

The Inquiry's key questions

1. Political parties have been absolutely central to British politics for many decades. But in recent years the number of people joining parties or saying they identify with one or other of the main parties has declined sharply. **So how can political party membership and allegiance be made more attractive? Are there more effective ways of involving people in politics than through parties?**
2. Some people argue that the government at Westminster is too powerful. They have called for more responsibility to be given to local councils and devolved institutions. Other people claim that the influence of unelected bodies such as major companies, international organisations and appointed authorities is too great and needs to be balanced by greater powers for our elected representatives. **But would greater powers for local councils, devolved institutions and our elected representatives encourage more people to get involved in politics? Would such change help more people feel more confident about the possibility of influencing political decisions?**
3. Some people claim the media breeds cynicism about politics and politicians which discourages political interest and involvement. **Is this true? If so, how can the media play a positive role in encouraging political involvement?**
4. The number of people voting in General Elections has declined considerably in the last ten years. Turnout is also very low in elections for local councils, devolved institutions and the European Parliament. **What changes would encourage a larger number of people to feel it is worth voting?**
5. Some people argue that voting in elections is not enough. They believe today's citizens need an opportunity to discuss and have a direct say over individual policies through other means such as referenda, internet forums and public meetings designed to have significant power to influence political decisions. **Would more opportunities to do this attract participants and would they encourage greater trust in the policies pursued by politicians?**
6. Some groups in society are very unlikely to be involved in politics. Young people are far less likely to vote or join parties than older people. The poorest sections of our society and black and minority ethnic communities are less likely to vote, join parties or take part in any sort of political activity. **What action would encourage greater political involvement by the groups that are least involved with politics?**
7. **Is there anything further about participation and engagement in democracy you would like to add?**

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Citizens' Inquiry Ltd, registered in England and Wales, No. 5211041

What will be happen to responses?

All evidence will be available to the Inquiry Commission in its original form. The Inquiry research team will also identify key themes arising from all evidence and present these to the Commission. A draft version of the final report will be made available to everyone who takes part in the Inquiry – including members of the public who have submitted evidence – and people will be able to make further comments for consideration by the Commission.

The political establishment are deeply worried by the growing disconnection between public and politics in Britain. Powerful figures have already shown a great deal of interest in the Inquiry and its potential findings. Input into the **POWER** Inquiry will be part of a process that will change British democracy for the better.

How to submit responses

Use the online form at www.powerinquiry.org or email info@powerinquiry.org.

Or write to:

The **POWER** Inquiry
2nd Floor, Downstream Building
1 London Bridge
London, SE1 9BG

The closing date for responses is **Friday 15 July 2005**.

Other assistance

- If you would like to organise an event or meeting to explore one of more of these questions and require support, please contact Emma Burnell on 0845 345 5307 or emma@powerinquiry.org.
- If you need these questions rewritten or translated to make them more appropriate to a particular audience, contact Adam Lent on 0845 345 5307 or adam@powerinquiry.org. As part of **POWER**'s research programme a range of material has been produced to scope out the areas that **POWER** is investigating. They can be found in the publications section of the website. Media articles can be found in the news area of the website. If you have not received an Inquiry Pack please contact the **POWER** office to request one to be sent to you.
- And finally - it is critical that the Inquiry's findings reflect what people think about Britain's democracy. It is important to us that you have your say, so if there is anything further we can do to assist you in submitting your views and ideas please let us know.

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