

# COMPASSIONATE POLITICS

Compassion in Politics UK have identified three core values that they believe are at the heart of a compassionate political system. They are **INCLUSIVITY**, **COOPERATION**, and **CARE**.

## INCLUSIVITY

A political system that is inclusive empowers the public to engage with decisions that affect them. Compassion in Politics suggest a number of innovations that can help embed this practice:

- Establishing constituency assemblies. Constituency assemblies bring together a group of constituents (potentially by sortition) who represent different political views and none for a moderated conversation about local and national issues. This gives political leaders a better sense of the collective needs of their constituents while also helping to create more community cohesion and understanding.  
**The UK Labour MP Darren Jones has already spearheaded this idea, for example.**

- Making it a requirement that major political decisions are consulted on with those most directly impacted. This would mean, for example, that changes to welfare policy should be discussed in-depth with those who access social security. Not only are they the experts in these issues with first hand lived experience, this can also help to increase government and civil service understanding and empathy for the individuals and communities concerned.
- Introducing compassion training to parliament. Compassionate leadership training can have extraordinary results for individuals, groups, and communities. For example, it can help reduce conflict, build bridges, and reduce prejudice. It can also help individuals manage stress and anxiety. These are crucial skills and behaviours for anyone in a position of responsibility.



# COOPERATION

No one politician or party has a monopoly on wisdom. And no individual alone can deal with the enormous challenges facing our world today. Compassionate leadership recognizes this and seeks to create coalitions of the willing who want to promote societies based on care, kindness, and justice.

**A number of reforms, developed by Compassion in Politics UK, can help to achieve this:**

- Ensuring the highest of ethical and professional standards in any parliament or political assembly. When rules are transparent and enforced, it is much harder for civility to break down. It also means that a level-playing field is created where no politician can benefit from unscrupulous behavior.

- Promoting respectful communication. Political leaders who speak with decency about their opponents and their views help to create an atmosphere of constructive debate. While this practice largely depends on the will of leaders themselves, having in place rules surrounding honesty and hate speech make inflammatory language less likely.
- It has also been argued that divisive systems such as “whipping” - where politicians are often cajoled into voting a particular way by their party - should be reformed or potentially removed altogether. It is argued that these systems make party loyalty more important than personal values or national interest.





## CARE

Fundamentally the object of any political system should be to care for its citizens - to alleviate their suffering and promote human and planetary flourishing. There are a number of steps that can be taken to bring this approach to the heart of politics:

- Providing new Ministers in government with a period of work experience. Unless a Minister has, in their previous work, already carried out extensive work in their new department's area of responsibility, this should be undertaken without delay and without exception. This could have two benefits: increasing their practical knowledge of the issue and, just as crucially, cultivating empathy for the individuals who are directly responsible for delivering the decisions and directives of their department: for example, doctors, nurses, teachers, and police officers.
- Legislating for action on suffering. Many administrations across the world have legislated for compassion by putting in place both rights to protect individuals and communities from harm and to require that public wellbeing is prioritized. Requirements, for example, that new laws do not increase deprivation - known in the UK as a “**compassion threshold**” - can help ensure that action is being taken across government to improve public welfare. Similarly laws that give rights to the environment or future generations can help governments to mobilize their resources to tackle climate change and environmental degradation. **Evidence shows** that when such laws are in place, more action is taken to reduce poverty and protect the environment.

