

Performance & Visual Actions

Make a mini UK - from different walks of life

This action outside the Welsh parliament used shoes to represent CA participants - selected at random from many walks of life.

Have an outreach stall or survey boards nearby to hold conversations and sign people up to XR.

Use our [demographic placards](#) to visually demonstrate how a UK-wide citizens' assembly will bring together people from many different walks of life.

You could use it in conjunction with a [CA outreach event](#) or [mini talks](#).



Example text for an event advert/invitation:

Westminster's not working. But for many of us it's hard to imagine anything beyond our current political system. And yet, as the climate and ecological emergency worsens, the need for democratic reform becomes ever more acute. On DATE/TIME, we'll bring a sense of what a citizens' assembly sounds and feels like to VENUE. Join us to take part in a conversation about how we can upgrade our democracy. The action runs from 1pm to 3.30pm.

Theatrical Performance- Modelling the difference between business as usual and citizens' assemblies

Near your constituency office or place of power, set up two tables, about 3m apart.

A sign in front of the first table reads: "**Politicians argue to score points and represent the interests of lobbyists.**"

Seat 2-3 people dressed in suits on both sides of the first table, representing politicians. They should argue with those seated on the opposite side of the table. 1-2 suited people stand behind them and occasionally hand them a document or note. These are lobbyists or funders, telling the politicians what they should say.

A sign in front of the second table reads: "**In a citizens' assembly, participants listen and deliberate together, and represent the interests of ordinary people.**"

Seat 5-6 people dressed normally around the second table so that they are not sitting on opposite sides. They represent assembly members, and they should respectfully listen to each person in turn, and then discuss amongst each other. A facilitator should be at the table assisting the discussion.

Idea: A short outdoor “debate”



On one side is an MP (dressed in a formal suit and tie) and on the other **a Citizens' Assembly member** (in relaxed everyday clothes). Example debate below:

I am a Member of Parliament and vote on the decisions that affect your day to day life: healthcare, taxes, housing, education etc. I represent you as my party was voted into power at the last election. Being a politician is a career and I have been working towards it most of my life and I am keen to be promoted. Obviously, we are interested in making decisions that are popular so we remain in power for as long as possible. After all, I don't want to be out of a job!

I am a member of a citizens' assembly. I was selected using a system like they use for jury service and am representative of some of the people in the population in terms of where I live, age, gender, level of education etc. So I am

part of a really diverse group of people from different walks of life, people I would not normally meet. I agreed to take part because I am interested in helping to make fairer decisions that benefit us all.

Well, we're pretty representative, out of 365 Conservative MPs, 25% are female, that's not bad going! I mean, that's a quarter! 6% of our MPs are black or ethnic minorities. The vast majority of MPs went to university, some of the best universities in the country, so people can rest assured that some of the best brains are making decisions on your behalf. What more could you want?

Since over half of the population (51%) are women, 51% of assembly members are women and education levels range from university to none but we are all listened to and respected. The collective intelligence of a group of people from different walks of life actually make bolder and better decisions than a group of people who all think pretty much the same. What's more, we have nothing to lose.

Basically, the party provides me with briefing notes with all I need to know shortly before a vote. Our funders, bankers, lobbyists and powerful people in industry and the media help shape the position the government takes. We obviously have to keep them all onside if we want to be re-elected. I have to admit that often MPs haven't even read the notes but it doesn't really matter too much because we are told how to vote anyway, we all have to follow the party line. It's about winning the argument, keeping on top.

What's really interesting in a citizens' assembly is that we are presented with really wide ranging ideas from experts and people with lived experience, so everyone is working from the same background materials and we come to agree on the same facts leading to informed decisions rather than opinion. We have honest conversations with each other in small groups and bring our own knowledge and experience to the table, weighing up the pros, cons and trade-offs before making recommendations. It's not about winning or losing, it's about working together.

MPs are very much in touch with ordinary people. We are very aware how the cost of living crisis is affecting everyone which is why we are no longer supporting the 1.5 degree global heating target, it is just too expensive to implement.

Well, that's what I heard and believed to be true. In the citizens' assembly we have been presented with that argument, one widely covered in the media, but we have been investigating further and I no longer agree. Further evidence we

have been presented with suggests that if action is not taken now, the cost of damage is likely to be six times higher than the cost of addressing the situation now. That is just short term thinking, pushing the problem down the line for our children and future generations to deal with which is unfair. We are thinking long term for the future of us all.
