



Government response to the Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
by Command of Her Majesty

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Introduction

From July to December 2017, the Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement conducted an enquiry to explore the issues of citizenship and civic engagement in the twenty-first century.

The Committee took evidence from a wide range of individuals, groups and organisations to examine what citizenship means for different parts of society and the challenges that they face. The inquiry received over 250 items of written evidence containing a huge amount of detailed information, and in a series of oral sessions from September to December the Committee heard evidence from 58 witnesses. The Committee also visited two communities, attended a citizenship ceremony, and held a meeting with young people to learn first hand about their experiences on the ground.

This is a complex area with inter-linking themes, and I commend the Committee for the thoroughness and breadth of this enquiry. The policies and activities it examines span the responsibilities of several Government departments as well as those of local authorities and other organisations.

I welcome the Committee's report and the effort made to take full account of the very diverse range of views of those who submitted evidence. The Committee has made 79 recommendations with the overarching aim of simplifying the individual's civic journey, and enabling people to be active citizens.

The majority of recommendations are directed at Government, and I have led on compiling the Government's formal response working with other ministers with responsibility for the policies the report covers. Indeed, the Committee's first recommendation is that there should be a single minister in a single department with responsibility for coordinating all matters that relate to citizenship and civic engagement. I have undertaken to give further consideration to this recommendation and respond to the Committee in due course.

This report is timely as Government is currently considering the responses to two significant consultations which will inform future policy related to this area, namely the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper and the Civil Society Strategy. As our response to the report makes clear, we will be considering the views of the Committee, along with the many others we have received, in formulating responses to these consultations.

Introduction

Recommendation 1: We believe that coordination of policy would be helped if a single minister in a single department, presumably the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, was given responsibility for coordinating all matters related to citizenship and civic engagement. (Paragraph 22)

We welcome the Committee's concept of a "civic journey" and ensuring that we address barriers to active citizenship, so that everyone has the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of living in modern Britain. This is an important and complex area, and the Committee makes a strong case for centralising responsibility for coordination of these issues which fall across a wide range of Government Departments. We note the Committee believes that a lead Minister on all matters relating to citizenship and civic engagement would bring advantages. We will consider this recommendation further and respond to the Committee in due course.

Values

Recommendation 2: The Government should stop using the term Fundamental British Values and instead use the term Shared Values of British Citizenship. It should recognise that the values are both shared with people from other countries and are essentially British. (Paragraph 46)

We understand there are different shorthand terms used to refer to "fundamental British values". The term itself encompasses the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. These, and the phrase "fundamental British values", are set out in regulations and Government statutory guidance relating to the education sector. Many institutions – particularly schools and further education (FE) colleges and providers – are familiar with the term and the associated policy objectives it is intended to meet. To stop using the term now could therefore undo the positive work of many institutions that are supporting Government in its effort to create a safe and integrated British society. As a result, we will not be revising the regulations and guidance to remove references to the term fundamental British values. However, we will continue to work with the relevant sectors to ensure that the intent of the term, and the values it encapsulates, is well understood.

We welcome the Committee's endorsement of using the term "British" in relation to these values, and recognise that people in other countries may also share these values.

We have also used the term "shared values", which can include, for instance, our commitment to equality or freedom of speech. We are also considering use of the terminology in our communication with the education sector, including for example, "shared values" and "shared values of British citizenship". What is important is whether the terms, and the substance of the collective values for which they stand, are understood and appropriate to the context in which they are used.

This Government is committed to creating a fair society in which all people, of whatever ethnic origin or background are valued, are able to participate fully and realise their own potential. The Prime Minister has spoken of the need to ensure that

our society works for everyone. We have an ambitious goal; to build strong integrated communities where people - whatever their background - live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

Our recently published Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper sets out our vision for delivering this, and creating a society where people of all backgrounds get on with each other, and can fulfil their potential by making the most of the opportunities and benefits that living in Britain offers them. Our ambition is that challenging segregation and promoting integration should sit at the heart of all policy and public service delivery.

This goal is also supported by other Government initiatives, such as publication of the Race Disparity Audit on the Ethnicity Facts and Figures website, to highlight disparities in public service outcomes for different groups, which will help address the gaps and barriers which prevent people from all backgrounds taking up these opportunities and achieving more successful outcomes.

Recommendation 3: The Government should initially change the existing list of values from “democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs” to “democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect for the inherent worth and autonomy of every person.” The rule of law ensures that every individual has freedom under the law (and hence enjoys individual liberty) and equality before the law (which entails a respect for the inherent worth and dignity of every person). The Government should encourage a broad public debate across the country on both the Shared Values of British Citizenship and the other values we share, and how they fit together. (Paragraph 58)

We welcome the Committee’s consideration of this issue. We believe that the term fundamental British values is now well established, particularly in the school system, but we recognise the need to continue to engage with the education sector to ensure there is clarity on the principles captured by the term and to make available resources to support schools and further education colleges and providers to embed them in their teaching and activities.

We should be clear that the fundamental British values are in no way privileged over equality. Schools are under duties to promote **both** fundamental British values and equality / respect for other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics. More generally, schools are under a range of other duties, such as to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and community cohesion. It is the combination of these duties, rather than a focus on a specific set of values, which underpins the education that children receive. We believe that the gains from making changes to one of the fundamental British values do not outweigh the burdens on the school system of implementing the changes. We will use the most appropriate values for the particular circumstances.

In the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper we consulted on our vision of building strong integrated communities where people – whatever their background – can live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. We are currently analysing the responses to that consultation,

which closed on 5 June, and is the start of a debate on the society we want to create.

Recommendation 4: The Government should set out what the Shared Values of British Citizenship mean for Government policy in each Government department, and outline how they can promote them, especially through areas of Government policy like sport, leisure, arts and culture that reach groups which may otherwise not engage with the Government. (Paragraph 61)

The Committee is right to identify sport, leisure, arts and culture as particular areas in which to emphasise the importance of the values; we would add education to that list.

Education plays an important role in equipping children with the knowledge, skills and values that will prepare them to be citizens in modern Britain. All schools are under specific duties to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of their pupils and to prepare them for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life. Furthermore, we expect all schools and further education colleges and providers to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. The Department for Education has provided advice to schools on how they can do this, for example by establishing a strong school ethos supported by effective relationships throughout the school; meeting requirements for collective worship; and providing relevant activities beyond the classroom. Schools are also required to have a behaviour policy, which requires good behaviour and respect, and prevents all forms of bullying and intolerance. Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, all primary schools will be required to teach Relationships Education, and all secondary schools will be required to teach Relationships and Sex Education, ensuring pupils are taught about healthy and respectful relationships.

Citizenship is taught in many areas of the school curriculum, including subjects such as religious education, personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), history, English, geography, and other activities offered by the school. For example, schools can also promote citizenship through participating in programmes such as the Cadet Expansion Programme, which enables young people to develop key skills such as responsibility, teamwork, self-reliance, and a sense of service to others.

Citizenship is also part of the national curriculum at key stages 3 and 4 and it is compulsory in maintained secondary schools. Primary schools can also choose to teach citizenship at key stages 1 and 2, following the non-statutory framework for citizenship, which is available on GOV.UK. Academies do not have to follow the national curriculum and can develop their own curricula, tailored to meet the particular needs of their pupils or the particular ethos of the school. However, they are still required (like all schools) to teach a broad and balanced curriculum and promote fundamental British values. Academies may therefore choose to teach citizenship to fulfil these duties.

A high quality citizenship curriculum helps to provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society as responsible citizens. Pupils are taught about democracy, government and how laws

are made and upheld. Teaching should equip pupils to explore political and social issues critically, to debate, and to make reasoned arguments.

All education providers should also encourage their pupils to respect other people, whatever their personal circumstances, background or beliefs. When inspecting schools and further education settings, Ofsted takes account of how well schools and further education institutions promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, including their understanding of, and respect for, different faiths and cultural diversity.

We know that many schools already do this very effectively, and helping showcase good practice can be a way to help schools understand what 'promoting fundamental British values' means in practice.

Universities also have a role to play in assisting their students to understand citizenship. They have a responsibility to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all students. This includes legal obligations for ensuring that students do not face discrimination, harassment or victimisation and to have regard to preventing people from being drawn into terrorism. This can help students better understand the society they are part of and the responsibilities that citizens have towards each other.

Freedom of speech and debate are also fundamental to a thriving democracy and have a clear place at the heart of our education system. Universities and FE colleges and providers have a particularly important role to play in allowing challenging and varied debates.

Sport and culture are powerful tools for engaging communities, particularly those who are hardest to reach, contributing to agendas across departments including the Home Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Participation in sport and culture has a demonstrable positive impact on social outcomes, including social mobility. Evidence suggests that arts participation may lead to greater social interaction, enhanced self esteem and the development of social relationships and networks, which nurture social capital. Evidence also suggests that organised arts activities may help promote the inclusion of disadvantaged groups such as asylum seekers and refugees, disabled people and young people at risk.

Sport and culture contribute to integrated communities and help people to find a common interest, promote social mixing and increase participation in voluntary activities, which all build a sense of community.

Sport is a proven tool for bringing people together and for building social interaction between communities, particularly those that have little engagement with other activities or public services. Sport builds teamwork in pursuit of a common goal, improves educational behaviour and attainment, develops social skills, and provides a platform for dialogue about sensitive issues to help break down myths and barriers. Evidence shows that those who belong to a sports club are 35% more likely to achieve very high life satisfaction than those who do not.

The government's Sporting Future strategy, which was published in December 2015, holds five key outcomes at its core: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, community development and economic development.

Arts and culture play an essential role in our everyday lives, our cultural identity and economy. The Culture White Paper acknowledged the role played by cultural activity in an individual's physical and mental health, education and life chances, as well as in driving local economic growth, job creation, community cohesion and helping tackle some of the most entrenched social problems. The Arts Council works in partnership with communities and local authorities to increase access to arts and culture and contribute to community cohesion. One example of this work is our Creative People and Places programme.

Recommendation 5: The promotion of Shared British Values should be separated from counter extremism policy. The Government should not place guidance on teaching Shared Values of British Citizenship on the “Educate against Hate” website. Guidance to teachers should make clear that the primary objective of promoting Shared Values of British Citizenship is to encourage positive citizenship rather than solely aiming to counter extremism. (Paragraph 70)

We agree that promotion of the values set out in fundamental British values - democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths, and beliefs - are an important part of schools' and further education colleges' and providers' efforts to support social cohesion and integration including, for example, through the duties to provide spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This should go beyond counter extremism policy. Through this, promotion of fundamental British values is an integral part of efforts to safeguard children and young people from the risk of, and build their resilience to, radicalisation. Promotion of fundamental British values is intended to provide safe environments for debating controversial issues, to challenge efforts by those seeking to undermine the values, to promote pupils' understanding, respect and tolerance of those of different beliefs and faiths, and to help pupils understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making. We agree that promoting shared values of British citizenship should also encourage positive citizenship.

All publicly funded schools are required to promote community cohesion, including through the national curriculum citizenship programme of study, which includes knowledge of the diverse range of identities in the UK and the importance of respecting others. Schools can provide many opportunities for their pupils to learn about and mix with people from different backgrounds – for example through visits and establishing links with other schools.

All schools and relevant further education colleges and providers are also expected to promote fundamental British values. Extremists seek to undermine these values, sow division and discord and promote hate, so young people need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to challenge and reject extremism, as part of preparation for life in a modern and diverse Britain. Schools can help do this by promoting fundamental British values and many already do this effectively through curriculum subjects, but also through extra-curricular activities.

It is right that fundamental British values are embedded in the regulatory framework, including that relating to counter extremism and safeguarding; this enables government to take action against institutions which provide a permissive environment for extremism and against individual teachers and governors who engage in extremist conduct.

We expect those who live in our society to regard people of all faiths, races and cultures with respect and tolerance, and for that to be reciprocated by support for the society which makes that possible. Whilst this means we undertake to respect and understand that different people may hold different views about what is right and wrong at a personal level, all people living in England are subject to its law. The rule of law is there to protect freedoms that we believe are meant to be enjoyed at the individual level, both by citizens who grow up in this country and by those who choose to live here.

Whilst we welcome the Committee's consideration of this issue, where government puts an expectation on schools – in this case 'to promote fundamental British values' - it is only right that it should make freely available high quality resources to help them meet this expectation. The Educate Against Hate website, which is visited by thousands of people every month, is a practical tool that supports schools to build children's resilience to extremism and radicalisation. We will continue to promote the use of the website. However, we are also considering other ways we can promote understanding of fundamental British values within the education sector.

Recommendation 6: Any change in the rules governing admissions criteria to faith schools should ensure that they do not increase social segregation. (Paragraph 82)

We welcome the Committee's consideration of this issue. The Government's Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, published on 14 March 2018, underlines the importance of inclusion and integrated communities. We know that Church and faith schools, like all schools, play an important role in promoting integration and supporting pupils to understand different faiths and communities.

For faith Free Schools, there is a 'cap' on faith-based admissions. This means that when the free school is over-subscribed it can only apply faith-based criteria for up to 50 per cent of places. Following consideration of the responses to the consultation, *Schools that Work for Everyone*, we have decided to retain the 50 per cent cap on faith-based admissions in new faith Free Schools.

It is important that any faith Free Schools remain open and attractive to those of other faiths or none, so all pupils can benefit from the good new school places they provide. To support our approach to integration, the application criteria for Wave 13 of the free schools programme (published on 11 May 2018), set out how we will consider the potential impact on integration and community cohesion, and the intake of neighbouring schools before a new school is approved. Our assessment will take account of proposers' planned approach to admissions and how it might affect integration and community cohesion. While we will continue to support the principle of parental preference for schools, the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper also commits us to work with local admission authorities in our Integration Areas to support increased diversity in schools' intake and promote integration.

We will continue to expect all faith Free School proposers to promote integration and inclusivity, including by demonstrating that the school is likely to attract applications from pupils from different backgrounds and communities and how they will ensure that all feel welcome and able to play a full and active role in the school. We will also give credit where they include actions to support integration that are effective in, and appropriate to, their local context - such as through linking with schools of another or no faith, or by ensuring diversity of their governing boards. This is reflected in the application criteria for Wave 13 of the free schools programme¹.

To support new free schools who wish to link with other schools, the Government has invested nearly £500,000 since September 2016 in the Schools Linking Network to develop programmes which will help develop strong and positive links between schools and communities with different religious and cultural backgrounds.

We are currently considering responses to the consultation on the Green Paper, which closed on 5 June 2018.

Recommendation 7: Faith schools, and other schools attended primarily by the adherents of one faith, should be no exception to the requirement to teach Shared Values of British Citizenship, still less the requirement to abide by the rule of law. We are glad to see Ofsted focusing on this important issue. They should not look the other way. (Paragraph 85)

Faith schools are not an exception to the requirement to promote fundamental British values. All schools are actively required to promote the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and the mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs.

The Government has also worked with Ofsted to strengthen their inspection frameworks so that inspectors are required to assess how well schools protect pupils from the risks of extremism and radicalisation, and promote fundamental British values. There is a statutory requirement on inspectors to consider how schools support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). This includes consideration of a number of factors which are relevant to shared values and citizenship.

Recommendation 8: We welcome the Government's new policy of ensuring that all applicants to set up a free school are required to say how their school will promote the Shared Values of British Citizenship. (Paragraph 87)

Promoting fundamental British values is a key part of ensuring that young people leave school prepared for life in a modern and diverse Britain, and able to play a full part in civic society. We are pleased the Committee supports the Government's policy of ensuring that all applicants to set up a free school are required to demonstrate how their school will promote these values.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-application-guide>

Education

Recommendation 9: The Government should create a statutory entitlement to citizenship education from primary to the end of secondary education. This should be inspected by Ofsted to ensure the quantity and quality of provision. Ofsted should give consideration to this in deciding whether a school should be rated as Outstanding. (Paragraph 123)

We recognise that high quality citizenship education helps to provide pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society. We want all pupils to understand democracy, government and how laws are made and to understand the different ways that citizens can work together to improve their communities and society. We want children and young people to use this understanding to become constructive, active citizens.

Citizenship is part of the national curriculum at key stages 3 and 4 and it is compulsory in maintained secondary schools. Primary schools can also choose to teach citizenship at key stages 1 and 2, following the non-statutory framework for citizenship, which is available on GOV.UK. Academies do not have to follow the national curriculum and can develop their own curricula, tailored to meet the particular needs of their pupils or the particular ethos of the school. However, they are still required (like all schools) to teach a broad and balanced curriculum and promote fundamental British values. Many academies will choose to teach citizenship to fulfil these duties.

The national curriculum was comprehensively reviewed and then published in 2013 and, in April 2018, the Secretary of State for Education committed to making no further reforms to the national curriculum in this parliament.

The national curriculum outlines the body of essential knowledge that must be taught in maintained schools; this essential knowledge should not change significantly over time. Alongside this, we have also been reforming GCSEs and A levels to be more demanding and knowledge based, to match the best education systems in the world and to keep pace with universities' and employers' expectations.

Ofsted does not inspect individual curriculum subjects but there is a statutory requirement on inspectors to consider how schools support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This includes consideration of a number of factors which are relevant to citizenship.

Recommendation 10: The Government should establish a target of having enough trained citizenship teachers to have a citizenship specialist in every secondary school. (Paragraph 132)

We do not impose a limit on the number of trainee teachers in citizenship that are recruited for initial teacher training and it is for head teachers to decide how to best deliver their curriculum through the effective use of teachers in their schools.

The recruitment of trainee teachers for citizenship is unlimited. Initial teacher training providers are free to recruit future citizenship teachers without constraints from the Department for Education (DfE).

DfE uses the Teacher Supply Model to estimate the number of postgraduate Initial Teacher Training (ITT) places required by phase and subject in England at a national level. These estimates are based on a range of factors including, but not limited to, changing pupil numbers and age demographics, the latest data on the teacher stock, and the latest data on what subjects that pupils are being taught in schools by age group.

The model is not used to set targets that relate to individual schools in the fashion outlined in the recommendation. The model estimates the need for citizenship teachers at a national level based on the number of citizenship lessons that are being taught across the country and how this is expected to change going forward.

Recommendation 11: The Government should establish citizenship education as a priority subject for teacher training, and provide bursaries for applicants. Urgent action should be taken to step up programmes of Continuing Professional Development for those willing to take on and lead citizenship education in their school. (Paragraph 133)

We have considered the Committee's recommendation on making citizenship a priority subject for teacher training, and to provide bursaries for applicants. We are already taking a permissive approach to the allocation of initial teacher training places for citizenship, building on the approach taken for this subject in 2017/18. As per the 2018/19 Allocations Methodology, recruitment to citizenship is unrestricted for 2018/19, and ITT providers and School Direct lead schools have maximum flexibility to recruit. We have had to make difficult decisions about where to focus our bursaries for initial teacher training. As schools enter more pupils for English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects we expect there will be more demand for specialist teachers in these subjects. We have therefore focused the bursaries budget on EBacc subjects to secure as many applicants as possible in the subjects where schools are likely to devote the most teaching time. Citizenship trainees are eligible for a tuition fee loan and a maintenance loan to support their living costs.

Decisions relating to teachers' professional development rightly rest with schools, head teachers, and teachers themselves, as they are in the best position to judge their own requirements – subject to the specific needs of their schools, staff and pupils. They are helped by the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development, which was developed by an expert group of head teachers, teachers and academics. This supports teachers and head teachers to understand what makes professional development effective and how to make choices to prioritise and enable high-quality professional development.

Recommendation 12: The Government should ensure that the National College for Teaching and Leadership allows citizenship teachers to apply to be specialist leaders of education. (Paragraph 135)

Teaching schools and system leaders support the Department for Education's goal to provide every child and young person with access to high-quality provision, achieving to the best of their ability regardless of location, prior attainment and background. We will introduce a new Specialist Leader of Education specialism for citizenship. This will help to develop the capacity and capability of other leaders so that they have the skills to improve practice and citizenship provision in their own schools.

Recommendation 13: Ofsted should undertake a review of the current provision and quality of citizenship education in schools and highlight best practice. This should be followed up with long term monitoring of whether citizenship education achieves the set of criteria or goals that the Government sets out for it. (Paragraph 143)

Ofsted is not currently undertaking reviews of individual subjects in the way that is proposed but is undertaking work looking at the curriculum as a whole. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector attaches great importance to schools having a broad and rich curriculum that is not driven by exam success but which, by its nature, helps to deliver this.

Ofsted has begun work on its new education inspection framework, which is due to be introduced in 2019. This will build on findings from the curriculum review and is expected to have a particular focus on the curriculum.

Recommendation 14: The Government should work with exam boards to ensure that citizenship qualifications feature active citizenship projects as a substantial part of the qualification. (Paragraph 148)

In developing the new GCSEs, AS and A levels, we worked closely with exam boards, subject experts and Ofqual, the independent qualifications regulator, to develop the subject content. This included GCSE citizenship studies. The draft content for each subject was also published for public consultation.

The reformed GCSE in citizenship studies has been taught in schools since 2016. The subject content requires exam boards to include 'taking citizenship action' in their specifications. The first exams in the subject will take place this summer.

The new content, for the first time, requires pupils to understand the processes of active citizenship such as lobbying, petitions, demonstrating and volunteering, which will enable them to take more effective citizenship action of their own. Pupils will also need to discuss real-life examples of active citizenship which demonstrate how citizens attempt to improve or change their community by working together. Schools are required to provide a written statement to exam boards confirming that each citizenship studies GCSE candidate has conducted an in-depth, critical investigation leading to citizenship action.

Exam papers must include questions that draw on the knowledge and understanding that pupils have gained from taking citizenship action. These questions will account for 15 per cent of the marks for the full GCSE course.

Recommendation 15: The Government should conduct a review of the citizenship curriculum and formulate a new curriculum that includes the Shared Values of British Citizenship, the NCS and active citizenship projects. Piecemeal changes made without reference to the existing curriculum should be avoided. (Paragraph 161)

See response to recommendation 16.

Recommendation 16: The Government has allowed citizenship education in England to degrade to a parlous state. The decline of the subject must be addressed in its totality as a matter of urgency. (Paragraph 162)

The national curriculum was comprehensively reviewed and then published in 2013 and, in April 2018, the Secretary of State for Education committed to making no further reforms to the national curriculum in this parliament. The national curriculum outlines the body of essential knowledge that must be taught in maintained schools; this essential knowledge should not change significantly over time. We will therefore be making no further changes to the citizenship programmes of study within the national curriculum.

However, we recognise that high quality citizenship education helps to provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society. Citizenship education has a strong position in secondary schools, where it is part of the National Curriculum in both key stages 3 and 4. It is one of only six compulsory subjects to be included in the key stage 4 curriculum.

We have made it clear that citizenship education can support schools to deliver their duties regarding the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and can provide the core knowledge that underpins a full understanding of fundamental British values. For example, the revised citizenship programme of study includes teaching about democracy, government, how laws are made and upheld, the diverse identities in the UK and the need for mutual respect and understanding, and the precious liberties enjoyed by citizens of this country.

However, the Department for Education does not specify how schools teach citizenship as a subject. The slimmer programmes of study in the national curriculum allow schools the freedom to use their professional expertise and understanding of their pupils to develop the right approach for their particular school.

Schools can also build on their citizenship provision through extra-curricular activity, including participating in programmes such as the Cadet Expansion Programme which enables young people to develop key skills such as responsibility, teamwork, self-reliance and a sense of service to others. We have seen 245 new cadet units (forces) created in state schools since 2010. This is a good example of active citizenship taking place.

The National Citizen Service (NCS) is helping to build a more responsible, more cohesive and more engaged society. We will consider what more we can do to strengthen the links between citizenship education and the NCS, specifically the role that NCS can play in helping schools provide opportunities for 'active citizenship'. To

support schools in making the links between education and participation in NCS, the Association for Citizenship Teaching has produced a set of resources. These include ready-made activities that link NCS and citizenship education for use in lessons or as off-timetable activities and school events. Alongside the activities is guidance for teachers and a social action toolkit designed for use by young people to help them plan, undertake and evaluate their social action².

National Citizen Service

Recommendation 17: The National Citizen Service should continue to prioritise inclusion as it expands. It should expand and improve on the work it is already doing to include groups that are hardest to reach. (Paragraph 174)

We welcome this recommendation. Ensuring that young people from harder-to-reach groups participate in NCS is a priority for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the NCS Trust. NCS is already working to ensure participants come from diverse backgrounds. For example, in 2017, NCS Trust data shows:

- 29% of NCS participants were from non-White backgrounds, compared to 18% of the population
- 17% were from minority religions, compared to 10% of the population
- 4.8% had special educational needs, compared to 1.7% of the population
- 16% were on Free School Meals, compared to 12% of the population

To help young people facing barriers to participation, NCS Trust has trialled a range of new approaches including a peer support buddying programme and a personal coach scheme. Both showed encouraging results and the Trust is exploring how the findings can be incorporated into the wider programme.

Recommendation 18: The Government should work with the National Citizen Service to tackle the hidden costs (transport, sponsorship forms, etc.) of the National Citizen Service for low income families, and especially those in rural communities. (Paragraph 178)

Participation in NCS should cost a maximum of £50 per person. NCS Trust offers bursaries on a case by case basis to ensure that this upfront cost is not a barrier to participation for those from low income backgrounds.

Recent research has highlighted that some participants may be experiencing hidden costs. DCMS has asked the NCS Trust to continue to work as quickly as possible with delivery providers to address this issue. We are aware that this issue may be a particular problem associated with the Social Action phase of the programme, for example in the form of additional transport costs. To address this, the NCS Trust is piloting a partnership with a transport company in one region, which provides free travel to NCS participants undertaking social action, and are analysing the effect this has on participants (including programme completion rates). NCS Trust plans to take

² <https://www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk/resource/ncs-citizenship-curriculum-materials>

this case study to other transport companies across the country, to make it as easy as possible for young people to experience the full NCS programme.

Recommendation 19: The Government should stop stating that the National Citizen Service is not a citizenship scheme. (Paragraph 191)

The National Citizen Service programme aims to deliver on three core objectives: social mobility, social cohesion and social engagement to help build a more responsible, cohesive and engaged society. While the programme was not designed specifically as a citizenship scheme, the 2016 evaluation showed that NCS participation has a positive effect on a young person's intention to vote in the next General Election as well as engaging in supporting their communities through volunteering.

The NCS Trust was granted a Royal Charter in 2017 which states that one of its functions will be: "Encouraging participants to take an interest in debate on matters of local or national political interest, and promoting their understanding of how to participate in national and local elections".

Recommendation 20: The National Citizen Service should change its communications and branding strategy to include the work it is already doing on democratic engagement and on projects with young people trying to bring about change in their community. (Paragraph 192)

NCS Trust actively promotes its work to support democratic engagement across its communications channels but as NCS Trust's communication and branding strategy is designed to most effectively engage young people in the programme, the Trust's core brand and messaging focuses on how best to appeal to young people. The 2017/18 multi-media communications campaign 'Unstoppable' includes case studies of young people making a difference to their communities through voluntary work.

Recommendation 21: The National Citizen Service needs to do more to ensure quality across providers of democratic engagement and young people's involvement in project choice and development. (Paragraph 193)

DCMS and NCS Trust aim to deliver a high quality programme with minimal regional variation in the NCS experience, including around aspects of the curriculum such as democratic engagement.

The NCS curriculum includes informing young people about the importance of the democratic process, which can include specific sessions on how to join the electoral register. NCS Trust has worked with Bite the Ballot to deliver sessions for NCS participants encouraging voter registration. 95% of participants that took part in these sessions registered to vote.

Independent research also shows that NCS has a positive impact on young people's intention to vote in the next General Election, with roughly a 14 percentage point increase in intention to vote shown in an evaluation of participants of the 2016 programme.

Existing contracts between the NCS Trust and local providers allow for some variation in curriculum content and delivery. DCMS will encourage NCS Trust to address this issue when commissioning new provider contracts.

Recommendation 22: The National Citizen Service cannot be seen as a short one-off programme and must be designed to create a lifelong habit of social action. (Paragraph 196)

DCMS supports young people to create a lifetime habit of social action through supporting the #iwill campaign to make social action a part of life for 10-20 year olds and through creating more opportunities for young people to participate in social action through the #iwill fund. DCMS is exploring how government can further help young people to get involved in social action through the Civil Society Strategy.

The National Citizen Service is one part of this social action journey, but aims to encourage graduates to continue to undertake social action after completing the programme. The NCS Trust already signposts young people to social action opportunities in their area through the online 'Opportunity Hub' and Government and the NCS Trust will explore other possibilities to support young people to continue their social action journey. The NCS Trust's regional youth development boards encourage NCS graduates to continue with social action, for example through the nationwide 'Action Day' which all graduates have the opportunity to take part in. The NCS Trust are developing partnerships with other organisations across the youth sector such as the Scouts Association, and DCMS encourages the NCS Trust to make links with organisations that support a young person to develop a lifelong habit of social action.

Recommendation 23: The National Citizen Service should work with Government, the voluntary sector and schools to ensure that NCS graduates are encouraged to continue to find opportunities for further civic engagement. (Paragraph 197)

Consecutive independent evaluations show that following NCS, participants are more likely to use their time to help others. The 2016 evaluation showed that the estimated value of additional volunteering undertaken by NCS graduates as a result of the 2016 NCS programmes was £61.1 million.

The NCS Trust will continue to promote 'follow on' social action opportunities to young people through the online Opportunity Hub, as well as through the NCS Trust's other channels which engage NCS graduates such as the national and regional youth development boards. DCMS will work with the NCS Trust to explore further how this can be achieved.

Recommendation 24: The National Citizen Service should be expected to make partnerships with voluntary sector organisations. (Paragraph 202)

DCMS expects the NCS Trust to forge partnerships with other voluntary sector organisations and this is reflected in the performance management framework for the Trust's grant funding. There are many recent examples of partnerships with the voluntary sector, for example with the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, and a

partnership with the Scouts Association. Over 300 local organisations form the NCS local delivery network, many of which are local voluntary sector organisations.

Recommendation 25: The National Citizen Service should continue to work with other youth organisations to establish benchmarks for effectiveness to support evaluation across the sector. (Paragraph 203)

DCMS will investigate how the data collected from the various evaluations across the Youth Investment Fund and the #iwill Fund and NCS can lead to the development of comparable benchmarks.

Furthermore DCMS commissioned an independent cost benchmarking report on NCS which is publicly available on the Public Accounts Committee website.

Recommendation 26: The Government should encourage and facilitate the National Citizen Service in making greater connections with schools, and should ensure that it is integrated with citizenship education provision. This should include encouraging NCS coordinators in schools to engage with citizenship courses and be given the Continuing Professional Development they need in order to do so. (Paragraph 209)

In 2017 DCMS worked with the Department for Education and NCS Trust to publish non-statutory guidance on NCS for schools and colleges with the aim of improving joint working at the local level between NCS providers and schools and colleges. Government will continue to encourage and facilitate these connections, including considering the role of citizenship education and NCS school coordinators.

Civil Society

Recommendation 27: The Office for Civil Society should publicise the guidance on nominating outstanding volunteers for honours. (Paragraph 219)

Guidance on nominating an individual for a national honour is readily available and can be found on GOV.UK³. Furthermore, the Honours team in DCMS is able to provide advice and guidance to members of the public on all aspects of the honours process - including how to make a nomination, either for an individual or in the case of groups awards via the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS). Information on how to nominate a group is available on the QAVS website⁴. We will keep our communications about honours under review.

Recommendation 28: The Main Honours Committee should give particular attention to the recommendations for honours for volunteers made by the honours committee for Community, Voluntary and Local Services. (Paragraph 220)

The Prime Minister has affirmed that honours should be awarded on merit and asked that independent honours committees give particular focus to nominees who give

³ <https://www.gov.uk/honours>

⁴ <https://qavs.direct.gov.uk/>

their time to improve their local community, support diversity and social mobility, and help children and young people to achieve their potential. On average, 70% of recipients on each honours list have given voluntary, charitable or community service. In November 2017, in recognition of the central importance to the honours system of voluntary service, HM The Queen approved the creation of a new Community and Voluntary Service Honours Committee. This Committee will give particular focus to the consideration of volunteers and will start its work with the New Year 2019 honours round, from July 2018 onwards.

Recommendation 29: Umbrella bodies in the voluntary sector should prepare guidance for local authorities, health and social care organisations on how to give formal recognition to outstanding work by volunteers they work with. (Paragraph 221)

Government departments notify stakeholders, including relevant umbrella bodies, when honours rounds are coming up and encourage them to nominate people who have made a significant contribution to their community. We would encourage umbrella bodies to use this and other routes to ensure people's contributions get the recognition they deserve.

Recommendation 30: The Government should ensure that all front line staff working at Job Centre Plus are fully briefed on the status of volunteers. Where job seekers wish to volunteer, staff should encourage them to do so, and should explain that this can count for half of their reasonable action to find a job requirement (up to 17.5 hours). (Paragraph 226)

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) recognises the value of voluntary activity in both developing skills which can be transferred into the world of paid work and in terms of benefits for local communities and the wider society. Undertaking voluntary work is particularly useful for someone who has been out of the labour market for some time and is looking to build up their confidence and their CV at the same time. This is why Universal Credit claimants can have their weekly work search hours reduced by up to 50 per cent to accommodate voluntary activity (this would be 17.5 hours for those expected to do the maximum of 35 hours of work-related activity). Claimants are not prevented from spending more time volunteering, but similar to those who are working, they need to manage combining voluntary activity with other work-related activities. This will give claimants the best chance of moving into sustainable work more quickly.

DWP already has in place a training package that work coaches complete, and supporting day to day guidance which encompasses the above policy. All learning packages and supporting guidance products are subject to continuous improvement and regularly updated, and on the next iteration will be reviewed to enhance and strengthen messaging in line with this recommendation.

Recommendation 31: The Government should work with local administrations to audit existing inclusive public and civic space to see how it could be made more easily available for civic activity. (Paragraph 233)

DCMS is aware that there is a considerable interest in how public and community assets could be better used and more sustainable. We will consider, in conjunction with MHCLG, whether this work should form part of our future focus within the Civil Society Strategy, which is currently being developed.

Recommendation 32: We agree that employers should have a comprehensive public duties and community roles policy. (Paragraph 240)

We note the Committee's view.

Recommendation 33: The Government should create an Access to Volunteering scheme similar to the existing Access to Work scheme. (Paragraph 244)

Government recognises that social action and volunteering can provide opportunities for individuals to develop new skills, reduce loneliness and improve wellbeing. We will be considering the findings of this report as part of the intelligence gathering exercise informing the Civil Society Strategy.

Recommendation 34: The Government should consider including information on volunteering in the pensions pack sent to those who reach pensionable age. (Paragraph 246)

DWP recognises that volunteering can provide opportunities that can enrich the lives of people in retirement. DWP will consider this recommendation and the most appropriate channel that could be used to communicate it.

Recommendation 35: The Government should implement the recommendations of the Hodgson Review of third party campaigning as soon as Parliamentary time permits. (Paragraph 253)

The Government recognises and values the important campaigning and advocacy roles of civil society organisations.

The third party campaigning rules are necessary. They ensure transparency and fairness of non-party campaigning at elections and that no individual or organisation exerts undue influence. The rules are not intended to prevent charities and other civil society organisations from undertaking legitimate non-party political campaigning.

Pressure on the Parliamentary timetable means that the opportunity for legislative reform is unlikely in the near future. Instead, the Government wants to work with civil society to ensure that civil society organisations have the confidence to continue their non-party political campaigning and advocacy.

Recommendation 36: The Government should conduct an early review of best practice in public engagement in public service provision and commissioning. (Paragraph 261)

DCMS is investigating best practice in public engagement in public service provision and commissioning through the Enabling Social Action programme. DCMS is

currently in the second phase of this programme building on the Enabling Social Action toolkit (published in February 2017). Phase 2 is designed to provide a better evidence base regarding the role of public engagement in commissioning and public service provision. The programme involves work with local authorities, commissioners and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise organisations to understand and reduce the barriers they face in engaging the public in their commissioning.

In addition, our Commissioning Academy is a development programme for senior decision makers across the public sector. It encourages collaborative, outcomes-based commissioning and includes co-design and social value. Commissioning for social value is an important strand of the Civil Society Strategy.

Recommendation 37: The Government should use the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 to include public engagement in the contracts of public service providers. (Paragraph 262)

In 2015 Lord Young of Graffham undertook a review of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 which found the Act was having a positive effect where it was being used to its fullest extent. We are implementing the review's recommendations. This included the publication of guidance on how to design social value into public service contracts that encourages consultation.

Social Value will be an important aspect of the government's Civil Society Strategy which will be published later this year. We are engaging with civil society representatives, commissioners, public sector procurement professionals as we develop the strategy.

Democratic Engagement

Recommendation 38: We encourage the Government to continue exploring ways of making voter registration activities more efficient by harnessing existing commercial data sets. (Paragraph 275)

The Government agrees with the Committee that the use of data can be helpful in electoral registration. In the case of commercial datasets, there is likely to be some circularity given commercial datasets may derive from the electoral register. Exploring the use of such datasets is not currently a priority. However, making electoral registration activity more efficient is a priority. As such, we ran a number of pilots in 2016 and 2017 designed to build an evidence base for improvements to the annual canvass process. Working with a number of Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) across Great Britain we are developing plans for a simplification of the canvass that will allow EROs to target their resources more efficiently. These plans include using national and local data to achieve this targeting.

We continue ongoing work to understand the optimum data for the EROs to use to aid them in their duties, both within canvass reform as well as the day to day registration duties. A recent desk-based analysis was completed in Scotland on the Tenancy Deposit Scheme data, with similar studies planned over the coming years

Recommendation 39: The Government should allow people to register to vote without a national insurance number on the basis of other recognised Government ID (passport, driving licence, etc.). (Paragraph 279)

Passports and driving licences can already be used by anyone unable to provide their National Insurance Number (NINo).

The introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in 2014 revolutionised the electoral registration system, empowering every individual to decide when and where they want to be registered. While providing a NINo is not necessary under IER, an online application is made easier by an applicant providing their NINo. This is requested along with an applicant's name, date of birth and address. Requesting these personal identifiers has significantly limited the ability for fraudulent applications, strengthening our democracy as a result.

One of the reasons for choosing NINos as the preferred way to confirm applicants' identities was that a survey, conducted by the Electoral Commission (EC) in 2013, found that 94 per cent of respondents stated that it would be 'very easy' or 'fairly easy' for them to provide it for official purposes, with just 2% suggesting that it would be 'very difficult'. Our own discussions with stakeholders and the public reinforced these findings, demonstrating that there was little concern about providing NINos.

Since the introduction of online registration, we have received more than 32 million applications and user satisfaction with the service is at 95 per cent. Each day, the IER Digital Service matches thousands of applications to Government-held records, using NINos, providing match results overnight to Electoral Registration Officers (EROs). This allows applications to be processed very quickly by EROs. For example, more than 620,000 applications were verified on the final day for registration at the 2017 General Election. The use of the NINo was central to this given the very high level of population coverage it provides, far exceeding other forms of ID. Overall, the practical experience of running online applications is that this system is vastly more accessible to citizens and is highly efficient for those who have to process applications.

Where electors cannot provide their NINo they are approached by their local ERO to prove their identity in other ways, for example by providing a UK passport or driving licence. If the applicant is unable to provide sufficient documentary evidence, they are then directed to the attestation process and asked to provide an attestation from a qualifying person who attests to their identity.

Given the efficiency of using NINos and the range of alternatives that can be used to ensure that no elector is disenfranchised as a result of not knowing their NINo the Government has no plans to make other forms of government identification – such as passports or driving licenses – a primary means for making an application to register.

Recommendation 40: The Government should pilot assisted registration at a number of schools and Further Education colleges across the country. (Paragraph 284)

See response to recommendation 41.

Recommendation 41: If the pilot is successful, the Government should consider making Regulations to impose on schools, Further Education colleges and apprenticeship providers a duty to assist Electoral Registration Officers when required to do so. (Paragraph 285)

The Government does not currently intend to operate the kind of pilot described by the Committee. However, the Government is of course committed to creating a democracy that works for everyone, including school and college students. As noted by the Committee, the Government's Democratic Engagement Plan sets out our intentions to work with school and college age students, and other under-registered groups, to improve awareness and democratic engagement.

The year 2018 will see considerable investment in engaging with young people to raise awareness of democratic participation. This includes National Democracy Week and the Suffrage Centenary celebrations. Linked to these events, we have recently launched a youth engagement pack for parliamentarians and announced the recruitment and training of youth democracy ambassadors. We will also be making a secondary schools resource for 13-16 year olds available later in the year.

Further to this work, the Government has legislated to include – for the first time – student electoral registration as part of the Higher Education regulatory framework. We expect this to lead to more higher education students making applications to register to vote. It will, however, be important to evaluate the success of this measure before the Government could consider extending it further, into the schools and Further Education sectors.

Recommendation 42: The Government should review its guidance for Government departments communicating with members of the public to encourage more personalised communication that directly responds to people's concerns. It should include telling people who they can talk to if they disagree with the response, and who would be responsible for changing policy. (Paragraph 290)

The Cabinet Office approved Customer Service Excellence model ensures that customer service is driven by robust, measurable and externally verifiable standards. A number of Government departments which, because of the nature of the services they provide, have a high degree of engagement with members of the public have adopted the model.

For example, DWP's Customer Charter published on GOV.UK⁵ provides a clear commitment to meet high standards of customer service and delivery. DWP takes feedback from claimants on its customer service seriously. Data from complaints and recommendations from the Independent Case Examiner are both considered alongside other feedback such as survey findings, official reviews and insights from intelligence sources such as stakeholder organisations and representative groups, and are used to drive changes and improvements to DWP procedures.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-customer-charter>

Recommendation 43: We agree with those witnesses who stressed the importance of Members of Parliament offering personalised replies to personal letters addressed to them, explaining honestly when they disagreed with the member of the public, and giving their reasons for doing so. (Paragraph 292)

The Code of Conduct and the Guide to the Rules content relating to the conduct of Members is approved by the House of Commons as a whole and it is not for the Government to comment on the content of the Code. Members of Parliament are elected, which provides a strong incentive to deliver a responsive service to their constituents.

Recommendation 44: The Government should co-ordinate with the devolved administrations and local government to create a “no wrong door” approach to the state. A citizen should not need to know who a service is provided by in order to be put in contact with the provider. (Paragraph 298)

We are committed to making Government information and services more accessible to individuals. As the Committee’s report acknowledges, GOV.UK⁶ has gone some way towards this by hosting 25 ministerial departments and 376 public bodies. It is built to meet user needs, not government needs. Users do not need to know which government department they need to deal with to access government services. GOV.UK reduces the need to learn government structures and provides a consistent user experience. It uses language that users understand and is optimised for search, so that users can find the service they need straight away without needing to know specific government terminology. GOV.UK also helps users to find services provided by local authorities and devolved administrations. It provides 120 lookups that link users to local government services in their area and services on GOV.UK clearly linking to corresponding services provided by devolved administrations.

An example of how this works in practice is that, where an HMRC adviser encounters a customer who has misdirected their enquiry to HMRC, such as a Universal Credit customer who should be dealt with by DWP, they would redirect the individual to GOV.UK which provides a portal to all Government services. This gives the customer the opportunity to resolve the enquiry using information contained on the website without the need to contact DWP. Where further contact is required, GOV.UK ensures the customer has access to the most up-to-date contact details.

There are other Government initiatives to simplify and streamline individuals’ interaction with the state, such as DWP’s ‘Tell us Once’ which enables someone who is bereaved to inform central and local government services of the death at one time rather than having to write, telephone or even attend each service individually.

Recommendation 45: The Government should co-ordinate with the devolved administrations and local government to create a “no wrong door” approach for those who seek to change policy. If a member of the public seeks to change a policy they should be told who the decision maker is. (Paragraph 299)

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/>

Elected representatives, including Members of Parliament and local councillors, have a key role to play in helping individuals to identify decision makers and lobby for policy change at a national and local level.

Guidance is available to individuals on how they can contact their Member of Parliament⁷ and on finding and contacting local councillors⁸.

Recommendation 46: The Government should investigate the feasibility of creating single points of contact in communities where people can get answers to questions that may fall across several departments, or between central and local government, or between them and other major service providers like the National Health Service. (Paragraph 300)

As the committee notes, GOV.UK was created to provide people with information, in one place, on matters relating to government departments. At the local level, principal councils have their own websites, which provide information on the services they provide and contact details for people who want further information. At the level below principal councils, not all areas of the county are parished, so the lowest level that a single point of contact would be feasible is through principal councils. Many principal council offices have reception areas that deal with enquiries through one-stop shops or customer service points for their services, which are effectively single points of contact for residents. In areas with two-tier county and district councils, there is often good integration between both levels of principal council, to provide a more streamlined service to residents.

Where people are interested in what their local council does, they can obtain information from their council's website, through direct contact with the council, and from their local councillor. With the move to digitise public services, and the support available to people who are not confident in using digital technology, the value of funding a new single point of contact would need to be clearly justified.

Recommendation 47: Local authorities should improve the way they notify the public, using open and machine readable formats. They should also investigate using digital methods like email newsletters and social media to ensure that the public are aware of changes. (Paragraph 304)

The way that local authorities notify citizens is sometimes governed by legislative requirements. Where this is not the case, it is for local authorities to determine how best to notify citizens. They are closer to their communities and will have better knowledge of how to reach effectively the different communities that they serve. Many authorities already use digital technology and social media to engage with their communities. In their communications local authorities should have regard to the Publicity Code when issuing communications to their residents

Recommendation 48: The Government should ensure that across all levels of Government data for democratic engagement is available in an open digital format. (Paragraph 305)

⁷ <https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-an-mp-or-lord/contact-your-mp/>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-councillors>

The Government is already working towards this end. The December 2017 Democratic Engagement Plan set out our priorities for raising awareness of democracy and participation in our democratic processes. As part of this, we have committed to developing an Atlas of Democratic Variation. This will be made publicly available online and will consist of visual maps, displaying data and trends in democratic engagement, across different areas. The types of data that will be used for the maps include data on estimated registration rates, population demographics, and data from the Individual Electoral Registration digital service. As well as the Atlas of Democratic Variation, the Cabinet Office also hosts the Live Service Dashboard⁹, which provides all data regarding applications to register to vote.

The Government is aware of work being led by the Local Government Association to standardise election results and is working towards fulfilment of the Open Government Partnership commitment in this area.

Between 12 May and 8 July 2016, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government consulted on options for updating the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 and this included questions about whether new data should be published, for example on local authority assets. Having analysed the consultation responses, the Department has delayed the timetable for its response in order to consider in more detail the options for legislative and non-legislative changes. The Department will set out its response to the consultation and next steps by the end of 2018.

Recommendation 49: The Government should ensure that local authorities, health bodies and other public agencies bring the public, especially marginalised groups, into decision-making as early as possible, invest in high quality consultation processes, provide proper feedback to local communities and use the many evidence-based community engagement initiatives. (Paragraph 312)

The Cabinet Office issues guidance to Government Departments on the principles of consultation¹⁰, and the Local Government Association has published a consultation check list and guidance for local authorities^{11, 12}.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has engaged young people across the country in policy development for the Civil Society Strategy and we have worked with the Big Lottery Fund to engage young people in developing our dormant accounts fund.

Recommendation 50: We agree with the evidence given to the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster that the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace should be used as an opportunity to make Parliament more easily accessible, and to improve education about its activities. (Paragraph 314)

This is a matter for Parliament.

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/performance/register-to-vote>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

¹¹ <https://www.local.gov.uk/consultation-check-list>

¹² <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/New%20Conversations%20Guide%2012.pdf>

Recommendation 51: The Delivery Authority that will oversee the Restoration and Renewal process should incorporate outreach and creative forms of engagement in its work on the Palace of Westminster. (Paragraph 315)

This is a matter for Parliament.

Recommendation 52: The Government should restore the Access to Elected Office Fund which gave grants of between £250 and £40,000 to disabled candidates seeking election to elected office. (Paragraph 318)

It is essential that our public offices, from the UK Parliament to local government, reflect the diversity of the UK population but currently the number of disabled people in elected offices is far too low. Around one in five of the UK population is disabled, but disabled people remain insufficiently represented in our Parliaments, Assemblies and councils. Data collected by the Electoral Commission in 2017 suggests that people with a disability or health problem are also under-represented in standing for office.

We believe it is primarily political parties' responsibility to support their candidates properly, just as they must also support disabled employees, but within this, there will be ways the government can help too.

That is why, following discussion with other departments, the Minister for Women and Equalities recently announced that over the next 12 months the Government Equalities Office will, with others, undertake a programme of work to help political parties to best support their disabled candidates and to consider how independent disabled candidates can be supported, too.

While that work is under way, we will provide up to £250,000 to support disabled candidates for local elections in the forthcoming year. These arrangements replace the Access to Elected Office pilot fund, which closed after the 2015 general election. Further detail of these new arrangements will be published in due course.

We expect political parties to step up their support and good practice so that this fund is additional, not a substitute for their efforts.

Recommendation 53: Our main concern is that our recommendations on citizenship education are accepted and implemented. When this has happened will be the right time to consider lowering the voting age to 16. (Paragraph 324)

While it may be considered an appropriate time to lower the voting age to 16 if the recommendations on citizenship education are implemented, the Government has given a manifesto commitment that the voting age will remain at 18. The age of 18, not 16, is widely recognised as the age at which one becomes an adult. Full citizenship rights should be gained at adulthood. There are therefore no future plans to lower the voting age.

Integration through participation

Recommendation 54: The Government should target specific community development funds to pay for community organisers, community development officers or other specifically tailored support, for those areas with the lowest amounts of social capital. This may also include funding local voluntary organisations to undertake this work. (Paragraph 345)

DCMS is funding the Community Organisers Expansion Programme (COEP), which is training 3,500 people in community organising between 2017 and 2020. Training is being carried out through: 20 local Social Action Hubs; partnerships with organisations like #iwill, Local Trust, Neighbourhood Watch etc.; the National Citizen Service and working with young people; public sector and VSO partnerships; and through public training courses.

COEP builds on the first Community Organising Programme - 2011-15 - which trained 6,500 individuals who built relationships between people, brought them together and supported them to take action on the local issues that matter most to them. Evaluation of the programme demonstrated that where Community Organisers were at work, people felt a stronger sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, they felt more valued and they became more likely to team up and improve their area.

Recommendation 55: The Government should expand the scope and funding of the Controlling Migration Fund to allow funds to be used for preparing for and providing support for new arrivals in neighbourhoods most directly affected by inward migration (Paragraph 350)

We note the Committee's concern that most of the £100 million intended for local authorities from the Fund has been allocated already whilst the fund covers the period 2016-20. We can reassure the Committee that the majority of this has been to projects lasting two years and includes grant funding for the years 2018-19 and 2019-20, which is yet to be paid. The funding awarded thus far will be spent by local authorities throughout the period on the projects that each has identified as the best approach to mitigating impacts of recent migration in the communities living in the area. We announced details of the latest projects on 8 June 2018¹³.

A new CMF prospectus will be issued in the summer, inviting bids on the remainder of the Fund. The Fund runs to March 2020 and decisions on the future extent and scope of the Fund will be made at the appropriate time.

Recommendation 56: Every consultation carried out by the Government and local authorities in which the views of the general public are sought should go out of its way to seek the views of those communities which feel disregarded and ignored by those in authority. (Paragraph 353)

The guidance to government departments and local authorities referred to in the response to recommendation 49 above emphasises the importance of engaging with seldom heard communities and individuals. This is particularly important in seeking

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/19-million-funding-for-councils-to-boost-integration>

views on the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper where we have used a range of methods to encourage people to respond, including visits and round tables in local communities, encouraging projects and umbrella bodies to publicise the consultation through their channels, producing a tool kit for stakeholders to use in engaging with communities, and running a twitter campaign to encourage responses.

Recommendation 57: Central and local government should give priority to funding sport, the arts, music and civil society groups that work across communities. (Paragraph 361)

In civil society, government (and Big Lottery Fund) is investing £80 million through the Youth Investment and #iwill Funds to increase opportunities for young people to benefit from open access youth services and youth social action. One of the three central aims of the National Citizen Service programme is to create a more cohesive society.

Sport England (the DCMS arm's length body with responsibility for grassroots sport and physical activity) has rebalanced its investment approach to ensure that at least 25 per cent of its total budget will be invested in tackling inactivity across all demographics but with a particular emphasis on the most disadvantaged. Sport England is investing approximately £130 million over 4 years to deliver 12 Local Delivery Pilots across England. Part of these pilots will involve testing out new ways of working with underrepresented groups, including some ethnic minority communities, and exploration of existing barriers to participation amongst particular groups. We are also working with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Sport England to back sport-based interventions to build integrated communities.

Through Arts Council England (ACE), DCMS supports programmes that have social outcomes and organisations that deliver these. ACE is continuing to work in support of DCMS to achieve the commitments laid out in the Culture White Paper, which committed to government putting in place measures to create wider access and opportunity, and wants to see more partnerships being formed between the national and local levels to put culture at the heart of place-making. ACE's Creative People and Places programme requires that each local programme is run by both arts and community partners – including grassroots organisations and must demonstrate how communities have genuine agency over the programme.

Public libraries provide accessible public spaces, open to all, at the heart of local communities; building on strong local knowledge they provide a wide range of activities that bring together people from all ages and backgrounds. They support a range of strategic outcomes (literacy, learning, digital inclusion, health and well being, cultural enrichment and community resilience and cohesion). They are well-used by minority communities, and by those in disadvantaged areas. They also host activities run by other local groups and organisations, encouraging local participation and increasing access to learning, skills and cultural opportunities.

Recommendation 58: The Government, when consulting minority communities, needs to do better at reaching out beyond the usual suspects and gatekeepers to other voices in the community. It should place a particular emphasis on hearing the views of young people and women’s groups. Minority communities too must open up, and enable different voices from within their communities to be heard. (Paragraph 366)

We welcome the Committee’s call for greater efforts to be made to engage with ethnic minority women and young people. This echoes what we said in the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper that *“some voices are too seldom heard, especially those of women and young people”*¹⁴.

In the five Integration Areas we have announced, we are ensuring that the development of local integration strategies involves those seldom heard voices and we committed in the Green Paper to addressing in these areas the barriers to people enjoying their full rights and opportunities in our communities, including disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people, women and young people. We are currently analysing the responses to the Green Paper consultation.

The Government’s consultation principles mentioned in response to recommendation 49 make clear that consultations should be targeted and *“Consider how to tailor consultation to the needs and preferences of particular groups, such as older people, younger people or people with disabilities that may not respond to traditional consultation methods.”*

Recommendation 59: The Government should prioritise women’s NGOs for funding in communities where women are underrepresented, and must make sure that women play a key role in consultations that are relevant to those communities. (Paragraph 381)

Over 80 charities are now receiving grants directly from the Tampon Tax Fund, with numerous others receiving onward grants. The purpose of the Tampon Tax Fund is to allocate the funds generated from the VAT on sanitary products to projects that improve the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged women and girls. A total of £47 million of funding has been announced since Autumn Statement 2015.

Government has pledged increased funding of £100 million over this Spending Review Period for tackling Violence Against Women and Girls. This includes providing a secure future to rape support centres, national helplines, the £17 million Violence Against Women and Girls Service Transformation Fund and MHCLG’s £20 million Domestic Violence Accommodation Services Fund.

The Violence Against Women and Girls Service Transformation Fund is funding projects across 41 areas to support, promote and embed the best local practice and drive major change across all services so that early intervention and prevention, not crisis response, is the norm. These projects include support for Black and Ethnic Minority women, LGBT women, and those with complex needs.

¹⁴ Page 17, Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, HM Government, March 2018

We have provided £100,000 to Imkaan to build capability in the BME women's sector, and published a National Statement of Expectations which sets out to commissioners how they should commission local services, including through engaging with marginalised communities.

To be truly democratic, our political systems should represent the nation they serve, and capture the full range of talent and diversity of British society. As part of the government's celebrations of the 2018 suffrage centenary, the Government Equalities Office announced that part of the £5 million centenary fund is going towards projects that increase women's participation in all levels of democracy, so that they have an equal voice in the decisions that affect them. We are also developing a programme to encourage more young women from diverse backgrounds to become leaders.

Through the centenary fund, the Government Equalities Office is also supporting women's organisations through the Women's Vote Centenary Grant Scheme for grassroots projects to run small-scale events and activities to celebrate the centenary of the first women gaining the vote. The grant scheme is also funding larger projects, with a stipulation that they reach underrepresented or disengaged groups, and that projects encourage more women to participate in democracy. Around 140 projects have been funded so far from the £1.5 million scheme.

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) leads on gender and LGBT policy, and is responsible for a range of equalities legislation. GEO consults directly with those affected by equalities policy, and works with a range of stakeholders to reach affected groups. For example, in the past eighteen months GEO has consulted on: introducing gender pay gap reporting regulations; returning to work after time out for caring; caste and equality law; and carried out the world's largest survey of LGBT people with over 100,000 responses. In the run-up to the Commission on the Status of Women the Government holds an annual NGO consultation event, which serves as one of the main vehicles for the UK Government's engagement with women and women's organisations.

Recommendation 60: The Government must, in consultation with relevant organisations, clarify and simplify the documentation needed for applying for such funding. (Paragraph 382)

We are committed to ensuring that the application process for grant funding is fair and not unduly onerous for applicants, while ensuring enough information is obtained to make responsible decisions about allocating public money.

We are aware that local organisations in particular may have limited resources, making it more difficult for them to make lengthy applications for government funding. We are considering the most effective way to consult with women's non-governmental organisations to ensure that smaller organisations are not disadvantaged by grant application processes. Additionally, we fund a number of organisations providing onward grants, to ensure that small-scale, local organisations have further access to funding.

Recommendation 61: The Charity Commission should work with the voluntary sector to develop a voluntary code of conduct for charities that requires diversity among trustees, as well as a reasonably frequent turnover of membership of the trustee body. (Paragraph 385)

This is a matter for the Charity Commission.

Recommendation 62: The Government needs to undertake an information campaign to better communicate the essential purposes and functions of Prevent. (Paragraph 392)

The purpose of Prevent work is to safeguard people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, by engaging people who are vulnerable to radicalisation and protecting those who are being targeted by terrorist recruiters.

We agree with the Committee's reflection that there is some misunderstanding about what Prevent aims to do and how it functions in practice, which does not accurately reflect the reality of its work. This includes inaccurate media reporting and the spreading of misinformation about Prevent on social media and in local communities, by groups that oppose Prevent's existence.

To enable frontline staff to learn more about Prevent we have supported the roll out of the Prevent Duty with guidance for each sector and a dedicated package of training. Over three-quarters of a million frontline staff have participated in such training and now understand the radicalisation process and know what to do if they have concerns.

Last year, we published data on Prevent and Channel referrals for the first time to increase transparency and understanding of the programme. We will continue to do so on an annual basis.

We also run a comprehensive programme of engagement events aimed at local communities around the country which invites members of the public, teachers, local Councillors, faith leaders, youth workers and others to learn more about Prevent and discuss their views on Prevent.

Recommendation 63: The Government needs to ensure greater involvement of local communities in the design of the Prevent strategy for their area. (Paragraph 397)

The cornerstone of Prevent is our work with local communities and civil society organisations. We support civil society organisations across the country to deliver a wide range of projects working with schools, families and in local communities. This work builds their awareness of the risks of radicalisation, their resilience to terrorist narratives and propaganda, and to help them know what to do if they have concerns that someone may have been radicalised. We support these groups to develop bespoke projects, best suited to tackle the threat from radicalisation in local communities, based on our collective analysis of the local threat picture in priority areas.

Prevent work in local areas is led by local authorities who work closely with communities and civil society organisations to deliver a programme of Prevent work that is rooted in local knowledge, understanding of the threat and working in partnership with communities. In addition to working with local communities, local authority Prevent Co-ordinators work with local Police, Prevent Education Officers, Higher Education / Further Education Co-ordinators and Health Co-ordinators to work up their local Prevent strategy. These sectors have valuable local and sector specific insights to feed into local Prevent strategies which then form the basis for their programme of delivery for the year.

The Home Office funds six Prevent priority areas in East London, and is developing a new 'cluster' approach for delivering Prevent across the region. The Cluster will improve cross-borough working and provide new interventions, professionalize delivery, and pilot new approaches in analysis, communications and community engagement.

Recommendation 64: The Government should review the definition and application of non-violent extremism in the Prevent strategy. It should not infringe the right to free speech, but must recognise that incitement and preaching of hate will always fall within this definition. (Paragraph 400)

With regard to the definition of extremism, in March 2018 the Government launched the independent Commission for Countering Extremism. This Commission will engage widely and openly on extremism and our core, shared values across the public sector, communities, civil society, families and legal and academic experts. Part of its role will be to identify extremism and advise the Government on new policies to tackle it, including whether there is a need for new powers. The Government will not pre-empt the advice of the independent Commission by reviewing its definition of extremism at this time.

In its first year, the Commission will also:

- publish a study into the threat we face from extremism, and the current response; and
- advise ministers on the Commission's future structures, work programme and the appointment of further commissioners. This advice will be informed by the Lead Commissioner's engagement with stakeholders.

Recommendation 65: Local authorities should prioritise ESOL teaching in communities, in venues which are co-located with other services, and through women's organisations. (Paragraph 422)

The Department for Education recognises that community learning can play a valuable role in helping individuals improve their English. Funding is available through the Adult Education Budget for community-based informal learning delivered in local venues, such as libraries, children's centres, and community centres. These funds can be used at the discretion of providers to offer a variety of courses, including English language training, depending on the needs of the local community. This informal support is delivered by a range of providers, including local authorities, community and faith groups, to build a stronger sense of belonging and the

opportunity to increase personal skills. Co-location can offer benefits to both the learner and the provider by offering better access to other services.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) also directly funds providers to deliver a community-based English language programme using innovative approaches and bespoke teaching to deliver English courses to adults with the lowest levels of English who have not previously engaged with mainstream provision - many of whom have no formal education. The tuition is delivered in community settings such as schools, libraries, places of worship, or community halls often by small voluntary or community groups who are already known and trusted by our target learners. The classes fit round caring responsibilities or come with support to overcome barriers to attendance, such as crèche facilities.

We are looking at how to boost English language skills as part of the consultation on the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, which includes proposals for developing a new strategy for English Language in England, launching a new community-based English language programme, working with local authorities in the Integration Areas to improve the provision of English language learning and establishing a new infrastructure fund open to other local authorities.

English

Recommendation 66: Local authorities should ensure that ESOL teaching is provided concurrently with childcare provision wherever possible. (Paragraph 425)

Funding for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) through the Adult Education Budget gives providers the freedom and flexibilities to deliver provision in a way which meets the needs of their local communities including tailoring the timing and location of provision. We are for example aware that many providers coordinate provision with school hours and early years' provision and, given the mutual benefits, would encourage more providers to consider this where appropriate. The Adult Education Budget (AEB) can also make available additional support to learners who face specific financial hardship at the discretion of the learning provider, this can be used to cover childcare costs.

We understand that many local authorities and ESOL providers offer courses at different times of the day to suit students' needs. To help accommodate this, we allow child carers who are delivering government-funded childcare to offer flexible packages wherever practicable between the hours of 6am and 8pm, including weekends.

Recommendation 67: The Government should restore ESOL courses which are combined with citizenship learning that can be offered to new arrivals in the UK. (Paragraph 429)

ESOL providers and teachers have the freedom to choose which materials they use to teach ESOL, to convey the knowledge and skills required at different skill levels. To support ESOL teachers the government funded the development (and later updating) of The Citizenship Materials for ESOL learners. These materials are

designed to help teachers develop learner's language skills (at Entry level 1, 2 and 3) alongside their understanding of life in the UK.

These materials continue to be available for teachers to use.

Recommendation 68: The Government must restore funding for ESOL teaching to its 2009/10 levels by 2019/20 and measure the effectiveness of its initiatives. (Paragraph 443)

Supporting people to improve their English skills is very important to achieving our vision of integrated communities, as set out in the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper published by MHCLG earlier this year. This is why we have sought a broad range of views on our proposals on English language through MHCLG's Green Paper consultation. In our approach to skills, we aim to create a fair balance between the investment made by Government, employers and the individual. We believe it is fair that those who decide to settle in the UK invest their own time and resources into learning English. This is why ESOL funding is prioritised with more funding available for those most in need of support.

Adults in England are eligible for fully-funded ESOL provision through the AEB if they are unemployed and looking for work. All other learners are co-funded with the Government contributing 50 per cent of the course cost. All learners funded through the AEB have to have been resident in the UK or another European Economic Area country for at least three years, with the exception of refugees, who are eligible immediately, and asylum seekers, who are eligible if they have been waiting for 6 months or more for their claim to be processed. We also know that many ESOL providers use their discretion to set lower fees, particularly for those on non-work-related benefits.

Recommendation 69: The Government should conduct an assessment of the effectiveness of different forms of ESOL provision, and direct the funds accordingly. (Paragraph 444)

The government recognises that ESOL learners are a diverse group of people with varying and changing needs. For example, provision which is appropriate for degree-level educated learners may be less appropriate for learners unused to formal education and with little or no literacy skills in their native language. This is why we seek to empower teachers and providers to tailor provision to their learners, while maintaining comparable standards.

The government funds a range of ESOL qualifications through the AEB, which are based on the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum and aligned to the National Literacy standards. These qualifications are regulated by Ofqual. All providers who receive AEB funding are inspected by Ofsted.

Recommendation 70: Local authorities should provide translations of documents and interpretation services only where this is essential (including where it is required by law). Savings made should be ring-fenced and applied to the provision of ESOL courses. (Paragraph 449)

We agree with the Committee that local authorities should only translate documents and provide interpretation services where this is essential. MHCLG published guidance in 2013 outlining why councils should not be translating into foreign languages (Hansard, 12 March 2013, Column 5WS)¹⁵. It is for local authorities to decide how the resultant savings should be used based on local priorities.

Recommendation 71: As will appear from this chapter, our strategy is to enable people of all ages, whether newly arrived or long-established, to achieve the greatest possible proficiency in spoken and written English by establishing and funding courses which are easily accessible, in particular for those with young children. We commend this to the Government. (Paragraph 452)

One of the core ambitions in the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper is for everyone living in England to be able to speak and understand English. Through the Green Paper we proposed, among other initiatives, to develop a new strategy for English Language in England. Through the Green Paper we invited views on a proposed strategy and the content of the strategy and we are working across government to review the responses to the consultation, which closed on 5 June.

The goal of the proposed strategy would be to identify how we can improve outcomes and secure better value for the taxpayer. We want to make best use of the funding the government already provides across a range of programmes.

Naturalisation

Recommendation 72: The Government should review the use and description of the “good character” requirements of naturalisation. It should ensure that these requirements are transparent and properly explained to applicants. Honest mistakes made during the application process should not by themselves be treated as evidence of bad character. (Paragraph 458)

Guidance for caseworkers considering applications for British citizenship is publicly available on GOV.UK. This is in the process of being updated to clarify the types of behaviours and activities which would demonstrate that an individual is not of good character. These include, but are not limited to, serious criminality, extremism, human rights violations and other unacceptable behaviour.

We also intend to clarify that an application should not be refused if the caseworker is satisfied that the person made a genuine mistake on an application form or claimed something to which they reasonably believed or were advised they were entitled and there are no other adverse factors impacting on the applicant’s good character.

The guidance will also clarify that a refugee will not be penalised for their illegal entry if they claimed asylum without delay and had travelled directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened.

¹⁵ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130312/wmstext/130312m0001.htm>

Recommendation 73: The Government should reconsider the age from which the “good character” requirement applies for the acquisition of British citizenship by registration. (Paragraph 460)

The good character requirement applies to persons aged 10 years of age and over as this is the age of criminal responsibility.

Criminal sentencing guidelines dictate that sentences for minors are already adjusted to take into account their particular circumstances and any mitigating factors, for example, the ability to understand the consequences of their actions. Therefore, the Government considers it appropriate to apply to minors the same criminality thresholds in the good character test that are applied to adults.

However, decisions on citizenship applications from minors are made taking into account the Home Office’s statutory obligations under section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 to have due regard to the best interests of the child.

Recommendation 74: The Government should alter the English Language requirement so that an applicant with an A level or equivalent qualification to an adequate level in a subject that requires the substantial use of written English is exempt from the test. A degree in any subject from a UK university should also suffice, but a degree from a university in another country should not automatically suffice. (Paragraph 464)

The language requirement for settlement and naturalisation is set at B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in order to test proficiency in spoken English. We will accept a wide range of qualifications, but GCSE and A level qualifications are not included. This is because they are a different type of examination; they are not primarily speaking and listening qualifications and are not mapped to the CEFR.

We appreciate that there are many qualifications available in the UK which directly or indirectly test English language ability but it would not be practical to accept every qualification offered for immigration purposes.

Recommendation 75: The Government should set up an advisory group to conduct a comprehensive review of the citizenship test, focusing on the key knowledge that supports citizenship in various forms, including becoming an active citizen. Knowledge of the working of bodies like local authorities and the NHS is essential, and the group should include representatives of these bodies. (Paragraph 472)

See response to recommendation 77.

Recommendation 76: The advisory group should revise the book on Life in the UK to focus on the knowledge required for active citizenship. Sections of the book on British history should concentrate on those parts that played a key role in the development of the Shared Values of British Citizenship. (Paragraph 473)

See response to recommendation 77.

Recommendation 77: We believe that the group we recommend setting up to review the citizenship test should also seek feedback from those who have been involved in citizenship ceremonies, and consider how greater publicity and impact might be given to them. (Paragraph 479)

The Government published the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper on 14 March. The Green Paper included a proposal to review the Life in the UK Test. Consultation on the Green Paper closed on 5 June. The Government is currently reviewing the responses, which will inform how this proposal is taken forward. We will consider the recommendations from the House of Lords Select Committee further and respond to the Committee in due course.

Recommendation 78: It is inequitable that the Government should seek to make excessive profits out of those seeking naturalisation. The fee should be much closer to the cost to the Home Office of administering the naturalisation process, and the cost to the local authority of the citizenship ceremony. (Paragraph 485)

See response to recommendation 79.

Recommendation 79: The advisory group we have recommended should also consider whether, in the case of acquisition of citizenship by registration, the Government should waive the registration fee entirely for children in care and for children who have spent their entire lives in the UK. (Paragraph 492)

The Department currently sets fees for visa, immigration and nationality services under the provisions in the 2014 Immigration Act. The Act, which consolidated and built on similar powers provided under previous primary legislation, enables the Home Office to set fees taking account of the following factors:

- the costs of exercising the function;
- benefits that the Secretary of State assesses are likely to accrue to any person in connection with the exercise of the function;
- the costs of exercising any other function in connection with immigration or nationality;
- the promotion of economic growth;
- fees charged by or on behalf of governments of other countries in respect of comparable functions; and
- any international agreement.

Income from fees charged for visa, immigration and nationality services plays an important part in the Home Office's spending plans. A significant proportion of this contributes towards the cost of wider immigration functions; helping to protect and maintain effective core services, which, in turn, help protect and maintain the UK's security for all.

Application fees for citizenship are set to reflect the significant benefits they bring to successful applicants, as well as the cost of processing an application. Such benefits include, lawful residence in the UK, entitlement to apply for a UK passport, entitlement of consular protection, the right to vote, unrestricted access to the labour market, health and education, and access to public funds.

In all cases where fees are set at above cost, the additional income is used to help fund and maintain effective wider immigration system functions, as explained above, and to ensure the Home Office can set some fees at below cost, where this supports the UK economy (short-term visit visas), or is otherwise required by international agreement (EEA fees). Fees for some services are set at cost, in the main where there is no direct benefit, for example where the fee relates to just a step in the overall application process, like biometric enrolment.

Setting fees at above cost also enables the Home Office to exempt some people from having to pay a fee, for example where they are in an identified protected, or vulnerable group. It also enables the Department to waive fees in certain individual circumstances, for example where people are destitute and need to access their Human Rights, for example their right to a family life.

The Home Office reviews all visa, immigration and nationality fees annually and will be considering representations made over the fee charged for children to apply for registration for British citizenship and any fee waiver that might apply.

