

Research Brief

# Inclusion and diversity among expert witnesses in deliberative mini-publics

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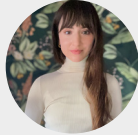
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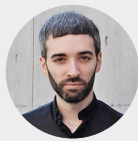
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## Research Brief

# Inclusion and diversity among expert witnesses in deliberative mini-publics

### Executive Summary

**Democratic innovations including deliberative mini-publics such as Citizens' Assemblies have been gaining prominence as a means of informing policy and decision-making in recent years.** Such processes typically involve experts to help participants understand issues and potential solutions. While there is emphasis on diversity and inclusivity across mini-public participants to ensure that they represent wider society, much less attention is given to the experts involved. Yet, having a diversity of identities and experiences represented among experts is important for the legitimacy of deliberative processes and their outcomes.

Recently, both in the UK and internationally, **the use of citizen deliberations has grown rapidly, particularly to inform on climate policy and action.** The disproportionate impacts of climate change on particular groups, including lower income groups, people of colour and younger generations, puts inclusion in decision making in the spotlight. There is a recognized need to urgently diversify who participates in climate change decision making (Dietzel & Venn, 2021).

**We analysed publicly available materials reporting on 23 citizen deliberations** (including Citizens' Assemblies, Citizens' Panels, and Citizens' Juries) **on climate change held in the UK since 2019** to explore:

- (i) *Diversity among experts* involved in citizen deliberations on climate action.
- (ii) *The considerations for inclusion of experts*, as well as barriers/enablers to participation in the process design.

**We find that none of the citizen deliberations on climate action report demographic information for the experts giving evidence during proceedings. There are no equity, diversity and inclusion targets or measures to support participation of experts from minority or marginalised demographics or identities. Further, there is no detailed and transparent account of the process of identifying and selecting experts, or those appointed to oversee expert input.**

Given that democratic processes should be equitable and accessible, it is paramount that organisers and governing bodies of deliberative processes resource and implement transparent and inclusive processes for expert involvement.

Our recommendations are relevant to any decision-making processes that include evidence-giving from experts.

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## Key findings and recommendations

Mini-publics are centred on transparency and representation. As such, open reporting on governance and selection processes should be considered good practice, including for expert witness identification, selection and inclusion. In the 23 mini-publics that we reviewed, great attention is given to recruiting a group of citizens who are representative of the population. For example, all reports present a selected—yet often incomplete—amount of demographic information of citizen participants. But **this is not the case for expert witnesses**.

Key findings and recommendations for action:

- There are no equity, diversity, and inclusion targets nor demographic information specifically regarding expert witnesses in the public reports. It is not possible to assess issues of over-representation or under-representation of particular groups among expert witnesses from public reports.

**Recommendation: Witness demographic targets should be set to ensure a demographically diverse and representative pool of evidence-givers. Demographic information should be collected and included in public reports, while safeguarding witnesses' anonymity.**

- There is no transparency around the process of identifying and selecting expert witnesses, which is overseen by governance teams. Further, there is no transparency regarding the process of identifying and selecting individuals for governance roles, nor regarding the interplay between different governance roles.

**Recommendation: There should be transparent reporting on the processes of identification and recruitment of all roles within mini-publics. Targets for equity, diversity, and inclusion should be set and reported.**

- Measures to manage or mitigate barriers to expert witness participation in citizen deliberations are not reported consistently throughout the process design.

**Recommendation: Barriers to expert witness participation should be clearly identified and reported and sufficient measures taken to mitigate these barriers and to ensure an inclusive environment for witnesses.**

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## 1. Introduction

Mini-publics aim to support improved, inclusive policy making, and foster trust in the decision-making process (Elstub and McLaverty 2014). In recent years, these democratic innovations (e.g. Citizens' Assemblies, Citizens' Juries) have gained prominence as a means of addressing the democratic deficit of current institutions of representative democracy and mitigating the rising political disaffection among citizens. Citizens' Assemblies particularly have been increasingly employed to inform climate policy (Cherry et al. 2021). Such 'Climate Assemblies' have been seen as a way to respond to the failure of elected representatives to adequately deal with the climate crisis and to challenge the short-termism of modern politics (Willis et al. 2022).

Both in the UK and internationally, the popularity of mini-publics like Citizens' Assemblies has grown rapidly (OECD 2020) to inform on climate policy and action (see Ireland's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change 2017, Climate Assembly UK 2020, France's Citizens' Convention on Climate 2019-21, Scotland's Climate Assembly 2020-21).

Given their prevalence and influence in contemporary policy making (OECD 2020), it is important to understand how such processes can be designed in the most democratically legitimate way. To date, much attention has been paid to representation and inclusion considerations for citizen participants<sup>1</sup> in mini-publics. However, experts also play a crucial role in governance and delivery, including information provision as expert 'witnesses'. Inclusion considerations among witnesses such as gender, ethnicity, type of expertise have so far been largely overlooked (Roberts et al. 2020). Having an inclusive and diverse set of identities and experiences represented among expert witnesses is important for the legitimacy of deliberative processes and their outcomes.

Inclusivity is particularly important for climate action due to the disproportionate impacts of climate change on minority and vulnerable groups (Dietzel & Venn, 2021). With the rise of mini-publics on climate change we analysed public-facing materials reporting on 23 citizen deliberations on climate (including 16 Citizens' Assemblies, 4 Citizens' Panels, and 3 Citizens' Juries) held in the UK<sup>2</sup> to explore:

- Diversity among expert witnesses involved in mini-publics on climate action and whether there are measures in place to support inclusion and diversity in the process.
- The considerations for inclusion of experts and the barriers/enablers to expert witnesses' participation in the design of the deliberative processes.

## 2. Methods and scope of work

These case studies, summarised in [Figure 1](#) and [Appendix 1](#), are numbered (n.) for ease of reference in this brief. Over half (15) of the citizen deliberations took place at least partially online because of the COVID-19 pandemic; those that took place before the start of the pandemic in March 2020 all took place in person. The purpose or mandate ranged from informing local policy (n. 3-23) to national policy

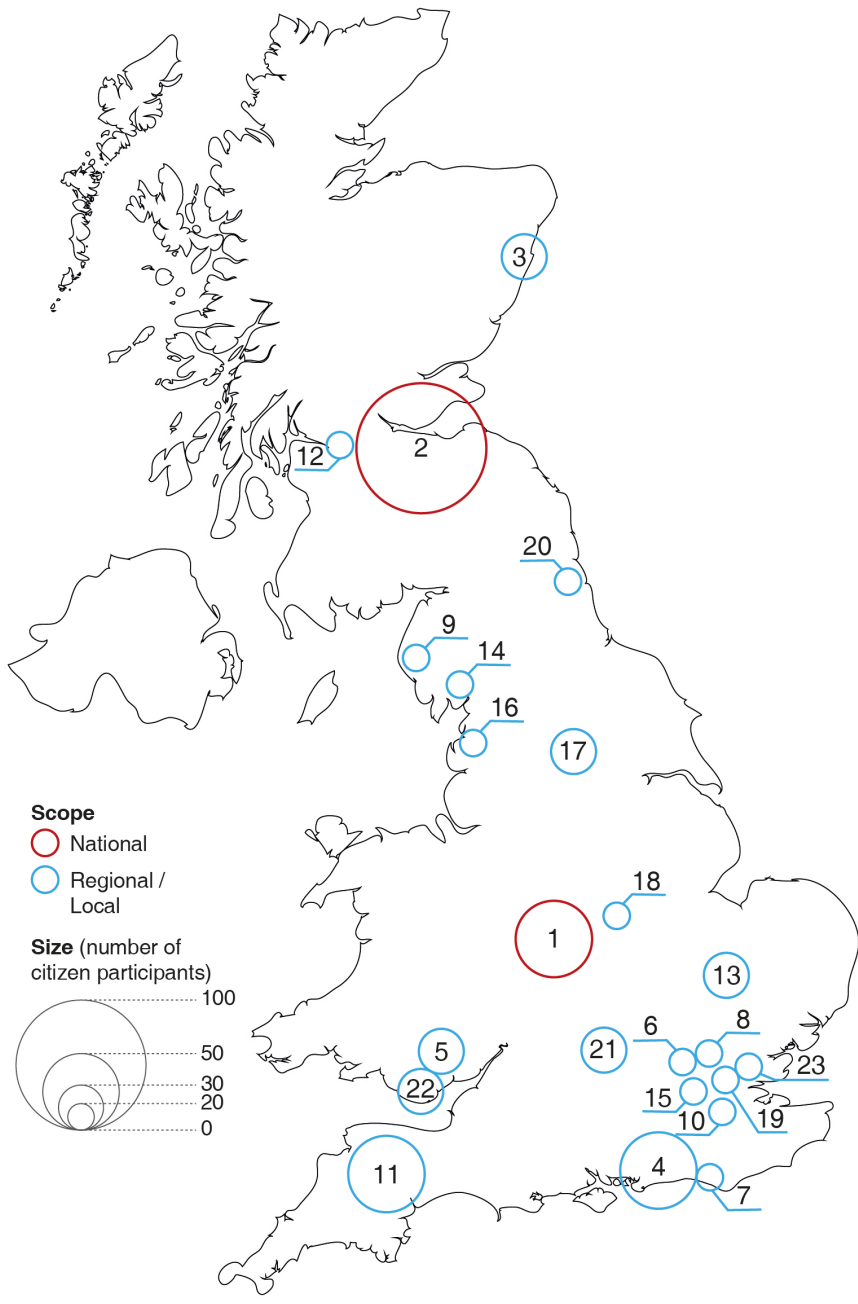
*There has been rapid growth in the use of mini-publics like Citizens Assemblies to inform on climate policy, both in the UK and internationally.*

### Notes

1. We use the word 'citizen participants' to refer to members of the public who are participating in a mini-public. Depending on the mini-public, citizen participants might be referred to as members or jurors, among other terms.

2. See Section 2 for the selection criteria used in our study.

- Citizen Deliberation**
- 1 Climate Assembly UK
  - 2 Scotland's Climate Assembly
  - 3 Aberdeenshire Climate and Fairness Panel
  - 4 Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly
  - 5 Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly
  - 6 Brent Climate Assembly
  - 7 Brighton & Hove Climate Assembly
  - 8 Camden Citizens' Assembly on the Climate Crisis
  - 9 Copeland People's Panel on Climate Change
  - 10 Croydon Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change
  - 11 Devon Climate Assembly
  - 12 Glasgow Citizens' Assembly on the Climate Emergency
  - 13 Greater Cambridge Citizens' Assembly
  - 14 Kendal Climate Change Citizens' Jury
  - 15 Lambeth's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change
  - 16 Lancaster District Climate Change People's Jury
  - 17 Leeds Climate Change Citizens' Jury
  - 18 Leicester Climate Assembly
  - 19 Newham Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change
  - 20 North of Tyne Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change
  - 21 Oxford Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change
  - 22 South Wales Valleys Climate and Fairness Panel
  - 23 Thurrock Climate and Fairness Panel



**Figure 1.** Map showing the location of the 23 citizen deliberations (16 Citizens' Assemblies, 4 Citizens' Panels, and 3 Citizens' Juries) examined in this work. The numbers correspond to the name of the mini-public, shown to the left of the map. The colour of the circle reflects whether the scope of the mini-public was national (red) or local/regional (blue), and the size of the circle indicates the number of citizen participants.



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(n. 1, 2). Over 100 citizens participated in Climate Assemblies with a national remit (n. 1, 2) while mini-publics with a local remit had an average of 41 citizen participants, ranging from less than 20 (n. 22) to nearly 70 (n. 11); the number of witnesses ranged from over 100 (n. 2) to less than 10 (n. 10) depending on size and scope of the mini-public. The length of the process varied from 16 sessions (n. 16) to one session (n. 18), and almost all<sup>3</sup> were held entirely on weekends and evenings.

The mini-publics were identified through systematic search of Participedia<sup>4</sup> and Involve's Citizens' Assemblies Tracker<sup>5</sup>, cross-referenced and supplemented by web searches to ensure that most relevant mini-publics were included in our sample. We consider only those held in the United Kingdom since 2019, and for which full public-facing reports had been published by March 2022.

For each case study, information was obtained through qualitative content analysis of public-facing final reports about the selection process for citizens and expert witnesses, inclusion considerations, aspects of inclusion in design of these processes and outcomes relating to expert inclusion. A list of witness names and affiliations was compiled from these public-facing final reports and official websites.

In addition to content analysis, and using Scotland's Climate Assembly as a case study (n. 2), we undertook governance mapping to:

1. Clarify the organisational goals and processes underpinning the Climate Assemblies.
2. Identify factors and stages within the process of identification and selection of expert witnesses that might hinder or increase equity, diversity, and inclusivity.
3. Understand the connections between different actors involved in decision-making about citizen deliberations.

### 3. Why is diversity and inclusion among expert witnesses important?

#### 3.1 Mini-publics aim to support relevant and inclusive decision-making

Because mini-publics are on a path to becoming even more widespread and influential in policy making (OECD 2020), it is important to understand how processes can be designed in the most democratically legitimate way.

Mini-publics aim to ensure political equality and promote representation, especially of citizens who tend to be marginalised by existing institutions of representative democracy. Mini-public participants engage in a deliberative process to reach conclusions and make policy recommendations (Pow 2021; Farrell et al. 2019). Typically, mini-publics are informed by contributions from experts (also referred to as witnesses, evidence-givers, or informants, among other names) to help participants understand the topic at hand, potential policy solutions, the wider policy context, and the lived experience of those impacted (see Lightbody & Roberts 2019, Roberts et al., 2020). Information giving and sharing can take place through talks, videos, question and answer discussion, small

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#### Notes

3. Specific timings were not explicitly reported for 5 Assemblies (n. 5, 10, 11, 15, 17).

4. Participedia is a crowdsourced database of democratic initiatives and public participation.

5. Involve is a UK public participation charity.

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*Having a diversity of identities and experiences represented among witnesses in deliberative processes is important for the legitimacy of the processes and outcomes.*

group discussion, written summaries and so on, and can be designed to present arguments for the different sides of the policy debate. Organisers can also include activities to support participants to critically engage with the evidence (Lightbody & Roberts 2019).

Mini-publics are designed to improve the policy-making process and its democratic legitimacy. Participant diversity is important for the legitimacy of both processes and outcomes - people judge political processes to be more legitimate if those affected by the decisions participate. Citizens are also more likely to accept the decisions, even when they go against their own views, when those affected by them are involved in decision-making (Esaiasson et al. 2019; de Fine Licht et al. 2014; Clayton et al. 2019; Rasmussen and Reher 2022 ). As such, participant selection processes place emphasis on ensuring that the representative subset of the population is as similar to the general public as possible (Fournier et al. 2011; Farrell et al. 2019), and put measures in place to decrease barriers to participation. For instance, the Climate Assembly UK remunerated participants, covered childcare costs, chose accessible timings and venues, and provided adjustments for disabled participants (Climate Assembly UK, 2021).

Yet, diversity and inclusivity among experts contributing to mini-publics has received much less attention from organisers of Citizens' Assemblies and from public debate (Roberts et al. 2020).

### **3.2 Diversity among witnesses is important for the efficacy and legitimacy of the process**

Experts play a crucial role in deliberative mini-publics because they provide an essential part of the input of the deliberative process: as the stakeholders they set the agenda and determine what sort of evidence will be heard, and as the evidence giving experts they set the boundaries for discussion by determining what aspect of the issue is discussed, including which information to provide (Roberts et al. 2020). Lived experience is also an important dimension of expertise. Having a diversity of identities and experiences represented among witnesses in deliberative processes is important for the legitimacy of the processes and outcomes in two key ways:

- **Ensuring diversity among witnesses benefits the democratic quality of the deliberative process** and its outcomes by making them more representative of the views and interests of the public, and especially those of traditionally marginalised and underrepresented sections of the public<sup>6</sup> (Junk et al. 2021).
- Greater diversity among witnesses is likely to **increase engagement at mini-publics among participants who belong to marginalised groups**, as feeling represented among 'elites' can enhance feelings of political interest and engagement among citizens (Banducci et al. 2004; Barnes and Burchard 2013; Gay 2002). Research shows that the attributes of the evidence-giving process affect how participants process and trust the information (Roberts et al. 2020).

#### **Notes**

6. The presence of certain social groups and identities among witnesses alone does not ensure that the range of views and interests among these groups are represented in the deliberations and outcomes; it is simply one step to make their representation more likely.



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**Having a diverse set of witnesses is likely to make Climate Assemblies as institutions, as well as their outputs, more legitimate** in the eyes of the wider public and those affected by its outcomes:

- Research on how citizens perceive the legitimacy of policy-making processes shows that processes which consult those who are affected by the policy are seen as more legitimate (Rasmussen and Reher 2022; Beyers and Aras 2021; Clayton et al. 2019). The perceived legitimacy of political processes, in turn, affects individuals' willingness to accept and comply with decisions (Esaiaasson et al. 2019).
- Diversity and inclusivity among witnesses might have particularly important effects on citizens from groups in society who are traditionally marginalised and excluded. Not seeing people 'like them' in positions of influence can make individuals feel that they have no say in politics and that their views and experiences do not count (Phillips 1995; Mansbridge 1999). Thus, ensuring that witnesses represent the diversity of society may strengthen trust in the political process and evoke a sense of citizenship and belonging among traditionally excluded groups. In turn, they might become more likely to engage with politics at all kinds of levels, including deliberative processes, but also community engagement or participation in elections.

Thus, there are direct and indirect implications to diversity amongst expert witnesses in mini-publics.

### **3.3. Proactive steps must be taken for inclusive witness recruitment**

**Active measures must be taken to achieve diversity among expert witnesses in mini-publics.** Without intervention, it is unlikely that witnesses will reflect the diverse range of evidence givers who could potentially fulfil this role. Indeed, previous work has highlighted evidence of poor diversity among witnesses (Roberts et al. 2020).

Furthermore, if inclusivity is not considered when seeking diverse representation among expert witnesses, systemic issues of inequities or underrepresentation will not be addressed. To avoid such shortcomings, mini-public governance teams should take a holistic and intersectional approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion. For example, when it comes to expert witnesses, governance teams should consider who is recognised to be - or who identifies as - an expert? Marginalised groups are often associated with stereotypes of lower competence (Fiske et al. 2002), which means that those involved in the selection and recruitment of witnesses might (unconsciously) overlook experts from these groups. Moreover, since these stereotypes and resulting barriers permeate society, individuals with marginalised identities might be less likely to hold positions conventionally associated with expertise. This is particularly true in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields, given the historical and persistent marginalisation and underrepresentation of women, people of colour, LGBT+, disabled, and working-class people (Blackburn 2017; Careers Research & Advisory Centre (CRAC), 2020; Equate Scotland 2020; Institute of Physics et al. 2019).

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*None of the citizen deliberations on climate in our sample provide expert witness demographic information within public-facing reports.*

As a result, **proactive steps are required to ensure that the process of witness identification and selection is as inclusive as possible**. For this, **barriers to witness participation must be identified and - where possible - mitigated**. Further, **steps should be taken to foster an inclusive environment for all participants involved in deliberative processes**.

#### **4. Findings: considerations around diversity among witnesses for Climate Assemblies**

We examined diversity among evidence-givers or ‘witnesses’ in mini-publics held in the UK on climate action since 2019. In total, our sample of 23 citizen deliberations involved 476 individuals as witnesses.

Given that processes such as mini-publics are centred on transparency and representation, it follows that open reporting<sup>7</sup> on governance and selection processes would be expected, including with respect to witness identification, selection, and diversity. This is not the case for the 23 mini-publics we examined.

##### **4.1 Expert witness demographic information is not collected and reported**

None of the citizen deliberations on climate in our sample provide expert witness demographic information within public-facing reports. Indeed, there is no indication that witness demographic data is collected.

Where the number of expert witnesses is small (e.g. less than 20 individuals, as was the case in Assemblies n. 7-10 and 12), it may not be appropriate to publish witness demographic information, as it might compromise witness protected characteristics.

While the names and affiliations of witnesses were provided in all but one case (n. 18, Leicester Climate Assembly), it is not appropriate to infer gender and other identity categories from this information; the witnesses themselves should be given the opportunity to self-report or self-identify.

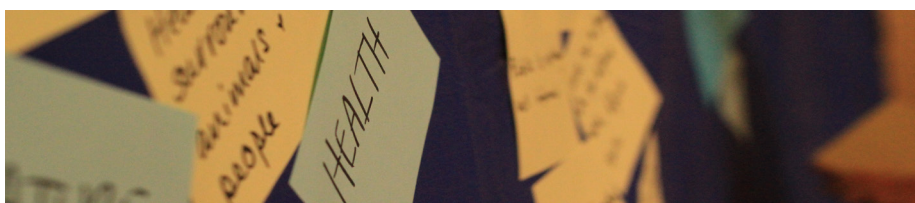
##### **4.2 Transparent selection criteria to ensure diversity and representation among witnesses are not reported**

None of the reports mention any diversity and inclusion initiatives taken in the selection of witnesses. There are no statements of intent regarding witness inclusion or diversity and no diversity objectives or targets. Four (n. 4, Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly; 5, Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly; 8, Camden Citizens’ Assembly on the Climate Crisis; 16, Lancaster District Climate Change People’s Jury) report desire for, or achievement of, diversity among witnesses, but in reference to diversity of perspectives and/or affiliations rather than demographic diversity or identities. Two Assemblies (n. 4, Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly; 11, Devon Climate Assembly) include testimonies from ‘lived experience experts’, and in these cases the criteria for ‘lived experience’ witnesses are also unclear.

In contrast, diversity criteria for Assembly participants are very clear, and centred on creating a sample that is representative of the Assembly’s community of concern. For example, Climate Assembly UK (n. 1) sought to be representative of the UK as a whole, while mini-publics with a local focus (n. 3-23) sought to be representative of their locality.

#### **Notes**

7. We examined public information and reports available in the period February - June 2022.



Information on age, gender, household income, ethnicity, and geography are considered in all cases, and attitudes toward climate change are also gathered and considered in 16 cases (n. 1-5, 9, 11-12, 14, 15-17, 19-20, 22-23). However, only one Assembly gathered and reported data on disability and sexual orientation of Assembly members (n. 12; Glasgow Citizens' Assembly on the Climate Emergency).

#### **4.3 Detail on the process for identifying and selecting witnesses are not reported**

Most (19) of the reports laid out responsibilities regarding witness identification and selection. These were usually the remit of the Oversight Panel, sometimes called the Oversight Group, Expert Advisory Board, Advisory Group, and so on. However, the specific criteria or characteristics of expertise being sought, and how these were decided, is not clearly explained. Of all the processes we reviewed, Scotland's Climate Assembly (n.2) was clearest in terms of explaining the design process that was followed to identify topics and positions or frames from which potential speakers were drawn (Scotland's Climate Assembly: Recommendation for Action). Despite this, the specific manner in which experts for each scenario were chosen remains unclear. Reports for other citizen deliberations make succinct statements such as "the identity of the commentators was decided upon by members of the Oversight Panel" (Shared Future, 2021b, pp 12). In one case, Assembly members were able to request additional speakers to cover topics they felt "would improve their ability to respond to the Assembly question" (Newham London & Mutual Gain 2020, pp 13). Four Assemblies do not report how witnesses were selected (n. 8 Camden Citizens' Assembly, 10. Croydon's Citizens' Assembly, 18. Leicester Climate Assembly, 21. Oxford Citizens' Assembly).

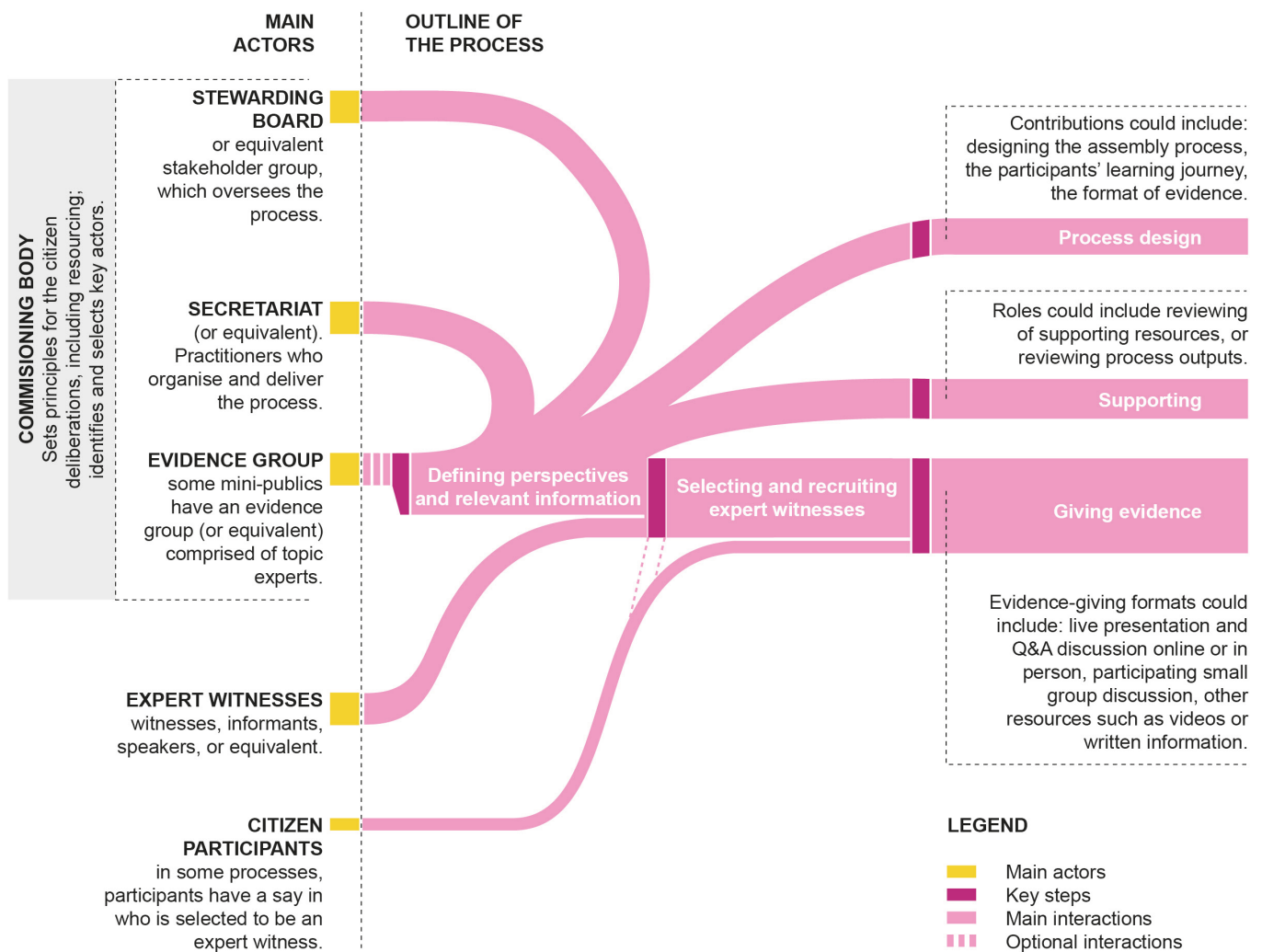
Thus, no substantial information is available to assess whether the process of witness selection was fair and inclusive.

#### **4.4 No accessibility and inclusion considerations to support witness participation are reported**

Across all reports, only one in-person mini-public (n. 1, Climate Assembly UK) specified that the venue was fully accessible. For the 15 citizen deliberations that took place, at least in part online, members were offered technical support and devices from which to access the online proceedings. There are no reports of such support for witness participation.

All citizen deliberations took place on weekends or evenings (i.e. outside of standard working hours) to support citizen participation. For

*None of the citizen deliberation reports we assessed mention any diversity and inclusion initiatives taken in the selection of witnesses. There are no statements of intent regarding witness inclusion or diversity and no diversity objectives or targets.*



**Figure 2.** Schematic outlining the process of identifying and selecting experts in deliberative mini-publics and the actors involved, as well as the different roles that witnesses can fulfil. The schematic is based on the processes outlined for Scotland’s Climate Assembly (n. 2). We find that the process of identifying and selecting individuals, and associated inclusion considerations, are unclear for all actors except for citizen participants. The power relationships between different actors (i.e. who has the final say on witness selection) is also not specified.

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witnesses, while contributing may be part of their professional roles or affiliations, participation essentially equates to working overtime; and whether witnesses receive support from their employers for this (e.g., paid overtime, flexible working, or time off In lieu) will depend on their workplace policies and management. Other witnesses might represent charities, community interest groups, or other third sector organisations, in an unpaid capacity. Twenty mini-publics (all but n. 10 Croydon Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change; 12, Glasgow Citizens' Assembly on the Climate Emergency; 15, Lambeth's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change) report providing citizen participants with financial compensation for their participation of usually between £100-300. However, remuneration or compensation for witnesses is not mentioned in any of the reports. We note that Assembly n. 13 (Greater Cambridge Citizens' Assembly) refers to a £3.5K budget for "Advisory group/ Speaker/ Expert lead honorarium/ accommodation/ travel/ subsistence expenses" (Involve, 2019, pp 46), but it remains unclear to whom this money was allocated, how much was allocated, and how this was decided. Further, there was no mention in the reports of support measures in place for witnesses, such as the provision of childcare, to support their participation (this was covered for participants in at least one Assembly; n. 1, Climate Assembly UK). In fact, none of the reports acknowledge potential barriers to witness participation.

Many of the reports make clear how the process sought to minimise barriers to participation and create an inclusive environment for deliberation for the citizen participants. However, there is no information about reducing barriers or fostering inclusive environments for the witnesses. For example, it is not clear whether the organisers assured potential witnesses from minority, marginalised or underrepresented groups of the measures taken to ensure that the Assembly would be a supportive and inclusive space, or that accommodation and other such logistical support would be offered where required.

Thus, no substantial information is available to assess whether the process of witness participation was fair and inclusive.

#### **4.5 A few people are expert witnesses for multiple citizen deliberations on climate action**

In general, there is variety among witnesses contributing to citizen deliberations on climate action. Of the 476 individuals involved as expert witnesses, 45 (9.4%) provided evidence to more than one mini-public in our sample, and three have been a witness at five or six (all academic researchers working in climate topics). Thus it is not the case that the same people are providing evidence across different citizen deliberations on climate action.

#### **4.6 There are multiple routes for inequalities to manifest in the process of witness identification, selection, and participation.**

Diverse and inclusive governance groups such as Oversight Boards may pave the way for a more diverse set of expert witnesses. However, demographic information or reports for these groups are not provided for any of the mini-publics in our sample.

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*For legitimacy, inclusion and diversity considerations should be considered at every step of the process for all individuals involved in mini-publics.*

For the 23 mini-publics we reviewed, the process of identification and recruitment of individuals into governance groups responsible for witness identification such as the Oversight Panel or Evidence Group is not clearly explained. As such, the steps that lead to establishing the management team(s) and the criteria used to appointing the members of those groups are unclear. It might be reported that the Evidence Group members are appointed by the Stewarding Board, but how are these individuals identified? Who decides who comprises the Stewarding Board, and how are those individuals identified? Thus, similar to the process of witness selection, no substantial information is available in public-facing materials to assess whether the process of recruitment into governance roles was fair and inclusive.

Governance roles can have cascading routes of influence, as outlined in [Figure 2](#). For Scotland's Climate Assembly (n. 2), a selected group of experts, the Evidence Group, did not merely identify the witnesses: they also influenced the design of the Assembly, gave evidence themselves as 'informants', and reviewed and fed back Assembly draft outcomes and recommendations. In other words, some witness roles extend far beyond giving evidence. The influence of such roles strengthens the case for a fully transparent account of the ways these experts were identified and selected, or whether any measures were in place to ensure that the group was diverse, inclusive, and representative of a wide and balanced range of point of views, backgrounds, and lived experiences.

While different roles and responsibilities in governance, design and delivery of Climate Assemblies tend to be clearly outlined in the reports, how these groups interact as far as power, authority and agency are less clear. In other words, who is ultimately responsible for what, who has the first say, and who has the final say? There is no mention in any of the reports of how decision-making arrangements were arranged to be fair, inclusive, and transparent, and process evaluations tend to focus on the Assembly arrangements and proceedings rather than governance.

Finally, none of the processes we reviewed referred to equity, diversity and inclusion in their mandates. As expert witness diversity is neither reported on nor ensured, we find that equity and inclusion fail to be successfully embedded as key principles guiding Climate Assembly processes.

## 5. Detailed recommendations

Our work has highlighted a lack of transparency around expert witnesses involved in mini-publics, and lack of transparency around those selected for the governance roles of such processes. For legitimacy, inclusion and diversity considerations should be considered at every step of the process for all individuals involved in mini-publics.

We outline recommendations below, and identify who is responsible for implementing particular recommendations. While our analysis has focussed on citizen deliberations on climate action, our recommendations are relevant to all deliberative processes and democratic innovations where information provision plays a role.

### Notes

8. Such as [Pass the Mic Scotland](#) or [The Global South Climate Database](#).



**Table 2: Recommendations (R) to cultivate inclusion and diversity among expert witnesses in deliberative mini-publics.**

**Commissioning bodies should:**

*R1:* Mandate that diversity and inclusion principles are embedded across all aspects of the process being commissioned, including in governance roles, witnesses, and reporting.

*R2:* Commit to resourcing diversity and inclusion across all aspects of the process.

*R3:* Expect and request monitoring and reporting on diversity and inclusion.

*R4:* Design and report on transparent process of identification and selection of those in governance roles.

**Governance groups (including evidence groups) selecting expert witnesses should:**

*R5:* Design and report on a transparent process of identification and selection of expert witnesses.

*R6:* Identify and, where possible, reduce or remove barriers to participation among expert witnesses. Seek to understand what is required for equitable accessibility amongst expert witnesses.

*R7:* Clearly state inclusion considerations in invitations to prospective witnesses (from making 'the room' a safe and inclusive space, to reducing barriers to participation including resourcing and remuneration).

*R8:* Remunerate expert witnesses and provide other support to aid their contribution (childcare support, online and/or support to produce materials)

**Practitioners (leading the design, delivery and reporting) should:**

*R9:* Commit to, state, and put into practice inclusion principles for citizen participants and expert witnesses.

*R10:* Consider and report on inclusion across the process for all actors that play a role.

*R11:* Collect and report demographic data from expert witnesses and those in governance roles.

**Expert witnesses should:**

*R12:* Expert witnesses should ask the organisers whether witness diversity is being considered in the witness selection process. If it is not, the witness could suggest or request that it should be. If the organisers choose not to consider diversity amongst witnesses, the expert could consider declining the role.

*R13:* Experts should request support if there is no remuneration or support offered from the organisers to aid equitable accessibility for all experts (childcare support, online and/or IT support to produce materials). If no support is provided, the expert could consider declining the role.

*R14:* Experts who are 'the usual suspects' could consider making room for more diverse experts; for example, by suggesting suitable but often overlooked candidates, earlier career experts, different types of experts (i.e., lived experience if appropriate) or directing organisers to organisations aiming to widen representation.<sup>8</sup>

*R15:* If experts feel comfortable to do so, highlight to organisers the reasons why they cannot take part so that the organisers can better understand the motivation behind who does and does not take on the role of expert witnesses, and take steps to improve accessibility

**Citizen participants & wider society should:**

*R16:* Demand that diversity and inclusion principles are embedded across the mini-public.

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## Appendix 1: Summary information for selected Climate Assemblies held in the UK between 2019 - 2022

**Table A1: Selected Assembly and Witness Diversity Data**

Direct quotes are derived from full reports and are followed by page numbers in parentheses.

Name [number]	Dates	Location and Duration	What was the task/question posed to members? (report page number)	How many witnesses? (what speakers/witnesses are called)	Website / Report Citation
Climate Assembly UK [1]	Jan-May 2020	In person (Birmingham) & online: 6 weekends.	"How should the UK meet its target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050?" (10).	47 ('informants': cover the range of views available on the topic; 'advocates': giving their own view or that of their organisation")	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Report: Climate Assembly UK (2021) <a href="#">The path to net zero: Climate Assembly UK Full Report</a>.</li> </ul>
Scotland's Climate Assembly [2]	Nov 2020 - Mar 2021	Online: 2 weekends (10 hours) and 2 evenings (3 hours)	"How should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way?" (6).	101 (speakers; experts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Report: Scotland's Climate Assembly (2021) <a href="#">Scotland's Climate Assembly - Recommendations for Action</a>.</li> </ul>
Aberdeenshire Climate and Fairness Panel [3]	Feb-Mar 2021	Online: 8 sessions at weekends and evenings over 6 weeks	"What practical steps should we take together in Aberdeenshire to address the climate crisis and restore nature in a way that is fair for everyone?" (9).	21 (speakers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Institute for Public Policy Research and the Aberdeenshire Climate and Fairness Panel (2021) <a href="#">Aberdeenshire Climate and Fairness Panel: Briefing and Juror Recommendations</a>.</li> </ul>
Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly [4]	Sept-Dec 2020	Online: 5 sessions (day of week, etc. unreported)	"How can we in Adur and Worthing collectively tackle climate change and support our places to thrive?" and "What does this mean for the way we live and for our local environment?" (1).	29 (expert speakers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Adur &amp; Worthing Climate Assembly (2021) <a href="#">Adur &amp; Worthing Climate Assembly Recommendations Report</a>.</li> </ul>

Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly [5]	Mar 2021	Online: 10 sessions (2 weekend sessions and 2 evening sessions); 23 hours total	“What should we do in Blaenau Gwent to tackle the climate crisis in a way that is fair and improves living standards for everyone?” (2).	24 (speakers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Cynnal Cymru &amp; Electoral Reform Society Cymru (2021) <a href="#">Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly Report</a>.</li> </ul>
Brent Climate Assembly [6]	Nov-Dec 2019	In person: 3 sessions, all weekends: “The Assembly met at Brent Civic Centre over three Saturdays in November and December 2019” (13).	“How can we work together to limit climate change and its impact while protecting our environment, our health and our wellbeing? Consider the Council, businesses and organisations, individuals” (5).	11 (experts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Traverse (2020) <a href="#">Brent Climate Assembly: Recommendations from Assembly members to Brent Council</a>, as reported by Traverse.</li> </ul>
Brighton & Hove Climate Assembly [7]	Sept-Nov 2020	Online: 5 sessions across three months, 3 evenings, 2 weekends	“How can we step up actions to reduce transport related carbon emissions in the city?” (11).	15 (expert speakers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Ipsos MORI Public Affairs. (2020). <a href="#">Brighton &amp; Hove climate assembly findings report</a>.</li> </ul>
Camden Citizens’ Assembly on the Climate Crisis [8]	Jul-19	In person (no exact location specified); 3 sessions (2 3-hour evening sessions and 1 6-hour weekend session).	“We are now facing a climate and ecological crisis. How can the council and the people of Camden help limit the impact of climate change while protecting and enhancing our natural environment? – What do we need to do in our homes, neighbourhoods, council and country?” (2).	10 (speakers; witnesses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Involve (2019) <a href="#">Camden Citizens’ Assembly on the Climate Crisis: Recommendations for Tackling the Climate Crisis in Camden</a>.</li> </ul>

Copeland People's Panel on Climate Change [9]	Jul-Sept 2021	Online: 10 sessions over 30 hours, some sessions specified as evenings/weekends	'What action should we take in our homes, businesses and local area to respond to climate change?'(3).	14 (commentators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Shared Future (2021) <a href="#">The Copeland People's Panel on Climate Change</a>.</li> </ul>
Croydon Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change [10]	Jan-Feb 2020	In person: 3 sessions and unspecified if weekend or evenings. Met at two different locations.	No question: " to review evidence and explore the options for reducing carbon emissions across the borough" (4).	7 (expert witnesses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• The Campaign Company (2020) <a href="#">A report on the work of the Croydon Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change</a>.</li> </ul>
Devon Climate Assembly [11]		Online: 11 meetings over 25 hours (3 blocks of weekday evening + 2 weekend sessions)	"How should Devon meet the big challenges of climate change?" (1). 1. What should be the role of onshore wind in the Devon Renewable Energy Strategy? 2. What should be done to encourage less car use within Devon? 3. What would be the best ways of encouraging, or requiring, people to retrofit their homes, properties, or business premises to reduce carbon emissions?" (14).	45 (speakers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Involve (2021) <a href="#">Devon Climate Assembly: "How should Devon meet the big challenges of climate change?": A report for the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership</a>.</li> </ul>
Glasgow Citizens' Assembly on the Climate Emergency [12]		Online: 5 x 3-hour sessions over one month; weekends and evenings	"How can we work together in Glasgow to tackle the climate emergency by 2030?" (5).	13 (expert speakers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Ipsos MORI Scotland (2021) <a href="#">Glasgow Citizens' Assembly on the Climate Emergency: Technical Report</a>.</li> </ul>

Greater Cambridge Citizens' Assembly [13]	Sept-Oct 2019	In person: location unknown. Over 2 weekends (2 days per weekend), 24 hours total.	"How do we reduce congestion, improve air quality, and provide better public transport in Greater Cambridge?" (9).	18 (speakers; expert speakers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Involve (2019) <a href="#">Greater Cambridge Citizens' Assembly on Congestion, Air Quality, and Public Transport: report and recommendations on who do we reduce congestion, improve air quality, and provide better public transport in greater Cambridge.</a></li> </ul>
Kendal Climate Change Citizens' Jury [14]	Jul-Oct 2020	Online: 9 sessions every other week. One session specified as 'evening'.	"What should Kendal do about Climate Change?" (3).	17 (commentators; witnesses; expert witnesses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Shared Future &amp; Kendal Town Council (2021) <a href="#">The Kendal Climate Change Citizens' Jury 2020.</a></li> </ul>
Lambeth's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change [15]	May-Jul 2021	Online: 10 workshops over 6 weeks, weekends and evenings	"We are facing a climate crisis: How can we work together in Lambeth to address climate change and its causes fairly, effectively and quickly?" (2).	16 (experts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Traverse (2021) <a href="#">Lambeth's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change: Final Recommendations</a></li> </ul>
Lancaster District Climate Change People's Jury [16]	Feb-Oct 2020	In person and online: 16 sessions and 35 hours total. Sessions 1-6 in person (location not specified), 7 onwards online. Some specified as evenings.	"What do we need to do in our homes, neighbourhoods and district to respond to the emergency of climate change?" (6).	34 (commentators/expert witnesses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Shared Future (2020). <a href="#">The Lancaster district Climate Change People's Jury, 2020.</a></li> </ul>

Leeds Climate Change Citizens' Jury [17]	Sept-Nov 2019	In person: 8 evening sessions, in the offices of an engineering firm.	"What should Leeds do about the emergency of climate change?" (3).	22 (commentators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Shared Future (2019) <a href="#">The Leeds Climate Change Citizens' Jury</a></li> </ul>
Leicester Climate Assembly [18]	Jan 2020	In person: 1 weekend session in the council's main city centre office building	"Which aspects of the vision, and which of the suggested actions did the attendees agree with or think would have further benefits for the city? Was there anything attendees disagreed with? Were there any concerns about the impact the visions and actions would have on people's lives, and ideas on how these concerns should be addressed? What barriers might there be to implementing the vision and actions, and ideas on how these could be overcome? What was the level of support for the actions? Was there anything missing from the vision and actions that should be added?" (no pg.).	Not reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Leicester City Council. (2020). <a href="#">Leicester's Climate Assembly Saturday 18th January 2020: Results Report</a></li> </ul>
Newham Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change [19]	Feb-20	Unclear if online or in person: 4 sessions and 25.5 hours total, evenings and weekends	"How can the council and residents work together to reach the aspiration of being carbon zero by 2050 at the latest?" (3).	14 (speakers; expert speakers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Newham London &amp; Mutual Gain (2020) <a href="#">Newham Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change: Report</a></li> </ul>
North of Tyne Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change [20]	Feb-Mar 2021	Online: 8 sessions (5 evening and 3 weekends) for a total of 30 hours	"What should we do in the region to address climate change and its causes fairly, effectively and quickly?" (4).	19 (commentators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Shared Future (2021) <a href="#">The North of Tyne Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change 2021</a></li> </ul>

Oxford Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change [21]	Sept-Oct 2019	In person: location unknown. 4 sessions, weekends (2 days per weekend)	"The UK has legislation to reach 'net zero' by 2050. Should Oxford be more proactive and seek to achieve 'net zero' sooner than 2050?" (4).	26 (expert speakers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Ipsos MORI (2019) <a href="#">Oxford Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change: A summary report prepared for Oxford City Council</a></li> </ul>
South Wales Valleys Climate and Fairness Panel [22]	Oct-Dec 2020	Online: 8 sessions over 6 weeks, evenings and weekends	"What practical steps should we take together in South Wales Valleys to address the climate crisis and restore nature in a way that is fair for everyone?" (9).	21 (speakers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Institute for Public Policy Research &amp; the South Wales Valleys Climate and Fairness Panel (2021) <a href="#">South Wales Valleys Climate and Fairness Panel: Briefing and Juror Recommendations</a></li> </ul>
Thurrock Climate and Fairness Panel [23]	Jan-Feb 2021	Online: 8 sessions over 6 weeks and about 20 hours, weekends and evenings	"What practical steps should we take together in Thurrock and the surrounding area to address the climate crisis and restore nature in a way that is fair for everyone?" (6).	18 (speakers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Website</a></li> <li>• Institute for Public Policy Research &amp; Thurrock Climate and Fairness Panel (2021) <a href="#">Thurrock Climate and Fairness Panel: Briefing and Juror Recommendations</a></li> </ul>



Research Brief

## **Inclusion and diversity among expert witnesses in deliberative mini-publics**

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