

13. Participation, influence and voice

Domain: The capability to participate in decision-making, have a voice and influence

Sub-domains:

- A. participate in decision-making and make decisions affecting your own life independently
- B. participate in the formulation of government policy, locally and nationally
- C. participate in non-governmental organisations concerned with public and political life
- D. participate in democratic free and fair elections
- E. get together with others, peacefully
- F. participate in the local community
- G. form and join civil organisations and solidarity groups, including trade unions

Final short list

Indicator 1: Formal political participation

Measure 1.1 (E, S, W): Percentage who voted in most recent General, national or local election

Measure 1.2 (E, S, W): Equality characteristics of elected representatives in House of Commons, Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and local councils, relative to national population

Indicator 2: Perceived influence in local area

Measure 2.1 (E, S, W): Percentage who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area

Indicator 3: Political activity

Measure 3.1 (E, W): Percentage undertaking at least one of the following activities in the last 12 months: contacting a councillor, local official, government official or MP (other than in relation to personal issues); attending public meeting or rally; taking part in demonstration or signing petition

Measure 3.1 (S): Percentage who have ever contacted an MP or MSP, government official, or media outlet about a government action that s/he felt was harmful or unjust

Indicator 4: Taking part in civil organizations

Measure 4.1 (E, W): Percentage who were a member of a local decision-making body in last 12 months

Measure 4.1 (S): Percentage active in a local or national Campaigning or solidarity organisation or group in last 12 months

Measure 4.1 (W): Percentage active in a local or national campaigning or solidarity organisation or group in last 3 years

Indicator 5: Being treated with dignity and respect while accessing and participating in decision-making forums

Measure 5.1: Percentage treated with dignity and respect while accessing and participating in local or national decision-making forums (*under development*)

Indicator 1: Formal political participation**Measure 1.1: Percentage who voted in most recent General, national or local elections**

Source: British Election Study

Sub-domains: D, B

Evaluation of measure 1.1 against essential selection criteria:

1	Relevance	All equality characteristics
2	Legitimacy	Strong
3/4	Disaggregation	
	- at GB level	Gender, ethnicity, disability, age, religion/belief, social class
	- within England	As for GB
	- within Scotland	Gender, ethnicity, disability, age, religion/belief , social class collected But sample size too small to disaggregate by ethnicity, and only partial disaggregation by religion/belief possible
	- within Wales	Gender, ethnicity, disability, age, religion/belief, social class collected But sample size too small to disaggregate by ethnicity, and only partial disaggregation by religion/belief is possible
5	Aspect of inequality	Outcome
6	Frequency	Every General Election
7	Individual level	Yes
8	Robustness	Good

Measure 1.1 is defined as the percentage voting in the most recent UK General Election, Scottish Parliamentary election, Welsh Assembly election, or local council election. This indicator is one of the few that measures sub-domain D (that is, the capability to participate in democratic free and fair elections). Although voting is an occasional and minimal form of political engagement, it is important to monitor whether there are particular groups who are disproportionately alienated or disenfranchised.

There are several sources, each with their own limitations. The British Election Studies (BES) have been carried out after each General Election since 1964 but are funded on an *ad hoc* basis, so although it seems likely that future surveys will be

carried out for each general election, there is no guarantee. Boost samples of ethnic minorities (in 1997), of Scotland (1992, 1997 and 2005) and of Wales (in 2005) have sometimes been included. The BES for 2005 contains information on a wide range of equality characteristics, though it does not include sexual orientation or transgender status. The former could be considered for inclusion in future surveys now that the ONS pilot of a suitable question has been completed. The total sample size for 2005 is 4,786 including the Scottish and Welsh boosts.

Figures shown in the table above relate to voting in the general election, but respondents are also asked about voting in local elections and national (Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly) elections, and these can be integrated into a compound measure of 'whether voted' in any recent election. Looking just at the general election, overall turnout is higher in Wales than the GB average. People from a mixed ethnic background are less likely to vote than the White majority, and there is a strong trend towards lower participation by people from a Black ethnic background, although the difference is not statistically significant in this sample. Older people are much more likely to vote than younger people, and people from lower socio-economic groups are, on the whole, less likely to vote than people from higher socio-economic groups. Christians are more likely to vote than people who do not 'belong to' any religion (the question phrasing used in the BES). In so far as these differences can be assessed in Scotland and Wales, similar patterns hold as for GB.

The British and Scottish Social Attitudes Surveys are an alternative source although the questions about voting behaviour are not as detailed. The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) asked questions on voting in 1999 and 2003 but not more recently: if questions were repeated this would be a good source for this measure for Scotland. The Welsh Assembly Election Study (2001 and 2008) contains information about voting, although the sample is only slightly larger than the Welsh component of BES (988 in WAES compared to 887 in BES). Finally the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS), the successor to the British Household Panel Survey, is expected to include questions on voting and will have a comparatively large sample in each country of the UK (100,000 overall, including at least 1000 of each of the five largest ethnic minority groups). This might well be a preferable source to the BES once it is established, although the frequency with which questions about voting will be asked is not known.

Measure 1.1 was broadly endorsed by the first and second rounds of specialist consultation, although it was noted that the measure by itself did not distinguish different reasons for not voting. This would need to be explored in more in-depth

work. (The BES contains many supplementary questions that could be illuminating in this respect). It was also suggested that differences in rates of participation in voting by equality characteristics would need to be contextualised by trends in overall turnout.

Some concerns about the reliability of survey data on voting were expressed (that is, people say they have voted when in fact they did not). The BES methodology has developed over the years to try to address this problem, and the questions are phrased so as to encourage people to feel able to say they did not vote, for example, 'Talking with people about the general election on May 5th, we have found that a lot of people didn't manage to vote. How about you, did you manage to vote in the general election?'

The difficulty of collecting information about voting behaviour among transgender people was noted. (See general recommendations in chapter 15).

Consultation responses from the Welsh and Scottish events pointed to the importance of including elections for the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly in the measure, despite the possible limitations on disaggregation by equality characteristics imposed by the survey sample size.

Table 13.1 Measure 1.1 Percentage who voted in 2005 General Election

Authors' calculations from British Election Study 2005

	GB %	Scotland %	Wales %
Overall turnout	68	68	74
Men	66	69	72
Women	70	68	75
White	69		
Indian	74		
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	76		
Black	48		
Mixed	31**		
Other	53**		
Age 18-24	44	48	51
Age 25-44	62**	59**	69**
Age 45-64	76**	78**	77**
Age 65-74	81**	89**	87**
Age 75+	84**	71**	87**
Disabled	69	67	72
Non-disabled	68	69	74
Occupational class			
higher managerial & prof	80	86	87
lower managerial & prof	75	75	67
intermediate	80	80	73
small employers & own a/c	68**	70	79
lower supervisory & tech	65**	68	73
semi-routine	65**	56**	70
routine	70	69	69
not classified	60**	60**	71**
No religion	61	62	70
Christian	74**	75**	79**
Jewish			
Hindu			
Muslim	74		
Sikh			
Buddhist			
Other	66	56	67
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>4,786</i>	<i>1,212</i>	<i>887</i>

** indicates statistically significant difference (at 95 per cent or above) between marked figure and first category listed in group

Measure 1.2: Equality characteristics of elected representatives in House of Commons, Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and local councils, relative to national population

Sources: Inter-Parliamentary Union Database; House of Commons Library Papers; National Census of Local Authority Councillors in England (2006) / Wales (2004); Scotland's Councillors Research Report (2007)

Sub-domains: D, B

Evaluation of measure 1.2 against essential selection criteria:

1	Relevance	All equality characteristics
2	Legitimacy	Strong – given careful interpretation
3/4	Disaggregation	
	- at GB level	Gender, ethnicity, age, social class
	- within England	As for GB. Also disability for local representatives.
	- within Scotland	Gender for Parliament. Gender, ethnicity, disability, age, religion/belief, social class for local representatives.
	- within Wales	Gender for Assembly. Gender, ethnicity, disability, age, social class for local representatives.
5	Aspect of inequality	Outcome
6	Frequency	ad hoc
7	Individual level	Yes
8	Robustness	Good

Measure 1.2 captures formal political participation at the opposite end of the spectrum: being elected as a representative in national or local government. Monitoring the opportunity women and members of minority groups have to become MPs, MSPs, Welsh Assembly members or local councillors may be important in its own right. In addition, increasing the proportion of elected representatives may also have instrumental importance in reducing the alienation of minority groups more broadly from formal politics. This measure was recommended by Walby and colleagues (2008) in their review of equality statistics for the EHRC, and figures from that report are quoted above.

The data sources for this analysis relate to a specific point in time and would need to be repeated regularly to serve as a useful monitoring tool for the EMF. While information about the gender, ethnicity, age and proxies for social class of representatives is generally available, other equality characteristics such as disability are not always recorded. This would need to be standardised. Monitoring religion/belief, sexual orientation and transgender status is more difficult in this

context, since elected representatives could legitimately wish not to disclose such information about themselves. Published information would need to be in a form that did not allow individuals to be identified.

Views on this measure were divided among participants in the first and second rounds of specialist consultation. On one hand, some argued that it was not the identity of the representatives that mattered, but whether they were working to promote equality and human rights: what they were doing, not who they are. On the other hand, others argued that the composition of the political elite was a significant indicator both of who held the power in society and what chance individuals with different characteristics had of getting to the top of the political ladder. This points to the importance of interpreting this indicator carefully: it is an outcome indicator (the valued activity is having political power). It is not intended to imply, for example, that only ethnic minority representatives can work towards equality for ethnic minorities, or that they necessarily will do so, any more than a woman MP or MSP will necessarily put the promotion of gender equality at the top of her political agenda.

Most participants thought that local, national (Scotland/Wales) and UK representatives should be included in this measure. Delegates at the consultation event in Wales were particularly keen on this measure, and wanted to ensure that it included the Welsh Assembly, possibly with a breakdown of the proportion of Welsh language speakers. They noted that better ethnicity breakdowns were needed.

Other comments included the suggestion that the measure should focus on candidates for political office rather than those who actually get elected, since the selection processes of political parties could be one of the stages at which discrimination occurred. However, the many contributory factors which lead to under-representation of people with particular equality characteristics in elected assemblies, including the process of selection, are probably better explored through more in-depth research, rather than attempting to summarise one aspect in a measure.

The equality characteristics of government appointments and civil servants were also suggested as alternative measures. Although these could also be interesting, the imperative to limit the number of measures overall led to us to decide to concentrate on elected representatives.

Table 13.2 Measure 1.2 Political representation in Parliament or National Assembly

Figures from Walby et al. (2008:78-82)

'Best performing' or reference group shown in **bold**. Calculation of under- or over-representation where 1 represents that a group has representation proportional to its presence in the population: a higher number means it is over-represented, a lower number that it is under-represented.

Source: House of Commons Library

United Kingdom (House of Commons)	Percentage of MPs who are from equality strands	Ratio of presence compared to proportion in the population
Male	80.2	1.6
Female	19.8#	0.4
White	97.7	1.1
Non-white	2.3	0.3
18-29	0.5	0.0
30-39	13.8	1.0
40-49	29.6	2.0
50-59	38.5	3.1
60-69	15.5	1.6
70+	2.2	0.2
Wales (National Assembly for Wales)	Percentage of Assembly Members who are from equality strands	Ratio of presence compared to proportion in the population
Male	53.0	1.1
Female	47.0	0.9
Scotland (Scottish Parliament)	Percentage of MSPs who are from equality strands	Ratio of presence compared to proportion in the population
Male	67.0	1.4
Female	33.0	0.6

Note: # The figure for the percentage of MPs is provided for 2005. In September 2008, women comprised 19.3 per cent of MPs.

Table 13.3 Percentage of councillors belonging to various strand groups (sex; ethnicity/race; disability; age; occupation)

Sources: England 2006: Local Government Analysis and Research; Local Government Association; Improvement and Development Agency; National Foundation for Educational Research (2007) *National Census of Local Authority Councillors in England 2006*. Slough, Berkshire: National Foundation for Educational Research.

Wales: Welsh Local Government Association (2005) *National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2004: Wales, an Overview*. Cardiff: Welsh Local Government Association.

Scotland 2007: Convention of Scottish Local Authorities; the Scottish Government; Improvement Service (2008) *Scotland's Councillors 2007 Research Report*.

England	Percentage of councillors	Ratio of representation compared to proportion in population
Male	70.0	1.4
Female	30.0	0.6
White	95.9	1.1
Non-white	4.1	0.5
Asian	2.8	
Black	0.5	
Mixed	0.7	
Chinese / Other	0.1	
Disabled	10.9	1.1
Non-disabled	89.1	0.6
39 and under	7.8	0.1
40-54	23.5	1.2
55 and over	68.7	2.6
Managerial or executive	40.0	2.6
Professional or technical	30.4	1.5
Lecturer, teacher or researcher	8.8	2.0
Administrative / clerical / secretarial / sales	10.8	0.8
Manual or craft	9.9	0.2

Wales	Percentage of councillors	Ratio of representation compared to proportion in population
Male	78.2	1.6
Female	21.8	0.4
White	99.2	1.0
Non-white	0.8	0.4
Asian	0.3	0.5
Black	0.2	0.3
Mixed	0.3	0.8
Disabled	16.7	0.7
Non-disabled	83.3	1.1
34 and under	4.3	0.1
35-54	29.8	1.1
55 and over	66.0	2.3
Managerial or executive	32.6	2.7
Professional or technical	26.6	1.4
Lecturer, teacher or researcher	8.6	1.8
Administrative / clerical / secretarial /sales	15.2	0.4
Manual or craft	17.1	0.7
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Scotland		
Male	77.6	1.6
Female	22.4	0.4
White	98.1	1.0
Non-white	1.9	0.9
Asian	0.7	0.6
Black	0.0	0.0
Mixed	0.9	3.3
Chinese / Other	0.3	0.5
None	30.8	1.1
Church of Scotland	44.1	1.0
Roman Catholic	14.1	0.9
Other Christian	8.0	1.2
Muslim	0.3	0.4
Jewish	0.3	3.0
Sikh	0.3	3.0
Another religion	2.2	4.4
Disabled	17.9	1.0

Non-disabled	82.1	0.9
34 and under	5.3	0.1
35-59	59.6	1.7
60 and over	35.1	1.7
Modern professional	28.9	
Traditional professional	15.7	No suitable information
Senior manager	19.1	available for comparison
Clerical	10.0	
Technical	7.8	
Semi-routine / routine	8.0	
Middle or junior manager	7.8	

Indicator 2: Perceived influence in local area**Measure 2.1 (EW): Percentage who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area (England and Wales)**

Source: Citizenship Survey

Measure 2.1 (S): Percentage who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area (Scotland)

Source: Scottish Household Survey (from 2007 onwards; data not yet available for analysis)

Sub-domains: B, F

Evaluation of measure 2.1 against essential selection criteria:

1	Relevance	All equality characteristics
2	Legitimacy	Strong
3/4	Disaggregation	
	- at GB level	Not available
	- within England	Gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion/belief, social class
	- within Scotland	Gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion/belief, social class Disaggregation by ethnicity, sexual orientation and religion/belief will require combining 2 or more years of data
	- within Wales	Gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion/belief social class collected Disaggregation by disability and social class will require combining 2 or more years of data. Disaggregation by ethnicity, sexual orientation and religion/belief not possible even with combined years.
5	Aspect of inequality	Outcome
6	Frequency	Annual
7	Individual level	Yes
8	Robustness	Good

Perceived influence in local area is defined as the percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area, that is, the area within 15-20 minutes walking distance from where the respondent lives. This indicator cuts across different sub-domains (participation in decision-making and the local community). It has been identified by the Public Service Agreement 21 (HMT 2007b) indicator 4 as one of the means of building more empowered communities and also features in the

Sustainable Development Indicators (DEFRA 2008). It is very similar to one of the indicators proposed by Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) for inclusion in an internationally comparable set of indicators of human development. Although the measure mainly assesses the respondents' **perceived** influence in the local area, it is still important to identify the respondents' feelings of self-empowerment and their ability to influence change in their area. This perception measure is crucial especially for disadvantaged groups who might formally and legally have the right to participate, but do not do so due to their belief that they cannot affect decision-making processes with respect to their localities.

The Citizenship Survey (CS) and the SHS allow disaggregation across a full range of equality characteristics, with the exception of sexual orientation in the SHS at present, and transgender. Unfortunately results from the two surveys cannot be straightforwardly aggregated to produce a GB figure: although the question wording is very similar, the CS gives a 4-point response scale while the SHS gives a 5-point scale.

Disaggregation within Wales by the smaller minority groups is unlikely to be reliable given the sample size of the CS, but a number of years of data could be combined. Alternatively, consideration could be given to including a question of this kind in the successor to the Living in Wales (LIW) Survey.

Preliminary results from analysis of the CS are presented above. The figures suggest a social class gradient in perceived influence (more influence among higher socio-economic groups) and that both the young and the old are less likely to perceive they have influence than those in the middle age groups. Interestingly, respondents from ethnic minorities perceive that they have greater influence than do respondents from the White majority. This is consistent with findings in the Hansard Society (2008) poll. However, all of these results are subject to confirmation by testing for statistical significance (pending resolution of a technical issue about the sample design).

Participants in both the rounds of specialist consultation thought this was an important measure, and they welcomed in particular the inclusion of a measure of perceptions. There was some discussion about whether it should be extended to include perceptions of national influence as well. Questions are available in the CS but the percentage of respondents believing they have national influence is very small, so differences by equality characteristic could be hard to detect.

Table 13.4 Measure 2.1 (EW) percentage who agree they can influence decisions affecting the local area

Authors' calculations using Citizenship Survey, 2007, England and Wales

	Percentage	Unweighted base
All	36	14,093
Occupational class		
higher managerial & prof	41	4,463
intermediate/small emp'ers	35**	2,607
lower supervisory & technical / semi-routine	32**	3,553
routine	28**	1,610
never worked/long-term u/e	31**	1,178
FT students	36	461
not classified	29**	207
Men	35	6,214
Women	36	7,875
White	35	8,555
Indian	43**	1,369
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	40**	1,112
Black	46**	1,677
Mixed	42**	486
Other	39	890
Disabled	32	2,871
Non-disabled	36**	11,155
Age 18-24	34	1,127
Age 25-44	37	5,688
Age 45-64	37	4,129
Age 65-74	32	1,564
Age 75+	34	1,275
Heterosexual or straight	36	13,046
Lesbian, gay or bisexual	37	230
Prefer not to say	33	298
No religion	35	1,682
Christian	35	8,930
Buddhist	48	129
Hindu	47**	756
Jewish	32	54
Muslim	38	1,784
Sikh	43	341
Other	39	385

** indicates figure is statistically significantly different from first category listed in group, at 95 per cent level. Statistical significance has been calculated taking into account the complex sampling structure of the CS.

Some participants in the Welsh consultation event raised a concern about the definition of 'local area' used in the CS, that is, 15-20 minute walking distance, which may not be appropriate in rural districts.

There were suggestions that Measure 2.1 could be broadened to include, or be replaced with, (a) whether the individual has taken part in a consultation exercise either directly or through a group of which they are a member; or (b) membership of decision-making bodies such as local health trusts, school governing bodies and so on. On balance, these alternatives were rejected as there are other objective measures of civic participation in the final short list for this domain.

Indicator 3: Political activity

Measure 3.1 (EW): Percentage undertaking at least one of the following activities in the last 12 months: contacting a councillor, local official, government official or MP (other than in relation to personal issues); attending public meeting or rally; taking part in demonstration or signing petition

Source: Citizenship Survey (for England and Wales)

Measure 3.1 (S): Percentage who have ever contacted an MP or MSP, government official, or media outlet about a government action that s/he felt was harmful or unjust

Source: Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (for Scotland)

Sub-domains: B, E

Evaluation of measure 3.1 against essential selection criteria:

1	Relevance	All equality characteristics
2	Legitimacy	Strong
3/4	Disaggregation	
	- at GB level	Not available
	- within England	Gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion/belief, social class
	- within Scotland	Gender, ethnicity (combined years), disability, age, religion/belief (combined years), social class
	- within Wales	Gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion/belief social class collected Disaggregation by disability and social class will require combining 2 or more years of data. Disaggregation by ethnicity, sexual orientation and religion/belief not possible even with combined years.
5	Aspect of inequality	Outcome
6	Frequency	Annual
7	Individual level	Yes
8	Robustness	Good

This indicator is intended to give a general overview of the respondents' empowerment and involvement in helping to shape policies locally or nationally. It serves as an objective counterpart to the subjective perspective provided by indicator 2.

The CS data will be used for PSA 15 (HMT 2007a) indicator 3 and the Office for Disability Issues indicator 27 (ODI 2007), and contains a full range of equality

characteristics, with the exception of transgender status. Both contacting officials and other forms of political expression are included. The questions are phrased in such a way as to exclude contacts with councillors and others in relation to a personal problem such as housing or immigration status.

The preliminary analysis shown in the table above suggests marked differences in rates of political activity by social class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and religion/belief. Interestingly, these patterns do not match those found in the subjective measure of political influence (measure 2.1). For example, while ethnic minority respondents were more likely to say that they could influence decisions affecting the local area, rates of political activity are lower among each of the ethnic minority groups than among the White majority. The contrast between the two measures emphasises the importance of looking at multiple measures within a given domain to get a rounded picture of inequalities.

The Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (SSAS) questions are slightly different, asking whether the respondent has ever contacted an MP or MSP, government official, or media outlet about a government action that s/he felt was harmful or unjust. This could be combined with data from the British Social Attitudes Survey to provide a GB-wide figure, although the CS measure is preferred for England and Wales because it includes forms of political activity other than direct contact with representatives. The SSAS survey does not currently include a question on sexual orientation, and is large enough to disaggregate to smaller ethnic minority groups and minority religion/belief groups only by combining two or more years of data.

The LIW Survey asks detailed questions about contact with local services and the local authority but this is in relation to quality of services provided rather than policies. It also asks whether respondents have contacted a member of the Welsh Assembly by email or the internet, but does not cover other means of making contact. The Welsh Assembly Election Study asks whether respondents have contacted their local MP, Welsh Assembly member or local councillor in the last 4 years, but does not distinguish between contact for political and 'personal casework' reasons. The focus of indicator 3 is on political activity. Disaggregation by ethnicity or religion/belief within Wales is not currently possible for this measure because both the CS and the British Social Attitudes Survey samples are too small.

Another potential source is the Audit of Political Engagement, carried out by ipsos-Mori on behalf of the Hansard Society (2008). The poll asks whether respondents have presented their views to an MP or local councillor 'in the last two or three years', and also asks about whether they have engaged in a range of activities,

including signing petitions and attending protest meetings. However, the sample size is relatively small (1,073) which limits the potential for disaggregation by equality characteristics.

Participants in the first round of specialist consultation thought it was a strength of this measure that it incorporated both individual and collective forms of political engagement but they were concerned that the types of engagement identified in this measure were archetypal middle-class forms of participation. One respondent thought that lifestyle choices like recycling should also be included, if the individual him/herself thought it made a difference to society. Participation in formal and informal organisations which can act as intermediaries, such as parents' groups or tenants' associations, may be important alternative routes for people to make their views heard, and these are reflected in Indicator 4.

The measure was broadly welcomed by respondents to the second round of specialist consultation. At the Scottish event, there was some discussion about whether contacting public officials for personal reasons should be included. This can indicate the extent to which an individual is empowered and able to claim his/her rights. However, other consultation participants felt that this should not be conflated with political activity, and were concerned that an increase in contact of this kind was ambiguous: would it indicate there were more personal problems to be resolved or a greater degree of empowerment?

Table 13.5 Measure 3.1 (EW) Percentage taking part in political activity in the last 12 months

Authors' calculations from Citizenship Survey, 2007, England and Wales

Percentage undertaking at least one of the following activities in the last 12 months: contacting a councillor, local official, government official or MP (other than in relation to personal issues); attending public meeting or rally; taking part in demonstration or signing petition

	Percentage	Unweighted base
All	39	14,093
Occupational class		
higher managerial & prof	50	4,463
intermediate/small emp'ers	41**	2,608
lower supervisory & technical / semi-routine	33**	3,553
routine	25**	1,610
never worked/long-term u/e	27**	1,178
FT students	34**	461
not classified	37**	208
Men	40	6,216
Women	38	7,875
White	40	8,556
Indian	25**	1,369
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	30**	1,112
Black	27**	1,678
Mixed	33**	486
Other	25**	890
Disabled	39	2,871
Non-disabled	39	11,155
Age 18-24	29	1,127
Age 25-44	41**	5,688
Age 45-64	44**	4,131
Age 65-74	42**	1,564
Age 75+	32	1,275
Heterosexual or straight	39	13,046
Lesbian, gay or bisexual	52**	230
Prefer not to say	41	298

No religion	39	1,682
Christian	39	8,930
Buddhist	38	129
Hindu	27**	756
Jewish	61**	54
Muslim	30**	1,784
Sikh	21**	341
Other	45	385

** indicates figure is statistically significantly different from first category listed in group, at 95 per cent level. Statistical significance has been calculated taking into account the complex sampling structure of the CS.

Indicator 4: Taking part in civil organizations

Measure 4.1 (EW): Percentage who were a member of a local decision-making body in last 12 months

Source: Citizenship Survey (for England and Wales)

Measure 4.1 (S): Percentage active in a local or national campaigning or solidarity organisation or group in last 12 months

Source: Scottish Household Survey (for Scotland)

Measure 4.1 (W): Percentage active in a local or national campaigning or solidarity organisation or group in last 3 years

Sources: Living in Wales Survey (for Wales)

Sub-domains: G, C, E, F

Evaluation of measure 4.1 against essential selection criteria:

1	Relevance	All equality characteristics
2	Legitimacy	Strong
3/4	Disaggregation	
	- at GB level	Not available
	- within England	Gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion/belief, social class
	- within Scotland	Gender, ethnicity (combining years), disability, age, sexual orientation, religion/belief (combining years), social class
	- within Wales	Gender, ethnicity, disability, age, religion/belief, social class collected But sample size too small to disaggregate by ethnicity or religion/belief, even if combining 3 years of data
5	Aspect of inequality	Outcome
6	Frequency	Annual
7	Individual level	Yes
8	Robustness	Good

This indicator has been selected as it cuts across a number of sub-domains such as joining and forming civil organisations and solidarity groups, including trade unions, participating in non-governmental organisations concerned with public and political life, and getting together peacefully.

The question wording and list of possible organisations varies by data source. Since the purpose of this measure is to focus on collective organisation with a view to shaping decisions, participation in leisure activities and clubs (including sports and hobbies) is not included here. Importantly, all the questions focus on decision-making or active participation rather than simply ‘armchair’ membership.

In the CS, the question refers to ‘being a member of a group making decisions’ and the time period is the last 12 months. The list includes decision-making bodies in relation to:

- local health services
- regeneration of the local area
- tackling local crime problems
- tenants’ group
- local education services
- local services for young people
- other services in the local community.

In the SHS, the entry point is volunteering (‘any work or activities on a voluntary basis’) and the time period is also the last 12 months, but the list of organisations differs as shown in the table above.

For the LIW Survey, the question refers to ‘groups, clubs or organisations’ and ‘being involved on a voluntary basis’; and the list includes the same categories as those for the SHS, but the time period specified is the last 3 years.

Participants in the first round of specialist consultation thought that this measure would ideally reflect whether people **could** take part in groups and civil organisations **if they wished to** rather than measuring actual participation. However, we are not aware of any survey questions which reflect this more nuanced concept.

In the Scottish consultation event, there was discussion about whether participation in clubs and groups more generally should be included. But participants in the Welsh consultation event argued in favour of retaining the focus on campaigning and solidarity groups, with participation in social, cultural or leisure groups seen as a more appropriate indicator for the ‘Individual, Family and Social Life’ domain.

Table 13.6 Measure 4.1 (EW) Percentage active in local decision-making body in last 12 months

Authors' calculations from Citizenship Survey, 2007, England and Wales

In relation to: local health services, regenerating local area, tackling local crime problems, tenants group, local education services, services for young people, services in local community

	%	Unweighted base
All	9	14,093
Occupational class		
higher managerial & prof	12	4,463
intermediate/small emp'ers	7**	2,608
lower supervisory & technical / semi-routine	6**	3,553
routine	5**	1,610
never worked/long-term u/e	8**	1,178
FT students	11	461
not classified	10	208
Men	8	6,216
Women	9	7,875
White	9	8,556
Indian	7	1,369
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	7	1,112
Black	12**	1,678
Mixed	10	486
Other	4**	890
Disabled	9	2,871
Non-disabled	8	11,155
Age 18-24	5	1,127
Age 25-44	8	5,688
Age 45-64	10**	4,131
Age 65-74	10**	1,564
Age 75+	7	1,275
Heterosexual or straight	8	13,046
Lesbian, gay or bisexual	15	230
Prefer not to say	5	298

No religion	6	1,682
Christian	9**	8,930
Buddhist	11**	129
Hindu	6	756
Jewish	17	54
Muslim	7	1,784
Sikh	6	341
Other	11	385

** indicates figures is statistically significantly different from first category listed in group, at 95 per cent level. Statistical significance has been calculated taking into account the complex sampling structure of the CS.

Table 13.7 Measure 4.1 (S) Percentage active in local or national group in the last 12 months

Authors' calculations from Scottish Household Survey, 2006, Scotland

In relation to: school board or parents-teachers association, community council social inclusion partnership or community planning partnership, tenants group, housing association or residents assoc, trade union

	%	Unweighted base
All	4	7,075
Occupational class		
higher managerial	6	117
higher prof	9	277
lower prof and higher tech	7	635
lower managerial	6	347
higher supervisory	6	183
intermediate	3	482
employers in sm orgns	8	50
own a/c workers	5	76
lower supervisory	2	373
lower tech	1	174
semi-routine	3	835
routine	2	629
Men	3	3,042
Women	4	4,032
White	4	6,968
Non-White	0	104
Disabled	2	1,004
Non-disabled	4**	6,070
Age 18-24	1	442
Age 25-44	5**	2,225
Age 45-64	5**	2,299
Age 65-74	2	1,047
Age 75+	1	945
No religion	3	2,414
Church of Scotland	4	2,990
Roman Catholic	4	1,008
Other Christian	5	536
Buddhist		
Hindu		
Muslim	1	36
Jewish		
Sikh		
Other	1	56

Note: groups with less than 30 respondents not shown.

** indicates statistically significant difference (at 95 per cent or above) between marked figure and first category listed in group

Table 13.8 Measure 4.1 (W) Percentage active in local or national group in the last 3 years

Authors' calculations using Living in Wales Survey, 2006, Wales

Organisations/groups listed are: political, animals/environment, justice/human rights, community/neighbourhood, citizens groups, trade unions

	%	Unweighted base
All	6	7442
Occupational class		
higher managerial and prof	9	652
lower managerial and prof	7	1842
intermediate	5**	721
small emp and own a/c worker	8	685
lower supervisory & tech	4**	795
semi-routine	4**	1190
routine	3**	1066
not classified	4**	492
Men	6	3112
Women	5**	4331
White	5	107
Non-White	1**	7336
Disabled	4	1727
Non-disabled	6	5705
Age 18-24	4	316
Age 25-44	4	2323
Age 45-64	7**	2699
Age 65-74	7**	1090
Age 75+	3	1015
No religion	5	1627
Christian	5	5554
Minority religion	7	204

Note: finer disaggregation by ethnicity, disability and religion would be possible by combining years.

** indicates statistically significant difference (at 95 per cent or above) between marked figure and first category listed in group

Indicator 5: Being treated with dignity and respect while accessing and participating in decision-making forums

Source: new data collection required

Sub-domains: B, C, D, E, F, G

No source of data assessing how people are treated when participating in, or attempting to access, decision-making forums has been located. A process indicator for this domain is therefore missing, and we are recommending the collection of new data to fill this gap. Measures 3.1 and 4.1 establish whether people are participating in decision-making forums; follow-up questions in the relevant surveys could ask whether the person has tried or wanted to participate but experienced difficulties, or whether they have not wanted to participate. For those who either are participating, or who have tried or wanted to participate but been unable to do so, further follow-up questions could ask about any barriers they encountered, including perceptions of discrimination and unfair treatment and, conversely, about being treated with dignity and respect.

Recommendations

Recommendations arising from assessment of short list against criteria for individual indicators

The indicators for this domain have strong relevance and the measures have generally good potential for disaggregation by equality characteristics and within each country. The data are of good quality and data for most of the measures are frequently collected.

However, as for other domains, some groups are not well-represented in the (mainly household-based) survey data: cross-domain recommendations are made in relation to these groups in Chapter 15.

In addition, some relatively minor changes to existing data sources would enhance the comprehensiveness of the equality analysis which could be performed:

- a wider range of equality characteristics of elected representatives, especially in the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly, could usefully be monitored anonymously and published;
- the addition of a sexual orientation question to the BEW, SHS, SSAS, the LIW Survey would enable more measures to be monitored by sexual orientation;

- adding questions on perceived local influence and political activity to a Welsh-specific survey such as the successor to the LIW Survey, and a question on political activity to a larger Scottish-specific survey such as the SHS, would enhance the potential for within-country disaggregation by equality characteristics.

Finally, a commitment is needed to ensure the frequency of questions on voting behaviour in household surveys is at least every three years (for example through the BES, or, preferably, the UKHLS).

Recommendations arising from assessment of short list against whole domain selection criteria

The proposed short list represents good topic coverage of the domain, including voting (sub-domain D), representation (sub-domains B and D), local influence (sub-domains F and B), political activity (sub-domains E and B), activism and solidarity (sub-domains G, C, E, F). Sub-domain A, on decision-making in your own life, will be picked up by autonomy indicators, such as those proposed by Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) – see also Chapter 14 below.

By including measures of high-level and basic formal political participation, inequalities at both the top and the bottom of the distribution of political influence can be monitored. Both subjective (indicator 2) and objective (indicators 1, 3 and 4) indicators have been shortlisted for this domain.

However, there are some gaps. No process indicators have been identified for this domain - new questions need to be developed to assess the extent to which people experience discrimination, or are treated with dignity and respect, while participating or attempting to participate in decision-making forums. Participants in the first round of the specialist consultation thought this was important and we recommend that a new question is developed, and considered for inclusion in the CS, the SHS, and the successor to the LIW Survey. This would form the basis of a new Indicator 5 for this domain.

All of the indicators in this domain reflect important civil and political rights. In addition, consideration should be given to supplementary monitoring of human rights concerns in this domain which are not best captured by statistical means, for example, groups who are denied the right to vote.

We recommend:

- The House of Commons, Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales collect anonymous information on a wider range of equality characteristics of their elected representatives (measure 1.2.).
- A question on sexual orientation is added to the BES, SHS, Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, and the successor to the LIW Survey to enable more measures to be monitored by sexual orientation.
- Questions on perceived local influence and political activity are added to a Welsh-specific survey such as the successor to the LIW Survey, and a question on political activity to a larger Scottish-specific survey such as the SHS, to enhance the potential for within-country disaggregation by equality characteristics (measures 2.1 and 3.1).
- A commitment is needed to ensure the frequency of questions on voting behaviour in household surveys is at least every three years (for example through the BES, or, preferably, Understanding Society - the UKHLS).
- A new question or set of questions is developed to assess the extent to which people experience discrimination, or are treated with dignity and respect, while participating or attempting to participate in decision-making forums. Such questions could be considered for inclusion in the CS, the SHS, and the successor to the LIW Survey.