In order to carry a positive action we must develop here a positive vision.
We want a transparent, resilient democracy

**Democratic institutions** that are open in their activities and aware of the people they represent. These institutions invite public participation in decision making, and are capable and motivated to respond to it. They evolve in response to our changing society and citizens’ expectations.

**Politicians and public servants who work for the public interest** — transparent by default in their work and held to account in meaningful ways for departures from the principles of public life.

**Democratic equality** — equal access to information, representation and voice for citizens. Citizens should be informed with clear, timely, accessible and free information on the decisions that affect their lives. Their interests should be fairly represented in decision making and they should have equal opportunities to access political processes.

**A flourishing civil society ecosystem**, including grassroots organisations — mechanisms for people to organise, make decisions, represent the interests of groups and form broad coalitions.

**The effective and principled use of digital technologies**, from basic data to artificial intelligence, to contribute to our democratic health

---

**In the face of the climate emergency, this vision necessitates**

Action from politicians to match the level of public concern and the threat to current and future generations

Better communication between politicians and the public about the scale of the challenge and possible responses
We desperately need broader participation in decision making to meet the challenges of the 21st century

We are in the midst of a worsening erosion of trust and legitimacy in the UK political system\(^1\), just at the point when we most need foresight and fair, informed policymaking to manage the crises we’re faced with. Our politics is not fit for the complexities of the modern age, and its failings are ruining lives. We need to respond to a multi-pronged crisis — a climate crisis that requires an unprecedented transformation of our society, and will intensify existing crises of inequality, inadequate policymaking and failing trust in institutions.

We need informed democratic participation from all kinds of people to rebuild quality of life in the UK, to reduce the harms and share the benefits of the transitions we have to embark on. In a country in which voting is declining, and faith in politicians eroded, we also need reforms and responsiveness from democratic institutions that will convince people that their participation is worthwhile. We need not just to persuade citizens to participate and policymakers to hear the voices and understand the lives of those they’re elected to serve, but also give them practical and effective ways to do so.

\(^1\) Life in the UK, 2023: Jennifer Wallace and Jenny Peachey, Carnegie UK

Digital tools have transformed our lives, but in a world where they’re often used to divide us for profit, we need to find better ways to communicate constructively and build appropriate trust at scale. To fairly negotiate our way through the next decades, we’re going to need digital services that are intentionally designed to increase the democratic health of the UK, operated at scale, and run in the public interest.
Our mission is to use our digital and data skills to put more power in more people's hands so that together we can build a fairer, safer future.

We use digital technology, research and data to:

- understand what citizens want and need in order to participate in democracy.
- deliver impactful digital services to citizens and civil society to meet those needs.
- demonstrate institutional barriers and provoke better institutional response.

We need to evolve old ways of making decisions together, and build new ones in the service of a democracy fit for the 21st century.
“Cheap and cheerful open web technology, tipping the relationship between people and government, in favour of the people.”

Michael Cross describes mySociety in The Guardian
We have a 20 year track record of providing innovative tools designed by our team of specialist developers, and of forging effective partnerships with other non—profits to bring about systemic change. Our services – which include TheyWorkForYou, WhatDoTheyKnow and FixMyStreet – form a vital part of the UK’s digital civic infrastructure. Over the past two decades our work has contributed significantly to increased civic engagement, transparency and accountability in the UK and around the world.

Impact

+1M requests

Our Freedom of Information service WhatDoTheyKnow published its millionth public request in 2024.

Alaveteli

20+ countries

Countries all around the world are using our free, open source Alaveteli platform to enable citizens to access data. In some countries, this information is a matter of life and death: in Ukraine, for example, vital information about bomb shelter repairs was made public.

As a whole, mySociety has a unique set of assets, capabilities, connections and influence across the UK’s democratic landscape.

Our services have a broad reach:

TheyWorkForYou

1 in 5 people have used it

TheyWorkForYou, our parliamentary monitoring service, has become a fundamental part of the political landscape. One in five UK adults have used it, and a GovLab report estimates that it has saved the UK charity sector £70 million a year in time on research and campaigns.
SocietyWorks Ltd is the wholly owned trading subsidiary of mySociety which exists to deliver sustainable profits to distribute back to mySociety and protect the charity’s future, and to extend the reach and impact of mySociety. Through SocietyWorks, we help local authorities better serve citizens by integrating our digital front end citizen-centric platforms with council back-end systems.

4.5M reports made using FixMyStreet
Our services are open and free to use — tens of thousands of people from all walks of life use them directly each day to get information from and about public institutions. They’re also used by civil society groups and other intermediaries for the public, such as journalists — we know that we play a particularly important role for smaller and grassroots organisations that don’t have access to paid-for sources of information.

We offer a particular kind of infrastructure and capacity building for them — both making information available but also helping them develop skills in requesting and interpreting information. We do this at various different levels — through the services themselves, through structured outreach and training, and through partnerships with other organisations.

Our services also have a longer term impact by putting consistent pressure on government and public institutions to be more transparent and responsive, by demonstrating how this can be done and the benefits of doing so. The benefits of more transparent governance are felt throughout society.

“Using mySociety services, we uncovered how many survivors of modern slavery were deported or detained in prison—like immigration detention settings. This has helped us illustrate the scale with which survivors are denied justice & support, helping to keep modern slavery in the national news”

Maya Esslemont
After Exploitation Director

“It would be in the interests of the public if the House was able to make our current register [of members' financial interests] much more readable and accessible. It is strange that we have to go to TheyWorkForYou to find out the history of our register of interests.”

Chris Bryant MP
Chair, Committee on Standards
#1 Reach, inform and empower more, and more kinds of people

Our services are used over 30 million times each year. There are responsibilities that come with scale, and one is to make sure that we do more than empower the already empowered. We want to reach more and more kinds of people, with a focus on those who are being democratically underserved, and those who are underrepresented amongst our service users.

We recognise that this is an area where we need to learn from others and we’re taking multiple approaches — conducting outreach and research on how we can better support people from marginalised and under-served communities using our core services, and developing partnership work that gives us opportunities to learn, such as the FixMyBlock project with TowerBlocks UK — helping tower block residents understand and exercise their rights, or the Stop and Search Data dashboard we’ve developed with Black Thrive.

“Tower Blocks UK had the privilege of working closely with mySociety for over three years on the development of FixMyBlock.org — this project aimed to empower tower block tenants to tackle problems with their homes, in particular around fire safety and dangerous conditions.”

Danielle Gregory
Tower Blocks UK Project Manager
#2 Get democratic institutions to meet citizens needs

Between them, our services span the practical issues that introduce people to civic life — from potholes, housing issues and bin collection, through the tens of thousands of public institutions covered by the FOI act, to the fundamental building blocks of our democracy — voting and representation in the UK’s parliaments. We’re going to use these services to push for policies and practices that remove barriers to broad, meaningful and informed democratic participation, creating more transparent, informed and responsive democratic institutions.

People want to participate in civic life but only if they have a reason to believe it makes a difference. The core of our mission is to use technology to improve democracy — to get institutions to show the kind of transparency, responsiveness and interest in people’s lives that makes participation meaningful. The scale and openness of our platforms gives us a unique perspective on the challenges people hit when they try to engage with democratic institutions. The fact that the platforms sit outside those institutions gives us a point of leverage.

We’ll be using what we’ve learned from our services, and support from the communities that use them, to bring about changes in policy and practice that are directly targeted at those challenges. That way, we’re not just helping people work around obstacles, but removing those obstacles for good.

“Women’s Aid have carried out FOI requests to local authorities in England to build up a picture of national domestic abuse commissioning trends, the FOI webinar series that mySociety delivered was a fantastic opportunity for us to learn how other organisations use this method.”

Maia Samuel
Senior Research and Evaluation Officer
#3 Help drive the democratic transition that we need in response to the climate crisis

Climate change is no longer the story, but the setting in which all stories take place. In the next decades we have to rapidly make changes across our society — in how we travel, what we eat, how we heat our homes. In order to do that fairly, the decisions we are faced with need participation from all kinds of people: to reduce the harms and share the benefits of this enormous transition. It’s a huge democratic challenge. We’re going to need to continue to learn and experiment, not least in getting people in all kinds of roles the information they need to act together. mySociety is in the position to have a positive impact by developing new services and service changes across our core areas of work improving democracy, enabling transparency and supporting communities.

Our newer climate services and features are targeted at both driving the accountable and responsive local governance needed for rapid decarbonisation, and empowering diverse communities to come together to take action.

“The Scorecards were very useful. I used them as an impetus to draw up a motion asking our council to attribute targets to actions they are taking, or will take in the future, regarding climate change and the environment.”

Cllr Andrew Murray
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, NI
“mySociety is a terrific example of public—interest technology. It provides digital tools that make it easy for British residents to communicate with, and monitor, their public representatives. One of these is their TheyWorkforYou service, which makes it easy to find your MP and send an email to her or him. What amazed me on Friday morning was to find that they had already updated the site as new MPs were confirmed as election results were coming in.

It was an impressively agile response. Shows how this tech can revitalise democratic institutions.”

John Naughton
Senior Research Fellow at Cambridge University
Our cycle of improved government service and citizen participation

Our digital services meet a broad range of citizen and civil society needs, attracting impactful usage at scale. Where those needs are underserved due to failings of our current democratic institutions and processes, we use the services to:

1. Identify the underlying issues
2. Bring the evidence to democratic reform efforts
3. Reflect that impact to service users, creating common cause amongst diverse interests and groups
4. Collate tangible public evidence of the impact across society

Our services have become part of the democratic infrastructure of the UK — with the advent of practically usable models of AI and data science, how technology is used in the context of our democracies is a key question for the next decades. We aim to model best practice in digital services that truly serve the needs of communities and build a fairer, safer future together.
We are a relatively small organisation operating in a time of rapid external change.

We take an adaptive and agile strategy approach in order to respond to changing circumstances, and treat our theory of change as a hypothesis, taking opportunities to test the elements of it, and revisiting it in the light of what we discover. We build our organisational stability and resilience where we are able to do so as we believe this enables us to have greater impact over the long term.
Values

Openness

Just as we advocate for transparency, we hold ourselves to the same standards. We conduct our work in public, sharing progress along the way, with code and data released under open licences. We undertake to be open, honest and accountable in our relationships with everyone we work with and for, and with each other. Our work is politically non—partisan, evidence—based, accountable and open to scrutiny. We critique our own work and that of our sector honestly; we publish our references, won’t hide uncomfortable truths, and where we fall short we seek to rectify our mistakes promptly.

Collaboration

We are most successful when we work with partners, cooperating within wider systems of change and with the participation of citizens. For participation to be inclusive and accessible for all people requires the work of many hands and collaboration with groups and partners drawn from those communities. As an organisation working internationally, we have partnerships with local actors that are built on experience, trust and aligned strategic goals. As a team we aim to be friendly and approachable; we foster a supportive environment for our staff, and nurture our relationships within the wider civic tech community.

Justice

We are determined to hold power to account and we advocate for equitable and just outcomes. We seek to empower every sector of society, ensuring our services are inclusive and accessible for all. Enabling a society where all voices can be heard equally, we will prevent use of our services to propagate discrimination or abuse. Within mySociety we uphold and promote diversity and equality, embracing flexible and remote working, thoughtful benefits, inclusive hiring policies and the opportunity to develop meaningful, properly recompensed careers.
Join us in empowering people to become changemakers

mySociety.org/subscribe

communications@mysociety.org

mySociety is a registered charity in England and Wales (1076346) and a limited company (03277032). We provide commercial services through our wholly owned subsidiary SocietyWorks Ltd (05798215).