

Participatory Budgeting –

A Guide for Young Scot Partners.

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Introduction:

Young people are a key partner in community engagement, however traditional methods of engagement can often miss the voices of young people.

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is an important tool to support community engagement and the Scottish Government sees PB as a key way to deliver on the aims of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

“PB is recognised internationally as a way for local people to have a direct say in how, and where, public funds can be used to address local requirements.” [PB Scotland website](https://pbscotland.scot)

Different PB models exist, although it normally involves members of the community deciding through a voting process how to spend part of the budget. PB can be carried out face to face at a community meeting, online and remotely, or a combination of these.

Young Scot and PB:

Giving young people a voice in their local communities, including deciding how money and resources are allocated, is a key aim for Young Scot.

Online PB Platform:

Having developed a robust eVoting and Participatory Budgeting online platform utilising the Young Scot National Entitlement Card (NEC) as a unique identifier for young people, Young Scot are able to support access to decision making for young people in their local communities.

Over 670,000 young people have a Young Scot NEC so the ability to integrate this as a unique identifier is an important enabler of the online PB system. By using the Young Scot NEC number, we can be confident that only young people are voting (aged 11-25), that they are only casting one vote, and that they come from a specific local authority. It is also possible to assign temporary numbers to each vote – this means that any young person that may have lost or do not have access to their card, will still be able to vote.

Electronic voting on the Young Scot platform has the potential to massively increase the reach of community PB activity. Where a face to face activity might generate votes in the hundreds, online voting has the potential to attract thousands of votes.

Enhanced Digital Communications:

Young Scot compliments the online voting system by harnessing our existing high profile and trusted brand to highlight opportunities to engage, and encourage young people to take part in local PB exercises. The reach of our digital and social media platforms is unrivalled in terms of speaking directly to Scottish Young People.

Young Scot can create a bespoke website channel on <http://young.scot> with unique URL to support your local PB activity. This site will serve to provide information, signposting and guidance in relation to local projects. It will also host links to the online votes when live. Please see [North Ayrshire](http://young.scot/napb) Example >>

Young Scot will also harness our extensive social media reach on platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram/Instagram Stories, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to engage young people in the voting process.

Young Scot can also support with offline media activity where applicable, including reaching out to local news outlet/providers.

The Young Scot package of support and accessibility to PB is one that can be easily utilised and personalised to the needs of an individual local authority.

Incentivised Participation:

Young Scot can encourage participation in your vote by using our well established membership and rewards platform. Working with you we can create a points value for voting in the PB, putting in a bid to be funded, attending an event or other aspects associalted with your PB event. Young people claim their points at the younh scot membership platform. This site can also be used the other way, to encourage people to vote if they happen to log in as a member.

We always have a range of rewards to claim, from physical rewards such as sports equipment to experiences such as behind the scenes tours or work shadowing someone with an interesting job. We can work with you to create a package of rewards that might encourage your target yuoung people to vote, although there is always value in having physical ‘prizes’, young people are often keen on experiences that need not cost the authority any money – such as work shadowing the chief executive.

Co-Design & Offline Participation:

Young Scot can support your off line events and activity both before during and after the actual vote:

* Our team can work with young people to help generate ideas to be submitted as bids, or help turn young people’s first ideas into fully formed bids.
* We can help at face to face voting events, encouraging young people to have their say and hosting a ‘polling booth’ at a community event or similar.
* After the vote we can help with publicising the results- helping funded project publicise their work.

Note that face to face attendance at your events cannot be guaranteed, and additional staff time can incur additional costs – we can negotiate the best ways to use our staff time within your budget.

Saving Resources using Young Scot:

Participatory budgeting can be a resource intensive process. Creating the system, generating the bids, and then conducting a fair and robust voting process all require significant time and resources. Though we can help with the processes before the actual vote, it is the Young Scot online voting system itself that can reduce the administrative burden the most.

Our system is robust, secure and does not require any additional data from young people.

Only those young people with a valid Young Scot card that has been issued within your local authority or a temporary Young Scot number as issued by your staff will be able to log in to vote in the PB exercise. No younger children, adults, or young people from elsewhere in the world will be able to vote.

The PB system never communicates with the database of cardholders (which is held securely by NECPO at Dundee City Council) it simply looks up to check if the card number is valid or not against a list of existing numbers.

Since we do not need to ask for personal details, there is no way for any personal data to be lost or stolen, and in addition it is not possible to register multiple times using a ‘fake’ name.

PB Process & Young Scot Support:

Should you decide to use Young Scot as a partner we will work with you to make sure that you get the best possible results including the widest possible reach.

1. Young Scot card check

In partnership with Young Scot, local authority carry out some work to encourage young people to sign up for a card, or to order a replacement. This ensures a large proportion can vote without needing a new number

1. Agreeing PB budget

How much money is going to be distributed via PB? Will the costs of the PB platform be covered? (PB is included for those authorities that pay their Young Scot contribution in full, there is a charge for other authorities)

1. Agreeing constituencies/vote format

Will it be one large vote or several constituencies? (Either geographical or communities of interest). How many votes a young person will have across the constituencies, will the vote be first past the post, single transferable vote, or multiple equal votes.

1. Setting PB parameters
   1. What is and is not fundable under the PB process, set clear rules and guidelines
   2. Generating project ideas
   3. Projects are encouraged to submit proposals for the PB. Young Scot can help if there is a need to generate ideas form young people themselves.
   4. Decision about voting protocols
   5. Will the vote be solely online, or will it combine with other methods? – if so, set the protocol for the weighting of each system.
2. Pre-assessment
   1. Check that projects submitted are within the funding criteria
   2. Supply project summaries to Young Scot – **at least 2 weeks prior to vote opening**
   3. All projects with a word counted summary, image, and project data to be included online
3. Projects online – final check **1 week before vote opening**

Young Scot circulate a link to the vote – local authority check details are correct

1. Voting goes live
   1. Young people vote in the PB
   2. Social media push to get young people to vote
   3. Young Scot and local authority use all available channels to publicise the vote
2. Close vote
   1. Young Scot analysis (ongoing during the vote, result can be supplied instantly in most cases)
   2. Results supplied to local authority

Scale of vote and partner engagement

Young Scot cannot guarantee a specific number of people will vote in any PB process. Young Scot have extensive digital reach to young people in Scotland but face to face communication with young people about a vote will be the best way to ensure a large turnout.

For this reason, it is essential that alongside the Young Scot staff commitment to supporting your PB, partner agencies also have enough staff time to support the vote. This includes staff on the ground during the vote to encourage young people to engage, but also pre-vote tasks such as encouraging young people to register for a Young Scot card, upgrade their card, or make sure they know where their existing card is. Using both the opportunity to vote and the additional services available through the card (such as rewards and discounts) is a key way to engage young people prior to the vote taking place and should help to ensure a good turnout.

Using Young Scot’s e voting platform has the added benefit of re-engaging young people with your own services and the information available through Young Scot, and although there is a resource requirement to

Some examples:

1. Single constituency:

This is the easiest system to organise, though we would suggest that a maximum of 10 projects are included to avoid confusion when viewing the projects online.

1. Multiple constituencies, single vote:

A number of parallel votes across the authority – either geographical or thematic. Young people are only able to vote in any one, but only one of the constituencies.

This system is used to allow a geographic or thematic spread of funds. It allows young people to choose their community, this allows young people to vote for a project that they are prepared to travel to, or when they live at more than one house. This system works as one vote per card holder.

1. Multiple constituencies, multiple votes:

A number of parallel votes across the authority – either geographical or thematic. Young people are able to vote in all of the constituencies.

This allows young people to vote in thematic clusters of projects – for example an arts stream and a sports stream. This system is more complicated than B: because it is effectively multiple separate votes, rather than one split vote. For those young people with a Young Scot card in their hand when they vote, it is not difficult, but could be problematic for people who need a temporary number – we would only recommend this system for areas with a high Young Scot NEC use.

We are able to provide an example for the PB system at any time there is not a ‘real’ vote taking place, contact us to be sent a link and some temporary numbers to try the system.

Contact Young Scot

To Speak to Young Scot about our support for PB, please contact Gavin Crosby [gavinc@young.scot](mailto:gavinc@young.scot).

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