

Scotland's Open Government Action Plan: 2018-2020

(NB: This is working document for civil society network members to comment on during the action plan. For the full original document, please click [here](#))

Commitment 5: Transparency and participation in Scotland as the UK exits the European Union

Timeline: December 2018 – 2020

Scottish Government Leads: Organisational Readiness in Exiting the EU, Scottish Government

Civil Society Representatives: Kaela Scott, with input from all CS group

What problem are we trying to solve?

Since the UK-wide vote to leave the European Union in 2016, the UK, as the member state negotiating with the EU, has not provided objective information on the process, outcomes and potential implications of leaving the European Union.

From discussions with stakeholders in Scotland, there is a perception that the public are confused and do not trust information surrounding Brexit, with a wide range of conflicting information regarding the possible terms of the UK's future relationship with the EU, and what this means for individuals and businesses in Scotland and the EU, and other EU nationals living in Scotland.

This was also recognised by the Open Government Partnership. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) Interim Progress Report for the United Kingdom 2016-2018 National Action Plan recommended:

The government must ensure citizens have access to information on how the Brexit process will impact their lives, given the major institutional changes that will take place in the UK as a result. Moving forward, the IRM researcher recommends that the government and CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) continue experimenting with new ways of engaging with a wider range civil society stakeholders and the public around this and other key issues.

Whilst this recommendation was made to the UK Government, the impact of Brexit will be felt as strongly, and even more so in some areas of Scotland, where there are particular concerns from individuals and organisations around depopulation from less migration, less EU funding and lower exports to the EU.

This is in the context of the majority of citizens voting to remain in the EU, and where devolution means the policy and legal implications of decisions made by the UK Government will have different implications and impacts on Scotland.

What are we going to do?

The Scottish Government is committed to proactively publishing information on the potential impacts of Brexit and actual impacts as these are realised. Where research and analysis is commissioned, we will seek to publish results where possible. To support and encourage

involvement of people and communities so we can hear their views and they can understand the information, implications and impacts of the decisions taken by the UK Government. The Scottish Government will make public its preferred approach to leaving the European Union, and the supporting evidence for that approach. We will engage with stakeholders, including the Scottish Parliament, to provide our ongoing assessment of EU exit negotiations, the implications of the outcomes for Scotland and we will listen to views to inform the Scottish Government's response. This will help to raise understanding by policy makers about the implications and to help protect what matters to the people of Scotland as the UK leaves the EU.

This is in addition to the commitments contained within our Agreement with the Scottish Parliament on Inter-governmental Relations, which has been commended to other administrations as a model of good practice.

The Scottish Government has already published several papers including:

- In our [Scotland's Place in Europe publication](#) published in 2016 and updated in 2018, we clearly set out potential implications of Brexit and our position to remain in the EU.
- [What's at Stake for Individuals](#) and [What's at Stake for Businesses](#) highlights what stakeholders in Scotland are concerned about .

All our publications relating to Brexit are [collated here](#).

How will this help solve the problem?

Publishing a clear position, based on evidence and analysis, at an early stage helped ensure that people were informed as negotiations began.

By continuing dialogue across and within communities we will continue to improve understanding of all of the issues people are facing in regard to the impacts of Brexit; increase understanding of and influence the Scottish Government's policy with regards to negotiations with the UK Government and help build consensus in Scotland for mitigation of the impacts of Brexit on people's lives and wellbeing.

This commitment supports the Open Government Partnership values of openness, accountability and participation in relation to arguably the biggest policy impact for a generation or more, which will change not only the policy environment but the legal basis and basic rights of all those resident in Scotland and Scots resident in EU countries.

At the time of developing the 2018-2020 Scottish National Action Plan the shape of the Brexit agreement and therefore the potential impacts on Scotland are not known. We are therefore keen to build on flexibility to this commitment to enable us to respond appropriately to this fast moving environment which is largely outwith the control of the Scottish Government.

Activities

1. To hold 3 roundtable discussions with citizens and interest groups in the run up to Brexit
2. To engage rural communities and work with Scottish Rural Parliament and potentially others, to deliver a discussion on the impacts of Brexit on rural communities
3. To work with Children in Scotland to deliver a young people's advisory panel on Brexit and MyLifeMySay to deliver Brexit Cafes for young people to understand their concerns and views on the future UK-EU relationship with a report due in December, 2018

4. As set out in the Scottish Government's Programme for Government, we are making provision for a service that will provide practical advice, information and support for EU citizens in Scotland. We envisage a service that will improve awareness and understanding of rights, entitlements and requirements, and we will set out more details of the service in the coming weeks.

5. We will make provision for an advice and support service for those 235,000 EU citizens resident in Scotland. This will seek to offer information on the new settled status scheme and provide support to EU citizens in understanding the impact Brexit will have on them.

State Actors involved: Other partners could be included as this work evolves.

Active partners could include: Open Government Network, Rural Parliament, YoungScot. Other partners could be included as this work evolves.