

## ESRC Anti Politics Study

### FOCUS GROUP TOPIC GUIDE

Section	Topics to be covered	Time allocated
Introduction	<p>Explain purpose of group.</p> <p>Explain recording of event</p> <p>Explain no right or wrong answers just interested in how they understand the topics.</p> <p>Interested in opinions of all and fair rules of discussion</p> <p>Introduce researchers and participants.</p>	5 minutes
Political words (warm-up)	<p>EITHER OR BOTH OF THE FOLLOWING</p> <p>-&gt; Ask participants for their earliest memory associated with politics.</p> <p>-&gt; Ask participants to think of words that describe politics and politicians.</p> <p>Write these up on a whiteboard</p> <p>Discuss choice of words: what they mean; do they suggest positive or negative connotations; are they active or passive; are they about duty or service; are they inclusive or exclusionary? How do they suggest distance between public and politics?</p> <p>Why do we have politics?</p> <p>Who is politics for?</p> <p>Could we construct a world without politics?</p>	15 minutes
Current Political Issue	<p>Introduce a current political news story.</p> <p>Ask them what they think about the issue. Is this issue political?</p> <p>How does the issue affect them?</p> <p>Can they think of other people that are affected by it?</p> <p>How do they or others respond to the issue in terms action or inaction?</p>	10 minutes
	Show Cartoon about the issue:	10 minutes

Section	Topics to be covered	Time allocated
	Does the creator of the cartoon have a point of view? What is it? Do you agree or disagree with it?	
Whose job is it?	<p>Should it be left to politicians, or do individuals and communities have a role to play in solving our problems and improving our society?</p> <p>What do you think motivates people to get involved in politics? Can you think of anything else?</p> <p>PROMPTS:</p> <p>Is it because people care about an issue?</p> <p>Is it because people feel they can do something about it?</p> <p>Is there a collective way, a political way of doing something about it?</p>	10 minutes
Thoughts on how politics works	<p>What do you think about people who don't vote?</p> <p>Why do people say they care about issues then do nothing?</p> <p>Is compromise selling out your principles?</p> <p>Who do you think has power and influence in our political system? Are these the right people/groups?</p> <p>Have we become complacent about democracy?</p> <p>Opportunity to introduce discussion on why talk about politics creates an aura of negative thoughts [but don't lead discussants].</p>	15 minutes
Prospects for reform	<p>If you had the power, how would you change how politics works in Britain? What would make things better?</p> <p>Write up ideas on the board.</p> <p>PROMPTS:</p> <p>Should we let experts or elected representatives decide more issues?</p> <p>Would you like more of a chance to talk through political issues with your elected representatives?</p> <p>Should important questions be determined by referendums more regularly?</p> <p>Could we clean up politics? If so how?</p>	15 minutes

Section	Topics to be covered	Time allocated
	Ask participants to write their top 3 ideas on the Priorities Sheet.	
Wrap up and debrief	Thank the participants for taking part. Explain how research is going to be developed. Ask what they thought of the session and if anything that could be improved.	5 minutes
	Contingency	5 minutes
	Total	1 hr 30 min



# UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO POLITICS

## PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

Please write in the boxes below your top three ideas / suggestions for improving how politics works from the list on the flip chart / white board.

Priority	Idea for improving how politics works
1	
2	
3	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to receive a copy of the final report from this research, please put your either your postal address or email address below. Your contact details will be held securely and not used for any other purposes (see Information Sheet for further details or ask the Principal Researchers).

Postal address: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

During the course of the focus groups (as indicated on the focus group topic guide) participants were shown two cartoons on a sheet of paper.

We do not have the copyright for these cartoons, but the originals can be found in the following locations:

Matt cartoon, Daily Telegraph: 2 November 2011

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/matt/?cartoon=8863940&cc=8863941>

Private Eye cover: Issue 1275, 12 November 2010:

<http://www.private-eye.co.uk/covers.php?showme=1275>