

PCSHE – Year 10 Topic 6 – Politics and Power

KPI1: Key Terms

- **Referendum:** Where people vote on an issue.
- **Centralised:** To bring (activities or processes) together in one place
- **Devolved:** having had power transferred or delegated to a lower level, especially from central government to local or regional administration.
- **Proportional representation:** refers to a type of electoral system under which subgroups of an electorate are reflected proportionately in the elected body.
- **First past the post:** Where the candidate with the highest number (but not necessarily a majority) of votes is elected.
- **Reserved powers:** The issues on which only the UK Parliament can make laws
- **Devolved powers:** The issues on which the Scottish Parliament, or the assemblies of Wales or Northern Ireland can make their own laws.
- **Councilor:** a member of a council.
- **Ward:** an administrative division of a city or borough that typically elects and is represented by a councilor or councilors.
- **Elector:** a person who has the right to vote in an election, especially one for members of a national parliament
- **Political Party:** A group of people with similar ideas who campaign together to win elections.
- **Independent:** a voter who does not have long-standing loyalty to, or identification with, a political party
- **MPs:** Successful candidates who represent their constituency in Parliament
- **Constituency:** An area of the country with around 60,000 voters. Each of the UK's constituencies elects one representative to parliament.

KPI2 – Democracy and Voting Systems

Democracy means the 'rule of the people'. Each person with voting rights has a say in decision making.

Representative democracy: A democracy that uses elections to choose the men and women who will represent all citizens. Members of Parliament are the representatives in the UK.

Voting Systems

Different election systems are used across the UK. The general election for the UK Parliament uses a first-past-the-post system where the person with the most votes is declared the winner. This system is also used in English and Welsh local authority elections.

First-past-the-post: Where the candidate with the highest number (but not necessarily a majority) of votes is elected.

Advantages:

- Simple to understand
- Easy to organise
- Most likely to lead to a majority government
- People have a single representative in Parliament so know who to contact with constituency issues.

Disadvantages:

- A candidate can be elected with support from less than half of the voters
- Voters may feel their vote is 'wasted' if they vote for a party candidate who has little chance of winning
- Can produce a government that over 60% of the workers do not support
- Voters may feel underrepresented if their MP belongs to a political party they do not like.

Proportional Representation: refers to a type of electoral system under which subgroups of an electorate are reflected proportionately in the elected body.

KPI2 – National Governments in the UK

- **House of Commons:** Democratically elected Members of Parliament (MPs) form the House of Commons. The House of Lords is the second chamber in this Westminster Parliament.
- **Monarch:** A monarch is a country's ruler. The UK has a constitutional monarch whose power is limited by the democratic system. The Monarch has important responsibilities in the British constitution including inviting the leader of one of the political parties represented in the UK Parliament to form a government,
- **Prime Minister:** The Prime Minister is leader of one of the political parties in Parliament – usually the party with the most MPs. He or she is asked by the Monarch to select a government to run the country. The Prime Minister is not elected directly by the UK citizens.
- **Government ministers:** Senior MPs or Members of the House of Lords who have accepted the Prime Minister's invitation to be part of the Government and to lead departments responsible for matters such as defence, health or education. Together with the senior civil servants they form the executive
- **Cabinet:** The Prime Minister and the senior colleagues he or she has chosen to be part of Government meet together at 10 Downing Street.

The UK Government's powers.
In 2016, the UK Government had the following powers over the whole of the UK. These are known as reserved powers.

- Defence
- Management of the economy
- Currency
- Elections
- Employment
- Foreign policy (international links and relationships)
- Overseas development
- Border control, immigration and asylum
- Benefits and social security
- Taxation (but with major exceptions in Scotland)
- Trade and industry
- Nuclear energy, oil, gas, and electricity
- Data protection
- The constitution.

PCSHE – Year 10 Topic 6 – Politics and Power

KPI 3 – Regional Government

Political power has been decentralised and devolved.

1. Government in the UK used to be very centralised – ruled only from London
2. People who lived in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland didn't think this was fair because their parts of the UK weren't fairly represented in the political system.
3. A referendum was held to see how many people wanted more political control over decisions affecting their own country. This happened in 1997 in Scotland and Wales and 1998 in Northern Ireland.
4. Scotland and Wales voted for separate regional governments, so some powers were devolved (handed over) from London governments to regional assemblies.

Regional Assemblies do not have complete control

Not all powers have been devolved to regional assemblies – many things, such as taxation are still decided in London and the regions still elect Westminster MPs in the general elections as well. Each assembly has a different set of things that it controls.

Scottish Parliament	Welsh Assembly	Northern Irish Assembly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based in Edinburgh - 129 members - Chosen through proportional representation - Controls most policy within Scotland, with some exceptions like monetary policy and foreign affairs - Sets taxes - Makes laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based in Cardiff - 60 members - Chosen through proportional representation - Has its own budget - Controls education, health, agriculture, economic development and transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based in Stormont – Belfast - 108 members - Chosen through proportional representation - Controls health, education and local government - Works with Eire on same-interest matters such as transport and agriculture.

KPI 4 – Local Government

What is it?

Local authorities also known as councils, make decisions about local services. Most local authorities are controlled by representative, known as councillors. Councillors are elected by local residents. Some local authorities are run by directly elected mayors supported by councillors.

How is it run?

Councillors represent a neighbourhood usually known as a ward. Elections for England and Welsh local authorities use first-past-the-post system. Each elector will be able to cast two votes if there are two council seats in their ward. Most candidates are nominated by local political party branches, although many candidates are independents.

Local Authority Type	Responsibilities
County councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children and families - Social care - Public health - Libraries - Strategic planning - County landscape and environment - Roads, cycle routes and footpaths - Consumer protection - Dealing with emergencies
Borough or district councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local planning and building control - Housing - Parks and leisure - Refuse collection and recycling - Food hygiene, public health and licencing - Pest control - Voting and elections
Town or parish councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide local services that improve quality of life: community events, public seating etc.

KPI 5 – Human Rights

The United Nations was formed at the end of WWII. Its aims was to rebuild a world on the values of peace, freedom and justice.

The European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms is an international treaty adopted in 1950. The UK was one of the original signatory countries and played a large part in drafting this agreement.

Articles of the European Convention on Human Rights:

- Article 1: Obligation to respect human rights
- Article 2: Right to life
- Article 3: Prohibition of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment.
- Article 4: Prohibition of slavery and forced labour
- Article 5: Right to liberty and security
- Article 6: Right to a fair trial
- Article 7: No punishment without law
- Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence
- Article 9: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Article 10: Freedom of expression
- Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association
- Article 12: Right to marry
- Article 13: Right to an effective remedy
- Article 14: Prohibition of discrimination