

## THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PROCESS

Consultation is an essential and important aspect of Scottish Government working methods. Given the wide-ranging areas of work of the Scottish Government, there are many varied types of consultation. However, in general, Scottish Government consultation exercises aim to provide opportunities for all those who wish to express their opinions on a proposed area of work to do so in ways which will inform and enhance that work.

The Scottish Government encourages consultation that is thorough, effective and appropriate to the issue under consideration and the nature of the target audience. Consultation exercises take account of a wide range of factors, and no two exercises are likely to be the same.

Typically Scottish Government consultations involve a written paper inviting answers to specific questions or more general views about the material presented. Written papers are distributed to organisations and individuals with an interest in the issue, and they are also placed on the Scottish Government web site enabling a wider audience to access the paper and submit their responses. **Consultation exercises may also involve seeking views in a number of different ways, such as through public meetings, focus groups or questionnaire exercises.** Copies of all the written responses received to a consultation exercise (except those where the individual or organisation requested confidentiality) are placed in the Scottish Government library at Saughton House, Edinburgh (K Spur, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD, telephone 0131 244 4565).

All Scottish Government consultation papers and related publications (e.g., analysis of response reports) can be accessed at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations>

The views and suggestions detailed in consultation responses are analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review;
- inform the development of a particular policy;
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals; and
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented.

Final decisions on the issues under consideration will also take account of a range of other factors, including other available information and research evidence.

## Handling your response

We need to know how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be made public. Please complete and return (either on-line or by post if you are completing the consultation manually) the **Respondent Information Form** as this will ensure that we treat your response appropriately. If you ask for your response not to be published we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

You should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

Where respondents give permission for their response to be made public, these will be made available to the public in the Scottish Government Library and on the Scottish Government consultation web pages. We will check all responses where agreement to publish has been given for any potentially defamatory material before logging them in the library or placing them on the website. You can make arrangements to view responses by contacting the Scottish Government Library on 0131 244 4552. Responses can be copied and sent to you, but a charge may be made for this service.

## Analysis and reporting of responses

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us reach decisions. We will issue a report on this consultation process.

## Comments and complaints

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to:

Jeannie Hunter  
Adult Care and Support Division  
Scottish Government  
Area 2-East Rear  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

**While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.**