



Scottish Policy Forum

Engagement Toolkit

Introduction

The First Stage of the Scottish Policy Forum (SPF) process has a focus on wider engagement with members and stakeholders. It is an opportunity for the Party at all levels to engage with those people and organisations that can make a constructive contribution to our Policy Programme.

A key role for SPF members is to organise, facilitate and participate in local policy events. The aim of this toolkit is to support members and party organisations in that role.

Scottish Policy Forum Process

Scottish Labour is a democratic socialist party. We make our policy together, through our policy development process. It is designed to involve all members, local parties, trade unions, socialist societies, elected representatives as well as the wider community.

The SPF's main role is to shape Scottish Labour's policy agenda, drawing up policy documents for consultation and agreement. The detailed work is done by Policy Commissions who focus on a particular policy area. The process operates in three stages.

1. The first stage is an open engagement with members and stakeholders based on consultation papers agreed by the SPF.
2. The second stage considers the submissions received and develops revised consultation papers that are primarily aimed at party organisations.
3. The final stage involves the SPF agreeing a report after considering specific textual amendments and presenting that report to conference.

If conference votes for the final documents then they become the Scottish Labour Party's programme. This is used as the basis of the manifesto for the 2021 Scottish Parliament elections.

Consultation 2019

The First Stage consultation started at Scottish Labour's Annual Conference in Dundee on 8-10 March 2019. Consultation papers have been drawn up by the Policy Commissions and approved by the SPF. They cover the following policy areas: Education; Health and Care; The Economy; and Communities.

The First Stage consultation will conclude on 23 August 2019.

The table below sets out how subject areas have been grouped into policy areas.

Education	Health & Care	Economy	Communities
Early years	NHS Scotland	Sustainable growth	Local Govt
Schools	Social care	Industrial policy	Justice
FE & HE	Mental health	Employment/fair work	Housing
Culture	Wellbeing	Training	Rural affairs
Int. Development	Social security	Infrastructure	Environment
	Sport	Transport	Social justice
	Health improvement	Energy/Fuel poverty	Equalities
	Water	Public finance	Land reform
	Food	Trade	Third sector
		Governance/Fol	

In addition, there may be separate challenge papers that deal with specific issues or cross-cutting themes. Scottish Labour also has a number of ad-hoc commissions looking at specific issues. The work of these commissions will feed into the policy process.

Engagement Events

Events to promote the consultation can be in many formats including:

- CLPs to hold a discussion on one or two of the topics at a future meeting - or hold a special discussion before heading off for a campaigning session. It may also be worth joining up with other nearby CLPs for a larger discussion. These can be open events ranging from specific invitees up to a public meeting. Closed events can be limited to party members, but don't forget Affiliated Supporters and Registered Supporters.
- Trade union affiliates to organise a workplace meeting on an issue that is likely to be of particular interest to members in that workplace. It could be a short lunchtime discussion or as part of a branch meeting. Union political committees may also want to organise an event to discuss the consultation papers and engage with sector/specialist committees.
- Socialist societies and Labour groups in local government to organise an event to discuss the consultation issues that are most relevant to their membership.
- An online event at which you have a facilitator and a speaker and then encourage contributions. You can use webinar software (some are free for small webinars) or social media platforms like Facebook Live.
- Encourage people to contribute to the policy process as part of your wider campaign activity. A brief discussion at a coffee morning; a leaflet on your street stalls, or mention it when door knocking.

- Build some of the consultation questions into your surveys and other community events. Reference the consultation in your digital campaigning. Showing that Scottish Labour is not just listening - we value community voices in our policy process.

If you want an external speaker at your event - SPF Officers, Policy Commission convenors and Shadow Cabinet spokespersons may be available to attend. Your SPF representatives will also be happy to help support events and attend meetings (details on the Policy Hub). Please ensure you give as much notice as possible. Surveying members is a good way to identify areas of expertise and interest.

Let us know when you hold an event and publicise it on Twitter and other social media using the hashtag *#SPFConsult19*.

Whichever way you organise an engagement event, please make sure that brief notes are taken and submitted to the Policy Hub. Remember to keep the contact details of members with particular expertise who contributed to the event and any external stakeholders. It is important that we keep in touch with participants to show that we value their contribution and to demonstrate how they influenced our policy development.

Diversity

Scottish Labour recognises that it is a fundamental right for members and stakeholders to be able to attend our events. This means that events should be held in an accessible venue and organisers should check this before booking a venue. Public service venues should have an accessibility checklist that covers disability access. This should cover accessing and layout of the meeting room and any breakout areas, toilets and catering areas. Check if there is accessible parking, ideally within 50m, with an accessible route to the building. Consider any additional support needs attendees may have.

Consider any other barriers your event may create for attendees from diverse backgrounds. For example, meetings in pubs may exclude some groups, or tea time meetings for those with caring responsibilities. Is the venue accessible by public transport? Refer to a cultural calendar to avoid clashing with major religious events or holidays.

We can provide further advice on these issues if required.

Organising Your Event

Here are some things to think about when holding an event:

Dates & times

Holding an event after work is easier for some people particularly if the event will be part of your CLP or BLP meeting, however for bigger events a daytime event at the weekend might be better. It's a good idea to check with Scottish Labour to make sure your proposed date doesn't clash with anything.

Venue

Choose a centrally-located venue that people will find it easy to get to. Think about who you are expecting your audience to be and consider issues such as disability access, cultural and religious concerns of your attendees.

Decide which issue(s) you are discussing

Instead of discussing all four documents, you may wish to focus in on one or two of particular interest to those in your location. Depending on how many people you are expecting at your event, and how much time you have, you may wish to split up into groups to discuss different documents, or different sections of the same document.

Engaging your local community

You may wish to think about inviting a local expert along, or other people in the community with particular experience or views on the issue to speak at the event and/or take part in discussions; for instance, a local employer or someone who works in a public service, like a school, university or hospital.

The more people whose ideas we hear the better, so don't be afraid to open your event up to people from outside your local party. Why not invite along supporters, people who have voted Labour in the past and other people who are interested in hearing what we have to say?

CLPs should consider developing a list of local organisations that might be willing to contribute to the consultations.

The National Standards for Community Engagement (see above) are a good [model](#) of best practice when engaging your local communities.

At the meeting

Make sure you have someone to chair the meeting and a note taker(s) so that people's views are recorded. It's a good idea to let people know a little bit about the SPF consultation process and what will happen after the meeting, you can refer to sections above on the policy making process as a guide.

Your meeting could begin with opening remarks from an SPF representative followed by a local expert. Small group discussions are often better at engaging the whole audience if the meeting is well attended. The questions included in each document are designed to provoke a broad



ranging discussion, in which people's views and examples of personal experiences are encouraged.

Following the group discussions, it is always a good idea to choose someone from each group to feedback their ideas. These ideas can be written up and sent as the basis of your submission to the SPF. You can also encourage people to visit the Policy Hub and input their ideas directly.

Further Support

- The online Policy Hub www.scotlabpolicy.org
- The e.mail address for the SPF is: scottishpolicyforum@labour.org.uk. Notes of events should be sent to this address. You can also access support from our Policy Development Officer, Dave Watson, at this address.
- The Twitter account is @ScotLabpolicy and the hashtag is #SPFConsult19.
- Or write to: Scottish Labour Party, Scottish Policy Forum, 290 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 4RE.
- Labour has a range of organising guides and tools that can help when organising campaign events in person or digitally: members.labour.org.uk/campaign-resources
- The National Standards for Community Engagement is a good practice guide <https://www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards/>

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