

Press release: Government launches plan to increase participation in democracy

The government has launched the first ever [Democratic Engagement Plan](#) today (19 December 2017) to tackle democratic exclusion and outline how it will increase participation among under registered groups.

The Minister for the Constitution Chris Skidmore launched the Plan today at the first meeting of the National Democracy Week Council, made up of organisations from across the civil society sector, working in partnership with government.

The Council has been established to plan activities for a week of unified national action that will take place between 2 to 6 July next year in celebration of two significant anniversaries – 100 years since women won the right to vote and 90 years since women won equal voting rights to men.

The Democratic Engagement Plan, launched today, follows the ‘Every Voice Matters’ tour, which over the last year has visited every region and nation in Great Britain. The Minister met over 100 organisations that represent people who are underrepresented on the electoral register, gathering insight on the barriers these groups face engaging with the democratic process.

The Plan sets out our approach to creating an inclusive democracy by:

- building on record levels of voter registration and identifying where there is more to do
- further encouraging participation to make our democracy more inclusive than ever
- launching National Democracy Week to promote democratic engagement
- identifying the barriers faced by specific groups that are currently under-represented on the electoral register

Also, today is the next stage of the government’s plans to make changes to anonymous registration, making it more accessible for those who need it most. The draft legislation will be laid in Parliament, if it is approved we anticipate the changes will come into force in time for the May local elections in England.

Minister for the Constitution, Chris Skidmore said:

I am pleased to publish the first Democratic Engagement Plan which sets out our longer-term approach to encouraging democratic participation.

We now have a better understanding of how participation differs between different groups and areas and this plan sets out how best

we can engage with those who are under-registered so ours is a democracy that works for everyone.

We want to ensure that everyone eligible who wishes to register to vote and participate in our democracy is given the opportunity to do so. There are still millions of people who are not enrolled on the electoral register or choose not to vote. But as this Plan shows, in our democracy, every voice matters.