions (such as views on whether the governments policies are likely to improve public services or not and questions on political activism) to ensure we got people with a good range of views attending the event.

# Key discussion topics

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The workshop involved a mixture of plenary and break-out discussions. These were designed to meet three main objectives:

- To better understand how people would like to be consulted on the draft legislative Programme in the future.
- To get clear and specific recommendations from the group as to how people could best be consulted on bills such as the three Bills they examine on the day.
- To secure understanding of what people's priorities would be for next year's legislative programme.

Ipsos MORI moderators used a discussion guide, developed in advance of the workshop. This was designed to serve as an aide-memoire, reminding moderators of the key topics and issues to be covered as well as the agenda for the day and the objectives for each session. This has been summarised in the table below.

09:30 – 10:00	<b>Arrival and registration</b>	
10:00 – 10:20	<b>PLENARY presentation</b> <b>Introduction by the Chair.</b> The day ahead, why the Government has asked Ipsos MORI to do this research, confidentiality and “housekeeping” arrangements.  <b>VOTING 1 and feedback</b>	
10.20 – 10.50	<b>BREAK-OUT GROUPS</b> <b>Discussion – identifying key priorities</b>	Investigate individuals' aspirations and priorities for the country – revisiting the pre-task booklets and considering different viewpoints.
10.50 – 11.10	<b>Discussion – putting these priorities into practice</b>	Get people to think about how government can respond to priorities – the options for changing these issues in practice.
11.10 – 11.25	<b>SECOND PLENARY</b> <b>STIMULUS: Presentation – Priorities and laws</b> Survey evidence on public's priorities; unpacking the potential responses by the Government; talking participants through the process of priority-setting and legislative change.	



11.25 – 12.00	<b>BREAK-OUT GROUPS</b> <b>Discussion – clarification and discussion of plenary material</b>	Engage people in a dialogue about <u>the broad principle</u> of involving people (and people involving themselves) in determining priorities and the strategic direction of the legislative programme, as well as specific laws.
12.00 – 12.45	<b>LUNCH</b>	
12.45 – 13.00	<b>THIRD PLENARY</b>  <b>MODERATOR FEEDBACK:</b> Run through feedback from previous session  <b>STIMULUS: Presentation – Public input: where next?</b> Current inputs and some of the main means of consultation/ engagement	
13.00 – 13.20	<b>BREAK-OUT GROUPS</b> <b>Discussion – awareness of, and attitudes towards, current opportunities for consultation/engagement</b>	Build on earlier conversations about the principle of involving the public, moving people on to more practical considerations about the actual process involved in developing legislative solutions.
13.20 – 14.00	<b>BREAK-OUT GROUPS</b> <b>STIMULUS: Domestic and international case studies –strategies for engagement and consultation</b>	Use the case studies to raise broader pros and cons of consultation and general and specific ‘models’ and methods in particular.
14.00 – 14.05	<b>BREAK</b>	
14.05 – 14.45	<b>BREAK-OUT GROUPS</b> <b>STIMULUS: Bill scenario showcards</b>	Use scenarios to get people to think in practical terms about real situations relating to particular Bills rather than the overall direction of the programme.
14.45 – 15.00	<b>Tea and coffee break</b>	
15.00 – 15.20	<b>BREAK-OUT GROUPS</b> <b>Discussion: post-legislative scrutiny</b>	
15.20 – 15.55	<b>Discussion – the Draft Legislative programme as a whole</b>	Having talked about the individual bills this is a chance to consider the overall programme and ‘agenda setting’.

4.00 – 4.30	<b>FINAL PLENARY</b>  <b>Moderators to feed back from each group briefly</b>  <b>VOTING 3 and feedback</b>  <b>Summing-up and thanks</b>	
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# Pre-task booklet

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Ipsos MORI

## Involving the public in making new laws

**National workshop**  
20 October 2007

**Some things to think about before the day**

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

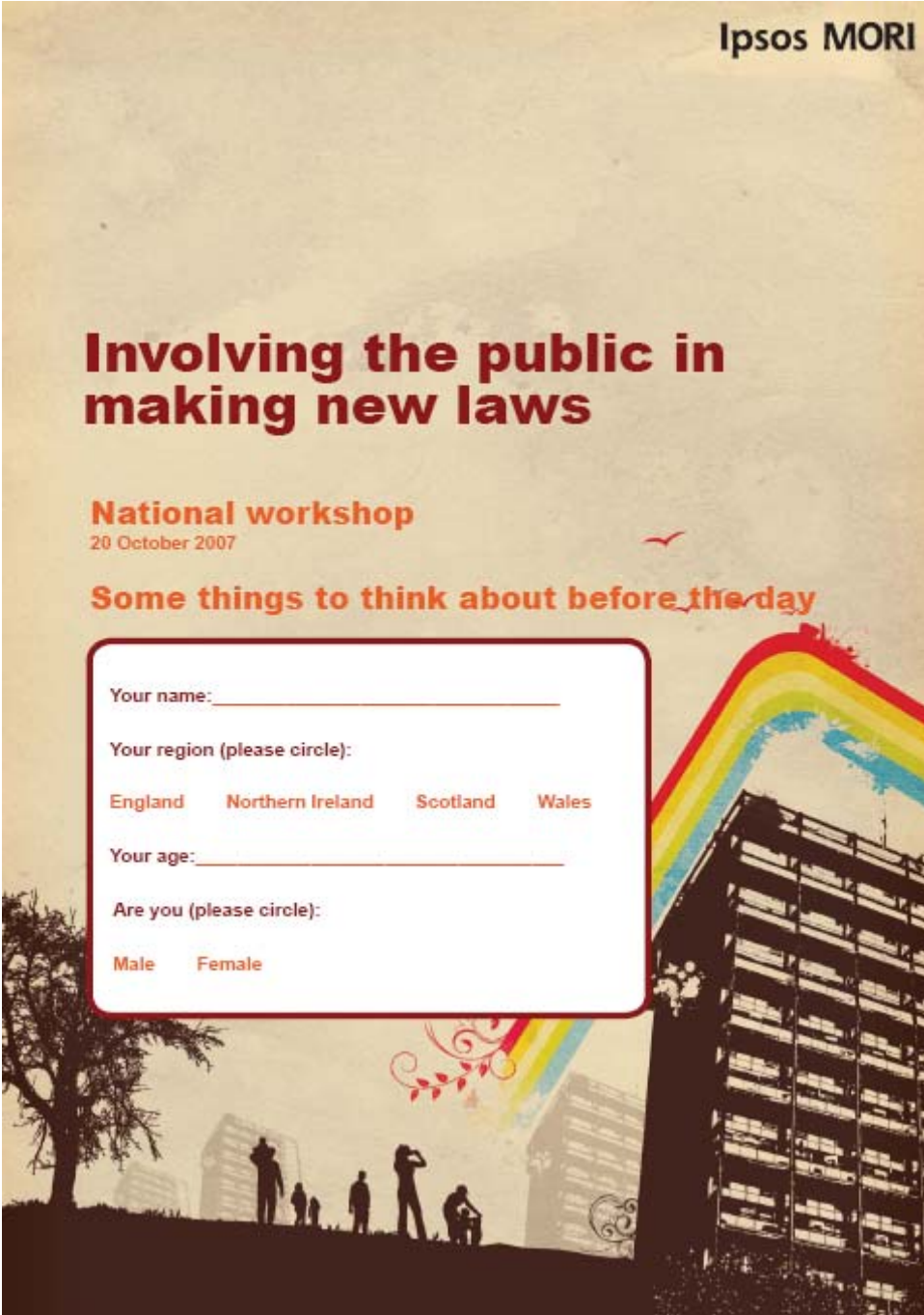
Your region (please circle):

England    Northern Ireland    Scotland    Wales

Your age: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you (please circle):

Male    Female



## About this booklet

This booklet is designed to provide you with some information and help you collect some of your initial thoughts in advance of the workshop in London on Saturday 20 October.

We'd like you to please read this and fill it out at home (it shouldn't take more than 15 minutes) and bring it along to the workshop with you.

The booklet covers some of main questions which we will talk about at the workshop:

- What do you see as the most important issues for the UK Government to make its top priorities?
- How do you think your views might differ from others in the UK and why?
- How much do you know about the opportunities available to you to influence the UK Government's priorities and to have a say?
- How might new opportunities for involvement in setting priorities be developed, and how would you want to be involved (if at all) in the future?

On the day of the workshop we will talk about these issues in more detail, but these are the main ones we would like you to consider in advance. We have set out a few (not too many!) questions for you to answer now. We have also included some questions underneath a heading "thinking and talking points". We're not after answers to these at this stage but just want to get you thinking and maybe even talking about these issues with family and friends.

At the workshop you'll have the chance to discuss all of these issues and more, to hear the perspectives of other people and to ask us questions etc. So, this booklet is just a starting point! Please keep it safe and bring it along on the day (we will collect the booklets in but won't show anyone else your answers – they will remain confidential).

We look forward to seeing you, and more than 70 other people, in London and hearing what you have to say about some very important issues.

From The Ipsos MORI team

## Section 1

### **What are your priorities for the UK? What should Government be focusing on?**

#### **Your priorities**

What do you think are the most important issues for the UK Government to focus on in the next few years?

Given the limitations in time and resources (including money) it faces, UK Government has to set priorities and choose the areas that are most important. This section is about **your** priorities and what you want to see happen next.

Please use the spaces below to write down what **you** think. Then, please think about other issues that are most important to your family, your community or local area or the nation as a whole. If you're not sure what to write, try thinking about different areas of Government, the different services Government provides or any issues you think are important in the UK today and looking ahead.

Firstly, what issues or things do **you** think should be a priority for the UK Government in the next few years? (Please write up to 5).

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Thinking of your list above, would it change in any way if you had to choose priorities for your **local area** (such as your local borough, neighbourhood or town)?



And what about your **region**?



Finally, what about **the UK overall**?



### Thinking & talking point:

Are the answers you have given above different: if so, why? What are the different things that you considered in choosing these? What about...

- how much they affect you personally?
- how much you think these things have changed (got better or worse) recently?
- how easy you think they are to address or improve?



## Other people's priorities

Before you come along to the workshop, please speak to a friend or relative or anyone you know quite well who you think might have different opinions to you, talking to them about what their priorities would be.

Talk through what their priorities would be, asking the question below and making a note of their answer *(it shouldn't take long)*:

What issues or things do they think should be a priority for the UK Government to focus on in the next few years? *(Please write up to 5)*.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)





Also, please note down here: Who you chose, how you know them plus their age and where they are from.



Were their views different from yours? Discuss why you think that is and make a note of what you both think:



## Section 2

**How does Government decide what priorities to focus on?**

**How can you be involved in this process?**

### **Government priorities: your involvement at present**

Democracy requires public participation. Elections are held to elect representatives but they also determine priorities (e.g. parties have manifestos and policies). Priorities for the country can also be shaped by organised consultation with individuals and groups within the UK or by people organising themselves to put across their views to Government and Parliament.

How these things work in practice can vary a great deal, and we will be talking more on the day about different opportunities to get involved and to have an input.

We would like to know a bit more about how far, if at all, you feel you have taken part by having your say. Which, if any, of the following ways of having a say have you heard of? And which have you done yourself:

	Heard of	Done
Voted in a local council election		
Voted in a Parliamentary election		
Written a letter to your MP/ an MP		
Signed a petition (an e-petition or a paper one) to be submitted to Government/Parliament etc-		
Been a member of a trade union and been to a trade union meeting		
Attended a meeting of a local branch of any political party		
Joined any other group that was campaigning on an issue		
Visited your local MP's surgery		
Taken part in a survey		
Taken part in a discussion group or big event organised by Government/ Parliament/ a public body		

Are there any other ways you feel you have taken part in shaping the priorities of national Government, Parliament, a local council or some other publicly-funded body? There are no right or wrong answers – please write down anything that comes to mind.



Are there any other ways to get involved/have a say you are aware of or would like to use, but have not done so yet? These might be ways you feel you have been consulted on by other levels of Government, such as your local authority or regional assemblies, or from any other organisation you are a member of.



Which of the issues or priorities you have previously written about in this booklet would you be most interested in having a say on/getting more involved in? Why this one?

What's the issue?:

Why you would like to be consulted on this?:

Finally, please use this space to add any extra thoughts or comments you might have, or to make a note of things you want to say at the workshop on the 20th October.



**Thank you for your time.**

**Please bring this booklet with you on the day and hand it in when you register.**

# Plenary presentations

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At the start and end of the day, and several points throughout, all participants were brought together for plenary sessions: presentations were made to tell people about the day and provide some key information, and we also conducted voting sessions. In the plenary voting sessions hand-held voting devices were used, to allow individuals to record their views independently and to see for themselves the aggregate views of the full group.

## First plenary presentation slides

**Ipsos MORI**

# Welcome!

**Involving the public in  
making new laws**

**National workshop  
London, 20 October 2007**

**Ipsos**

Ipsos MORI

About us...

# Ipsos MORI



*The team...*



Ipsos MORI

On behalf of the Cabinet Office





## About you...

- From all over the UK
- England, Wales, Scotland, N. Ireland
- Mix of ages, backgrounds
- Mix of opinions!



## About today...

### Today's themes:

1. What are the future priorities for the country?
  - For you/ your area/ UK?
2. How should citizens be involved in decisions about new UK laws?

## Timings

- 10:20 – 11:10 Your priorities and putting them into practice
- 11:10 – 11:25 *Plenary* – priorities and laws
- 11:25 – 12:00 Who should be involved?
- 12:00 – 12:45 Lunch
- 12:45 – 13:00 *Plenary* - Public input: where next?
- 13:00 – 14:45 Current ways of consulting citizens
- 14:45 – 15:00 Tea and coffee
- 15:00 – 16:00 Review processes
- 16:00 – 16:30 *Plenary* – Feedback and wrap up

## Some things to bear in mind...

- Lot to cover – we're not being rude...
- Ipsos MORI completely neutral and independent
- All comments confidential
- No right or wrong answers
- Don't have to agree
- Voting, diary room, feedback form
- "Housekeeping"... phones, toilets, fire

## Voting sessions

**During this session, you will be asked for feedback on some issues.**

**When asked to do so, simply press the button(s) corresponding to your selection.**

**If you make a mistake, press the C button and re-enter your new choice.**



Second plenary presentation slides



Ipsos MORI

# Priorities and laws

Second plenary session 11.10-11.25



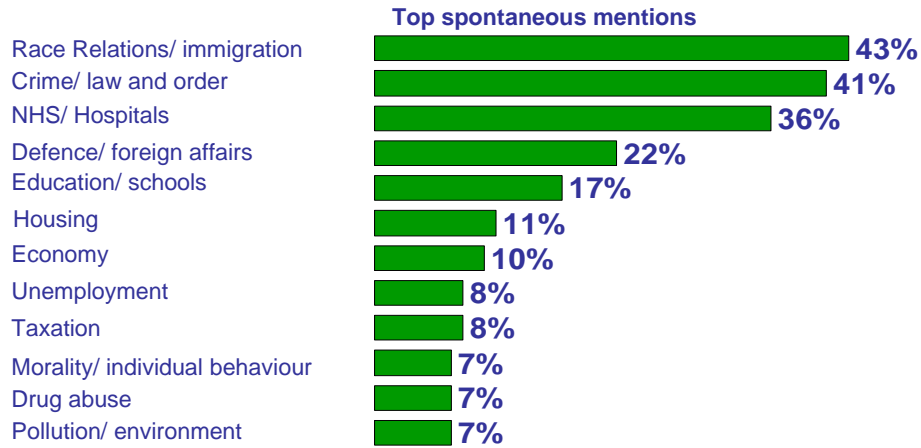
Ipsos MORI

## What's important?



## Issues facing Britain: September 07

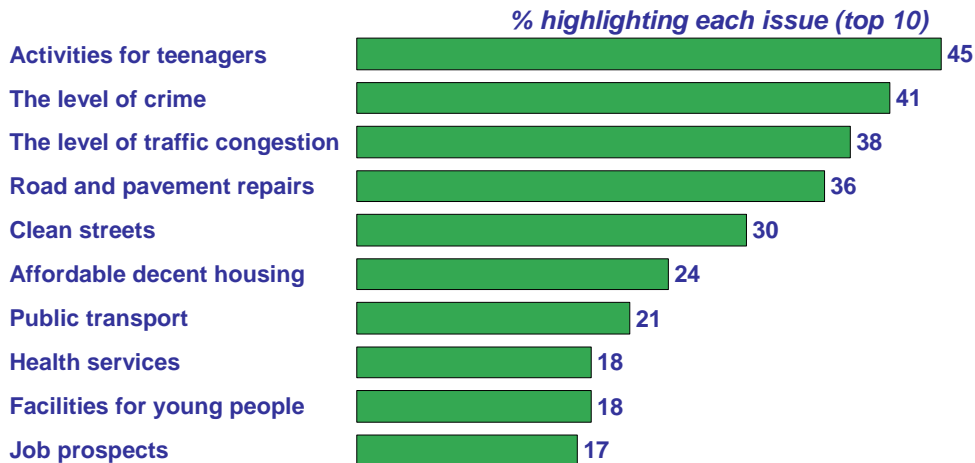
**Q** *What would you say is the most important issue facing Britain today?  
What do you see as other important issues facing Britain today?*



Base: 988 British adults 18+, 20-26 September 2007

## Different focus at local level...

**Q** *Thinking about this local area, which of the things below, if any, do you think most need improving?*

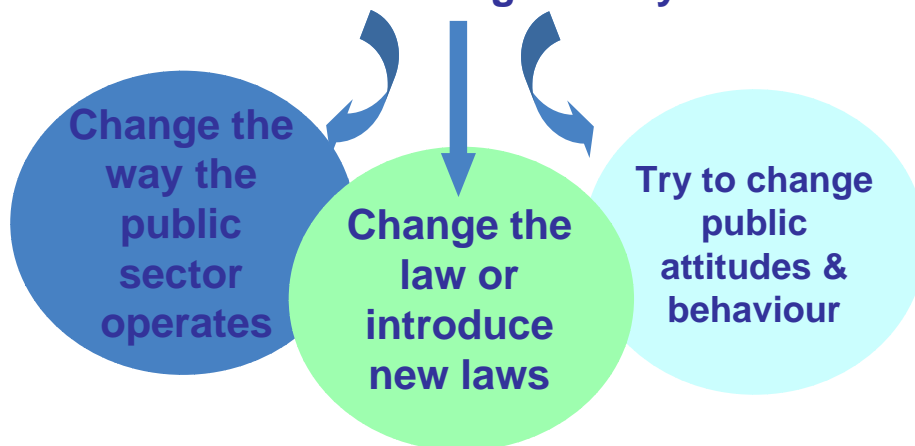


Base: Upper/single tier authorities BVPI 2006 (149 local authorities)

# So, how can Government respond?

## Putting priorities into action

Once priorities have been identified, Government can act in a range of ways:





*Doorstep recycling*

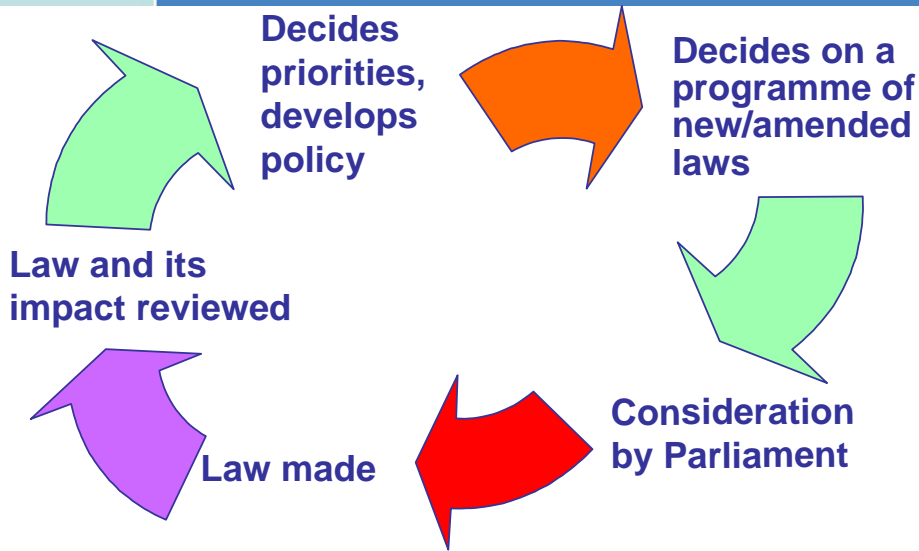
*Smoking ban*



*Information about healthy eating*

Today focuses on  
*laws*

## If changing the law...



## Deciding priorities

- The process has historically been done mostly by Government

1. Departments, eg education/health etc, bid for 'slots' in programme of new laws
2. Bids are reviewed and decisions made about priorities
  - taking into account international obligations/manifesto commitments
3. Consultation exercises on the proposed content of bills are run
4. Government considers its response
5. Bills are drafted
6. Final programme of bills presented in Queen's Speech

- Now, Government has committed to publish its programme of bills before the Queen's speech:
  - to open up the process of priority-setting and increase involvement



## Draft programme '07-08

- Delivering housing supply
  - Housing & regeneration
  - Planning reform

- World class education & skills
  - Education & skills

- Looking after all our children
  - Child Maintenance
  - Children in care

- A healthy nation
  - Health & social care
  - Human tissue & embryos

- The constitution
  - Constitutional reform

- Protecting
  - Counter-terrorism
  - Criminal justice
  - Immigration

- Climate change & energy
  - Climate Change
  - Energy

- Supporting business
  - Employment simplification
  - Regulatory enforcement & sanctions

- Welfare reform
  - Pensions

- Addressing local transport needs
  - Local transport

**23 Bills in total**

## Consideration by Parliament



- Bills are put to both Houses of Parliament for
  - general debate
  - detailed examination by MPs – including inviting evidence from experts and interested groups
  - amendments as necessary
- When finally agreed by both Houses, draft bill becomes an *act* i.e. law

## Review of the impact of laws

- **“Post-legislative scrutiny”** aims to
  - understand whether laws do what they were meant to do
  - find out whether laws have consequences that had not been foreseen
  - Improve the quality of legislation and policy making
  
- Current process does not make it a requirement to review each bill after become law
  
- Government has signalled that it wants to take a more active approach in the future

## Two key issues to consider

1. Who is involved when it comes to ***deciding priorities for new laws*** – who should be involved?
  
2. Who is involved in ***planning, putting in place and then reviewing these new laws*** – and who should be?

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# Public input: where next?

Third plenary session 12.45-1.00

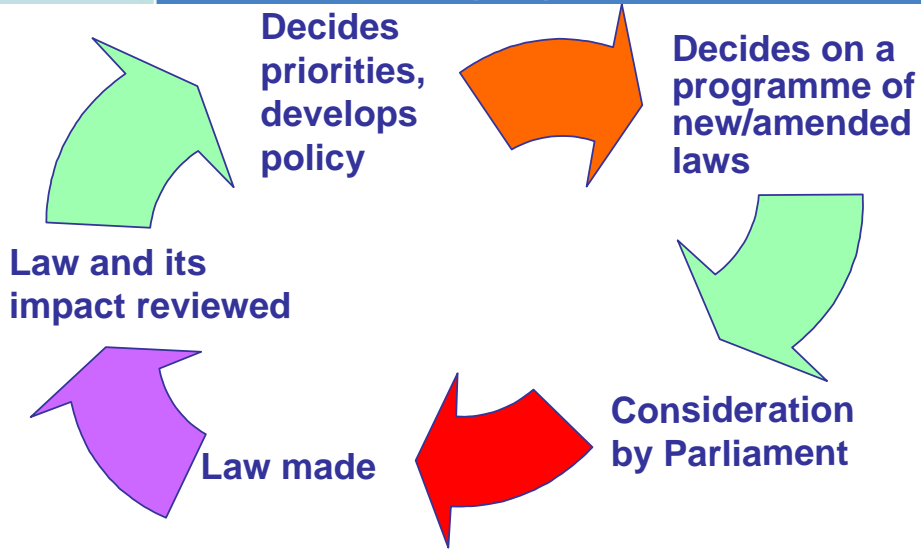


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## Feedback on three key questions...

- Are there enough opportunities to get involved?
- Are there particular issues you would like to be involved in? Why?
- Are there any groups who should be more involved? Why?

## A reminder of the process for changing the law...



## Number of potential inputs, including....

- *Development of party manifestos*
- *Public debate*
- *Interest groups & lobbying*
- *Formal consultation*
- *Media coverage*
- *Scrutiny by Parliament & others before bills introduced*
- *Parliamentary debates involving MPs*
- *Committees taking evidence and considering details of bills*
- *Once introduced, review of new laws*

# There are ways for people to get involved in law-making...

## Ways to get involved



Voting/referenda



Letters to MPs



Lobbying  
in person, letter, online



Petitions  
written/online



Online  
consultation



Local meetings/debates/groups



Research – face to  
face, online,  
telephone



MPs  
surgeries



Specialist committees of  
experts/users



Public  
education/  
information

Events like today!

1. We're going to look at some examples of practice around the UK/the world

- What would work? Why, why not? How might this be done? How might people be informed about it?

2. We're going to focus on 3 examples – each is an actual bill

- Who should have a say? When? How? When is it right to involve 'experts' and/or a wider group of people?

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# Feedback and wrap-up

Ipsos

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- Two/three key ideas on consultation approaches?
- Any other messages for Government?



# Have your views changed?



Q11. In your view, what if any are the best ways to allow people to have a say on which new laws are introduced in the UK?

*Workshops with the public*

*Consultation with professionals/  
experts on the subject involved*

*Voting/referenda*

*Consultation panels so that people  
are consulted on an ongoing basis*

*Consultation with people who  
have experience of the issues*

*Surveys of public opinion*

*Debates open to the public*

***Any other ideas...***

*MPs considering laws  
on behalf of voters*

*Consultation using online methods  
– debating forums, e-petitions*

*Specialist committees looking at issues  
and asking people to give evidence*



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# Thank you!



## Plenary voting questions

### **First plenary session**

#### *A. Warm up questions:*

**Q1: Who do you *think* will win the Rugby World Cup this evening?**

Response list: England; South Africa, Don't know/don't care

**Q2: Who do you *want* to win the Rugby World Cup this evening?**

Response list: England; South Africa, Don't know/don't care

#### *B. Research questions*

**Q3. How important is it to you to have a say on which new laws are introduced in the UK?**

Response list: Very important, fairly important, not very important, not at all important, not sure

**And do you agree or disagree with the following statements...**

**Q4. "I currently have a say on which new laws are introduced in the UK"**

Response list: Strongly agree, tend to agree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to disagree, strongly disagree, don't know

**Q5. "There are lots of ways in which people like me can have a say on which new laws are introduced in the UK if they want to"**

Response list: Strongly agree, tend to agree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to disagree, strongly disagree, don't know

**Q6. "The right people currently have a say in which new laws are introduced in the UK"**

Response list: Strongly agree, tend to agree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to disagree, strongly disagree, don't know

**Q7. "In the future, I want to have more of a say on which new laws are introduced in the UK"**

Response list: Strongly agree, tend to agree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to disagree, strongly disagree, don't know

Q8. And **at the moment** do you think that too much, too little or enough is done to review the impact of new laws?

Response list: Too much, too little, enough, don't know

Q9. Now thinking generally about the country as a whole, what would you say is the single **most** important issue facing the UK today?

Free text

Q10. What do you see as other important issues facing the UK?

Free text

### **Final plenary session**

Repeat Q3-Q10 **BUT** with Q9 and Q10 asked first

Q11. In your view, what if any are the best ways to allow people to have a say on which new laws are introduced in the UK?

Free text but presenting the following options on the slide as an aide memoire:

**Workshops** with the public

Consultation with **professionals/experts** on the subject involved

Consultation with **people who have experience of the issues**

Consultation **panels** so that people are consulted on an ongoing basis

Consultation using **online** methods – information, debating forums, e-petitions

**Surveys** of public opinion

**Debates** open to the public

**Specialist committees** looking at issues and inviting people to give evidence

**Voting/referenda**

**MPs** considering laws on behalf of voters


**Any other ideas**...please say what you think

# Stimulus material

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Much of the event involved detailed discussions within smaller (9 – 11 participants) age-based break-out groups. In some of these sessions examples of bills and consultation case studies were used to stimulate ideas and debate. These were read out by moderators but also available as handout cards for participants.

## Case studies



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**Domestic and  
international case  
studies**

**Break out groups 1.20-2.05**

**Ipsos**

## Case study 1

### E-democracy

Participation through the internet or other new technology such as texting and digital TV

- Online information through the internet on the system of government and law-making
- Web links provided to established groups or organisations concerned with specific social, environmental or political issues
- Presentation of issues which have been/will be debated in Parliament - citizens able to add their voices to the debate before Parliamentary votes
- Electronic “meeting spaces” available for users to bring up new topics & debate these
- Candidates for government offices able to go online to debate with citizens before elections
- Online petitions can be set up

*International (national & local government)*

## Case study 2

### Conference for young people

- Conference **designed and run by local young people**, to develop plans and priorities for young people in the area
- Participants recruited from a wide range of children's & youth network groups
- Attendees included senior service managers, councillors and representatives from educational, disability, policing and social services
- Professionals filled in a questionnaire after the event to establish whether they would be prepared to follow up the ideas which emerged

*UK (local government)*

## Case study 3

### 'Your City Your Say' feedback panel

- This aimed to increase public input into city planning decisions
- Registration forms and background info sent to all residents asking them to join the panel
- Around 6,500 residents are registered
- Young people, people from ethnic minorities and women specifically targeted to ensure they are involved
- Residents are asked to participate in a range of ways, e.g. surveys, "visioning" activities and focus groups, having been given background information on the issues
- Newsletters regularly sent to panel

*International (local government)*

## Case study 4

### Public pre-legislative scrutiny

- Some drafts of upcoming legislation could be published early on
- Recently, a bill aiming to reform the Coroners system was considered in the following ways:
  - The bill was examined by a parliamentary committee
  - AND
  - A small group of people with recent experience of the Coroners system were invited to examine the proposals and consider the extent to which they would work

*UK (national government)*

## Public Bill Committee

- As part of passage of a bill through Parliament, the committee examining the bill can take evidence from interested parties including:
  - experts, groups and individuals with different perspectives on the content of the bill and its likely effect
- These additional views can help Parliament to consider the impact of the bill and reach a view on whether to support it or not

*UK (national government)*

## Workshops

- Convened by local government to develop a social plan to understand and help overcome key community issues
- Residents recruited through ads in local newspapers and selected to represent the profile of the local community
- Participants debate the issues after being given detailed information on the issues from experts
- Participants reimbursed to cover their costs

*International (local government)*

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# Bill scenario showcards

Break out groups 2.05-2.45



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## Scenario 1 (The Human Tissue and Embryos Bill)

- Recent scientific advances in study of the development of human embryos mean that current laws need to be revised.
- Decisions need to be made about how new technologies will be available to scientists and how they should be used.
- This will be a balance between potential medical benefits this technology may offer and ethical dilemmas it may raise.
- It is clear that the issue of exactly how and when it may be used, which needs to be reflected in the Bill, is very technical and detailed, but the implications will be of interest to everyone.
- Who should be consulted on these areas and how should this be done?



## Scenario 2 (The Pensions Bill)

- Research has identified that around 7 million people are not saving enough for their retirement.
  - Only 40% of those not yet retired are saving for their retirement at all – yet 80% say they will need more than the State Pension to live on.
  - In order to ensure security in retirement for tomorrow's pensioners, work needs to be done now.
  - Government is proposing significant changes to the pension system, to simplify pensions and help individuals save.
  - Who should be consulted and how should this be done?
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## Scenario 3 (The Marine Bill)

- There is a need to ensure environmental issues are considered alongside the requirements of people and industry, including around our coastline.
  - In response to this the Government made a manifesto commitment in 2005 to introduce new laws governing the way we use and protect our marine environment.
  - Proposals include streamlined regulation, better protection for marine wildlife and integrated planning and management of seas, coasts and estuaries.
  - Who should be consulted and how should this be done?
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