

Candidate 4 evidence

Politics Higher Resource Sheet			
Candidate Name		Scottish Candidate Number	
SOURCE A: [https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12368492/] “When citizens feel that representative institutions fail to reflect their preferences or uphold democratic values, they may advocate for direct democracy as a corrective measure” “Citizens tend to view outcomes from ballot initiatives as fairer than those passed through legislative processes” SOURCE B: [https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2474736X.2020.1809474#d1e327] “This puts the decision-making directly into the hands of the citizens themselves and takes it rightly out of the hands of the politicians who are perceived as corrupt and incompetent.” SOURCE C: [https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=nEsrDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA3&dq=legitimacy+AND+direct+democracy+AND+benefits+AND+representative+democracy+AND+political&ots=I2xjW4OmLB&sig=t4nl62xNQ5eu7Jc-3Ajz4C1JUT0#v=onepage&q&f=false] “defined as ‘the justification of authority’ or as the ‘rightful holding and exercising of political power’”			

Direct democracy should be implemented into the UK. Discuss.

Democracy is a form of government which gives power to the people. There are two main types of democracy. Direct democracy and representative democracy. Direct democracy is where they let the people vote on individual issues and make decisions, whereas representative democracy is where the people vote on a politician for their constituency, then the politician votes on individual issues and make decisions. Examples of a country having a representative democracy would be the UK and an example of a country have a direct democracy would be Switzerland. In this essay, I will discuss reasons why direct democracy should be implemented into the UK, using factors such as practicality, experience and expertise, political literacy and legitimacy. I will then conclude that direct democracy should be put into place in the UK and why it would benefit the UK.

An aspect to consider about direct democracy being implemented into the UK is Practicality. The UK has a population of over 5 million, so it would be technically easier for the political decisions to be made on our behalf by politicians. The ability of a country to get over 5 million people to vote on individual issues on a regular basis presents issues such as time needed and cost. In the UK, 650 MPs each have a spot in parliament to represent the wishes of over 700,000 people. This would require the people have to put their trust into politicians. This may not be desirable because of the dwindling trust people have in our politicians these days. This may also not be desirable because how can we expect one politician to accurately represent the wishes of over 700,000 people; it just isn't realistic. In Switzerland, the citizens vote locally on issues that affect them and their community regularly. This shows that people can vote on individual issues on a regular basis without there being any trouble or inconveniences. If people think that their government is broken and corrupt enough, they might not view practicality as a proper issue and might just want the government to be reformed, even if it is a big inconvenience. Source A states that *"when citizens feel that representative institutions fail to reflect their preferences or uphold democratic values, they may advocate for direct democracy as a corrective measure."*

An aspect to consider about direct democracy being implemented into the UK is Experience and Expertise. Having experience and expertise in your field of work is only expected when you're in a high paying, high stakes job such as being a prime minister or an MP. Rishi Sunak, for example, went to an elite

university for philosophy and economics, among other things. This was the same for David Cameron. Rishi Sunak is also a very rich person in general. This might be more difficult for the average working-class person to accomplish, simply because of the fact that they might not have gotten a good education, or because they couldn't afford to go to an elite university. This, in turn, might make people view politicians as being out of touch and not able to make decisions for the people that accurately represent their wishes because of the fact that most politicians and prime ministers had grown up rich and had lots of money throughout their time, therefore they wouldn't be able to make good decisions on behalf of the working-class person. Another thing proving this, is the fact that over 20 politicians have got to the elite Eton University, including Boris Johnson. People would believe that politicians are out of touch and corrupt which could result in people wanting direct democracy to be put in to place. Source B states that if direct democracy would be implemented, *"This puts the decision-making directly into the hands of the citizens themselves and out of the hands of the politicians who are perceived as corrupt and incompetent."*

An aspect to consider about direct democracy being implemented into the UK is political literacy. In the current form of democracy we have at the moment, people aren't really motivated to learn and educate themselves on politics and the issues surrounding politics, mainly because they feel as if they don't have much of an impact on the decisions that are being made. If direct democracy were to be implemented, this would mean that the average person has more of an influence and an active hand in decisions that are being made, which may then motivate them to become more educated on politics, because of the fact that they are the ones making the decisions. This was proven by the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum and the 2016 Brexit Referendum, where the people who were able to vote, felt it necessary to research what was going on and what each decision meant, even if it was only a yes/no question. The media, however, had a huge influence on how people voted in these referendums and it often swayed peoples votes if they were indecisive. Even if major political parties and politicians didn't get a say in the way the vote turned out, that didn't mean they couldn't campaign and attempt to influence people to vote the way that they wanted to. A lot of people couldn't be bothered to do research and just believed what social media or what the news told them, this could be because the average person doesn't want to get involved in politics or this could be because of the way that people believe that

they don't have a say in what decisions are made and that their vote has an impact, even if they're the ones voting. If direct democracy were to become a more staple part in British politics and people saw more of it, then they probably would realise that they have an impact on politics and then that would result in them getting educated on decisions that would affect them and their community personally.

An aspect to consider about direct democracy being implemented into the UK is legitimacy. Legitimacy could be described as the community believing that the person in power has the right to be in power. Source C says legitimacy is *"defined as 'the justification of authority' or as the 'rightful holding or exercising of political power.'"* In theory, direct democracy would be the most legitimate form of democracy because the people would be more likely to accept the decisions that have been made if they were the ones to have made them in the first place. Referendums have a lot of power in the political process, since they are harder to ignore than the normal vote, and people tend to be happier with the outcomes of said referendum. This is proven by Source A, which states that *"Citizens tend to view outcomes from ballot initiatives as fairer than those passed through legislative processes."* However, this could be proven as not true, since in the later years after the 2016 Brexit Referendum, people are seen to have regretted their vote, most saying that the media had had a very big part in influencing what they voted and what decisions that were made. Legitimacy could be threatened if the people are influenced by the media and what the media is saying. In turn, representative democracy might not be the most legitimate form of democracy, simply because of the fact that if the citizens of a country don't see the current government or leader as being deserving of that power and influence, then that means it isn't legitimate. This could cause lots of issues and conflict within the community and it would just not be worth it.

In conclusion, while direct democracy still has its issues, it would relieve a lot of the problems and issues that people have with our current democratic system. It could save us from having to put all of our trust into politicians in order for them to represent our wishes, it would help take the power out of the elite class (which is already powerful enough as it is) and help give the power to the working-class people, it would help people to be more politically literate and educated in the issues that affect them and how they can have an impact in changing that for the better, it would help make the government more legitimate and help people see that the people in charge, which is the people

themselves, have a rightful place in power and make good choices and it would help make the parliament more realistic in terms of the people and the choices (since there is one MP for about 700,000 people.) Overall, I believe that direct democracy would have a positive impact on the UK, because of the reasons I have stated above and would make decisions pass by quicker and people would be happier with the decisions that were made.