



# HOUSE OF LORDS

## Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement

### Oral Evidence Volume

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Wednesday 6 September 2017

10.45 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beddoe; Baroness Stedman-Scott; Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 1

Heard in Public

Questions 1 - 16

Hardip Begol, Integration and Faith Division, Department for Communities and Local Government; Paul Morrison, Director, Resettlement, Asylum Support and Integration, Home Office; David Rossington, Director, Office for Civil Society, Department for Digital,

## Examination of Witnesses

Hardip Begol, Paul Morrison, David Rossington and Ann Gross.

Q1 **The Chairman:** Thank you very much for coming today. Welcome to our first evidence session. I have to read the formal bit to you; the police caution, so to speak. A list of the interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and it is available. Since this is the first public meeting of the Committee, we shall go around the room and declare our interests before we start speaking or questioning you. The session is open to the public. It is broadcast live and is subsequently accessible via the parliamentary website. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and will be put on the parliamentary website. A few days after the session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy. It would be helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. After the evidence session, if you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence or have additional points that you feel should be made, you are welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us then.

Would you like to introduce yourselves so we know what you are about? Secondly, if you wish to say a few introductory words as background, that might also be helpful for the Committee. Shall we start from left to right?

**Ann Gross:** My name is Ann Gross. I am a director in the Department for Education where I am responsible for policy on life skills, which includes the citizenship area, policies for disadvantaged pupils and special educational needs and disability.

**David Rossington:** My name is David Rossington. I am director of the Office for Civil Society, which is part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and deals with encouraging a healthy civil society in this country. I have been in my post for a relatively short time, a couple of months.

**Hardip Begol:** I am Hardip Begol. I am the new director for integration and communities at the Department for Communities and Local Government. I have been in my post for an even shorter period than David. I am responsible for integration, communities policy, race, equality and faith engagement.

**Paul Morrison:** I am Paul Morrison. I am the director of resettlement, asylum support and integration in UK Visas and Immigration, which is part of the Home Office. My areas of responsibility relate to the range of support that we give to newcomers, particularly those arriving through the asylum system, but as a member of UK Visas and Immigration that is also the part

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of the business that is responsible for naturalisation, citizenship and citizenship ceremonies, so it covers a range of issues that may be of interest to this Committee.

**The Chairman:** Is there anything any of you wish to say about the background to your work, or are you happy for it all to come up as we start cross-questioning? No. In that case, we will now declare our interests. Perhaps we could go around the room. Lord Blunkett, would you care to start?

**Lord Blunkett:** I had better not go through them all in this area. My main interests are that I am honorary president of the Association for Citizenship Teaching and a current board member of the National Citizen Service, which has just been reconstituted, and I am a patron of City Year UK.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** I am Jill Pitkeathley. I have no relevant interests to declare.

**Lord Rowe-Beedoe:** I am president of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and a member of the Committee to recommend the UK City of Culture 2021.

**Lord Verjee:** I am chairman of WE Day (UK). We teach active citizenship in schools.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** I am patron of Just Fair, which campaigns on social and economic human rights.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** I am chair of the Commission on Civil Society and Democratic Engagement.

**The Chairman:** I am a trustee of Fair Trials International, which is publishing a pamphlet tomorrow, entitled *Britain's Demographic Challenge*, about the increase in population expected by the ONS over the next 20 years.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I have no relevant interests in this inquiry.

**Baroness Redfern:** I am an elected member of North Lincolnshire Council and past leader. I am pleased to meet you.

**Baroness Barker:** I run a management consultancy that has a lot of voluntary organisations and charities as clients, and I have extensive experience with a range of different charities.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** I am a deputy lieutenant for East Sussex.

**Baroness Newlove:** I am the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales, and I am involved with the OnSide Warrington Youth Club, which involves the National Citizen Service.

Q2 **The Chairman:** That has cleared the requirements of the House to make

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our interests clear.

I will begin the questions by asking a broad one. Your departments have the primary responsibility for citizenship and civic engagement. What cross-departmental co-ordination is there between the very distinguished group that we have in front of us? Is there a department with explicit leadership responsibilities for ensuring that this programme is effectively dealt with? What are the Government doing in particular to support active citizenship among people post-secondary school, post-18?

**Hardip Begol:** We co-ordinate our work across departments on specific initiatives rather than having a standing committee that looks at the issues of citizenship and civic engagement, given how broad those topics are. At the moment we are working closely with a range of departments, including those represented here, on the integration strategy, which has a significant component on issues of identity and citizenship. We have a group, chaired by the director-general, that meets on a monthly basis in relation to that strategy. In addition to the departments you see here today, the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Justice, DWP and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office included in the group that is preparing that strategy.

Given the cross-cutting nature of this, I do not think there is a natural lead, which is why you see four of us here today, but on any issues we obviously look to co-ordinate. I have met David three times in my first months on issues that cross both our areas of responsibility outside the issues relating to this Committee's inquiry.

I will ask David to answer your question about post-18 engagement, if I may.

**David Rossington:** To add a little to what Hardip has said, another example of cross-departmental co-ordination is that my department organises a regular meeting of all those who are interested in the voluntary sector or have dealings with the voluntary sector. Citizenship is certainly a very wide-ranging subject, so it is not confined to the interests of a particular department.

I will talk a bit about DCMS's own interests in citizenship and then give you some examples of some of our policies to support citizenship among the over-18s.

Our citizenship responsibilities arise primarily from our responsibility for my area, the Office for Civil Society. That aspect of citizenship is primarily about people acting together for the common good, often at the grass-roots level. That is our angle on it.

There are many examples of policies. I will select a few. My department provides support for a programme to train community organisers. We have reached around 6,500 people across the country who have been through that training programme so far, and our aim is to get to 10,000 by 2020. We do not have people from Whitehall going out and teaching people how

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to be community organisers; we provide funding and the training is provided by people who have knowledge and expertise in this area.

We also have a significant amount of work on encouraging volunteering. To give you some examples, first, we are working with the innovation charity Nesta to encourage volunteering for people over 50. There are already significant numbers of people over 50 who volunteer, but with life expectancy in the UK increasing, getting those numbers up will make a further difference. They are often people with significant skills and experience and able to give back a lot to the communities that they are in.

Sport is a good example, too. My department is responsible for sport. Our estimate is that about 5.5 million to 6 million people engage in volunteering in sport in one way or another, both at grass-roots level and helping with major events. There was a lot of volunteer support, for example, for the Olympics in 2012, which you will probably be familiar with. The Sport and Recreation Alliance estimates that in 2014 there were approximately 150,000 community sports clubs in the UK and that, on average, each of these has around 24 volunteers associated with them, so this is a significant area of work. I will not talk about volunteering for young people at this stage, because I think you may come to that later.

**The Chairman:** You passed the baton a little and were talking, if I may say so, about people post-18, and Mr Begol about people pre-18. Is there a danger of there not being a continuous process, of it breaking down as it moves from your area of responsibility for school-aged children to adults?

**David Rossington:** My department is responsible for youth policy outside schools, so we do a great deal in relation to volunteering by young people. I can give you more details.

Q3 **Lord Blunkett:** I ought to say that we are not going to shoot the messengers here and we are having your principals later in December. The last time I came across Ann Gross was when I introduced her at a conference I was chairing only to find that she was not there, so I am glad you are here this morning, Ann. It is one of the dangers of not being able to see.

The very short paper that was circulated very late yesterday suggested from the Government as a whole that citizenship education was a fundamental—I use the word that was used in the document—part of the curriculum. Perhaps, Ann, you could say a word or two about how that fits with the virtual collapse of teacher training, the fact that, unlike other basic curriculum subject areas, there are no bursaries, that the removal of the half GCSE has seen a collapse in the take-up of the GCSE generally and where the Government feel they are going in terms of any future review and a national plan.

**Ann Gross:** Lord Blunkett has asked me quite a complex interaction of questions there, I think. I appreciate your saying that you are not going to shoot the messenger here. I will begin by setting out the Government's

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overall policy on citizenship education, and then perhaps I can touch on the other points that you have raised about the GCSE and teacher training.

The Government are clear that education plays a really important role in equipping children with the knowledge, skills and values that will prepare them to be citizens in modern Britain. Our written statement sets that out more fully and I will highlight some of the key points now. First, all schools are under specific duties to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils—SMSC for short—and to prepare them for opportunities and responsibilities in adult life. We also expect all schools and further education colleges to promote fundamental British values: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs. Those aims can be achieved in a number of ways, for example by establishing a strong school ethos, collective worship and extracurricular activities beyond the classroom. Of course, citizenship is also part of the national curriculum at key stages 3 and 4, which means that it is compulsory in maintained schools. Primary schools can choose to teach citizenship at key stages 1 and 2, following the non-statutory framework for citizenship. The Government believe that the national curriculum contains the essential knowledge that all pupils should be taught and is a benchmark for what is seen as a high-quality education. Citizenship is therefore a core part of that quality education.

Our policy is that we expect schools to determine how best to deliver the national curriculum. Citizenship can be taught through many areas of the school curriculum, including subjects such as religious education; personal, social and health education; history; and English. We introduced new programmes of study in 2013 that give schools more freedom to decide how to teach citizenship so that teachers can draw on their knowledge of what their pupils need and their own professional expertise in order to draw up the right sort of approach for their school. We encourage them to draw on sources of specialist advice, too. There is much material, including from the Association for Citizenship Teaching, to draw on.

Of course, the national curriculum does not represent everything that schools provide. Almost all schools promote a wide range of extracurricular activity. There is lots of relevant activity outside the classroom. There are particular programmes, such as the National Citizen Service or the Cadet programme, that enable young people to develop some of the key skills such as responsibility, teamwork and self-reliance. That is the overview of our policy.

Lord Blunkett asked about the GCSE and the position on that. It is fair to say that there has been a drop in the number of GCSE entries, but that is not really the whole story of how schools are educating young people on citizenship. We want to make sure that all pupils are prepared to play a full and active part in adult life. Citizenship is taught through the national curriculum and it does not rely on pupils doing a GCSE-level qualification on it.



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On bursaries for teacher training, we have had to take some difficult decisions about where to focus the bursaries budget for teacher training. It is not possible to provide bursaries for all trainees. As we enter more pupils for the English baccalaureate subjects, the decision has been that we need to focus the bursary budget on the core academic subjects so that we build up expertise in the teaching profession. Citizenship teacher training is part of what is described as the “other” category for initial teacher training. That is just a term; it is of no significance in itself. For 2017-18, teacher training places in that category are uncapped. That means that schools and ITT providers can recruit as many citizenship trainees as they wish in line with local need. There is now a new dedicated citizenship page on the Get Into Teaching website, which means that people who are interested in that area can go there for further information. I hope I have covered the key points.

**Lord Blunkett:** That is very helpful. I do not intend to delay the Committee on one subject area only. We are looking at the journey, and the journey starts with young people through early years, through school.

Do the department have any plans to review not only how citizenship is delivered but what the role of Ofsted might be in overseeing whether it is being taught at all, never mind whether it is being taught well or badly?

**Ann Gross:** We do not have current plans to review citizenship in the curriculum. It was thoroughly reviewed in 2013 and the messages that we are getting from teachers are that they would really value stability of the curriculum at the moment. Obviously, we keep a close eye on all curriculum subjects and look at the evidence that we have available to us to see how well they are being addressed in schools, but there are no immediate plans to have a fresh review of the subject.

Clearly, Ofsted is an important source of information for us, alongside other surveys of schools and research. Over time we have had some important surveys, such as the Ofsted 2013 study, which showed that the quality of teaching in schools was improving. We commission regular Teacher Voice Omnibus surveys, which give us very direct feedback from school leaders about their perception of how things are progressing in schools. In September 2016, the survey indicated that most school leaders were confident about the preparation they were doing to teach the new wave of GCSEs, which include the citizenship GCSE, so there are some positives there. Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools is about to embark on a thematic review of the curriculum and will include citizenship.

Q4 **Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I take the point about it being in the national curriculum, I really do, but how much do you worry that messages that are given by the department, other than what is in the national curriculum, mitigate against citizenship having a really firm foothold in schools? If we were to think about the English baccalaureate, what Ofsted inspects, what speeches Ministers make, what announcements we have, or what good practice is there, I would struggle to think of examples over

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the last few years where I have heard that punchy message from the department that citizenship matters. What are your department's thoughts about whether character education has displaced citizenship education? There is a difference between the two, which I know you know because you are in charge of that. I worry that we hear a lot of ministerial statements and have plaudits and awards and things like that about character education but not about citizenship education. The Committee was also interested in knowing—and this goes to some of the comments you have just made about collecting data—why the Government are not taking part in the International Civic and Citizenship Education study that is coming up when they did in the previous one.

**Ann Gross:** There are several points there and I may have to ask you to remind me of them as I go through, if that is okay. I will start with the last of those first: the question about our participation in the International Civic and Citizenship study.

I am aware that there is quite a long history of international research in the citizenship area. There were two surveys in 1999 and 2009, and we have looked at them, taken account of their findings and built them into our current thinking about the citizenship curriculum. So we have that to build on. However, each cycle of that study is a standalone and a separate cycle. Ministers considered whether to take part in the 2016 framework study, but took the view that it was not going to be a priority this time because it is largely a continuation of the 2009 study. It was felt that the emphasis that it was giving was not going to generate new evidence that would be relevant to current policy priorities. They decided not to go for that route and instead we have joined a new international study with the British Council and partners in France, Spain and Greece. That is a three-year project and it will trial an intervention that is aimed at increasing active citizenship and promoting fundamental values. It started in March and is measuring teachers' attitudes and practices in relation to citizenship teaching and those of pupils. It will look at the impact on schools more widely. We will make sure that that informs how government policy moves forward, so there is a new approach going on in that area.

That study links, as I said, to the question of fundamental values. I think that the emphasis on fundamental British values in schools has been mutually supportive of citizenship teaching. The department's guidance on fundamental values reinforces some of the key elements that schools can use for teaching citizenship. It emphasises the importance of things such as mock debates, using school councils and schools running their own elections as a way of engaging pupils, and we encourage that. It is very much a reinforcing of the citizenship agenda, as is the focus on character or life skills, because, again, that is about schools working through extracurricular activities to develop particular qualities and aptitudes in young people—some of the more intangible things, such as resilience or team-working and having a bit of grit and determination to get over problems—so they are not in conflict but they are mutually reinforcing academic attainment. I think that covers your key points.

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**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Generally I think that character-building is much more about the self and is much more inward-looking, whereas citizenship education is much more outward-looking; it is about how you get out of yourself and be part of the wider community. I can see that there is an overlap, but I am not persuaded that the work on character education can be called citizenship education. Do you know anything about the young people who take the GCSE? What else do they take? Are they high-achieving students in leading schools or in less successful schools?

**Ann Gross:** I do not believe that I have that information with me. I do not know if my colleague has it, but if you would like that we can send you some further information.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Just out of interest. Thank you very much.

Q5 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** What criteria do the Government use to assess the effectiveness of citizenship education, and how is it currently performing against those criteria?

**Ann Gross:** Clearly, we have quite a range of sources of information for assessing the effectiveness of citizenship education. For example, we draw on Ofsted findings, and Ofsted is required to report on SMSC in its inspection reports. It usually comes under a couple of judgment areas, either leadership and the management of schools or pupils' social and moral development. We also regularly engage with stakeholders. We want to hear feedback. As I have already mentioned, we commission regular surveys of what is going on in schools. We look at it and keep it under review. We do not think it is our role to collect detailed information from schools on what is being taught in the classroom, because we think that would be very labour-intensive for schools. I think we all know—and I hope the Committee would agree—that teachers are very committed to providing a very good education and making sure that their pupils are fully prepared for adult life. Clearly, as Baroness Morris has said, citizenship is about preparing young people to take an active part in adult life as citizens and to take part in all those processes.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** It is helpful to know the kind of information you draw on, but I am still not clear. Presumably, we teach citizenship education because we want to achieve certain things, and I am not clear what the criteria are for assessing how well it is performing that function. Maybe you could come back to us on that. I think we need to know what it is being tested against. When you collect this information, how are you using it to judge against criteria?

**Ann Gross:** Clearly, Ofsted has a set of criteria that it uses to inspect schools and they are set out in the Ofsted handbook. That material will be drawn on by all Ofsted inspectors, and their judgments are transparent in their reports and their feedback to schools. Ofsted has recently appointed a specialist inspector to lead in this area, which I think reflects its interest and the significance that it is attaching to it. Clearly, we assess taking account of all those sources of evidence that I have referred to previously.

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**Q6 Lord Verjee:** What policy do the Government have to increase diversity in schools? Could you talk in particular about segregation in schools and the evidence that we see of that? Could you also say a bit about our policy towards faith schools?

**Ann Gross:** Thank you for that question. The Government recognise that schools play a vital role in promoting integration because they obviously play a significant role in local communities as well as supporting their own pupils to develop positive attitudes and respect for all people. As I have said, all schools are under a duty to support community cohesion, and there is an expectation that they will promote fundamental British values. That is the overarching framework.

Our admissions system is of course based on parental choice, so we do not control a school's intake. All mainstream state-funded schools must comply with the state school admissions code, and admissions must be fair, clear and objective and must not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, children from any particular social or racial group or, very importantly, children with a disability or special educational need, or local children. That is the clear diversity framework.

Of course, there are many other ways in which schools can and do provide opportunities for their pupils to learn about and mix with people from different backgrounds, such as visits, linking with other schools and encouraging participation in the National Citizen Service. There are lots of excellent examples. Parkfield Community School in Birmingham, which has 23 nationalities in its pupil population, has a policy for promoting diversity called No Outsiders. It is very much about welcoming people of all race, colour and creed into school, and they have an ambassadors programme. I think some of those things are really important.

Faith schools are required to offer every child who applies, whether of the faith or another faith or no faith, a place at the school if there are places available. Where one of those schools is oversubscribed they may then use faith-based criteria and allocate places by reference to faith. I think those are the key points that I wanted to put across. Have I answered your questions?

**Lord Verjee:** From what I understand, while the Government have a philosophy of trying to encourage more diversity in schools, we do not have targets and, by definition, we do not measure against those targets.

**Ann Gross:** That is correct.

**Lord Verjee:** Do you think we should review that?

**Ann Gross:** I think I have set out our policy and the importance of schools promoting understanding and integration. I do not think we have any expectation to develop targets, but Hardip might wish to comment.

**Hardip Begol:** We are preparing a cross-government integration strategy that will include education, because there was a clear commitment in the

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Conservative manifesto for the election to work with schools to make sure that those with intakes from one predominant racial, cultural or religious background teach their children about pluralistic British values and help them to get to know people with different ways of life. Our primary aim is to make sure that where schools have a particular intake the school takes action to make sure that children mix with those of different backgrounds rather than review the whole admissions system.

**Q7** **Baroness Redfern:** What is the Government's policy on citizenship activity beyond the classroom? I know Ann mentioned encouraging school councils and mock debates. Do you believe this is an effective way to promote active citizenship? David also mentioned over-50s volunteering and sports clubs and volunteering in sports events, et cetera. When we talk about that, can you also tell me how we can promote best practice in those areas?

**David Rossington:** I will begin by talking about citizenship activity beyond the classroom and a few of the pieces of policy that we implement in my department. To give you some examples, we provide grant funding to the British Youth Council, which encourages young people to engage with democracy. A particular initiative is the British Youth Council-run UK Youth Parliament, which is made up of democratically elected members. The Youth Parliament's Make Your Mark vote takes place every year. It is the largest ballot of youth views in the UK. In 2016, just short of a million young people took part in the voting, which is a very significant number. We are hoping this year we can get above the 1 million mark. Those are a couple of examples.

More widely on youth volunteering, my department is part of the #iwill campaign, which is co-ordinated by the charity Step Up to Serve. We are doing that in partnership with the Big Lottery Fund and a number of other organisations. The aim is to really early on in a person's life get them thinking and engaging in social action of a positive kind. Over 700 businesses and charities have pledged support for the campaign. There is £40 million of seed funding from us and the Big Lottery Fund. The aspiration is to increase the number of 10 to 20 year-olds taking part in meaningful social action to the 60% level. It is currently just over 40%. Those are some examples of areas where outside the classroom the Government are seeking to encourage initiatives for younger people.

**Baroness Redfern:** Do you work very closely with universities and colleges for students to get involved? Is there work being done there?

**David Rossington:** We certainly involve young people. For example, yesterday I was at a board meeting in relation to the #iwill campaign and there were young people who were full members of the board who were providing really useful insights.

**Baroness Redfern:** Good.

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**Ann Gross:** Yes, we think that activities such as school councils and mock debates can be a really effective way of promoting active citizenship. It is something that the guidance on British values encourages.

**Baroness Redfern:** Do you get a lot of feedback on that?

**Ann Gross:** We do, and there are some excellent examples of schools. The Bennett Memorial Diocesan School in Kent has a very strong emphasis on these sorts of activities and promotes the sorts of things we have been discussing, such as debating tournaments from year seven, school-wide voting for pupil leadership roles, including hustings and mock elections, and obviously during general election periods pupils taking part in mock elections. That is one example among many schools.

We would also say that these are not the only ways in which schools can promote active citizenship. Volunteering can be a really excellent route. The key stage 4 programme of study for citizenship encourages volunteering and encourages schools to make partnerships with voluntary and charitable organisations locally. That can be really powerful. We have already heard about a number of organisations that are involved in that sort of thing with schools. An interesting initiative is UNICEF's work on rights respecting schools. It can be a very good way of engaging children and young people. There are some really encouraging initiatives in those areas.

Q8 **Baroness Newlove:** I am really keen on youth and engagement. In my previous role as communities champion I met many of the people you have discussed this morning, especially the community advisers, who I think are wonderful and help the community.

Young people refresh our default mechanisms, I might say. My question is about the National Citizen Service. I want to ensure that this is effective. What is the Government doing to ensure it is effective in creating active citizens? What are they doing to ensure that the NCS is linked to citizenship education and the government programmes to boost active citizenship. I have seen them and other group programmes, but they seem to do it at the cliff edge. It should be about engaging them all together to create a better generation.

**David Rossington:** Thank you very much for that question. Let me start with the recently agreed royal charter for the National Citizen Service. Among the various things that this covers is a requirement for the NCS to have regard to the desirability of encouraging participants to take an interest in matters of local and national political interest, and to promote their understanding of how to participate in national or local elections. There is among the various frameworks for the NCS a strong link into active citizenship.

I will give a couple of concrete examples. Part of the NCS programme involves volunteering, and the NCS Trust, which is directly responsible for the programme, estimates that past NCS participants have donated around

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10 million hours of volunteering. There was an independent evaluation of the NCS in 2015, and it suggested that the effect lasted beyond the programme and that NCS participants contributed four additional hours a month in volunteering compared with people who had not been on the programme.

The second area links more directly to political citizenship. The NCS Trust works with various other bodies, such as The Basics Rock'n'Roll Party, to deliver sessions on democratic engagement in NCS courses. There is also some evidence from the NCS evaluations that young people are more likely to vote after taking part in the NCS programme than they were before. There is definitely a strong link. However, the NCS programme is devolved and run by the NCS Trust and it is not identical in every area of the country or for every group of participants. That is because there are differences in different places. There is no mandation, but it is a very strong link and the data suggests that it is making a difference.

**Baroness Newlove:** My worry when we speak about the Youth Council and other bodies is how that citizenship activity is provided for the people who are difficult to reach. You get very articulate people who shine a light. I am more for the people who have never stepped out of their communities. How do we engage them, because they are part of our society? Could you provide anything on that?

**David Rossington:** That is clearly something the Government are very concerned about—absolutely. There is some evidence, for example, that the population going into the National Citizen Service is more socially disadvantaged and more diverse than the average population. I am very happy to send you further data on that if that would be helpful.

**Baroness Newlove:** Thank you.

Q9 **Baroness Barker:** What evaluation of the National Citizen Service exists that is not carried out by the NCS itself?

**David Rossington:** The National Citizen Service has not been going for that long, so the evaluations that I have quoted from are, I believe, independent. Again, I can send you more details about them if that would help.

**Baroness Barker:** The Public Accounts Committee report on the National Citizen Service asked some pretty searching questions of it and of your department, and their questions are due to be answered this month.

**David Rossington:** Indeed.

**Baroness Barker:** I know we have had the election, but is that timetable still in force?

**David Rossington:** Yes. Obviously I am aware of the PAC hearing and I am aware that the Government are looking actively at responding to the

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questions that came out of that. I am not aware there is any change to the timetable.

**Lord Verjee:** Do we have numbers of how much we spend on the National Citizen Service and how much it costs per head?

**David Rossington:** Yes, we do. It is clearly a significant sum because there are large numbers of people involved in it. I do not have the precise figure for this year, but it is certainly more than £200 million. The unit costs for the National Citizen Service very much came up in the PAC hearing and is something that the department and the National Citizen Service are working together on. It is clearly an important area. As you no doubt will be aware, the National Citizen Service, following the royal charter, is undergoing change to the charter body, and, indeed, a new chair and new board members are being recruited at the moment. There is a lot of focus on helping the National Citizen Service to provide an even better experience and on looking at issues such as value for money and so on. It is something I spend a lot of time on. It is very important indeed, given the importance of the National Citizen Service, which this year will have about 100,000 participants.

**Lord Verjee:** That is quite an easy number. So it is £200 million for 100,000, is it?

**David Rossington:** Roughly, yes.

Q10 **Baroness Pitkeathley:** My question is about how the Government support civil society initiatives, but, David, I think you have already given us some very helpful examples about that, so I would like to ask you to move on a bit and ask what mechanisms you have for receiving feedback from the civil society organisations that are involved in these initiatives. I am thinking of local authority funding; many local authorities are having great difficulty with it and some of these initiatives were dependent on it.

**David Rossington:** There is a range of ways of doing this. When the department funds a programme, we will look at its effectiveness. We will undertake it and evaluate it at the end so that we can learn what worked and what could be improved for next time. That is a regular occurrence, quite properly. More than that, we have close relationships with bodies in the civil society area. As a newcomer to this area, I spent quite a lot of the summer meeting lots of civil society organisations, talking to them and hearing their views on a range of subjects. It is very much part of my job and my department's job—not just me but lots of us—to do that.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** Can you give us a flavour of those discussions?

**David Rossington:** In summary, first—and it may sound strange to say this—I have really enjoyed these meetings. There has been a kind of passion and enthusiasm about making society a better place that was really quite uplifting, if I may say so. There are clearly various issues, such as how charities, particularly smaller charities, can compete on a level playing



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field for public services. That is clearly a significant issue. Those are probably the two main points that I would bring to your attention.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** Thank you very much. Could I ask you specifically about the innovation fund that was set up to increase political engagement? Could you give us a flavour or a progress report on how that seems to be working?

**David Rossington:** I am not familiar with that. I apologise. It is a function of me having been in post for a short time. I am happy to write.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** Are any of the witnesses up to speed with the innovation fund?

**David Rossington:** We will write to you.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** Could you do that? Thank you very much.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** I have a short follow-up. Are there initiatives to liaise with faith communities to see what issues there might be within the faith communities themselves in order to encourage civic engagement?

**Hardip Begol:** The Department for Communities and Local Government is responsible for faith engagement and we meet regularly with faith organisations. Lord Bourne is very active about meeting organisations. By coincidence, in the next couple of weeks we have an interfaith group focusing particularly on the issue of community sponsorship for those who have come in as part of the Syrian resettlement programme to look at what faith organisations can do to encourage people to house or accommodate those individuals. We have very strong links with those main organisations and we cover a whole range of issues through the meetings that Lord Bourne leads.

**Lord Blunkett:** To follow up very quickly, how much liaison is there between you—I recognise that two of you are quite new in the job—on what is working out there and how to spread it, because we keep reinventing the wheel?

**David Rossington:** I will start off and others may want to say more. The fact that we come together when there are major issues that we share is really helpful. The example that Hardip has given of the cross-departmental group on integration is a very good one. We are ensuring that we share what is good about what has been done and where we can develop things better through fora such as that.

**The Chairman:** It would be very helpful if you could write in. Obviously we are not asking you now because that would be unfair, but if you could show us where good things have happened and how you have spread them all around the country—as Lord Blunkett says, we do not want to keep reinventing the wheel—that would be helpful.

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**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Can I very quickly follow that up? This is a genuine question because I have forgotten what the rules are. Like Lord Blunkett, I have been around too many years, I suppose, and that is our problem, but there have been one or two initiatives that you have mentioned today that you have now started that I know we tried when we were in government. I have forgotten what the rules are about whether you can look back at how that was implemented and learn lessons from that. I know there is a tendency for the politicians not to want to do that, but could you remind me? The example that came to my mind was the initiative to make schools that had children from one ethnic group mix with others. I can remember that from about 2001. To follow up Lord Blunkett's question, do you look back that far and say, "It was exactly the same idea and initiative. What did we learn from that?" I cannot remember if you can do that or not.

**Hardip Begol:** As government officials, it is a core part of our professional policy development to present to Ministers the evidence of what happened previously and the evaluation of that evidence. For instance, on that precise point, DCLG and DfE are together funding the Linking Network that links schools together in different parts of the country. It originated in Bradford, I think, almost a decade ago and links schools together so that children mix. That is a joint-funded initiative from both departments.

**Ann Gross:** I very much agree with Hardip on this. I think you are right; it is something we all have a responsibility to do and we need to get better at. When I look over my career—and I have worked in education and social policy areas—I can see some of the really difficult questions that keep recurring. There is something about making sure that we know both what the public evidence says and that we talk to people who are working on the ground so that we are drawing in their current knowledge and up-to-date understanding of what the real challenges are. That is something we really do try to do. Hardip and I have worked together over quite a long period on similar linked areas.

**Lord Blunkett:** Just to be a little mischievous, when Jack Straw handed over the Home Secretary's job to me, he said, "One of the things you will find is there is no collective memory whatsoever", and as a vice-president of the Alzheimer's Society I am quite keen that we overcome that.

**Hardip Begol:** Could I add one final point about working with the voluntary sector? The CCLG co-chairs a community partnership board, of which it is a member, with people from organisations such as National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Co-operatives UK and Locality, so we regularly meet organisations that represent voluntary sector partners. I have not had the pleasure of co-chairing one of them, but I think they are absolutely clear and forthright in their views about how the voluntary sector is working in local areas.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** I am not surprised to hear it.

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**Q11 Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** On British values, you may remember that when this was first introduced as part of the school curriculum there was a certain amount of disquiet from some faith leaders because it was introduced in some connection with the Prevent programme and there seemed to be a heavy emphasis on “British” rather than “fundamental” or “shared”. Is there any experience from teachers who are teaching or promoting this subject in their schools as to how it is going on the ground? If there is no evidence so far, are there any plans for a survey to find out, because it has not been part of the curriculum for very long?

**Ann Gross:** I will hand this over to Hardip, because he has led on this area more recently than I.

**Hardip Begol:** As a director for counterextremism at DfE until July this year—I implemented the introduction of fundamental British values and the Prevent duty—we surveyed teachers and school leaders about how they were implementing the Prevent duty. We did that a couple of years ago and we carried out a subsequent survey to ask teachers how effectively they thought their pupils were being prepared for mixing with people from different backgrounds. Both of those surveys showed that schools were comfortable in relation to both the Prevent duty and teaching children how to work and interact with those of different faiths and beliefs. We have followed that up. It also became a more significant part of the Ofsted school inspection framework given the duty to actively promote fundamental British values was a new duty on independent schools and academies. Our feedback from Ofsted regarding its inspection reports is that it believes that schools have grasped this and are doing a good job on it. That is their informal feedback to us. They do not see it as a particular cause for concern across the whole sector.

There are particular independent schools that have struggled with parts of this and I think Ofsted may want to give evidence to this Committee on its experiences of going around schools to check how it is done. Our surveys are school leaders and teachers’ own impressions of their implementation of those issues, and I think Ofsted is probably a bit more independent in checking how well schools are doing.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Thank you very much. It would be helpful if we had copies of those surveys and Ofsted report at some point.

**Hardip Begol:** We can send those in.

**Q12 Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** I have to admit that I have a problem with this concept of fundamental British values. What is quintessentially British about those values? When I read them, it seems to me they are values that underpin democratic citizenship and we are not the only citizenship democracy, so what is so British about them?

**Hardip Begol:** I do not think there is anything unique to Britain about them, but I think it is important to articulate those things we value as being core and fundamental to life in Britain. I think “British values” is a

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shorthand for things with a common core or fundamental understanding that we particularly value here. If we want to bind British society together we have to write something down. I do not think they are uniquely British, but they are the things we value in Britain, and I think "British values" is shorthand for that.

**Lord Verjee:** Going back to numbers, it seems a bit bizarre to link fundamental British values with the Prevent programme. How many people do we think are at risk of extremism in this country? It seems to me that we are talking about a very small number, yet "British values" suggests a huge number.

**Hardip Begol:** I was responding to the question that mentioned both. I think that fundamental British values are core to what all schools promote. Democracy and the rule of law link very closely to the citizenship agenda. It is what schools do all the time in making sure that people do not discriminate, bully or harass people of different faiths and beliefs. I think that is separate from the Prevent duty on schools, which is very much about safeguarding young people who are at risk of being drawn towards terrorism. The schools that I have spoken to and the survey evidence shows that schools have been confident in implementing that separate duty to safeguard young people. I think they view it very much as their obligation to make sure that children are kept safe, particularly given emerging issues such as online grooming and radicalisation, in the same way in which they would want to keep children safe online from other predatory behaviour.

**Lord Verjee:** Have we any idea of the numbers? Is it 10,000? Is it 50,000? There is so much talk about these issues, yet to me it seems to be a very small number.

**Hardip Begol:** We have data on Prevent referrals that are in the public domain.

**Paul Morrison:** Counterextremism and Prevent are both within the Home Office's remit and they are two distinct things. There is a wider issue relating to extremism, holding values and challenging those behaviours that are antithetical to that. Then there is the Prevent programme, which, as Mr Begol has described, is focused really on national security, safeguarding, and preventing people becoming involved in terrorism.

On the numbers, Channel is the multidisciplinary referral point to which people under the Prevent agenda are referred. There have been around 1,000 referrals since 2012, which gives you an idea of how the Prevent agenda focuses necessarily on a smaller cohort of people and set of issues than the issues relating to fundamental values, which ultimately should encompass the entire population because they are intended to bind us together. You have drawn the right distinction, and sometimes it is unhelpful to elide the two, but you need to recognise that there is a connection between the two agendas.

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**Lord Verjee:** So we are talking about just 1,000 people?

**Paul Morrison:** That is the number of people who have been referred through the Channel programme; some 1,000 people have come to attention and been considered. I would highlight that of that 1,000 people, a third might be involved in far-right extremism, but the programme focuses on people who are at the harder end rather than the general issue, as I have said, which is about values and is broader.

Q13 **Baroness Barker:** We are in tricky territory here, not least because we have the terms "British values", "pluralistic British values" and "fundamental British values" this morning. I think we are struggling somewhat. I want to take us back to schools. You said that there is evidence from Ofsted that schools do this and actively promote British values, but what evidence is there of the effect of that, and what difference does it make?

**Hardip Begol:** In terms of outcomes for young people?

**Baroness Barker:** Yes.

**Ann Gross:** My understanding is that in its inspection reports Ofsted reports on how activity under that heading contributes to the various outcomes regarding the leadership and management of the school and children's social and welfare development, so it is about making a contribution to the positive running of the school and the overall ethos of the school.

**Baroness Barker:** Will we at some point have evidence requiring schools to actively promote British values? It makes a material difference that would not have been achieved by encouraging pupils to respect British values.

**Ann Gross:** I guess the change in that wording was intended to give a clear signal to schools that this was an important area to focus on and that we wanted schools to take positive steps to address it in a serious way and to make sure that there was a clear understanding of the importance that the Government place on those values. We think that the values and the practical steps taken to promote them are more important than the particular language or label that you use around it.

**Baroness Barker:** Thank you.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Anecdotally, when I go around schools now, I see much more evidence of what schools think they do to promote British values, so I can see that there is a range of activities, but I want to follow up on what you have said because I am not sure we have a real answer to that. There is a danger in judging the programme by input rather than output. We have probably agreed that there is more input, so the head will get a better score for management and leadership because they are being shown to promote it. I assume that the effect of it is more long term,

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because you are talking about the way young people grow up. What has been put in place, if anything, to monitor the impact on the behaviour of children as they grow up, because I assume that was the purpose of the project? On this, we are in real danger of measuring input rather than output, so do you have anything to reassure us on that?

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** That relates to my earlier question on citizenship education, but you have put it much better.

**Ann Gross:** You raise an interesting and important question, and it perhaps goes back to some of the points that members of the Committee have been making about how we think longer term about children's and young people's outcomes and how we prepare young people for adult life, so some of the measures will need to be about longer-term participation in civic society as active adults. This is Hardip's area in DCLG, so he might want to add to that.

**Hardip Begol:** On the schools point, in the school inspection framework, which is the framework Ofsted developed, there are criteria that inspectors should look at relating to the social development of children, which includes a willingness to work actively with people from different backgrounds. It tests their understanding of people from different cultures and different religions, so an inspector going in would ask, "Do your children understand what activities are taking place when they mix more and understand more about these values?" The inspector would look at what impact that is having in the school and the way the children talk about different groups of people from different backgrounds. I think Ofsted would say that it is independent, and where it has found that that has not happened it has found children with very stereotypical views of people from other backgrounds, which has been noted by the inspectors. So that is an issue.

On the question of the understanding of democracy and the rule of law, over the longer term we would hope that if young people understood them better and started volunteering earlier, that would carry on into their adult lives. Some of the evidence that David has given of the impact of the NCS, for instance, and of sustained volunteering should feed through.

Q14 **Baroness Barker:** What do citizenship ceremonies achieve?

**Paul Morrison:** One of the ways of thinking about this is to look at what happened before citizenship ceremonies came in in 2005. Before then, a person would go through the naturalisation process, at the end of which, in a largely bureaucratic exercise, they would get a letter from the Home Office; the act of their receiving that citizenship was not marked in any particular way. In 2004-05, the proposals to introduce citizenship ceremonies were based on our belief that it was important to mark that moment of achieving citizenship; it is a major thing to commit to the country that you are now becoming a citizen of. Not only do we think that is an important part of the process and an important symbolic undertaking that is made, but the evidence shows that the people who are going through it, the immigrant communities, and their families who attend those

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ceremonies welcome the ceremony. I think it serves as an important symbolic moment to underline what it means to become a British citizen.

**Baroness Barker:** You introduced them in 2005.

**Lord Blunkett:** It was in 2003, but let us not argue about it.

**Baroness Barker:** I absolutely take your word for it. We are now in 2017. Have you not gathered any evidence about what difference they have made?

**Paul Morrison:** I think a hard, longitudinal study would be needed to collate evidence of a causality between the opportunity to make that commitment in the ceremony and the wider societal impact. We have to base our evidence on the experience of the people who are undertaking it. The symbolism of it is important, and I think the Government would continue to say that it is a key part of the process. It is certainly better than just having a letter from the Home Office at the end of an administrative process.

**Baroness Barker:** I have no doubt. Indeed, I have been to several, and they are extremely moving. Given that this activity of performing those ceremonies, which local councils do, is seen as being valuable, it seems to me that we should now ask where this fits into the wider issues of citizenship that we are looking at. I am surprised that we have no information about that, but thank you very much.

Q15 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** What are the Government doing to increase political participation among young people and, in particular, to increase the number who are registered to vote?

**Hardip Begol:** I will take the registration part of that to start with. Maximising registration is a responsibility of the Cabinet Office, which works closely with partners, including electoral administrators and the Electoral Commission, to ensure that we have a democracy that is open to all. Since the introduction of individual electoral registration in 2014, over 28 million applications to register have been made, with over 7.3 million of those coming from those aged 16 to 24. We know that the online registration is especially popular with young people. The Cabinet Office has supplied me with some figures relating to the recent general election. Between the announcement of the 2017 general election on 18 April and the registration deadline on 22 May, over a million applications were made by those in the under-25 age group. This figure represents 37% of all applications made within this period and is an increase of 51% from the 2015 general election. The outcome of all that activity is that the youth turnout has also seen a significant increase, so an estimated 66.4% of young people voted in the 2017 general election, representing a 14-point increase over 2015, which makes it the highest youth turnout figure since the 75.4% recorded for the 1992 election.

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We know that there is more to do, and one initiative in this area involves the Minister for the Constitution leading the campaign and carrying out visits in every region and nation of the UK to hear about the barriers that prevent some groups from participating in the democratic process. He has spoken with over 100 individuals and organisations, including civil society groups and universities, and in the autumn the Government will publish their democratic engagement strategy to set out how we continue to work through this Parliament to increase registration levels among all, including the young and disenfranchised.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** You mentioned barriers. As you may know, one of the Committee's concerns is the barriers more generally to active citizenship and citizenship engagement, not just voting but wider. Have the Government identified those barriers, and what are the Government's policies, which they have or are developing, to address those barriers?

**Hardip Begol:** In particular in relation to registration, we know that students make up a sizeable division of frequent movers, as they often have at least two addresses in a year and tend to move between them, and there is a clear correlation between that home movement and the completeness of the register, so we know that there is definitely more to do there.

More widely on civic engagement, DCLG has set up some projects, and we have some overall frameworks in relation to people taking part in communities. Through the Localism Act, we have the right to have assets listed and the right to challenge and to take over the provision of those assets. Through a community fund, we are also funding projects in local areas for people to get engaged, particularly tackling some of those trickier, long-standing issues, but it is definitely an issue that we need to do more about.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Thank you, that is helpful, but I suppose I am trying to get at whether the Government have an analysis. There are many different groups, and we are not just talking about young people now but about poverty or where people live that could act as barriers to different kinds of engagement, and whether the Government have an analysis of that to then drive a policy.

**David Rossington:** The Government hold a dataset on a set of attitudes towards civic participation and engagement in the Community Life survey. It comes out once a year and has been running now for four or five years, and it builds on a dataset that goes even further back, to the early 2000s, in the Citizenship survey. That is a national dataset, which is published, obviously, and it gives a lot of information about people's attitudes to the communities they live in, such as whether they think they are places where people get on together. It also gives data on civic participation, which can certainly be broken down by ethnicity and various other pieces of data. That is an underlying dataset that is extremely useful for all the



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departments here and for the rest of government in analysing what is going on.

**Lord Verjee:** It seems to me that there are two big areas of opportunity here. I know that this is a political question, but one is younger people, younger voters and lowering the voting age. Could you comment on that a bit, and on the immigrant vote? Is there a particular focus on increasing voter participation among immigrants to this country?

**Hardip Begol:** The Cabinet Office has advised that we have no plans to lower the voting age for UK parliamentary elections. The Conservative Party manifesto outlined a commitment to maintain the minimum voting age for these elections at 18. I am afraid I do not have information on migrants in particular and on voting registration for those who are able to do so, but I will write in relation to that.

Q16 **Baroness Stedman-Scott:** We have had the publication of the Casey review. Can you tell us whether the Government are preparing a response to it and a response to the consultation on faith schools?

**Hardip Begol:** I can give a fairly short answer to that. Yes, we are working on that and expect to publish the government's strategy.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** When might that be?

**Hardip Begol:** This autumn.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I remember the autumn.

**Hardip Begol:** Famous last words, of course. That is the intention.

**The Chairman:** On what date are we seeing the Ministers? On 13 December, so the autumn must be before 13 December, yes?

**Hardip Begol:** As Ann has said, we have been around for a long time when it comes to making promises about when documents are coming out, but it is being actively worked on across government at the moment.

**The Chairman:** It would be very helpful for us if that were in the public domain. It will not influence us, but if our little influence counts at all we would urge you to have it available before we reach the end of our evidence collection.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Do the Government agree with the Casey review that they need to be more robust in countering false perceptions about Prevent? If so, what are they doing to counter these perceptions?

**Paul Morrison:** We certainly think that there needs to be an ongoing effort to make sure that there is as broad an engagement with the Prevent approach as possible and to address some of the myths and problems that prevent that, whether it is a particular community's perception that it focuses on them or the perception, which Mr Begol described before, that

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it is not about safeguarding and understanding vulnerability. There is a need to ensure that we are working collectively with communities to provide that protection. I think it will have to be an ongoing process of engagement. There is a lot of activity on this, whether it is the direct engagement with community groups, events run by the Government that involve getting out there and having roadshows, or me and others appearing at events like this and saying again how important it is to see Prevent for what it is, which is identifying vulnerable people and ensuring that their protection is provided before the negative things happen.

**Hardip Begol:** When I was at the DfE, a lot of the media stories were about young people and their referrals, so as a department we obviously looked into those. I think Louise Casey's review commented that a lot of them are not what is reported. The teachers I meet think that the safeguarding of young people in their schools is paramount and that when they make referrals it is always, as far as I have seen, in the best interests of the young person. I am not saying that mistakes do not happen, but, as with all safeguarding, the professionals out there need to be trusted to make the correct decisions when they seek help and advice on very serious matters concerning children's safeguarding.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** A key criticism of Prevent is that it does not engage sufficiently with local stakeholders, and that is one of the reasons why it is mistrusted. What is your answer to that?

**Hardip Begol:** I think that the local Prevent organisers, who I know and have worked with over the last two years, make a strenuous effort to make sure that they engage locally with both the public sector organisations and the communities. Part of their job being based in local areas is to get that community engagement. The Home Office also funds significant numbers of community-based projects. Some 169 were delivered in 2016-17, reaching over 50,000 participants. Those projects involve everyone from the Home Secretary, who went to Yorkshire last week to talk to some of the community groups that have been funded in relation to counterextremism, to the Home Office officials—Paul is one of them—actively going out and talking to groups to make sure that Prevent, as a safeguarding initiative to stop people being drawn towards terrorism, is well understood and that it covers all ways of being drawn towards terrorism, both Islamist and far right.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Going back to the Casey review, I think Ministers have said that there will be a new integration strategy as part of the response to it, but I want to bring in Paul in particular here. Are you working on a specific integration strategy with regard to immigrants and refugees? You will be aware that the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees, in which I declare an interest as a member, produced a report on the integration of refugees before the summer and, just yesterday, although I have not managed to read it yet, published a report, *Integration not Demonisation*. I have not heard anything that suggests to me that there will be an explicit strategy about integrating people who are new to

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this country, which seems to me slightly different from the kinds of things that Louise Casey was talking about.

**Paul Morrison:** The Casey review said quite a lot about newcomers and their integration and made some recommendations on that. Certainly, our intention is that those issues will be part of the response that we are working on with communities and local government. It is an area that is very much a joint undertaking. For example, I am currently responsible for the joint Home Office, DCLG and DfID group, which covers our need to work not just on how people are moved from one place to another, which is part of what the Home Office is responsible for, but on how they then achieve self-sufficiency and what their longer-term outcomes are. It is certainly the intention that it will be covered in the strategy, but not necessarily that there will be a separate strategy specifically for newcomers. But those issues will certainly be addressed in the wider integration strategy that we are discussing here.

**The Chairman:** Before we thank you formally, are there any points that any member of the Committee would like to pick up?

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** I have two points. I think we have received written evidence from the Lord Lieutenantcy secretariat.

**The Chairman:** We have.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Is there anything in there that would have answered Baroness Barker's question about effectiveness and the difference they are making? That might be something that you want to drill down on.

**The Chairman:** I am not sure that we know yet.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** If we do, it would be good to know, and if we do not it might be worth going back to them.

**The Chairman:** Yes, we will note that. Any others?

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** We heard before the meeting that the Government intend to set up a new commission on counterterrorism. I wondered whether you had anything to say about that.

**Paul Morrison:** The commission on counterextremism was mentioned in the Queen's Speech. The intention is that it will look at many of the areas that we have been discussing here and counter the obstacles to the values that we have been talking about, such as how to promote them and how to learn what has worked and how to engage with community groups. The next stage will be the Government coming forward with proposals on it will function and operate. That is being worked on at the moment, but it is about counterextremism rather than counterterrorism.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Is there any idea of the date when it might

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begin?

**Paul Morrison:** I do not have a specific date, but there will be a further announcement on the detail of some of those issues imminently.

**Lord Blunkett:** Chairman, could all the witnesses today liaise and provide you and the Committee with a list of the forthcoming responses, reports, commissions and reviews that they know are coming in the pipeline in the next six months? I think it would help us, because there is a great deal going on and the duck is paddling but we only get the quacks. I do not mean that in a disparaging way; I mean that we only hear what we hear.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Building on the question about whether citizenship ceremonies are effective, there has been some talk about young people having a ceremony when they leave school. I wondered if that is on your radar and whether you have thoughts on that.

**Ann Gross:** It is not immediately on my radar, but we will take it away and let you have some more considered thoughts on that.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** You are writing to us, so I wonder if you could give us a summary of the national curriculum requirements, because everything that you have said revolves around citizenship.

**Ann Gross:** I am very happy to do that. That is not a problem.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** That would be good, even if it is only a link so that we can see exactly what they say.

**Ann Gross:** Yes, absolutely.

**The Chairman:** Since you have been very kind and answered all our questions, can I give you the last word? Is there anything you wish to say, apart from goodbye?

**Hardip Begol:** I would like to say thank you. It has been a very good session. It is right to challenge whether we have evidence and evaluation of the programmes and spending that we are undertaking, and to make sure that we all keep in touch with one another and that we have a consistent government approach to this really important subject.

**The Chairman:** On behalf of all the Committee, I would like to thank you very much. It has been wide-ranging and very helpful in getting our Committee under way.

Dr Jill Rutter, Director of Strategy and Relationships, British Future; Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, former General Secretary, Muslim Council of Britain; and David Goodhart, Head of the Integration Hub at Policy Exchange – oral evidence (QQ 17-24)

**Dr Jill Rutter, Director of Strategy and Relationships, British Future; Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, former General Secretary, Muslim Council of Britain; and David Goodhart, Head of the Integration Hub at Policy Exchange – oral evidence (QQ 17-24)**

Wednesday 13 September 2017

10.40 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Redfern; Baroness Stedman-Scott; and Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 2

Heard in Public

Questions 17 - 24

Dr Jill Rutter, Director of Strategy and Relationships, British Future; Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, former General Secretary, Muslim Council of Britain; and David Goodhart, Head of the Integration Hub at Policy Exchange – oral evidence (QQ 17-24)

## Examination of Witnesses

Dr Jill Rutter, Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, David Goodhart.

Q17 **The Chairman:** Thank you all very much for coming along this morning; we are very grateful for your expertise and your evidence to our inquiry. A list of the interests of members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and it is available. The session is open to the public; it is being broadcast live on our website and is being recorded for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence, which will be put on the Committee's website. A few days after the session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check it for accuracy, and it would be very helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after the evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence, or have additional points you wish to make, you are welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. That is the end of the police caution, so to speak. Perhaps I could now ask you to introduce yourselves and, if you wish to make a brief statement, but we are quite tight for time, by all means do so. The acoustics in this room are terrible, and I have a bad cold and cannot hear, so I would be very grateful if you could speak clearly and loudly. Mr Goodhart, would you like to start?

**David Goodhart:** My name is David Goodhart. I am a journalist by background, I have written various books relating to issues of immigration, ethnicity, integration, and citizenship is obviously a big part of that. I currently work part time at the Policy Exchange think tank.

**Dr Bari:** I am Muhammad Abdul Bari, community activist, teacher and parenting consultant. I would like to say a few things at the beginning.

We all have multiple identities—national, ethnic or racial and faith or no faith; they are complementary. The multiplicity of our identities, our human diversity, and pluralism in society is a matter of celebration. We are all equal, but different. In my religion, Islam, the concept of human diversity is very positive as human beings are not born as clones of one another; human diversity is a garden which is comprised of multi-coloured flowers of different shades and styles. Would that not be more appealing than a garden entirely made of the same colour and flower?

Citizenship is about national identity or being a legal member of a country. There are rights and duties to being a citizen. Active citizenship is a concept that encourages citizens to work for social solidarity or the common good for all. There are many ways of being active, such as voluntary neighbourhood and community work as well as broader socioeconomic and political participation.

In the UK, citizenship is taught in secondary schools—I was a teacher—as part of the GCSE curriculum so that children grow with the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an active part in society. Citizenship teaching includes topics such as democracy, government, the justice system and human rights. Schools must promote the spiritual, moral,

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social and cultural development of pupils within fundamental British values. This is defined by Ofsted as “democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith”. To me, these values are universal which take account of tolerance of others, equality, equal opportunity, fairness and justice. Prejudice, bigotry, hate and discrimination are aberrations in any society. As an active citizen, a teacher and a community activist, I have been working in the voluntary sector for decades to promote these universal values and fight prejudice, bigotry and discrimination.

You may be aware of the civil society body, Citizens UK’s Commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life, which was set up September 2015 to understand the challenges Muslim citizens face in the public domain and to find better ways for their civic engagement. The final report, *The Missing Muslims – Unlocking British Muslim Potential for the Benefit of All*, was launched in July and contained a number of recommendations. I can leave a couple of copies, Lord Chairman, if you would like.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much.

**Dr Rutter:** I am Jill Rutter. I am Director of Strategy at British Future, a non-partisan think tank which is focused on immigration and integration in the UK with a particular focus on understanding public attitudes. In a previous job, I set up one of the first PGCEs in citizenship education in 2001, so citizenship and civic engagement is an issue which is dear to me.

We think that there is a common understanding of British values. British Future has undertaken polling on what people think British values are, and there is broad agreement across different faiths and ethnic groups. For example, 69% of minority ethnic groups agree that British values comprise a respect for law.

We also think that it is important to talk about British values and our Britishness because it is a civic identity; it enshrines a relationship between the individual and the state. We need to teach about British values, but we should caution against using the word too much and using it as a counternarrative to religious extremism. We were told, when we met a group of young people in Newham, east London “The more they talk about British values, the more we feel we don’t belong”. We have to be sensitive and cautious about how we use it and we need to use it in positive contexts, not as a counternarrative to religious extremism.

The Government have a big role in promoting British values and shared values. We need clarity in the aims of our naturalisation policy: what do we want to achieve in terms of naturalisation, and is it to induct more people into Britain? I do not think we have a clear idea about the aims and objectives of our naturalisation policy.

We can work to make the achievement of British citizenship more positive. We wrote a report about how British citizenship could engender greater

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belonging. The Mayor of London and the Mayor of Birmingham are looking into how citizenship—

**The Chairman:** Dr Rutter, we will give you a chance to answer some questions in a minute.

**Dr Rutter:** I was going to make some points about life transitions at 18 and citizenship education, which I am sure you can ask me about later. Thank you.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much. We will go to the questions. I think the two statements have largely answered my question, which was to provide the Committee with a brief statement of the contemporary core essence of British values. Mr Goodhart, you did not have a chance to say anything there, so you might like to say something.

**David Goodhart:** I think the Government's statement about British values is fine as far as it goes. As Jill said, one of the problems is that we tend to talk about it too much in the context of radicalisation and should find other opportunities to talk about it. My perhaps slightly pedantic point is that I am fine with the "British" part of it, but it is the "values" part which is a bit of a problem because the Government's statement is not about values but about institutions essentially, with the possible exception of the concept of mutual respect, so it talks about democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty, which are all institutions which have developed historically over time. It perhaps sounds a little too abstract to talk about British institutions, but the whole point about a liberal society is that we can live freely by different values and even, to some extent, opposing values. There is a problem, I think, with the very word "values" in this context.

Incidentally, I would perhaps expand the Government's short description of British values and include things like equal citizenship, open society and so on. Of course, much of what is said in the Government's statement of values and even what I have described, things like equal citizenship, are essentially political things, but there are also the common norms, a way of life and the common behaviour of most British people, and this is manifested in the rules of the road of British life, if you like, and the highway code of people having to observe certain rules on things such as queuing, and one might even include a sense of humour and things like that. Obviously, governments cannot, and should not, legislate for these everyday life things, but when we talk about people from outside the country coming to live here and being absorbed into the common norms of everyday life we should talk about those things too because they matter in everyday life; it is not just about abstract political ideas.

**The Chairman:** Thank you. Lord Harries?

Q18 **Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** I think you have all said something on this question 2, but to what extent is it useful to refer to these values, in particular, as "British"? Is the debate about British values as opposed to



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social values, which are important and cherished in Britain, more than a question of semantics? You have made the very good point that we talk about British values too much in the context of radicalisation and we take that for granted, but you are all basically sympathetic to the concept of British values. If you were looking for an alternative way of talking about it or nuancing, would you use a word such as “social” or “shared”? Is it more than a question of semantics?

**Dr Bari:** I do not have an issue with the definition of “British values”. To me, it is a bit limiting and I agree with my two colleagues that it is more or less in the context of radicalisation. Given what is happening around the world, the violence and destruction, the basic thing is that we live and let others live. That is the core thing. British values encapsulate—and it cannot be mentioned in the definition of British values—fair play, resilience, humour and tolerance. All these are part of British values, but I would prefer the words “social values” or “shared values” because, if someone is not a British citizen and lives in this country, there is a slight dichotomy as to whether that person has British values because, legally, he or she is not a British citizen. The nuances are there, but I would prefer “shared and social values”.

**Dr Rutter:** I do not have much to add on common values, shared values, but we need to talk about British values perhaps when a young person becomes a voter in citizenship ceremonies and so on, so I think we have to be sensitive and aware of contexts.

**David Goodhart:** I would disagree with Dr Bari. I think the “British” word is very important; it is much firmer in some ways than the “values” word. Moderate nationalism and a national identity is increasingly important in a much more diverse society. We did not have to talk about these things so much 100 years ago or even 50 years ago because there were implicit understandings; we were a very ethnically homogenous country. We are now not, and national identity becomes more important in these circumstances, not less, so I think we should very much stick to the word “British” and not dilute it because everybody living here, or most people, are British and, indeed, people who do not become citizens should be encouraged to do so. I think there was a proposal some years ago to make it more or less compulsory to become a British citizen once you have lived in the country for a certain period of time. That may be a little draconian, but I do not think we should not use the word “British” because a few hundreds of thousands of people are denizens, which I think is the technical term of people who are permanently resident in a country but not citizens; I think that would be a very small tail wagging the dog.

Q19 **Baroness Barker:** Thank you very much. I am very taken with Mr Goodhart’s statement about different and opposing values coexisting as opposed to having common values. Can a commitment to mutual respect and tolerance be combined with a belief in shared values within society? Are there boundaries or limits when it comes to respecting diversity? Is that what the word “British” is trying to convey?

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**David Goodhart:** Richard Dawkins, for example, at some level, has contempt for Dr Bari and, indeed, for all religious believers; he thinks they are idiots, children at some level, and he is entitled to have that belief, which is antagonistic to organised religion. What he is not entitled to do, obviously, is to throw a brick at a mosque or abuse Dr Bari in the street as that would be a hate crime, but he is entitled because, like I say, we live in a liberal society which has diverse and even conflicting values, and that is part of what makes us a good society in some ways.

**Dr Bari:** To me, values and beliefs are two different things. Beliefs can be very limiting and values are to be shared, so beliefs are not values and values are not beliefs. People can have any sort of belief, a belief in religion, a belief in no religion, but they can have shared values, so I consider values as superimposing on beliefs. Beliefs can be changed as well and, of course, values can change, but religious and other beliefs have changed over decades, so I would rather give more importance to values than beliefs. When it comes to beliefs, we may disagree on many issues as religious people disagree; within a single religion, there are disagreements.

Q20 **Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I take that point and I do not disagree, but there is a point where that analysis becomes more difficult. Values are great until they challenge you and you do something that is not value-driven, and we have all had that experience. It is very easy to sign up to the values, but it is sometimes more difficult to sign up to the practicalities of living those values. If we talk about tolerance, I accept that we say to everybody, "You needn't have a religious faith, but you must be tolerant of other people's faiths", but, if you go into the position of women or gay rights, that becomes more difficult. If we might take that as an example, where do we get to at that point? As a nation, we have legislation, values and a common stated view from leaders of our nation that we are tolerant of homosexuality, of gender reassignment and all those social changes of the last 20 or 30 years, so what right does that give people to oppose those and behave in a way that challenges those British ways of behaviour? There has to come a point where there is a conflict and how do you deal with the conflict?

**Dr Rutter:** The boundaries are clear and outlined in law. There are things which are illegal, and hate crime is against the law, but there are lots of tensions, as you said, around gay rights and the position of women. At British Future, we have been doing quite a lot of work in Bradford looking at how integration and cohesion could be improved in that very diverse city. We think that there need to be more safe spaces where people can discuss face to face their differences of opinion and accommodate each other. That is happening, to a certain extent, in schools. It is harder when adults leave school, but it has to be a face-to-face discussion. One of the areas where these tensions are manifest, wrongly, is in online discussions and social media where people's opinions are not moderated by face-to-face contact, so we have to think about how we come to terms with our social media.

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**Dr Bari:** There may be tensions, and there are tensions, between values and beliefs, and that is the nature of human society; if the family has tension, the community has tension, society will have tension. If traditional views conflict with the national shared views that must be challenged, but my contention is that that challenge should be done in a civilised way. People’s religious views or beliefs can be definitely challenged, and should be challenged, but two wrongs cannot make things right. If you become intolerant to a certain opinion and then talk about tolerance, it does not work in a society. Tolerance has to accommodate some beliefs and practices, until and unless they break the law, and there should be robust discussions on the table. If free society has the benefit of having robust discussions, it has the benefit of giving people the chance to air their views until and unless they break the law.

**David Goodhart:** There clearly is a conflict, as you say, between freedom of belief and freedom of speech and equality for gays and women in the sense that people are allowed to believe that homosexuality is wrong. It is not yet a crime to believe that homosexuality is wrong, and that obviously does lead to conflicts. As Dr Bari says, it is regulated by the legal space that you are allowed to express opinions that run counter to the general principle of equality and tolerance.

Q21 **Lord Blunkett:** I wonder if we could address for a minute or two the deeply alienated, probably as exemplified in the last two years with the vote in the United States for Donald Trump as President and the vote in the UK for Brexit, as most people would see that and as the evidence from the election survey would reinforce. How do we address that group of people who do not fit into any alphabetic list of inequalities and feel that the debate around this area is completely outwith their own day-to-day concerns? I wonder if all three of you would like to say a word or two about the juxtaposition of rapid change and its impact on people’s perceptions of themselves, where they stand in society, how they see the world changing, and the economic changes and perhaps the slow burner from the collapse of heavy industry through to the global meltdown. If you take too much notice of the BBC, you would believe that the global meltdown started with Northern Rock 10 years ago this week, but, of course, it started a lot longer before then. Is that economic, social and cultural mix something that we can easily take account of in the debate that we are having in this Select Committee and the recommendations that we might come forward with?

**David Goodhart:** It is a good question and an important subset of the general issue. The question in Lord Blunkett’s list implies that the so-called left behind depart from the mainstream liberal norms of British society. I would question that to some extent. As you mention, I have written this book, *The Road to Somewhere*, and I talk about decent populism. Some people regard that as a contradiction in terms, but obviously I do not. What I mean by that is a large section of our population, whom I call “the people from somewhere” tend to be more rooted and perhaps somewhat more socially conservative in their attitudes, placing a higher value on security and familiarity than the highly educated and the affluent, who tend to

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stress more openness and autonomy and serve social change more comfortably. The “people from somewhere” have, generally speaking, gone along with the great liberalisation over the last 30 or 40 years, which Lady Morris was talking about, in attitudes on homosexuality, gender, race and so on. If you look back as recently as the late 1980s, I think about 65% of the British population thought that homosexuality was wrong. Now, 70% plus support gay marriage. We have seen a great switch particularly on that issue, but on others as well.

I think that most people, even the people whom Lord Blunkett was referring to, feel not so much hostile to the socially progressive values that one associates with London and the great metropolitan centres, but feel that their way of life has been undervalued. They still have very strong national and local attachments, they have very strong group attachments in the way that perhaps the more mobile “people from anywhere” do not and they have seen the social changes that have happened. The great economic openness of the last 20 or 30 has led to deindustrialisation, radical changes in their way of life, with mass immigration and rapid changes to neighbourhoods. They feel that their lives have not been valued by the people who are most dominant in society with the declining status of so much non-graduate employment, among other things.

If you come from Barnsley, say, 50 years ago you lived at the centre of one of the great European coalfields. Now you feel you do not have a place in the national story in the way that you used to and that the national story has shifted so much to the great metropolitan centres. That fragments society and divides us into our version of red states and blue states, which is damaging for the national cohesion. Although, as I say, “decent populism” is a regional description of how many people believe, they have gone along with many of the changes. They look at the national conversation coming out of London about transgender issues and about this, that and the other, and it is not necessarily that they are intolerant of transgender people, but they think that there is too much stress on these things and they would like there to be more stress on decent jobs for people who do not go to university, for example.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** How do you feel this can be addressed? I think we acknowledge the truth of what you are saying as it is borne out by all the facts, but how can it be best addressed?

**David Goodhart:** Well, it is being addressed partly because we are having to address it because of the Brexit vote. A lot of these people had not voted, which is one of the reasons why the pollsters got the Brexit vote so wrong. They had not voted in the preceding four or five elections because they thought all the parties were the same, “they are all more interested in transgender people than me”, to slightly exaggerate, and, perhaps partly thanks to the Brexit vote, we are now talking differently. We might not have been having this conversation but for Brexit. They have used their political power as citizens, their vote, to change the argument. It may have been a lashing out, but it requires greater emotional intelligence on the

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part of the people whom I call the “anywheres”, who will continue to dominate our society, the highly educated, mobile, generally speaking more affluent people.

**The Chairman:** But Lord Harries’s question is how do we get emotional engagement? Here we are in our little Committee with a chance to drop a small pebble into the pond. What pebble are we going to drop? What does the pebble look like?

**David Goodhart:** It is adjusting our national conversation to accommodate the sentiments of this large group of people who feel that they have been excluded. I think we are beginning to do that. Some of this is not subject to legislation, it is literally the nature of the continuing public conversation we have. One little policy thing that I am quite keen on is compulsory voting; one of the reasons these people have been ignored for so long is that many of them had stopped voting, until Brexit anyway, and that allowed the politicians to discount their views so much. Compulsory voting works perfectly well in Belgium and Australia, I think. Obviously it is one small thing which is not going to change things enormously but it is worth considering.

**The Chairman:** Dr Rutter, I know you want to come in.

**Dr Rutter:** We have been doing this activity called the national conversation on immigration—essentially, citizens’ panels, glorified focus groups. I have done some of these panels in outer city areas and people are saying that they do not trust politicians, they do not trust their MPs, and feel that the council just does stuff to them. When you go and do a panel in Bradford, the so-called left behind talk about HS3 and why is HS2 going up from London when they want a fast railway link across the Pennines. It is those economic issues.

In terms of what we could do to enable the so-called left-behind to feel that they had a greater stake in this country, I think MPs should get out and talk to every single sixth-former in their constituencies in small groups, which I am sure is possible. Councils need to think about how they engage with local people. Some are very, very good at that, and councils are an institution of the state as well. Some are not so good, and you get this phenomenon of people not trusting councillors and feeling that the council comes and does stuff to them. Our new academies have to be strongly rooted in the communities in which they are teaching, and I do not think that some of the new academy chains have built their community roots to a sufficient extent, but trust in our local politicians is part of this left behind phenomenon.

**Lord Blunkett:** I do not disagree with what Dr Rutter is saying, but does not her answer exemplify the problem we have? Many MPs go around the sixth forms in their constituencies, but they do not get the chance, or are not in a position, to talk to the young apprentices who are not in the sixth form and have not gone through the sixth form. So we get a skewed view,

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do we not, of the way the world is?

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I have certainly not got the evidence, but I am surprised at that research because I thought that, on the whole, people trusted their MP but they do not trust MPs, so I think it is more complex than that. I think people trust their MP, who gets around, and they trust their councillor, who gets around, but they do not trust the council, and they separate it. I think the switch has been that the local representative is seen as being on their side, but it is the institutions to which they have elected them which are not on their side. I am not sure that it can be solved by getting the local politicians to go and talk to more people, but it is the bridge between them and the institutions that they belong to.

**Dr Bari:** Going back to the problem that Lord Blunkett and Lord Harries mentioned and looking for the solution, while we have come together, in a social and community sense many communities are fragmenting, and that is the reality I can see, even in the minority communities. Equal opportunity, which I mentioned, is one aspect. Fragmentation can be economic, political or even ideological, and here lie the challenges on the politicians and the civil society leaders in coming together and addressing the issues so that no community or group is left somewhere else. I was part of the Olympic board and we used to bring all the communities together and there were hard-to-reach communities. There is a target for the local boards to go to the communities which feel alienated, so that is important. Fragmentation is a reality and addressing it has to be done politically, economically as well as through social enterprise by the civic society leaders.

**The Chairman:** This is an important point. Does any other member want to ask a question, otherwise we will go on to Baroness Redfern?

Q22 **Baroness Redfern:** What role should the Government or society more generally have when it comes to promoting or embedding certain shared values, particularly promoting beyond the education system?

**Dr Bari:** I think that both the Government and society have a large responsibility. The Government can only legislate against discrimination or hatred in society, but they cannot promote values or be the nanny state. When it comes to hatred or discrimination or violation of equal opportunities, it is the Government's job to legislate, but civil society has to be on its feet as to where laws are highlighted, where values are needed for the whole society. Civil society, including the voluntary sector and the religious communities, has a great responsibility to bring them together.

The role of the media has been discussed, and the Muslim community has been facing the brunt of the media, especially in the recent headlines. When I talk about civil society, the media are also part of it and nobody wants to talk about it. I know that there is freedom of expression and the media are free in this country, but do the media follow the self-regulation that we talk about? That is probably the big issue. If a certain community is demonised for actions by a small part of the community that is not fair

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to that community and civic engagement is hampered. That is the whole purpose of forming the Citizens UK Commission so that Muslims do not face what they are facing in the public domain and they can have full civic participation as normal citizens, like others.

**Dr Rutter:** The state reaches people in many different ways, not just through the education system.

**Baroness Redfern:** That was just one example.

**Dr Rutter:** Yes. It reaches people through lots of different ways, through the arts, through publicly funded art through libraries and art through leisure centres. We could think about how these different organisations of the state could gently promote shared values, perhaps by encouraging volunteering and bringing people of different communities together. It would be lots of different small things.

**Baroness Redfern:** Which the Government are doing at the moment.

**Dr Rutter:** And everybody contributing in different ways and reaching different groups of people. It is people who are more isolated who are less likely to participate in arts, leisure, sports and volunteering, whom we need to reach.

**Baroness Redfern:** So how are we going to try and attract those people?

**Dr Rutter:** Perhaps, as Lord Blunkett says, through further education and apprenticeships, through football and through the institutions that they use and visit. It is a very big task.

**David Goodhart:** In a way, Brexit ought to be an opportunity to reboot the country to repair our national social contracts and to bring into the public realm people who have felt excluded for different reasons. Of course, it is not really working out like that and the debate is not exactly being conducted in the spirit of reconciliation, but quite the opposite. What Brexit has done is reveal the divisions that were there more clearly to us, but at least they have been revealed and we know what we are talking about now perhaps more clearly than we did before the vote. It has revealed what a very big job we have.

Dr Bari was talking about the media, and the whole evolution of social media, which is an extraordinarily recent thing in the last five or ten years. It has undoubtedly coarsened public debate in many ways, but it has also broken the elite filters on public debate. In some respects, I think it is a very healthy thing and has given the "somewhere" and others a voice, and they may be misusing that, but these are very early days and, as time passes, the so-called trolls will become more responsible citizens. That may require some degree of nudging or regulation; I am not really a media expert, but we should not be too depressed about this coarsening. I hope it is obviously a temporary thing, or we need to make sure it is. There are minor things, and Jill may have already mentioned them, just symbolic

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things in relation to citizenship, like reviving the citizenship ceremonies, which started off with a bang whenever it was. I think Lord Blunkett was involved in the initiative starting whenever it was, 15 years ago, and there was a lot of cynicism about it but it turned out to be really popular. It still does not involve enough long-established citizens in these ceremonies and if more noise were made about them, if you had them more like a group, like the Moonie weddings, as it were, with hundreds of people at a ceremony and it is a big local event, that would be good. On national volunteering, what is it called that The Challenge organise?

**Baroness Redfern:** The NCS.

**David Goodhart:** It is a volunteering scheme, but perhaps we should make volunteering compulsory. There has been a long debate about this and it would be very expensive, but what about a three-month version of national service in which everybody has to do something with a particular emphasis on mixing the social classes and the different ethnicities in the group of volunteering work that they are compelled to do?

**The Chairman:** I think that takes us to your question, Baroness Stedman-Scott.

Q23 **Baroness Stedman-Scott:** To what extent might the concept of the “civic journey” through life add structure and meaning to the broader issues of citizenship and civic participation? Do the Government or civil society need to do more to outline a positive framework of citizenship that instils a series of shared values?

**Dr Bari:** If I understand the term “civic journey”; it should start from the moment a child is born, so it starts with positive, gentle parenting, which is important. Of course, one of the ideas could be that citizenship is a subject at GCSE, so why not have it as a core subject like maths and English? That is one of the suggestions that I support. Of course, the civic journey is about civic participation, starting from the local neighbourhood to the community and society and all sorts of things, so the Government, civil society, the media and the whole of society should work together for people’s civic journey from the moment they are born until they die.

**Dr Rutter:** I think more could be done at 18 when a young person becomes a voter. Maybe one could look at a ceremony to welcome that young person to the voting community. I know that in parts of London people are thinking about that where you meet your MP and your local councillors and get a pack of information about what voting means. I think we should look at the transition at 18 as being particularly important and make sure that all young people are included in that, not just those at school.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Have you done any research into this? Has this come up or have you any evidence to say that 18 year-olds would appreciate something like this?



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**Dr Rutter:** We do not have evidence at the moment, but the Mayor of London has appointed a deputy mayor for social integration. One of the things that he is looking at is whether there should be more done to welcome new voters, whether they are new British citizens from abroad or voters who have just turned 18, into the political community.

**Baroness Redfern:** Also probably information about what the young people can get involved with and do, working with other bodies.

**David Goodhart:** Yes, some sort of rite of passage. Rites of passage are always good things and they have tended to disappear from our lives. I would just add to what Jill said that if there is this induction into citizenship at the age of 18 it should involve visits to the institutions, including the local magistrates' court or the local Crown Court. The whole legal system exists invisibly to 98% of the population until they do something wrong or have a friend who does something wrong, but the legal process stands behind so much of everyday life.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Would you do it at 16 or 18?

**David Goodhart:** At 18, definitely. I think the idea of reducing the voting age to 16 is ridiculous.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** No, I did not mean voting, but this citizenship.

**David Goodhart:** Well, it makes sense to do it when you can first vote, in a way, to link it to the act of voting.

Q24 **Lord Verjee:** Are there any other big issues relating to British values that we might not have touched upon in this session? I would like to hear some thoughts about the role as a global citizen and as a British citizen. The Prime Minister famously made a distinction there: can one be a global citizen and a British citizen? The other area I would like to hear about is the breakdown in family education. We talk a lot about teaching citizenship in the education system, but, as Dr Bari was saying, it should start from the day you are born. How can we find ways to encourage good citizenship within family values as well? Are there any other big issues that you feel we have not touched upon relating to British values?

**Dr Rutter:** Shall I start by talking about parenting education and what happens within the family? As a result of government initiatives, the Department for Education has looked at how the early years can promote fundamental British values and has given guidance to our early years providers. There is a lot going on implicitly in nurseries, which is promoting British values and rubbing off on parents and how we bring up our children. Democracy is about making decisions together and listening to other people. In nurseries, staff encourage children to sit down and listen to each other, which is an implicit British value; they encourage mutual respect and tolerance and treating others as you wish to be treated yourself. A lot of the best kind of parenting education is doing that and I think that a lot of families do that implicitly anyway.

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As regards being a global citizen and having global responsibilities, an aspect of being British that we are concerned about is what is happening internationally. We have polling data on that from British Future and people do understand their global responsibilities.

**Dr Bari:** I would mention three specific points that probably need to be addressed. One is the incorrect perception of seeing a people, say, in the case of Muslims, seeing Muslims as a monolithic community and often treating them with suspicion of criminality. This does not help with social cohesion or citizen engagement and has undermined the Muslim community. I am not saying the Muslim community is perfect, but there are issues in this area.

Secondly, the Social Mobility Commission, probably 10 months ago and more recently, came up with why Pakistani and Bangladeshi children are doing far better than 25 years ago but social mobility of these two communities is very weak because of the job situation and discrimination. One of the suggestions is a nameless application form and all sorts of issues. I mentioned the overenthusiasm of mainstream media on certain communities, but in the global citizen area, we are global citizens—it cannot be nationalistic because global nationalism is not feasible—in the sense that this small planet should be looked after by human beings in a way that it is not distorted and destroyed. In that sense, we have the global citizenship values which are important.

As a parenting consultant, I have always emphasised that a person's life starts in the family and parenting is fundamentally important. In some countries I know, probably in Singapore, there is parenting education from the Government. I am not saying that Britain should do this, but this should be given higher value. Children who are born happy and educated and inspirational citizens can say a lot of things in the future and we can learn other ways.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** I could not quite hear, and perhaps others could not, the point that you made about Bangladeshi and Pakistani children. I could not quite gather whether they were doing better or worse.

**Dr Bari:** They are doing better in education. Even in university, they are doing far better, but their job situation, their moving into the higher echelons of the job is very weak.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** So education is better, but social mobility is worse?

**Dr Bari:** Yes.

**David Goodhart:** That is not quite correct. When people look at these statistics, they include the British-born and the immigrant Bangladeshis and Pakistanis. If you just look at the British-born, there is an almost equal proportion of Bangladeshis and Pakistanis in the higher social class as white British, so we are not doing too badly on that score.

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**Dr Bari:** Those are the Social Mobility Commission’s findings.

**David Goodhart:** Well, the Social Mobility Commission is often wrong. On the broader point, I think most people in this country think that charity begins at home, but it does not end at home. We believe in the moral equality of all human beings but we do not believe that we have the same obligation to all human beings otherwise the development aid budget would be as big as the NHS budget, but it is not—it is a fraction of it; a growing fraction, admittedly.

Theresa May’s famous statement in her conference speech last year that if you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere, was an attempt to empathise with people whom I call the “people from somewhere”, the majority of the population who still tend to be very rooted in this country where 60% live within 20 miles of where they lived when they were 14 years of age and we are not that mobile a society. It was also signalled that we want to repair our national social contracts in employment, in welfare, and so on, and the feeling that some people, the global citizens, do not have a particularly strong attachment to Britain and to British citizenship. She was implying that they should have a stronger one, which does not mean that you cannot also be very internationally connected and support lots of international causes. I think that, in retrospect, it was a political mistake and a lot of people were absolutely enraged by it. Why did the Tories lose Kensington, for goodness’ sake? Because lots of people who regard themselves as citizens of the world took that as an insult.

One of the things that is important here, going back to my anywhere/somewhere distinction, is the particular problem in this country that people feel that to succeed and to lead an ambitious and fulfilled life you have to leave where you were born, unless you happen to be born in London or Manchester or one of the great metropolitan centres. Justine Greening gave a speech to the Social Mobility Commission just a few months ago. Justine Greening comes from Rotherham and she said, “When I grew up in Rotherham, I used to dream of owning my own home, having an interesting job, having a career that challenged me, and I felt that I could not have that in Rotherham”. Rotherham has seen better days, but it is not a one-horse town; it is a town of 120,000 people and within half an hour’s commuting distance of Sheffield. The idea that you cannot live a fulfilled, ambitious life in Rotherham is ridiculous, and a lot of people feel that to be part of the successful bit of the country you have to move, which we have to do something about.

I think we have neglected the private realm of the family too much and too much of our family and gender policy has been about encouraging parents to spend as little time in the family as possible over recent years. That lies behind a lot of our biggest social problems, like social care and the housing crisis, where much of the issue stems from the neglect of the private realm and we need to rethink a lot of it. We are the only country in Europe which does not provide fiscal support for the family. We are one of the few countries where we spend £8 billion or £9 billion on childcare every year

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and you cannot access a penny of that if you want to look after your own child. Lots of other countries allow women, and sometimes men, to use childcare funding to stay at home for longer with their own kids, and I think there is a huge appetite for that which is not recognised enough in public policy.

**The Chairman:** Thank you all very much; it has been a most interesting session and you have given us a lot of food for thought. If you have further things which you think we ought to be aware of, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. Thank you very much.

Michael Sani, Chief Executive, Bite the Ballot; Ashok Viswanathan, Deputy Director, Operation Black Vote; Professor Jon Tonge, Professor of Politics, University of Liverpool; Matteo Bergamini, Founder and Director, Shout Out UK – oral evidence (QQ 25-34)

**Michael Sani, Chief Executive, Bite the Ballot; Ashok Viswanathan, Deputy Director, Operation Black Vote; Professor Jon Tonge, Professor of Politics, University of Liverpool; Matteo Bergamini, Founder and Director, Shout Out UK – oral evidence (QQ 25-34)**

Wednesday 13 September 2017

11.40 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts (Chairman); Lord Blunkett; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Redfern; Baroness Stedman-Scott; Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 3

Heard in Public

Questions 25 - 34

Michael Sani, Chief Executive, Bite the Ballot; Ashok Viswanathan, Deputy Director, Operation Black Vote; Professor Jon Tonge, Professor of Politics, University of Liverpool; Matteo Bergamini, Founder and Director, Shout Out UK – oral evidence (QQ 25-34)

## Examination of Witnesses

Michael Sani, Ashok Viswanathan, Professor Jon Tonge, Matteo Bergamini.

Q25 **The Chairman:** Thank you all very much for coming along; we are very grateful to you for giving up the time to help us in this inquiry. Can I just remind you that a list of interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available? This session is open to the public, it is being broadcast live on our website and it is being recorded for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and we will put it on the Committee's website. A few days after the session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy and it would be helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after this evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence or have additional points you would like to make, you are most welcome to submit supplemental evidence to us. Could I begin by asking you all to introduce yourselves? If you wish to make a personal statement about this evidence session, please do so, but, with an eye on the clock, could any such statements be brief, please? Perhaps we can start with Mr Sani.

**Michael Sani:** I am Mike Sani, chief executive of Bite the Ballot.

**Ashok Viswanathan:** I am Ashok Viswanathan, deputy director and co-founder of Operation Black Vote, which was founded in 1996.

**Professor Jon Tonge:** Jon Tonge, professor of politics at the University of Liverpool, former chair of the Youth Citizenship Commission.

**Matteo Bergamini:** My name is Matteo and I am from Shout Out UK. We try to get more young people engaged and involved in politics and we run political literacy courses in schools.

Q26 **The Chairman:** We will go straight to questions, and can I start by asking you to provide the Committee with a brief statement of your views on the current state of democratic engagement in the UK?

**Matteo Bergamini:** I am quite new in this space as Shout Out UK was started in 2014, but, based on my own experience and dealing with this space, I would say it is disjointed at the moment. Citizenship education is often treated as second-class in schools and a lack of a political literacy in schools means that that automatically lowers the engagement level of young people, partly because they just do not have the knowledge when they come out of school and get to voting age to be able to actively engage with the system.

I would say that there has been fantastic work done around voter and democratic engagement from the organisations which are here today, from Bite the Ballot with voter registration and so forth, but I would say that the core issue for myself and, I think, others is that there is a very low level of political literacy at the moment in schools and in regard to democratic

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engagement in general. Obviously, voter registration and so forth is incredibly important, but we need to give young people an understanding of how the system works, how to engage with it and how democracy works. At the moment, I do not think that is happening in our schools or in society as a whole. That is my view.

**Professor Jon Tonge:** The picture is mixed in terms of democratic engagement. If I were a glass-half-full person, I would point to the increases in turnout for which there has been evidence since the nadir of 2001 when only 59% of people voted. We were up to almost 69% at the recent general election, we had a high turnout for the EU referendum and we have had a very significant increase in the percentage of young people, 18 to 24 year-olds, voting. I think that citizenship education, notwithstanding the problems of delivery which have been associated with that, is beginning to make a difference in youth political engagement and we are seeing the results of a decade and a half, so I am an optimist in a lot of ways. The level of democratic engagement is probably improving, but there are still some huge gaps, most notably in terms of local government where, frankly, there is very little democratic engagement of young people, in particular, but not exclusively young people, and we still have a problem with those who are hard to reach who do not democratically engage at all. Even with the increased turnout at the last election, only 32 million of a potential 47 million people voted, and 80% of those who do not vote in one general election do not vote at the next, the serial abstainers, the hard-to-reach groups, and we still have not really tackled that problem.

**Ashok Viswanathan:** When we set up the organisation Operation Black Vote in 1996, one in four people from African, Caribbean and Asian communities were not registered to vote and over half were not turning up at polling stations and exercising their vote, and I believe that that situation has not changed a great deal since 1996. In other areas, our work has excelled. When we set up the organisation, there were only five black minority ethnic MPs in Parliament and today there are more than 50, so we have seen moves in some areas, but I would say that there still remains a great challenge around increasing BME voter registration and voter participation, and that, for us, is the biggest challenge moving forward. Some of the challenges have already been outlined—political education, political literacy—but the elephant in the room on this is the lack of funding within local authorities, education authorities and from central government to promote this sort of work, which is important not just in the election cycle but outside of an election cycle.

**Michael Sani:** It could certainly be improved. There is immense potential to increase the civic participation of young and, especially, socially excluded citizens. However, I do not think there is a silver bullet for that and it needs to be carefully thought out. The goal is to ensure that people can play an active role and understand the responsibilities of playing an active role. Much of that starts within education, but we should not overlook the family home. There need to be greater efforts to increase

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cross-sector collaborations, but that normally comes down to financial support, especially for NGOs.

Ultimately, we are at a time now where the increase in the youth vote in the last election is definitely putting their demand for their vote on the table. I think we will see more parties trying to actively canvass for that vote. Greater communication will, essentially, lead to more participation. The work of the Select Committee last year, which Graham Allen led, was fantastic, but we did not see any of it come to fruition and a lot of work went into that, so I am curious to know if the recommendations that come from this will actually lead to something.

**Lord Blunkett:** So are we.

**The Chairman:** We hope so.

Q27 **Baroness Morris of Yardley:** In your responses to that question, each of you in your different ways mentioned reforms to the electoral process, whether it is registration, finance or all the rest of it. Is there anything else you want to say on that, and is there any particular change to the machinery of voting and participation? Also, what none of you mentioned were politicians, political parties and manifestos. I suppose there might be an argument that voter turnout drops when there is not much difference between the parties—and I can see that there might be a responsibility—and there is not much there worth going out for. 2001 could be explained by the fact that there was not likely to be a change of Government. We have had a lot of discussion about 2017 and the Labour manifesto being very attractive. There are two bits to that question really: is there anything particular in the electoral machinery; and do you have a view on the role of the political parties in encouraging people to vote?

**Professor Jon Tonge:** On the parties, that is where I am again optimistic because there was an awful lot of literature in political science not that long ago about the death of political parties, but most political parties in the UK have seen a very substantial growth in membership in recent years, which has hopefully put that to bed.

In terms of the mechanics, I understand why the Government moved from household to individual electoral registration, because there was far too much pressure placed upon the leader of the household registering the family and, in a lot of cases, that was not being done. However, individual registration, to me, is not the optimum option. I think the best method would be to have automatic electoral registration based upon your national insurance number.

If we are not going to have that method, schools, colleges and universities should, as part of the enrolment process, put people on the register when they come to 16 or 17 years old. It should be automatic, when you turn up at university, that you are enrolled with an opportunity to vote at home, if so preferred. I do not understand why it is not an automatic part of the enrolment process. It also would be an act of citizenship within schools or



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colleges which would be quite a ceremony and, when someone goes on the electoral register, why not make that part of a citizenship class? I really cannot understand why it has not been done already.

**Michael Sani:** That is in the works though, is it not? The Government, prior to the announcement of the snap election, made possible amendments to the Higher Education and Research Bill where universities will have advice to enrol students at the point at which they enrol on their university course, so it will be interesting to see if that is maintained on the agenda.

**Lord Blunkett:** People may have thought that that was a bad idea in view of the result of the election.

**Michael Sani:** Yes. I think there needs to be an increase of digital democracy. I know that we are far away from ever allowing voting to be done online, but there could be an increase of digital democracy. There are fantastic tools out there which enable citizens to share data based on their views and opinions, and that could be a great asset to political parties, when writing manifestos—to be able to look at data and see where there is demand for particular pledges. I think we will see a natural advancement there.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Do any of you have any views on compulsory voting and, looking at the experience of other countries, do you see both advantages and disadvantages?

**Ashok Viswanathan:** I am very much against compulsory voting or anything punitive around citizenship education or increasing political literacy. You really have to change attitudes and I do not agree with anything that is punitive. To add to what has been said, and I obviously agree with everything that has been said so far, I have found that one of the biggest hurdles in the 2015 election and the 2017 snap election was voter registration. We had a mobile bus which went around the country and registered people to vote, using the gov.uk site, and the biggest hurdle was when we got to national insurance. I simply do not understand why it is necessary and why there cannot be alternatives, for example, that people cannot take their passport to the polling station on the day or why we do not have early voting, like they have in a lot of American states. When I say early voting, I am not talking about postal voting but about having a polling station open. You could have a central polling station open for two or four weeks before election day with people able to go in and vote early, which gives that flexibility that people do not have in the UK. Obviously, in many countries, they do not use a Thursday for election day. There are a lot of things around flexibility and access which are lacking at the moment in the mechanics of our current system.

**The Chairman:** If you are doing that, are you restricting postal voting?

**Ashok Viswanathan:** No.

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**The Chairman:** So you would not be changing any of the existing system, just adding an early-voting facility.

**Ashok Viswanathan:** Yes.

Q28 **Lord Blunkett:** I was going to ask about auto-enrolment for registration and compulsory voting, but it has obviously been well covered, so perhaps I can just do a sort of off-ball googly and say that, 17 years ago, quite a lot of research was done by the Government in relation to the stake that people had in society determining their willingness to engage in all sorts of ways, not just voting but in participating as active citizens. Part of the consequence of that was the development of the Child Trust Fund, which was abolished in 2011, for new youngsters. The idea of that was that people would have some asset when they became adults and transcended to adulthood in a world where the divide between those with and without assets is growing by the day, not least because of house prices in London and the south-east of England. Do you have any thoughts about the connection between engagement and some form of asset and stake in society?

**Professor Jon Tonge:** It is not a panacea, but there is citizen education. When we controlled for social class and for a whole range of socioeconomic indicators, it showed that that made a difference and that properly delivered citizenship education helped people's propensity to democratically engage and to go and vote, regardless of their social class. There is still an imbalance and, clearly, those who are better off in society are more likely to go and vote and to democratically engage. That comes across in every study that has ever been done. In terms of remedying that problem and improving political engagement among those who are less well off in society, I would argue that citizenship education is beginning to make a difference. It will not completely redress that imbalance and we should not pretend that it can, but it does aid participation across the social classes.

**Matteo Bergamini:** I fully agree with what has been said, but I would add that there is a danger in linking engagement and participation with having assets because, if you look at the current price of properties and young people being able to buy a home and so forth, that is not a possibility for a lot of young people. The main way of engaging people who are not already engaged is by giving them those tools to be able to understand how the system works because, whether or not you have an asset within society, a direct financial stake or whatever else, politics affects you, and it is making sure that people know and understand, regardless of where you are socially, economically or whatever else, that politics impacts your life.

For me, that issue starts with schools as well as voluntary organisations, local councils and so forth. It starts in education where you get young people engaged or get people talking about it and understanding even something like this, understanding what a committee is and how they can

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start to engage with the actual process. A lot of people do not have a clue what a committee like this does or what first past the post is or what an MP does and the difference between an MP and a councillor. We are talking about very basic things, which are required for people to actively participate in our democracy, which people just do not understand or do not get.

**The Chairman:** We will get to Baroness Redfern's question on that point, but, Professor Tonge, did you have something more you wanted to tell us about the technical processes of voting, because I think we cut you short?

**Professor Jon Tonge:** There are only 11 democracies in the world that now use compulsory voting and it has not really acted as a panacea. If you look at the percentage of Australians who will take the 20 Australian dollar fine—and maybe they could raise the fine—that has not worked. Regarding the technicalities of voting, postal voting has been the one experiment that has improved participation. I remember the era when it was very difficult to get a postal vote and you had to prove why you were away. Postal voting is the only experiment that has offered a sustained increase in turnout. The other experiments did not work. Electronic voting did not work. When I chaired the Youth Citizenship Commission, we asked a lot of 16 and 17 year-olds and then 18 to 24 year-olds whether they thought it archaic to go to a draughty church hall and probably use a pencil for the only time in their lives and put their cross. They wanted that to be retained and they did not want text voting, which they thought was fine for "X Factor", but too gimmicky for an election; they regarded elections as too serious for that. I am all for looking at technocratic solutions to how we vote, but I do not think that they would make a great deal of difference.

**The Chairman:** Lord Harries, have we bottomed out this compulsory voting for you enough?

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Yes, but I have another supplementary and I would like to ask a bit more about the black community. Are there differences in the percentage of people who are registered to vote on age between older people, more settled people and younger people? What about the black churches, many of which of course are flourishing: how do they rate on registration and voting?

**Ashok Viswanathan:** Yes, there is higher voter registration and a higher voter turnout rate as the age groups increase. That is particularly the case with African-Caribbean communities and the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities. The Indian community seems to be pretty stable all the way through from a younger age going upwards.

The black churches, the African-Caribbean churches, have a huge sway now in voter registration and voter turnout. At every election since 2010, we have held rallies in megachurches around the UK, and not only do they have the facilities and the resources to assist in voter registration and voter engagement but they also have an immense amount of influence in their

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congregations and how their congregations vote, similar to the American models of black churches. There is a big argument for not just NGOs such as ours to engage with the black churches en masse on such a large scale but for political parties and leaders to do so. Some political leaders have understood this since 2010, but there is a lot more work that could be done with political parties and black churches, particularly on increasing engagement.

Q29 **Baroness Redfern:** I heard Matteo when he was talking about low-level engagement in schools, et cetera, but how do you think we could change that?

**Matteo Bergamini:** With regard to?

**Baroness Redfern:** Citizenship education.

**Matteo Bergamini:** For me, the ideal would be that it is made a compulsory subject in all secondary schools across the country, and that would include citizenship, the way the system works, our democracy, et cetera. Obviously, that is the ideal which may or may not happen. For me, there needs to be created almost a framework from central government which details key things that all schools need to cover throughout any academic cycle with specific points when it comes to general elections or major highlights in the political calendar. For example, when a general election comes by, it should not be just down to one or two teachers in a couple of schools who are really keen and interested themselves and, therefore, they set up mock elections or they start to look at manifestos and so forth. Schools should have a framework for this which they prepare for and where they know, if there is a general election, "This is what we will be doing throughout this time and, if there is not any major event in the political calendar, we should be using form time to discuss current affairs topics and we should be using certain lessons to look at different sections of how to engage". Maybe they should use the connections with local MPs and have more engagement around that, not just talking about the issues but going into the systems in place around how that works essentially, so looking at councils, councillors and so forth. Although it may sound boring or something that young people are not interested in, they are interested in that because they are interested in current affairs and issues that obviously affect them and they want to understand how Parliament and government shape the society they live in.

**Baroness Redfern:** In my authority, we have a strong youth council and a very active young mayor engaging with MPs, which works really well and it engages young people. I think that is really important.

**Michael Sani:** Echoing Matteo and not to repeat what he has said, there are opportunities to ensure there is a greater social action element to schools. The NCS is now growing and becoming even more of an opportunity for young people to go on. Tying in to voter registration, it would be great if we could pilot automatic voter registration for attainees, which would go out with the NI number and references to the NCS. I know

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that HMRC wants to send a letter to every young person about the NCS, so let us also let people know that they can register to vote or tell them that they have been put on the register.

There are a few things to plug which we have done across the third sector such as the national voter registration drive, which is a fantastic call to action where private, public and NGO spaces come together around a key time in the calendar year. It is a great opportunity for students to actively get involved and share why it is important to register to vote. The strongest examples are when students in year 9, who cannot even register, are running events to register the sixth form and talking about the benefits of jury service and credit rating and making it real for people. There are great opportunities to ensure that education offers that first step into active citizenship so that it becomes real.

**Q30** **Baroness Newlove:** We have just been talking about national citizenship and my question is about volunteering. Do you believe that voluntary citizenship programmes, such as the NCS, should have an element of political education, as you have just discussed? Would this be effective in increasing democratic engagement? What do you see as the effect of volunteering on democratic engagement? I declare an interest as an observer of the National Citizen Service for OnSide Warrington Youth Club.

**Michael Sani:** With the NCS, there is a change in the royal charter that democratic engagement and the invitation to register to vote should be happening on the residential. I know that many participants enjoy the sessions that currently go on in the NCS around voter registration. Recently, the Cabinet Office tweeted with the Minister for the Constitution around young people telling him that they had registered to vote while on the NCS programme. However, I do not know the extent to which that has been rolled out or the standards to which it is being rolled out. Is there a certain programme that people must follow and is it down to the individual providers? Obviously, when you get into the detail, you might have an excellent provider in Liverpool who registers everyone and other people might not build it into their programmes, so it will be interesting to see how the royal charter is taken forward by the NCS itself.

**Professor Jon Tonge:** I am a fan of the National Citizen Service and I would like to see it better integrated into existing citizenship education. I would like to see a more political dimension to it. Part of the problem with citizenship education is that it has gone through different phases. You had the initial phase, the Crick/Lord Blunkett phase, when there was quite an emphasis on political engagement within citizenship education. We have rowed back from that slightly and it has been more about civil engagement and not mentioning the politics because it is a bit frightening and teachers do not want to touch it. The thirst for personal knowledge is clearly there. If you look at the fastest-growing A-level in the country, it is political science with a 13% increase in take-up for A-level politics from 2015 to 2016. We do not have a GCSE in politics, so how will we inculcate political knowledge in people if we do not embed it into such things as the National

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Citizen Service? You would not let people go out on the road and drive a car without giving them some lessons first, yet we expect them—particularly if we lower the voting age to 16—to go out and vote without giving them any training in what our political systems are about. It seems perverse.

**Q31** **Baroness Stedman-Scott:** To what extent might the concept of the civic journey through life add to democratic participation? Do you support the idea of some sort of ceremony celebrating the citizen's first vote or other elements of symbolism that could be added to the democratic process?

**Matteo Bergamini:** I am a big fan of ceremonies and all that kind of stuff; they make it more of a journey for people. Let me take a personal example of something that we do with our political literacy course. The course is six weeks and we go through the different processes within politics and, at the end, each of the students has to give a speech about something they feel passionate about. Their parents get invited and it is a little event, which is quite nice for them. It makes them strive for something at the end and it empowers their voices because they get to talk about something they feel passionate about to an audience. Small symbolic gestures such as that, for them, are quite empowering. It could be included in our civic journey so that, when you vote for the first time, there is some sort of ceremony—although I am not entirely sure how you would roll it out—that emphasises the importance of that and how precious that vote is. Often, we forget about it, and you can drill it down to just putting a cross in a box in a booth, but the reality is that the symbolism of the vote is important, but it is often left out of what we do. Democracy is not just a right but a responsibility and it requires all of us to maintain democracy, so any sort of civic journey in which you have milestones or some form of engagement where it becomes more than just a tick-box exercise every five years is something that definitely should be considered.

**The Chairman:** Do any other of our witnesses wish to come in on that?

**Professor Jon Tonge:** Yes, I think we should do much more to celebrate. We should issue certificates to celebrate people coming on to the register in the first place and certificates to celebrate your first time of active voting, one of the most important things you will do in your life. There has been talk about having more public holidays. I would not make them necessarily saint feast days, but how about celebrating the 1918 or the 1928 Representation of the People Acts? Let us celebrate democracy far more than we currently do.

**Q32** **Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** To what extent does a lack of integration in society hinder democratic engagement? Do you think that perceived differences with other members of society hinder people's engagement with the democratic process?

**Michael Sani:** I do, yes. I think communities are divided far too much, fuelled in many instances by the media, and we need to tackle the root cause of that and there needs to be far greater integration within

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communities, but we need to give people the skills to be able to do so. One of the biggest things that shocks me is the lack of empathy sometimes and that, when you meet people, they feel a lack of empathy for anyone who is different from them because they have too much pressure in their own lives and empathy is seen as a luxury.

WE Day, for example, is fantastic where children start at a young age to begin to understand differences and what is happening around the world and begin to respect just how lucky and fortunate they are to be in this country. It needs to start a lot younger and we need far greater opportunities for our communities to interact. You see it first-hand where people will come together and talk about an issue. It is brilliant when they come to the conclusion that they can have a different outcome—and they might want a different outcome—but the best thing about it is listening to and hearing each other's point of view, which we have not done enough. That can start by creating a safe space within education where people can debate issues and they are not taboo. The Prevent programme around extremism has not been well thought out; teachers getting emails saying, "If you hear these words, contact the community police officer" just drives communication underground. You need to create a safe space for people to talk about what they are worried about and explore it, so yes, I would say that integration is a huge factor.

**Q33 Lord Verjee:** Are there any other major issues relating to democratic engagement which you feel we have not covered yet? To me, the really complex problem here is how we find the solution to involve in the democratic process the people who need it most—the people who feel unrepresented and locked out of society. How do we get them to engage more with the democratic process and with the community as a whole?

**Professor Jon Tonge:** I suppose voting at 16 is an issue which we have not really covered. I think the pressure is increasing, and I am someone who is agnostic on this. The 16 and 17 year-olds may feel excluded by the fact that they do not have the vote and yet that age group has the vote in Scotland. You see the imbalances now in political and democratic engagement across the UK and it is an issue that will not go away, especially as every single political party or the powers in Westminster, except the Conservatives and the DUP—important though they are—now favour lowering the voting age, and I can see both vantages. I do not think anyone in Scotland would want to re-raise the voting age for devolved elections, but I also see some anomalies. There is a need for a holistic review of rights and responsibilities because those who voted on the independence of their country in Scotland in 2014 could not then go and buy a beer or cigarettes or even drive to their friends or buy a firework to celebrate the result either way, which suggests that there is an asymmetry of rights and responsibilities that needs addressing. If you are going to lower the voting age, it may well boost democratic engagement, but it begs wider questions about when rights and responsibilities of citizens should begin.

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**Lord Blunkett:** I think that is crucial. Your review of it, which was a decade ago, had a draw, if my memory serves me correct; young people themselves were not entirely sure whether they wanted to vote at 16 and 17.

**Professor Jon Tonge:** Yes, they were split almost equally themselves, and the now-dated evidence from the Electoral Commission suggests that a majority of those 18 and over were against lowering the voting age, and I suppose that does beg the question of to what extent should that majority view among the existing electorate be factored in: should it be factored in at all or not?

**Michael Sani:** There is an opportunity in that, though. If the Government or whichever relevant department were to announce that they would lower the voting age if the demand was there, then you put the onus back on the 16 and 17-year-olds themselves and they know, "Okay, if I want the vote, I need to register and I need to demonstrate that I want it", in the same way that the vote was given to the suffragettes and everyone else where people actively campaigned for it. I do not think it is anyone's place to say that we all put our names on a co-signed letter and expect the Government to lower the voting age. We should empower 16 and 17 year-olds to actively win the right to vote and then they will get their first of change-making and, from then on, it could be habitual. If you stand there and you know that you are one of the first attainers to campaign actively and encourage others and the result changes, I think you would see a natural increase in other areas where they want change.

**Baroness Newlove:** I am quite interested in 16 and 17 year-olds as I have three daughters, so I am coming from that angle, and my other role is as the Victims' Commissioner. Social media presents a horrible platform and, if we give 16 and 17 year-olds the vote, if they know that their peers are not voting, then it interacts at another level, "Why are you not using your vote?"—they are very vocal, yet they do not have the life skills to understand that there is a choice in this. For me, it is about ensuring that we have a safety mechanism and that they understand it. As adults, we all have the right to vote and we know about the history of why we are voting. With social media, my concern is that that is 24/7 and it creates this different level which they do not understand and their choice is taken away because the mantra is "You are 16 and you must vote". For me, it is about looking more deeply and protecting the ones who are not ready to do that and saying it is not essential that you must. We all know with politics that there are different levels of education and understanding.

**Michael Sani:** Much of that comes down to what people have said today, that you cannot have one without the other. There is political education, and the understanding of the entirety of the system and your role within it need to come hand in hand if you are ever to lower the voting age. For the record, I just point out that not every adult knows the history of voting. I did not; I registered to vote at 27.



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**Baroness Newlove:** No, and I am not saying you do but, as you grow older, you get life skills and you have other conversations. In school, it is in a straight line, in a sense, and you get very vocal ones who do the youth politics and some have the ability to have the conversation, but they lack the confidence to do so, and I just do not want to dismiss that; I think we should cherish that and nurture them for when they are ready.

**Michael Sani:** Yes.

**Matteo Bergamini:** To add to what Mike said, social media present 24-hour news or opinion sites, if you want to call them that. Before social media, we still had the media and so forth which have their own opinions, advice and whatever else, and that has always existed ever since the media have been around. Obviously, social media have intensified that, but a lot of the articles and so forth which are being shared on social media come from the main newspapers anyway, so there is that information. I stand by what the panel has said, that to lower the voting age to 16 would mean that we need to start thinking seriously about improving political literacy education or citizenship education in schools. My argument is based on what I do, dealing with young people, but we could have the same conversation about 40 and 50 year-olds as well. Yes, they are slightly older, so they have had a potential chance to engage with the system. So, if you work for yourself, you engage a little bit with tax and you start to understand it a little bit more, but not necessarily, and sometimes you may have biases which you may have learnt or picked up from somewhere because you have never had a grounding in political education when you were in school, so you have to pick up things as you go. There is always that kind of case.

**Baroness Newlove:** Yes, there is always that, and I agree that the media are not always objective. There have always been media, but, as young people in schools say, it is 24/7. Years ago, you could have a weekend break and you could have a discussion with your parents or someone in a safe environment, but, unfortunately, there are not a lot of safety mechanisms on social media, which we had a discussion about earlier with the other witnesses, and we need to protect that. It is easy to say it, but it is the individual who is going through it at the time which is the bit I am really concerned about and we need to look at it in more depth before we go out there and do it.

**The Chairman:** Mr Viswanathan, we have not heard from you for a bit. Is there anything that you want to add to this?

**Ashok Viswanathan:** No, not particularly; I think it has all been covered.

**Lord Verjee:** We talked about lowering the voting age, but one area which we have not covered at all, and which I would be interested in your views on, is whether we should have increased democratic engagement through more referendums. That debate does not seem to be out there at all, and we have just had a very important referendum which is changing the

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history of the country. Do you have any views on that?

**Michael Sani:** If a particular party wants a referendum on a particular issue and it goes in their manifesto, we will know if the public are in favour. I do not know if it as simple as just saying that we should have more or, no, we should not. Prominent events may call for a referendum more so than other issues.

**Matteo Bergamini:** To add to that, referendums are a tool that we have as a democracy and I would not say that we necessarily need more or less of those. Obviously, if there is a massive societal-changing event, then potentially a referendum is required, but I do not think having more of them is the key to having more participation and more civic engagement.

**Professor Jon Tonge:** Clearly, there is a temporary effect where people engage in democracy, but it is not always healthy. If you talk to Scots, they do not cite the Scottish referendum as an example of a particularly healthy democracy as it was hugely divisive, as referendums tend to be. I can see the case for referendums to effect great constitutional change, and they were necessary to introduce devolution for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but overall I would not be a fan of them for day-to-day decisions. I would limit them and the only way you can limit them really is to have a written constitution which formalises their use, and I think we are still some way from that, unfortunately.

Q34 **The Chairman:** Some of the changes that we have been discussing which might be made will, of course, require the active co-operation and help of Whitehall and central government. You have had a lot of experience of working with Whitehall, so perhaps you would like to give the Committee your view of how effective, how easy and how engaged it has been.

**Professor Jon Tonge:** In terms of Whitehall and democratic engagement?

**The Chairman:** Yes, as it is important in the areas that we are discussing here.

**Professor Jon Tonge:** One of the areas we have discussed is the National Citizen Service and, clearly, there have been severe cost implications of that, which is part of the reason it has not been rolled out. In the first speech I ever heard David Cameron give, he was banging the drum for the National Citizen Service and was very keen for it to be a fully costed national programme in which all young people would engage for six months. There are obviously cost implications and Whitehall has had to put the brakes on for financial reasons for some of the programmes.

In terms of the backing for citizenship education, that has remained underfunded, and there are issues with the status of it. It is probably the least developed statutory subject—well, non-statutory these days—that we have on the school curriculum. As ever, a lot of these democratic engagement initiatives come down to how much we can afford to fund

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them. In an ideal world, quite clearly, the National Citizen Service would be rolled out on a far more extensive scale.

**The Chairman:** It is about economics, not about the willingness to get involved.

**Professor Jon Tonge:** As I said earlier, there has been a slight row-back with the current Conservative Government from being in favour of civic engagement to volunteering and the promotion of community good, which has perhaps been emphasised slightly at the expense of political engagement and democratic practice. I would not overstate that, but I think there has been a shift in emphasis. I would like to see them as co-equals; I see them as complementing each other.

**Michael Sani:** I would just raise a point about local authorities and the pressure they find themselves under. It is a point that needs to be made, and there are some solutions. Last year, I brokered a conversation between Experian and the Electoral Commission to explore a data sharing arrangement. Experian holds far greater detailed data on the local community than the local authority does, and it needs to be written into law apparently, according to the Electoral Commission, for Experian to be able to share that data. There is a demand for it from the local authorities, but it got caught up with the legal team at the EC. If local authorities are going to be held to account to increase the register, the greater the information they have to understand where unregistered parts of the community are the better, because there is still a lot of money wasted on blank letters that go to people who are already registered to vote telling them to register to vote. There are huge amounts of money wasted and that needs to be addressed.

**Lord Blunkett:** Perhaps we could ask you, if there are two or three examples of practical change which you feel would be helpful, to let us have them, because at the end of the day that is what we may have to recommend.

**Michael Sani:** Can we do that in writing, David?

**Lord Blunkett:** Yes.

**The Chairman:** Thank you all very much indeed for coming along; we are most grateful to you.

Dr Rania Marandos, Deputy Chief Executive, Step Up to Serve; Michael Lynas, Chief Executive, National Citizen Service Trust; and Matt Hyde, Chief Executive, The Scout Association – oral evidence (QQ 35-42)

**Dr Rania Marandos, Deputy Chief Executive, Step Up to Serve; Michael Lynas, Chief Executive, National Citizen Service Trust; and Matt Hyde, Chief Executive, The Scout Association – oral evidence (QQ 35-42)**

Wednesday 11 October 2017

10.45 am

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Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Baroness Stedman-Scott; Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 4

Heard in Public

Questions 35 - 42

## Examination of witnesses

Dr Rania Marandos, Michael Lynas and Matt Hyde.

Q35 **The Chairman:** Good morning and welcome to our witnesses, and welcome to all those who have come along to listen to this important evidence session. I will just make a formal statement. A list of interests of the members of this Committee which are relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. The session is open to the public and is being recorded for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and will be put on the Committee's website. A few days after the session you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check it for accuracy, and it would be helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after the evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points you made during your evidence or have any additional points you wish to make, you are welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us then. Could I ask each of you to briefly introduce yourselves and then we will turn to questions?

**Dr Rania Marandos:** My name is Rania Marandos. I am chief executive of Step Up to Serve, the charity that co-ordinates the #iwill campaign. It is led by over 700 cross-sector partners across the UK to embed social action in young people's lives.

**Matt Hyde:** My name is Matt Hyde. I am the chief executive of the Scout Association. We are the largest co-educational youth organisation in the UK; we have 464,687 youth members after 12 consecutive years of growth and they are supported by 154,000 adult volunteers. In spite of that—our highest number—we still have 51,182 young people on our waiting list.

**Michael Lynas:** I am Michael Lynas. I am the chief executive of the National Citizen Service. We operate programmes across England and Northern Ireland. This year, we will bring together more than 100,000 16 and 17 year-olds.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much. If we can begin with an overview question, it would be helpful if you could provide the Committee with a brief statement of your views on the current status of civic engagement among young people in the UK. Dr Marandos, would you like to start?

**Dr Rania Marandos:** Thank you for the question. Young people absolutely have the appetite to contribute to their communities. We, in collaboration with DCMS, run the National Youth Social Action Survey, which has surveyed over 2,000 young people each year since 2014. That shows that about 40% of young people, 10 to 20 year-olds, across the UK take part in meaningful social action. That can be campaigning for a cause they care about, mentoring another young person, helping out in a community event, fundraising, joining a charity or helping in a hospital. There is much more appetite than that for young people to take part however and, when asked, most young people—70%—of young people say that they would like the opportunity to take part in meaningful social action, where there is a double

benefit. There is a benefit to themselves in terms of their well-being, their skills development and their networks, and a contribution to their community and something they care about. The reasons given by young people who do not take part in social action are usually lack of awareness—“It never occurred to me, I don’t know how to get involved, I don’t have the information available”—rather than a lack of interest.

**Matt Hyde:** I would start by saying that there are reasons for optimism here. It has been said that the millennials are the most civically minded generation since the 1950s, and you can support that with some of the evidence we have seen, both what Rania has described and the fact that there was an increase of 50% in young people volunteering between 2011 and 2016. You have seen the development and the introduction of organisations such as the National Citizen Service; you have more young people voting in the most recent election; and I have shared with you some of the data on Scouts as well with 12 years of growth and 55,000 young people on the waiting list, so there are lots of reasons to be optimistic.

However, as you have just heard, there are a lot of young people who want to take action on social issues, but they do not necessarily feel they are given the opportunity. The ComRes data we have showed that 82% of 12 to 24 year-olds thought it was important that young people helped to solve social issues, but that only 36% felt they were given the opportunity. That is particularly true as there is a disparity in terms of those who have access to citizenship education and social-action programmes, such as the ones that we represent. Arguably, that has been exacerbated by the fact that there has been £400 million-worth of cuts in youth services. Hopefully, what we will be able to explore is how targeted investment can help to narrow that gap for those who have access to these opportunities and those who do not and the link between formal and non-formal learning.

**Michael Lynas:** We published a report with the think tank Demos a couple of years ago, which we called *Generation Citizen*, because we found that there was a big disparity between the perceptions of the general public, what gets played out in the media sometimes and the reality of this generation, so when we looked at some of the words used to describe young people in the media—feckless and feral—they were very negative portrayals, and the reality, as my colleagues have described, is very different. It is remarkable that the age group that we are talking about have moved from being the least likely age group to volunteer, in around 2009, to being now the most likely age group of any to give their time. We believe strongly that this age group, if given the opportunities, will take part. But Matt is right that there is still a disparity. This is something that the Step Up to Serve DCMS survey looks at—the gap between those who come from more middle-class backgrounds and those who come from more disadvantaged backgrounds. We think that is why programmes like NCS are important to give access to everyone to play their part.

**The Chairman:** Dr Marandos, your CV shows that you have experience at the intersection of the private and public sectors, with McKinsey, Teach

First and this whole area. A lot of our discussions are around what the Government can do. Is the private sector doing enough to facilitate and provide information to smooth the pathway?

**Dr Rania Marandos:** Absolutely; a cross-sector, cross-government solution is needed, and business has a key role to play in different ways. One of the big things that they are already doing—and more is needed—is to showcase the value of the skills that are developed when young people take positive action in their communities and take practical action in the service of others to create positive change. There is lots of robust evidence now to show that young people who are taking part in meaningful social action develop communication skills, leadership skills and they are able to work better in a team. That recognition is there and possibly could be communicated even more.

There is a role in terms of their schools' outreach. Often, business supports schools and there is more it can do, potentially, to show how social action can be embedded in a school journey, educational journey, for young people, and then, for their own employees, are they giving the time to be able to continue that social action journey? The point of the #iwill campaign is to help young people create a habit for life that they can continue once they are in employment and continue to be active citizens, and there is an important role for business and employers to play.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** On a point of clarification, you talked about the group who were the least likely to volunteer and now they are the most likely. Are you talking about the cohort or the age group, i.e., is it that cohort moving through or the particular age group?

**Michael Lynas:** This is data from what used to be the Citizenship Survey and is now the Community Life Survey and it is about the cohorts of age groups, so it used to be the over-60s and the over-65s who were the most likely to volunteer and now it is the 16 to 24 age group.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** So it is not the group?

**Michael Lynas:** It is not that group followed through; it is that group in 2015.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Sorry to put you on the spot so quickly, but you said that targeted investment was needed. Do you have any view of how much and where that money might come from in a cross-business/government partnership? Would it be possible or sensible for youngsters who do work experience, which can be across the spectrum in quality, to do a social action fortnight, which would get it into them?

**Matt Hyde:** In recent years we have had funding from the Youth United Foundation, which was DCLG money and then LIBOR money. It was about £20 million and in a strategic alliance of uniformed organisations. That £20

million created 44,000 new opportunities in areas of deprivation<sup>1</sup>. For £550, we can create, on average, a four-year opportunity for a young person in an area of deprivation. In addition to that, about £40 million created over 7,000 new volunteers, so there is a sustainability argument in terms of working with communities to help them to build sustainable youth provision that leads to citizenship education. Bear Grylls recently has called for a £50 million investment, which would give us 90,000 new opportunities. If you look at us in the Guides alone, we have over 110,000 young people on our waiting list. That is across all communities. If you take Blackburn alone, we have 600 young Muslims who cannot join Scouting because we do not have enough volunteers and, with that funding, we could target that provision and help to build more cohesive and stronger communities.

**Dr Rania Marandos:** There are many schools and colleges which already partner with the community to offer young people work experience that is in the form of high-quality social action. Recently, the Department for Education has included quality social action in their guidance on study programmes so that it can be a form of work experience. I know that Michael would like to add to that.

**Michael Lynas:** There are many good examples of businesses which are doing this well and many more could copy that practice. We are working with Santander at the moment, which is now filling its work experience opportunities for this age group from NCS grads rather than through their own networks. Because of that, they are getting a much more diverse group of young people through, who are equally talented at doing those roles, and it has led to many young people getting their first foot on the job ladder, so it is a very important way of recognising the skills that young people get from doing this.

**Baroness Redfern:** You mentioned the waiting lists in some areas. In which particular part of the UK is the waiting list longest?

**Matt Hyde:** It is all parts of the UK. It is particularly prevalent in ages for our Beaver Scout age, so six to eight year-olds, but it is all communities, which is why I highlighted that particular example of Blackburn because that often surprises people.

Q36 **Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** What are the demographics of the groups that your organisations reach? How do they differ from the population as a whole? Which groups do you find hardest to reach? We have had some helpful statistics in from NCS, but we are not quite sure what the figures are for Step Up to Serve and the Scouts, so you may wish to discuss with us the kind of groups which you target and how successful you have been in targeting those groups.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr Hyde subsequently clarified that the funding received was £3.1 million, creating 6,836 new places in areas of deprivation.



**Michael Lynas:** We have sent the NCS statistics.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Yes, the statistics are in.

**Michael Lynas:** It is very important to us that every group that goes out represents a social mix, because integration is absolutely the core of what we do, so in any local area where young people go out, we want to represent the mix in that area. Having said that, we work particularly hard to reach the groups which are particularly hard to reach. That is why we have over-represented it with, for example, Muslims, those on free school meals and those from minority ethnic communities; generally, in more deprived areas, when you look at the indices of deprivation, we over-represent. In terms of the group that we find the hardest to reach, I think it is pretty similar right across our politics, when we look particularly at white working-class boys in the north of England. That is the group who are less engaged with what we do. What works with that group is that it requires more intensive work through the different places that they are, particularly sports clubs, and we work with many local football clubs, which is a good way of reaching those particular groups.

**Matt Hyde:** We have 457,000 young people across the UK and they are in 8,000 separate charities. We are also boys and girls, which surprises some people, and over the last four years there has been a concerted effort as part of our Scouting for All strategy to ensure that Scouting is representative of the communities in which those young people live. As an example of that, we have gone from 22% to 27% of girls and young women over the last four years and we are present in 460 areas of deprivation that we were not present in three years ago. There are challenges with the volunteer-led model in data collection, if I am honest, and we have been reviewing how we can improve the data that we get from that because we rely on the adult volunteer to populate the data.

If I can give an additional example, we know that one of the fastest-growing areas of Scouting is from the Muslim community. We now have 5,000 young Scouts from the Muslim community supported by our Muslim Scout Fellowship, which has been working locally in those communities to drive up that support. We know that where we have had most success is where we have worked in partnership with schools. For instance, to give you an example of the Page Hall area of Sheffield, where we offered Scouting as an after-school provision, we were able to access and open up Scouting for particularly young people from the Roma community whom we would not have accessed if we had used the traditional scout-hut model of coming back at 7 o'clock. That is key here in the investment argument and how we can innovate to reach more young people. We are also present in prisons, hospitals and other settings, so it requires a bit of innovation on our part.

**Dr Rania Marandos:** The #iwill campaign is driven by organisations across sectors, so we look at national-level data, and I can share some of that. Part of the campaign is the NCS and the Scout Association as well. At

the national level, there is a stark socioeconomic gap in participation. Young people from less-affluent communities are taking part in social action much less than their more affluent peers. There is also a gender gap with young girls taking part more than young boys. The most common route into social action is through school or college, and there is a drop-off once young people are in employment, which is back to the business point, and we are working with business to integrate social action into apprenticeships and early employment to help develop young people. I can share later some more demographics which are more detailed, if that is helpful.

**Michael Lynas:** Just one point to build on that: the participation gap still exists, but it is narrowing. That is good news.

**Dr Rania Marandos:** It is looking to, but there is more to go on that. We do the survey every year, so it was only one data point last year, which we need to see continue. It is important to address that.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I have a question about the statistics and then a general question. Just on the NCS statistics, compared to the population—have I got this right?—if we take free school meals, it is not 8% of the young population on free school meals? It might be 8% of the population, but most of the population are not on free school meals, so I am not quite clear on that. The first figure is your participants and the second is compared to “of the population”. Is that of the general population or of the age group which you are targeting? That 8% figure does not look right.

**Michael Lynas:** It includes 17 year-olds, so including the age group who would be at college. It is Department for Education data.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I am surprised that the number of people on free school meals has dropped to 8%, or am I wrong on that? It used to be double that and more at 17% to 18%.

**Michael Lynas:** I can follow it up. This is not our data, but I believe it is because it includes people, many of whom have left school and are now at college.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** That is my point, that the figures are perhaps overestimating the number of people not on free school meals. It is not a big issue, but if you look at your other two statistics—non-white communities and minority religions—I would have thought that, if you compare that to the age group which you are targeting, the figures would not have been so much out of kilter with the population because of the birth rate and the changes in demography with the younger population. It can be clarified for us later, but I am not convinced that you are comparing like with like on this.

**Michael Lynas:** What we do on the 2011 Census is take the age group and cast it forward, so 20% are from BAME communities in the population

of that age group and 34% of the participants of our programme are from that age group, so we are not comparing; 20% of the general population in Britain, according to the 2011 Census, are not from BAME communities.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Just to take the free school meals one, because that is the one that looks more out of date, the issue I want to raise—and this is very impressive and I do not want to be negative—is that I am always interested in who drops out. Sometimes the statistics look good. There is a statistic here about one volunteering activity a year, and there is a real question as to whether that is a commitment to volunteering and whether it is going to change either society or the individual. I was wondering, without being negative, not so much who you have most difficulty reaching, but, when you have got them, who do you have most difficulty keeping? With your concentrating so much on schools, which I think is a great idea, I was wondering what that means for kids who are not great at going to school, because they might be people who would appreciate a non-school environment, yet you are tying them back into school.

**Matt Hyde:** To deal with that last question first, there is an interesting initiative taking place with the Horizon Primary School in Kent whereby they have given over their Friday afternoons to Scouting, so Beavers and Cub Scouting. Interestingly, what they have found is that it has improved their truancy rates, their attendance and their attainment and it has been reflected in their Ofsted rating<sup>2</sup>. What that and the other examples I have seen say to me is that, through a bit of innovation and creativity, it can feel and look different from the school day, and the results are there to be seen, which we can share with you as well. In terms of the drop-out rate, to be completely honest with you, the data is not strong. One of the reasons why we have been so heavily involved in the Step Up to Serve campaign from the start—and I am a trustee—is that young people will have different touch points and different access points for youth opportunities throughout their lives. The key for us is that we ensure that every young person, particularly at the earlier stages, gets access to those opportunities because we know that you are more likely to continue a habit for life if you have undertaken social action or been involved in one of these programmes before the age of 10. For me, it is not just about everyone being able to do Scouting but that they have an opportunity to get involved in the thing that they are passionate about and will unlock their potential.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** I am struck that none of you has mentioned parents and families as a way in. Is that because they do not feature?

**Dr Rania Marandos:** They are one of the key influencers. The National Survey shows that teachers are a key influencer alongside parents and peers; it is absolutely important. We are just starting to understand

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<sup>2</sup> Mr Hyde subsequently clarified that the Horizon Primary School had not been inspected by Ofsted since adopting the Scouts model

parents. We are about to launch a survey with Mumsnet of parental attitudes to youth social action and how it features in their lives.

**The Chairman:** The Committee is very interested in civic engagement among the minority communities. I notice that you say that 27% of the Scout members are girls. What proportion of those are young Muslim women? Do you have that figure or could you let us have it?

**Matt Hyde:** We can write to the Committee about that. I do not have that data to hand.<sup>3</sup>

**The Chairman:** It would be helpful if we could have that because we are interested in how we are getting all communities involved and that there are no young people being left behind.

Q37 **Lord Verjee:** What are the main barriers and blockages you face and how could they be addressed? In particular, how can we scale up the initiatives? How can we measure and reduce the cost per person and have a greater impact? I wrote down what you said, Dr Marandos. How can we change this into a habit for life rather than short-term interventions which are effective in the short term?

**Matt Hyde:** The biggest barrier to us is the recruitment of more adult volunteers. We need about 11,000 to 12,000 more just to clear our waiting list. We know what we need for that to happen, which is for us to promote messages around flexible volunteering, which has worked well. We need employers to work with us, and there are some fantastic employers who understand that enlightened HR practices in terms of promoting well-being are also about promoting volunteering. I hope we do not lose sight of the three days' volunteering that was promoted in the previous Conservative manifesto because that was a good thing.

That leads on to the arguments which I made before about targeted funding because we know that, when we get that paid support; if I go back to the Youth United Foundation example, we would have paid support that goes in to recruit and train more adult volunteers, to promote Scouting through school assemblies and things such as that and to remove some of the initial cost barriers of things such as the uniform or equipment.

Obviously, we need places to meet and go, so we have some communities whereby Scouting is so popular that for seven days a week the scout hut is full and, therefore, we need to think about how we use public assets better. Partnerships are the other thing. As well as the corporate partnerships, which we touched on earlier, Scouting thrives because

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<sup>3</sup> Mr Hyde subsequently clarified that they did not currently record the religion of every young person within the Scout Movement. However they knew that of the young people in the Muslim Scout Fellowship 57% were girls.

communities enable it to thrive, so it is what the state can do to help foster those communities better.

**Lord Blunkett:** We have already had mention of the journey and keeping people engaged with volunteering, and Rania talked about that. Could we look a bit closer at how we could integrate what is happening in getting so many young people involved through social action, the NCS and the uniformed organisations to stay on and become the volunteers that you cannot recruit?

**Matt Hyde:** Yes, indeed. I have two points on that. We have a Young Leaders scheme so that, at the age of 14 to 18, our Explorer Scouts undertake a young leaders' programme. That has provided a pipeline of talent so that, of our volunteers, we have about 17,289 who are 18 to 25. They keep that sense of belonging and involvement. More recently, in July, we announced a partnership with the National Citizen Service which was doing exactly that. It is a pilot programme which looks at how we can work together to ensure that NCS graduates can go on to become future adult volunteers and to help grow Scouting. It is about how we signpost between different opportunities along the journey; so I completely agree.

**Michael Lynas:** Also, at the end of that journey, if you like, when young people are becoming adults, there are exciting opportunities to have new programmes or to scale up things such as City Year, which is offering young people an opportunity to volunteer for a year in public services. The evidence that we have from the United States and the UK, where this runs in a few cities, is that that provides great opportunities not for replacing work in those settings but to add to the experience of pupils at school and, for that investment in young people up to 18, getting the social return and offering opportunities in public services that need support.

**Dr Rania Marandos:** Perhaps I may return to the habits, and I completely concur with what Matt was saying about starting early and the importance of having a journey for young people. In addition, it is critical that there is a good quality of opportunity for young people. If they have a good experience they will understand the double benefits; they have an opportunity to reflect on that. If there is youth-led social action, their attitudes to education will improve. It will not be seen as something else they have to do if they are properly involved in shaping their social action according to their community's needs, which they see. Linked to that in terms of how we help that habit, it is important that it is integrated in young people's educational journeys in both formal and non-formal education, and it should start in primary and go into colleges, apprenticeships and early employment. Where that is done well, it is the whole community coming together. Where schools and colleges are effectively embedding social action in their culture and practice, employers in the community are helping, charities are coming together, as are parents. It is not just about the school or college having to do it, it is the whole community.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Particularly in relation to Scouts, have you thought of contacting people who are retiring from the armed services? Is that possible?

**Matt Hyde:** Yes, we have engaged with a number of other charities which are specialists in that area and, yes, we have explored that. Of course, the important thing we do in terms of civic engagement is the intergenerational mixing that takes place between adult volunteers and young people themselves.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** In your joint evidence, you draw attention to barriers created by the legal status of volunteers. I will not ask you to go into it now because I know the Chair wants to move on, but could you perhaps write to us and give us chapter and verse as to what are the laws that are preventing this? I was surprised at that.

**The Chairman:** I would add one thing because I noticed, when I was involved in the International Citizen Service where people are going abroad for longer periods, that also had an impact on their social security and positioning. It is not part of this inquiry, but it would be useful to have your views on that as well.

**Lord Blunkett:** I think, Chair, that this is something that we could home in on at the end of our evidence session because we could make positive recommendations. I know it is hard to get anything moving, having been in government, but it would be very hard for them to resist if we had a very positive proposal to put.

Q38 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Your organisations each focus on promoting active citizenship through volunteering and local social action, but how do you see this fitting in with democratic engagement and political participation? Do you think your programmes could do more to encourage political engagement and increase political literacy? I am thinking, in particular, of the evidence of one of our witnesses in the next session and academic research into the NCS, which suggests that perhaps, at least in some parts of the country, there is a lack of attention to the political side of citizenship. I do not know who wants to start, given that.

**Michael Lynas:** Yes, of course. In some senses, the sorts of social action that young people do in NCS has a political element, with a small “p”. They are being introduced to things in their community which they maybe want to change and given an opportunity to campaign and build different projects to try to do practical things about that. We also want to make the link between things in their local area which they maybe do not like. On politics, we have many MPs going out and visiting the programme, and many councillors and peers. Over 200 MPs went out this summer to talk to young people and engage with them, often demystifying what MPs are like. MPs, like young people, do not have the best reputation always and it is not always fair. That is something which we think is very important.

We also run democratic engagement sessions, so we end up registering tens of thousands of people to vote, but it is through engaging them with why it is important to vote, and we work with a range of organisations, which I think you have taken evidence from. With Bite the Ballot, we run their Basics programme in some areas; we run the RockEnroll! programme, which is a different programme to do the same in other areas. Most young people in NCS have those sessions and many register to vote. Our impact analysis tells us that, compared to a control group, young people who do NCS are significantly more likely to vote at the end. We think that starting locally, where the issues are that they care about, and connecting that to the national picture seems to help.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Why do you think it is that this research, in particular the qualitative part, seems to suggest that some young people felt that it was all about—and I am not saying that this is in itself a bad thing—volunteering and so forth, but it did not seem to be engaging them? I am talking about small “p” politics, of course. Would you accept that there may be more you could be doing on that?

**Michael Lynas:** There is always more we can do. The vast majority of people on the programme have a module, if you like, in the curriculum where they have the opportunity to register to vote. In the RockEnroll! programme, for example, 95% register at the end of that session. The quantitative data from Ipsos MORI tells us that, versus a control group of people who have not done the programme who were demographically similar, there is an up to 10 percentage point increase in the likelihood to vote. I cannot speak to all the qualitative data that was done. We are working with a PhD student from University College London, the Behavioural Insights Team, who is doing his PhD on improving democratic engagement through NCS, and I am meeting him today to discuss that. There are, of course, more things that we can do.

**Dr Rania Marandos:** Giving young people an active voice and an influencing role as early as possible will support later democratic engagement and specifically voting. It is important to be thinking about young people as influencers from a young age, whether that is through student councils, sitting on boards, trustee boards or decision-making bodies, and connecting democratic engagement to real-life issues and their ability to influence what is happening around them in their communities and wider society. We will then start to get a strong link to active engagement later on in life as well.

**Matt Hyde:** We look at active citizenship in the broadest sense through our programme. Every young person engages at some level in active citizenship. An example of that would be an initiative we introduced two years ago, the A Million Hands campaign, where we asked young people what social issues they wanted to take action on. They chose access to clean water and sanitation, disability and mental health—which was the highest thing that came out in the survey and, for us, was surprising to mention. We then worked with charity partners to develop resources so

that those young people could undertake action on those issues in their local community or wider. That can include campaigning, fundraising or visiting a local home, and 230,000 young people have now signed up to that initiative. For us, it is about getting young people focused on the issues that they are really bothered about and helping to support them to understand how they can make a difference on those issues, of which campaigning and engagement with politicians and opinion-formers is one route. We have also worked with Bite the Ballot and the British Youth Council on representing young people's issues and the UK Youth Parliament.

Q39 **Baroness Barker:** You point out to the Committee that young people's services in local government have been subject to cuts of over £400 million. The Government have guaranteed NCS income of £1.26 billion between 2016 and 2020. In March 2017, the Public Accounts Committee was highly critical of the comparative value for money of the NCS. How do you evaluate and demonstrate the NCS's value for money?

**Michael Lynas:** Of course, we clearly take it very seriously and we have independent evaluation for every pound that is spent on the programme. That is through Ipsos MORI and through different economists, including an organisation called Jump and Simetrica, who look at various aspects of the programme. We use Treasury Green Book analysis to look at the social return on investment, which allows us to compare versus a control group, so, when we see impact on the programme, it is not just what young people are stating but is against another group to be able to compare the difference. We find that up to £8.36 is returned for every £1 invested, when we look at a wide range of different impacts. To give you an example, we worked with UCAS to compare the group who have been through NCS and the group of people applying to higher education, and we found that everyone who did NCS was significantly more likely—controlling for all the other factors, such as demographics, GCSE grades—to get into higher education. That impact was much bigger, up to 50%, for the poorest fifth of young people, and of course we are able to put some value against that because of the value of going into higher education. We know that £1 invested in NCS is £1 of public money, so we need to take it very seriously, but it is having a real social return. At present, we are only able to look at certain things. We are currently working with government to be able to track not just UCAS but employment data and other things as our graduates get older, and we also want to look at the impact of the people who mentor in the programme and the wider impact on the community. We think that the £8.36 is a conservative figure when you take into account those other things.

**Baroness Barker:** So that evaluation carried out by those people was the data that was given to the Government, when they decided to put forward the NCS Bill, and to the NAO, not you?

**Michael Lynas:** If I understand your question, this is data that is independently gathered and analysed by companies such as Ipsos MORI,



which obviously have their own academic panels and their own research. It has been carried out over time as our graduates have got older. For example, with the UCAS data, there is a lag of about two or three years between them doing the programme and being able to look at that. That UCAS data came out in, I believe, May of this year, which was a few months after the Public Accounts Committee.

**Baroness Barker:** So it is different, okay. You will know that, during the passage of the Bill, there was a fair degree of criticism of NCS's relationships with the rest of the voluntary sector, so I am interested to read about the partnership that you have agreed between you and the Scouts. Could you send us details of that, please?

**Michael Lynas:** Yes.

**Lord Verjee:** Going back, Michael, you are impacting 100,000 young people at the moment. Obviously, your cost-effectiveness will come down dramatically if you can scale up, so how do you feel you can scale up much quicker than affecting just 100,000 young people?

**Michael Lynas:** It is some of the things we have all discussed, which is ultimately embedding in communities. We are talking at the moment to the different metro mayors about what we can do, starting, hopefully, in London and going to other cities to embed across all the different things from public transport to things that young people would find helpful. Transport often comes up for young people, how they get around and get to jobs, so engaging with those local communities is important. Schools are clearly the place where not all our young people but most of our young people are. Where we get up to 50% to 70% penetration, which we do in some schools, of the group in year 11 taking part in this programme, it is because the school leadership, the heads, have embedded it in the school and made it a normal part of being at school in that year. This is something after your GCSEs, you have been working hard and it is a great thing to do. We are working now across a number of schools where we have partnered with a school and have a school co-ordinator to embed it in the school, and we think that that will have a significant effect. We are trying it out first on a relatively small scale and we will see the results at the end of this academic year. If that works, that will be a major way for us to grow. Of course, we do not want to forget those young people who are hard to reach and who struggle to get on to the programme. We are piloting something called a Personal Coach programme, which is providing intensive one-to-one support before, during and after the programme for young people, for example, who have been in gangs or who have been involved in the criminal justice system, to help them to just turn up, which is an achievement, and then to continue afterwards.

**Baroness Barker:** Will your evaluation of programmes like that be on a comparative basis, and will you compare your interventions with other people's?

**Michael Lynas:** Where we can, certainly we are committed to doing that. There are obviously some constraints with what data is available in the voluntary sector, for understandable reasons. Where we can, we are working with Step Up to Serve to provide as much comparison as possible. We are talking at the moment, because NCS invests significantly and has sector-leading evaluation, about what we can offer, for example control groups, to other organisations to be able to offer that same level of data evaluation.

Q40 **Lord Blunkett:** We are pressed for time. Quite a lot of what I was going to raise has been answered, but perhaps all three of you—and Rania touched on this earlier—could say how you feel the citizenship education programmes might better incorporate not just the commitment to giving and volunteering but also to the wider understanding of society and about how you have tried to impact on the citizen education programmes in schools.

**Dr Rania Marandos:** Thank you for the question. It is part and parcel of embedding this wider notion of responsibility and citizenship across the education journey of young people and emphasising that, for it to be an effective way of young people developing, they need to be having a social impact. In order to have a social impact, often understanding the decision-making structures around them can help them make that difference that they want in their communities. It is about bringing out those examples, and the campaign can do more to show where young people, through understanding local and national decision-making structures around them, are able to have a bigger impact on the causes they care about.

**Michael Lynas:** I used to be a civil servant in No. 10 and I helped to set up the Step Up to Serve campaign, and I hope what is coming across today is that all of us are working together because we are talking about young people across—

**Lord Blunkett:** Which is a miracle today because most people do not.

**Michael Lynas:** We are seeing miracles today, Lord Blunkett. What is perhaps an ignored area relatively is their citizenship education in schools. We work with the Association for Citizenship teachers and have produced special curriculum material that references NCS to build that in because, if you have that education in school combined with going out, taking action and doing things outside the classroom, that is where we will have much more of an impact over a young person's time from primary school to going out into the workforce. Clearly, no single organisation will be able to have a monopoly on those young people for that whole time period.

**Matt Hyde:** I support that, and this is an important point. In fact, we did research with Demos in 2015 that showed that 39% of state school respondents agreed that their school provided enough opportunities for volunteering compared to 70% of respondents from fee-paying schools. This is really important. I am a big fan of Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland. The fact that the formal education system recognises what young

people are doing outside of the school environment is critical to encouraging them to get involved in more things outside of the classroom, but also the way in which it builds social capital and connections with people in that community is essential.

**Q41 Baroness Stedman-Scott:** There are a few questions here and I know time is tight. What might the concept of the civic journey through life add to the existing policy on citizenship? Do you think it will be possible to add more coherence and structure to the policy terrain in order to foster citizenship and participation? After a young person has engaged with a voluntary programme, how do you encourage them into active citizenship as an adult?

**Matt Hyde:** At the risk of repeating myself, and I am conscious of the time, the three points I would highlight are that primary schools are key—that primary age is key. I would target investment into the under-10s in particular. The second would be the point I have made about formal and non-formal learning and how important that is. The way in which we do it, your final point, is, as I have mentioned, the Young Leaders scheme. We can see from our evidence that you are 29% more likely to respond to statements that say that you are an active citizen if you are a Scout than if you are a non-Scout, and that has wider benefits later on in life. The University of Edinburgh did a fantastic piece of research last year with a significant cohort size which showed that you were 15% less likely to suffer from anxiety or mood disorders later in life if you had been involved in Scouting and Guiding.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** What was the name of the study?

**Matt Hyde:** We can send you the study. It is the University of Edinburgh's study. I dare say, whenever I talk to charity audiences or audiences of charity leaders and ask people whether they have been a Scout, a Guide or a Cadet, hands shoot in the air. It would be interesting to find out whether the people in this room were Guides or Scouts or involved in the Cadets.

**Dr Rania Marandos:** Thank you for the question. It goes back to that journey; it is about investing in transition points for young people. There is often a drop-off between primary school into secondary school and then from secondary school and college to employment and apprenticeships, so it is making sure that there is an opportunity for young people to continue engaging in social action throughout those life stages. There is also collaboration across different opportunities, so there is a need for good signposting. Once a young person has started their journey and they do a programme that finishes, what comes next is the important thing and ensuring that everyone is building in those opportunities to continue. Once you get the bug, it is usually something you want to continue. Often there is an age barrier, so what the campaign is trying to do with lots of partners is to lower age restrictions. Often, in a charity or a hospital, you cannot volunteer until you are 18. There are many pioneering charities and hospitals which are lowering that to at least 16 and then thinking creatively

about how 10 year-olds and 11 year-olds can also make an impact. The more we can recognise the value young people bring from an early age, the more able they will be to start and continue their journey in social action.

**Michael Lynas:** There are a few things; first, working closely together. When any organisation is working with a young person, that is an opportunity, when that relationship ends, to hand over to another opportunity that is more appropriate for the stage in life they are at, and that is probably the most important thing. In the age we live in, online is clearly important and having portals and places where people can go to search for opportunities. At NCS, we have an opportunity hub that is tailored to the young person and their interests and includes volunteering and work experience opportunities. There is a place for new opportunities at the age of 18, that transition age, in public services, as I talked about before. Employer and university recognition of the value of doing social action when you are applying either to university or to get a job is helpful—when you are at work or in university, those places recognising their role within the community, whether it is three days or other programmes, and helping people to make their mark.

Q42 **Baroness Pitkeathley:** My original question was about integration, but I think you have kindly given us quite a lot of information about integration, so I am going to ask you something you can answer very briefly, in the interests of time. Is your focus primarily on the individual and their development or their broader role and responsibility in society? Which way is your focus? I would prefer it if you all did not say “both”.

**Matt Hyde:** I might disappoint you there because we see that the double benefit is critical. At the end of the day, for us, it is such a part of the DNA of Scouting that you are not just part of a movement in the UK or in your local community but there are 40 million Scouts across the world<sup>4</sup> who have one of these—a world membership badge—and that is a unifying symbol whereby everyone is underpinned with those values, so we see it as absolutely essential to understand both about yourself and your contribution to wider society.

**Dr Rania Marandos:** I will not reinforce the importance of the double benefit, but I feel that they are linked. I would put more emphasis on young people’s contribution and their potential to help all of us address key societal challenges. The more we recognise that and provide the opportunities for young people to have a voice and active involvement in that, the more likely we will have a better future, but they will develop the skills, networks and capacity that they need for their future.

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<sup>4</sup> Mr Hyde subsequently clarified that there were between 25 and 40 million Scouts worldwide, but that it was not possible to be more accurate due to the inability of many countries to complete an accurate census. The World Scout Bureau’s estimate was 28 million.

**Michael Lynas:** I will cover that in two ways. The first is that at NCS we often start with the individual and, over our programme, they do the outward bound and the fun stuff at the start and then they get on to what they think is the really fun stuff by the time that they have done it, but maybe the young people who do not normally put up their hands for voluntary experiences want to know, “It’s good for me, it’s good for my CV, it’s good for my work experience and it will be fun”, and then, by the end, they have actually got involved with doing something in their community and they have caught the bug, as we were saying earlier.

Looking at it more broadly, if we think about the journey from primary school through to the end of secondary school, the investment will be as we go along that journey, moving from the individual—from the me into the we—which is why it is quite important that we find those service year opportunities at the end of the journey where young people who have been through that journey can give back in an intensive way to our public services.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** I was struck that in your joint evidence you put some emphasis on the importance of young people’s perspectives as global citizens. Inevitably, your action tends to be at the local level, so how do you help them make those links between local and global, and could you do more on that?

**Matt Hyde:** It is an intrinsic part of our programme, including the global issues badge, and to get the top awards, you have to explore an understanding of world issues. We will send 4,500 young people to the World Scout Jamboree in West Virginia in two years’ time. Interestingly, it is a collaboration between the Boy Scouts of America and the Mexican Scouts, which I put to you as coming at a timely moment to show that we have more in common than divides us. It is part of our DNA and an essential part of what we do.

**Michael Lynas:** It is very important. I helped to start ICS and NCS and they were always intended to be very much partner programmes. The International Citizen Service takes place at a slightly older age range and we have not got to the stage yet where everyone who does ICS is an NCS graduate, but at the moment one in four have done it. We have also, interestingly, seen influence from other countries in the NCS model and we are currently piloting in France, called the Become programme, which is based on the NCS and is being evaluated at the moment. As more of these programmes start, there is an opportunity to learn from each other and collaborate.

**Lord Verjee:** It is a bit of a curved-ball question but my personal feeling is that we do not measure happiness in our society enough. Do you think that your organisations can help promote happiness in our society? How would we measure this: a good citizen is a happy citizen or a happy citizen is a good citizen?

**Michael Lynas:** It is critical that we measure well-being. As you know, the ONS now measures the four well-being questions and we measure those through our independent evaluation. Unsurprisingly, we find that being linked in a community with other people, making connections and giving back, makes you happier and less anxious, and we see those effects on NCS continue in our longitudinal analysis. When we publish two-year-on studies, NCS graduates, compared to the control group, feel less anxious and have improved well-being. This does not get talked about as much as it should because we are focused on other things that we measure, such as economic indicators, but you are quite right, that our general well-being is central to how we engage in our community.

**Dr Rania Marandos:** The national-level data supports that. Young people who take part in meaningful social action have consistently since 2014 shown higher levels of well-being, using the same ONS measures, and we need to talk about it more.

**Matt Hyde:** I strongly urge the Committee to look at the University of Edinburgh research because it is very compelling. When I spoke to the chief executive of MIND about this, it underscores the five ways to well-being and how important that is in terms of giving and connection with others. Now we are measuring it as part of our new theory of change and impact measurement framework, using some of the similar data to NCS, to understand that more and evidence it going forward.

**The Chairman:** We have overrun and kept you too long, but that is because you have given us such a lot of food for thought, for which many thanks. There are one or two issues, which we have picked up during the course of the session, on which we would like the further evidence. Thank you all very much; it has been a most useful first session.

Oliver Lee, Chief Executive, The Challenge; Dr Andrew Mycock, Reader in Politics, University of Huddersfield; Dr Sarah Mills, Loughborough University – oral evidence (QQ 43-50)

**Oliver Lee, Chief Executive, The Challenge; Dr Andrew Mycock, Reader in Politics, University of Huddersfield; Dr Sarah Mills, Loughborough University – oral evidence (QQ 43-50)**

Wednesday 11 October 2017

11.45 am

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Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Baroness Stedman-Scott; Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 5

Heard in Public

Questions 43 - 50

Oliver Lee, Chief Executive, The Challenge; Dr Andrew Mycock, Reader in Politics, University of Huddersfield; Dr Sarah Mills, Loughborough University – oral evidence (QQ 43-50)

## Examination of Witnesses

Oliver Lee, Dr Andrew Mycock and Dr Sarah Mills.

Q43 **The Chairman:** I am sorry that we have kept you waiting; we will get under way as speedily as we can. Thank you very much for coming along to talk to us today. I have to make a formal statement. A list of interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available to you. This session is open to the public and is being recorded for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and will be put on the parliamentary website. A few days after this session you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy. It would be helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. Finally, if after the evidence session you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence, or have additional points you wish to make, you are welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. Without more ado, could you briefly introduce yourselves and then we will go to the first question?

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** Dr Andy Mycock, reader in politics, University of Huddersfield. I was a member of the Youth Citizenship Commission which sat in 2008-2009.

**Dr Sarah Mills:** Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I am Dr Sarah Mills. I am a senior lecturer in human geography at Loughborough University. I have completed ESRC-funded research on youth citizenship, volunteering and informal education, on voluntary youth movements in historical and contemporary contexts, and National Citizen Service.

**Oliver Lee:** Good morning. I am Oliver Lee, chief executive of an organisation called The Challenge. It was founded in 2009 with the germ of the idea of National Citizen Service at that point in time. Subsequently, there was an initial pilot of about 150 people in that year and we are delivering this year about 45,000 National Citizen Service places across the country, 30% of which are through local delivery arrangements with local delivery partners. We also do a series of other activities astride the National Citizen Service graduate agenda, or extension agenda as it is sometimes called.

**The Chairman:** Can we begin with an overview? It would be helpful if you could provide the Committee with a brief statement of your views on the current state of civic engagement among young people in the UK. Who would like to go first?

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** Civic education or civic engagement?

**The Chairman:** The state of civic engagement.

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** It is my age. I have just turned 50; my hearing is going. There is a need to take a glass-half-full approach. If you look back a decade ago and compare it with the situation now, there has been a transformation in not only the political preparedness of politicians and others to debate the status of youth citizenship and civic engagement particularly but a broadening and more sophisticated understanding about



Oliver Lee, Chief Executive, The Challenge; Dr Andrew Mycock, Reader in Politics, University of Huddersfield; Dr Sarah Mills, Loughborough University – oral evidence (QQ 43-50)

what we understand by the term civic engagement. There is a greater acceptance now that it stretches beyond the formal to the non-formal and informal modes of engagement and participation. With social media, there are greater opportunities to engage in different ways and modes, with different outcomes. That glass-half-full approach needs to have a certain amount of reality placed on it. What we see, particularly with regard to young people—and I know we are here to speak about young people and their role in civic engagement this morning primarily—is that even if we look into the so-called youthquake of the general election of this summer, it is notable that still the vast majority of young people do not vote at elections, are not members of political parties and do not feel that politics is a system that they understand or that it actually works to support them.

Fundamentally, if we look at how formal politics encourages civic engagement, there is a tendency to look at the symptoms rather than the causes, and I would urge this Committee to ensure they look more at the causes of civic engagement. That means looking at the political systems and the modes of civic engagement as well as the expansion of opportunities for young people in particular to get engaged. To summarise, as I say, we should take an optimistic view of the state of play at the moment, but there is a need to always approach this with a sense of criticality.

**Dr Sarah Mills:** In terms of a brief statement on the current state of civic engagement, there is a long history, both inside government and in civil society, about how to train young people as citizens in the making or acknowledge the contribution they already make as active citizens in the here and now. There have been shifts back and forth in relation to citizenship education within schools, changes in the nature and membership of voluntary youth organisations, such as the Scouts from whom you heard earlier, Girlguiding, Woodcraft Folk, faith-based brigades. More recently, National Citizen Service has marked a shift change, and again you heard about NCS earlier from the chief executive. It has echoes of those voluntary youth organisations in its activities and target audience.

I would argue that the growth of NCS combined with the rise in social action, spearheaded by the #iwill campaign, has embedded what I would argue is a particular brand of youth citizenship that is centred on social action and, because of that, it emphasises responsibilities more than rights. That brand of social action is almost positioning citizenship as the same as volunteering and volunteering as citizenship, and I am keen to discuss those themes later. I believe there is great scope for NCS to embed citizenship education and political literacy more fully in its curriculum, to address some regional disparities—and I have recommended as such in my written evidence—to improve the NCS experience and potential for civic and political engagement. Overall, the current state of civic engagement among young people in the UK is shaped, in part, by these spaces, their geographies, their relationships to each other. I would also recommend closer engagement between citizenship education in schools, NCS and Step Up to Serve. I look forward to our discussions on those themes.

Oliver Lee, Chief Executive, The Challenge; Dr Andrew Mycock, Reader in Politics, University of Huddersfield; Dr Sarah Mills, Loughborough University – oral evidence (QQ 43-50)

**Oliver Lee:** I would not disagree with anything I have heard, including in the previous evidence session. Overall, it is a positive picture. The data suggests a progressively positive picture over the last 15 to 20 years. Michael Lynas referred to some of that data. I absolutely think that it is not an area to be complacent over. There are clear areas, such as incentives and finding specific opportunities for community engagement, whether it is social action, volunteering or something more broad, and finding that opportunity on behalf of the young person where considerable improvement could still be made. It is undoubtedly an improving picture over time, which I think is welcome.

Q44 **Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Which groups of young people are being missed out and are least likely to be engaged, in your experience?

**Oliver Lee:** We are an organisation whose fundamental mission is about social integration and social cohesion. Those are our charitable objects. We make very significant effort to try to avoid any element of society being missed out. That would be to conceal the fact though that there are certain elements of that demographic—and we try to take a broad slice of the society from which the people with whom we are working are drawn to include every element of that—which are undoubtedly more challenging to reach and more expensive to support through some of these activities, potentially, all the way from preceding the activity, through the activity itself into the aftermath of the activity. The Personal Coach programme to which Michael Lynas referred, which he was absolutely accurate over and which applies to some of those specific harder-to-reach elements of society, is an example of an initiative that we are undertaking at the moment to try to close some of those gaps. To give you an example of that, this year we have 800 or so looked-after children or those from pupil referral units among the 45,000 who we have put through the NCS programme as an organisation this year. That is The Challenge specifically, not NCS more widely. To pick up a related point with regard to free school meals from you earlier on, which I think is key, and to clarify that: in 2016—so last year and we do not yet have the figures for this year—of those who went through the NCS with The Challenge, it was 22.9% on free school meals.

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** The evidence suggests that it is those coming from families of a lower socioeconomic background, and ethnic minorities in particular for young people, who tend to get involved and engage in civic activities compared to other cohorts. The area which is left out of that analysis is about geography. Geography matters enormously. If you think about the opportunities for getting involved in a youth council, it is a postcode lottery across the United Kingdom as to that approach. That is largely down to the fact that different local authorities invest different amounts of resources. There is no set minimum standard offer to young people where they live. Programmes such as NCS and others that are offered across the United Kingdom or across England and Northern Ireland are not offered in a universal sense. Citizenship education is defined, to a certain extent, by geography and other things.

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In that sense, there is a need to go back to the Youth Citizenship Commission report where we made a recommendation on that. There was consideration that there needs to be a standard minimum offer to all young people so that they have universal opportunities to engage in different programmes, that there should not be one particular programme but they should all be offered a programme. There is a need to accept that formal programmes are posited in a language which often, if not being divisive, certainly puts some young people off participating. In that sense, there is a recognition of a need to co-ordinate informal and non-formal participation, which may not be seen as civic engagement directly and not be termed as that, but on a very banal level means that young people are engaged in their communities. There is a need to widen that sense of what we understand by the term civic engagement itself, to recognise that there is a diversity of engagement forms and they are not necessarily ones that those of us who are immersed in the world of politics typically recognise.

**Dr Sarah Mills:** In relation to young people who are being missed out and are least likely to be engaged, I would flip the question and say those least engaged are young people who are socially and politically excluded more generally in society. One of my PhD students Tim Fewtrell has just finished a project on young Muslim volunteers. The levels of volunteering are incredibly high in fundraising, et cetera, but that image of the good young Muslim volunteer does not make it through into media discourse. There were further barriers to volunteering from some of the young girls who responded about Islamophobia on the street, and so volunteering levels could be even higher but the barriers more generally in society were real challenges. It is encouraging to hear youth organisations—NCS, et cetera—talk about some of the ways to open up their schemes with bursaries for those from lower socioeconomic groups, but our ESRC research (Mills & Waite) also found some hidden costs of social action. Because there is so much emphasis on fundraising across the board in the youth sector, there is an atmosphere of pressure on families from taking sponsorship forms home, to being asked to contribute to bake sales. Those more everyday hidden costs of social action or the cost of transport to social action projects are a real area for policy recommendations to improve that experience and reduce the burdens on those young people.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** This is a really important point that I cannot quite get my head round. The biggest challenge is rolling things out. As a nation, we are really good at starting things off and doing them on a small scale, but so many of them fall away and never become the national programme we had hoped for. In terms of some of the figures you have just mentioned, I am not quite sure what our aspiration should be or where the fault lies. Is it that we are not doing enough with these programmes which are very successful and doing a lot of good things for young people to get them to all people, or that we just cannot have a system where a small number of highly funded successful programmes manage to reach all young people? Does that make sense?

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** It makes sense, yes.

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**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I am not quite sure where you feel our challenge lies in that.

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** It is a very interesting point. It is about whether you instigate top-down programmes that seek to become universal.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Because they have worked with some people.

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** Or you encourage bottom-up programmes. I think the answer is somewhere in between those two points.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I thought you might say that.

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** I will give you some evidence on that. If you look at citizenship education in schools, that is an example of a national curriculum standard you can establish which then is translated into the locality. That has been seen to work. When there has been political commitment and will, it has seemed to work very well. The problem is that there has been variability in the two Houses here in terms of the desirability of citizenship education and what it should contain if it does exist. For programmes such as National Citizen Service there is the question of the extent to which it should be nationally offered and whether that should be universal. There is a danger that it could suppress other or existing successful programmes at a local level. There is some evidence that might be the case because of the fact there is a shortage of funding, particularly to local authorities, to maintain some very successful youth engagement programmes. There is a danger in which very simple solutions to much more complicated problems emerge.

If you look at it the other way round and the way that local moves up the other way, and if you look at what youth councils do and those programmes that are linked to it, they very much go from the bottom upwards. There is a need to recognise that at the moment, if there is a problem, it is that there is not enough co-ordination at a local level. Most of the youth initiatives we are seeing developed at the moment tend to come from the top down, from the national level downwards, and it reduces the agency for local councils, schools and civil society to develop their own initiatives and to network in imaginative ways. We are moving towards a one-size-fits-all approach, which I think takes the local out of it in some ways. I am not here to promote it, but the report that we did in the Kirklees Democracy Commission—which is currently developing a programme of work with young people—started from the premise that their viewfinder of citizenship begins in their local communities and moves upwards rather than starting at the national and moving downwards. There is a need to engage more with young people about what kind of programmes they would like to see. There is a tendency to develop programmes and then push them downwards rather than start at a point and say, “What opportunities would you like? How do you see the geometries of citizenship and what kinds of programmes would you like to see to empower you and give you more opportunities?”

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**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** There is still quality control—if you start from the bottom and let them be aware of what we have learnt from experience which they might not have had. That is their dilemma, is it not?

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** There is a need to establish some kind of minimum offer. I am very encouraged about this narrative of a journey. It works very well. Through that journey, if you look at transition points and the different ways in which you can focus on that sense of a journey, there is a need to consistently offer a minimum standard to all young people. There is a tendency at the moment for national programmes to constrain imaginative responses to that that come from the local response to local circumstances and local needs, particularly if you look at that previous question about social composition, where what works in London in terms of the design may not work in Cumbria. There is a need to have that local sense of shaping what the offer is, but it is a very good question.

Q45 **Lord Verjee:** Some of these issues have been covered. What are the main barriers and blockages preventing better action on citizenship and civic engagement and how could they be addressed? In particular, in your studies, The Challenge talks about social segregation as “there is more that divides us than binds us”. What are the blockages and how can we have a more cohesive society?

**Oliver Lee:** Can I very briefly refer back to the previous question on the subject of constraints nationally versus locally? My personal view is that NCS is at its most effective when there is an effective harmony between those two dimensions—local and national—so that there is a degree of quality control and commonality of approach, but there is also an enormous amount of local input into that, because there is of course vast variation. The direction of travel of NCS sees it strongly moving in that direction. To give an example through my organisation, if one were to go back about three years, roughly 5% of our places were delivered through local delivery partnerships. That is now just over 30% and it is continuing to move in that direction, and that is extremely welcome.

Turning to your question, Lord Verjee, we think there is a clear relationship between social responsibility, civic engagement—however one wishes to describe it—and a sense of trust and belonging flowing from social integration and overcoming either perceived or real segregation. In some or all of that mixture is an incentive, which could be described as the lens of social mobility; certainly the NCS Bill refers to this. Our argument would be that it is difficult—and this is a horribly overused word these days, for which my apologies—to separate out those different elements of that ecosystem entirely; they all interrelate with each other, which is why the goals pursued through NCS and the outcomes that it is seeking in a balanced way between those three areas are absolutely invaluable. To give you a sense of that, I do not think the key indicators of trust, confidence, respect, understanding and empathy will necessarily be in place within a community for somebody to take—even if it is incentivised—a leap of faith into some form of social action, some form of volunteering, to choose to spend their time on that, to choose to travel to that, unless they are confident in those whom they are surrounded by, including those from

extremely different backgrounds. If that level of confidence and glue exists, I think there is much greater chance that this sort of engagement will take place in the manner that we would like it to.

There are a number of other factors I could turn to—for example, the role of business in this, which was touched on in the earlier session. It is quite interesting to see that the CIPD identifies that 67% of employers judge their new-entry employees as more work-ready if they have already had volunteering experience, yet you can contrast that against the fact that only 16% search for that through an application and only 33% search through an interview. What this means is that a lot of this is pushed rather than pulled and, if we wanted to make it more comprehensive, we would shift that round and it would be pulled by the individual rather than pushed towards the individual. I do not know whether that is the beginnings of an answer to your questions.

**Dr Sarah Mills:** I am struck in this debate by the terms that are used: social inclusion, social mobility, social action, social mix. There is a wider identity crisis in some of this discussion about civic engagement in that a lot of those policy hooks are used all at one and the same time, and “citizenship” is the broad umbrella term that captures a lot of that. Certainly from interviews with NCS providers and voluntary sector organisations that we have conducted, a lot of them are very open about the fact that they are in this competitive landscape and having to get on the policy hook of the day in order to stay competitive. That makes it very confusing for young people to decide which scheme is for them. While they are making a number of connections to these policy hooks, it is important to step back and reflect on which ones are the most salient to young people in their lives at that particular moment and which ones have a historical longevity, such as youth citizenship, to capture what it is we are really talking about here, whether that is about rights and responsibilities or civic engagement. The competitive landscape, certainly in the last few years, has led to these buzzwords, if you like, clouding or muddying the water somewhat in what different organisations purport to be, or are about, and how young people actually experience them.

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** I would argue that resources are one of the main barriers. It is a barrier in terms of the obvious effects in that it is limiting the opportunities for young people to engage. You find that local government and other state institutions and civil society groups are constantly in some form of conflict about who delivers and how they deliver. There is a lot of competition for resources in there. It means that often there is a lack of developed collaborative frameworks between the formal and informal groups. That links with what Sarah was suggesting, which is that it is very confusing for young people because there is a lack of a detailed map and a lack of co-ordination and, particularly in schools, there is a lack of real advice for young people about what opportunities there are and what is appropriate for them. There is always a question about what kinds of opportunities are appropriate. A wider barrier is located in these two Houses and elsewhere, and that is political will. There seems to be a sort of replicative emphasis on young people that comes and goes.

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When I think about my experience in the Youth Citizenship Commission, at that point, towards the end of the Labour Government, there was great interest in young people; a new Government comes in and the entire body of work is dropped. There does not seem to be a consistent application and focus on young people. That is one thing that, more than anything, would help develop this more cognitive developmental progressive approach towards opportunities for young people in youth engagement and integration.

**Lord Blunkett:** I am very interested in the answers to the last question in terms of the latest hook and buzzwords and how to fill in the appropriate forms, but I want to go back to the original question in putting mine. Sarah said she wanted to say more about it in the opening question. There is the old adage of the priest in South America who said, “When I gave to the poor, I was a saint; when I tried to stop them being poor, I was a communist”, and he was a priest, not a politician. How can we get over this understandable emphasis on responsibility and duty, which I am totally in favour of rather than just rights and entitlements, but to translate that into people seeing that they can do more gradually in terms of changing the world for the better when they have learnt about themselves and their relationship to civil society?

**Dr Sarah Mills:** That relationship between responsibility and rights sits at the heart of a lot of the discussions on citizenship. My opening statement in relation to that was about how the brand of youth citizenship that NCS and other organisations espouse is very much about volunteering and social action. We engaged with a cohort of NCS graduates about what citizenship is and 80%-plus agreed that NCS had helped them to learn more about what it was to be a citizen. However, when we asked in qualitative interviews, it was about the volunteering and about social action. The way we could have a more encompassing understanding of citizenship within those types of programmes is about, as Andy said earlier, the postcode lottery. Our research found that geography matters and that who your NCS provider is will determine the particular activities and curriculum that you receive. While some NCS graduates meet their MPs, have very “big p” politics debates and discussions on voting, others do bricklaying, more community gardening and design posters. Those activities can be political, however, geography is a real area of improvement for the NCS—to equalise that and to ensure that young people are engaging in political literacy/citizenship education through what is ostensibly a national programme. Yes, responsibility is absolutely at the heart of many formations of youth citizenship. It is the active way that young people before they can vote, et cetera, can perform citizenship, but it is not the only way to engage them as active citizens by saying, “You are going to volunteer; this is how you volunteer”. There should be a broader understanding of youth citizenship.

**Lord Blunkett:** Anything to add? Do you agree?

**Oliver Lee:** Save for one very small point, which is that an assertion one would make is that an element of NCS’s uniqueness is that it was

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specifically designed and academically grounded in that original curriculum to promote positive contact between people from different backgrounds. It was designed to do that through purposefully intense and even, on occasion, stressful extended situations. In that context integration, to an extent, is the first domino here and is therefore not necessarily, I would argue, a buzzword; it is a pretty important word at the heart of much of this.

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** This is the core of your work, this idea about what you understand by the term “citizenship”. Over the last 20 years communitarian forms of citizenship have dominated. What we might see now is that we have moved into a neo-communitarian age where before it was rights. In some ways we seem to offer a rather truncated version of citizenship where responsibilities are not just put before rights but it is often responsibilities without rights. Young people are given a rather inert and compliant version of citizenship which means that they do not seem to be schooled in giving themselves that agency and efficacy to change the world in which they live, in terms of volunteering when there does not seem to be an offer back. It is interesting if you look at why young people voted for Labour in the last election. It was the first time in certainly my lifetime I can remember a political party going out and saying, “We are offering you rights back. We are returning some of the rights that you have had taken away from you”. That seemed to energise it. There is a need to make sure that we go back to balancing the notion of responsibilities and those rights that are attendant upon a balanced form of citizenship.

Q46 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** There is one particular aspect of the rights and responsibilities around political citizenship, and you raised it in your evidence, Andrew, and that is the voting age. Do you think that reducing the voting age would strengthen young people’s citizenship? I got the sense that you were quite ambivalent about it, but I would be interested to know what you all think about that in terms of a very clear political right. We talk a lot about young people not using the vote and we talk about it as a responsibility, but it is a political right.

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** I have been on a journey. The Youth Citizenship Commission in 2009 did not come to a decision on lowering the voting age. I was one of those who said that it should not be lowered because I did not think the case at the time was right. I have been on a journey towards a more supportive position, but the danger at the moment is that we are looking at what has happened in Scotland and we are reading into it that this is some kind of success story. It is not. Although we saw a high turnout in the 2014 referendum, turnout has since dropped dramatically for those under the age of 18. There is a wider question here. If you are going to lower the voting age, you need to think about that correlation, that relationship between rights and voting age, and at the moment that conversation is not being had. It seems very strange to be pushing lowering the voting age to 16 and pushing the rights of various other things upwards. It is a very confusing message.

Beyond that, this wider question that you are looking at about political socialisation needs to be taken far more seriously. If we go back to 1969,



Oliver Lee, Chief Executive, The Challenge; Dr Andrew Mycock, Reader in Politics, University of Huddersfield; Dr Sarah Mills, Loughborough University – oral evidence (QQ 43-50)

there were promises after the point of lowering the voting age to 18 that we would bring in some form of political or civic education and, lo and behold, we did—in 2002. If we are going to think about lowering the voting age now, it needs to be taken seriously because there is a need to support young people to ensure that they feel confident about going to the ballot box. I will leave it at that.

**Q47** **Baroness Barker:** The investment of more than £1 billion in NCS is the biggest investment by Government in this area. As was said in the previous session, earlier on this year the Public Accounts Committee was very critical of the comparative value for money of NCS. How can NCS improve its value for money?

**Oliver Lee:** I am not going to rehearse Michael Lynas's points. I was sitting in the back of that session earlier and I would endorse those points and would agree with the figures and the data points that he pointed to. Above and beyond that, there is no doubt that the programme, which is challenging, and has been challenging to get to the point that it is at now, is seeking a series of really quite significant outcomes. That has been a challenging process for all involved, unquestionably, given where the funding flows from, and it needs to be seeking an ever-increased level of efficiency and value for money. I am absolutely committed to that. It also needs to be seeking an ever-increasing disbursement of that money, which goes back to my earlier point about local versus national. There needs to be breadth of activity in this lane, which I am reassured is in fact very much broader now than it was, with many thousands of organisations, and it is certainly becoming increasingly broad.

There are other efficiencies that can be considered. One needs to be careful with regard to quality and impact and outcomes. We ran 10,000 of our places this summer as a pilot on behalf of the NCS Trust in a compressed model seeking similar outcomes but over, broadly speaking, a three-week rather than a four-week programme. That, of course, would derive savings. We would need to confirm that the outcomes and impacts are common otherwise a judgment needs to be taken between those two things.

The final point I would make is that the development into a thoroughly high-performing organisation from a start point in 2013 of the NCS Trust means that there is inevitably duplication at the moment between elements of what the NCS Trust is now capable of doing and elements of what the front-line delivery organisations are doing. There should be a singular commitment to drive out those duplications such that this becomes ever-more efficient.

**Dr Sarah Mills:** I read the Public Accounts Committee report with interest and obviously followed the NCS Bill and submitted evidence to that inquiry. It is clear that value for money could be improved. It is partly a question of evaluation. I was encouraged to hear that there have been more reports since and research undertaken by the NCS Trust. There is more long-term longitudinal work that needs to be done there, and I think time will tell on many of those issues.

Oliver Lee, Chief Executive, The Challenge; Dr Andrew Mycock, Reader in Politics, University of Huddersfield; Dr Sarah Mills, Loughborough University – oral evidence (QQ 43-50)

I am also encouraged by the recent announcement between NCS and the Scouts. There is potential there. To be honest, it would have been helpful to have had that type of relationship at the start of NCS in terms of a closer working relationship with the third sector. Certainly my research has heard about a lot of challenges and animosity towards NCS because of that relationship, because of the climate and reality of austerity in the youth work sector. Bridges are being built. It will take time and it was encouraging to hear in the previous session of those closer working relationships. Value for money could be improved, but it needs to be cognisant of the specific dynamics between the state and the third sector. It is also a question of devolution. There is an assumption sometimes that NCS is across the UK. It only operates in England and Northern Ireland. It does not operate in Scotland or Wales. There was a pilot in Wales, but it was not taken up by the Welsh Government. Devolution and geography also need to be taken into account in terms of the future of NCS as well.

**The Chairman:** Are you happy, Baroness Barker?

**Baroness Barker:** Yes.

Q48 **Baroness Redfern:** Do you think different government initiatives to encourage civic engagement link together into a cohesive strategy? Are there coherent links between citizenship education, the #iwill campaign, and National Citizen Service? Who wants to go with that one?

**Dr Sarah Mills:** Each of those organisations is working incredibly hard in its own space to carve out their niche and, as was said in the previous session, to start that working relationship again. I was encouraged to hear that they are sharing datasets and thinking about that evaluation a bit more cohesively. Some of the challenges have been because of the movement of NCS. It started in the Department for Education, went to the Cabinet Office and is now in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. In the middle of that there was the formation of the NCS Trust. The real area for better working relationships is the link between NCS and citizenship education in schools—that link between formal and informal education. In the third sector in terms of the #iwill campaign, there is a much closer working relationship than perhaps there is between NCS and citizenship education in schools. That would be my recommendation for close work.

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** It is a good question. In some ways the question starts at government and the fact that different wings and different branches of government are working on similar initiatives at any one time. I am thinking now about Chris Skidmore, the Minister for the Constitution, and a project there looking at youth engagement, and you are looking at it. At times, that tends to produce a fractured response. You will see different initiatives associated with different bodies and they tend to not coalesce particularly well. Beyond that, there is almost a sense of competition between some of these initiatives which means that they often spend a certain amount of their energies in trying to establish themselves as opposed to other initiatives. I think that is a problem.

Oliver Lee, Chief Executive, The Challenge; Dr Andrew Mycock, Reader in Politics, University of Huddersfield; Dr Sarah Mills, Loughborough University – oral evidence (QQ 43-50)

To go back to the Youth Citizenship Commission when we were looking at the start of NCS and other projects, the problem in many ways is that you are trying to wire in programmes that do not sit particularly well with the school curriculum in some senses. There is a need to think about that sense in which citizenship teachers are furnished with the abilities to offer a range of opportunities rather than to say citizenship education necessarily tramlines into a particular opportunity.

As far as Sarah's comments about devolution go, one of the things which needs to be recognised is that this is a partial offer across the United Kingdom and that, within England, devolution, particularly to city regions, offers the opportunity to devolve down a lot of these programmes to a city region local level. National Citizen Service, #iwill and these other programmes could be not just delivered but designed and managed at that level as well. True devolution means that these programmes work better if you build from the bottom upwards and network on a local basis rather than on a top-down basis, as I said before.

**Baroness Barker:** During the passage of the NCS Bill, Lord Maude, who was one of the architects of the NCS programme, was quite open about fact that it was set up deliberately to stand aside and to be separate—in his words “protected”—from the rest of the voluntary sector, and a lot of what you are talking about is a consequence of the basic set-up of the organisation. Not now, because we have not got time, but would you consider the constitutional set-up of the NCS, and particularly its status now as a royal charter body and the extent to which it is possible to achieve the sorts of aims that you are talking about, which is greater efficiency and integration across a range of organisations in the light of that move? It is a given that its constitutional basis is as it is, but how can these aims that I think we are all in agreement are beneficial to young people be achieved? If you could write to us about that, that would be very helpful.

Q49 **Baroness Pitkeathley:** In the interests of time I am going to combine two questions. I am going to ask you first about the relationship between integration and civic engagement. How well do initiatives which are aimed at increasing civil engagement foster also greater integration? Could you give us some examples of best practice? We would like some real examples of best practice.

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** It is a very good question. It is a starting point. In many ways, a good approach towards youth citizenship is that you look at civic education as a tool to bring different groups of young people together. My view is based on work in Kirklees where I have been working with schools across the area—and we know the history of that—where we network different schools into a programme which I have brought you a report on called *My Country, My Vote*, where we get schools to work independently on different youth initiatives in their communities. We get them to work across the community. We have different schools from different backgrounds and they go and work with different youth-based civil society groups within their communities as well. It is wiring them together and getting that sense of interaction. At the core of good

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community cohesion is interaction, increasing those sites and spaces of interaction.

For that we bring in the local council and the university. The universities play a very fundamental role in providing neutral spaces. It is that critical thing about identifying neutral spaces. Sometimes schools themselves are not neutral. The data we have produced seems to indicate that if you can build a sense of common purpose, if you can give young people a sense in which they have the ability to change their environment, they start to feel that that civic identity has a binding effect. One thing we have found really difficult has been to change the behaviour of the politicians to engage with the young people, including at the sites of citizenship. We get our local councillors now to have constituency meetings in the schools to go to listen to young people so they feel valued. It is that question: that if you value young people—if politicians value young people—they will open up those wider relationships.

**Oliver Lee:** There is a reasonable body of evidence, both academic and more in the here-and-now practical outcomes that we are seeing, that demonstrates that first domino of integration leads to meaningful levels of civic engagement/civic contribution. This is an area of strength for the National Citizen Service. Integration being at the heart of that programme leads to a whole series of follow-on activities that we see on the graduate agenda. An example of that would be a programme that we run called HeadStart. This sees 16 hours' worth of volunteering being incentivised by a guaranteed job interview at the end of it with one of various business partners. It goes back to my point about the "whole ship" enterprise; everybody needs to be involved in this, and there is a reference there clearly to business. What we see through that programme is a much higher likelihood of people continuing to contribute thereafter. It is very much the continuum that has been referred to on a number of occasions today.

**Dr Sarah Mills:** One of the founding principles of NCS is around social mix and integration. It was recently included in The Casey Review as an example of integration. There is real potential there. My research found that young people, when they talked about encountering difference, did not refer to race, religion, ethnicity or class but talked about different personalities, not judging others or meeting somebody from the next street or another part of the village or town. There is a very local geography to that. Of course, you can encounter difference there at a local level, but what would be really encouraging to see is more cross-regional and cross-national events through NCS that do that geographical mixing, which was one of the original aims of the policy as well, with social mixing on that level, because if you do NCS in east London you will meet other young people from east London. It is encouraging to hear about more alumni-related events or follow-on programmes that can foster more cross-national and cross-regional encounters with difference as well.

**Oliver Lee:** Could I have 20 seconds on that? I would simply say that we think that national mixing is an area that NCS could do better. It was expressly designed, in the first instance, for it to lead that local sense of

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community conscience towards the latter part of the programme. We think that is still a thoroughly worthwhile outcome, but in the earlier phases of the programme, where people are moved for a variety of different reasons away from their communities to undertake the various activities, we think that could be done in a more national mixing sense, and there will be some innovation around that next year.

**The Chairman:** Baroness Lister, I am aware that I cut you off because you asked a question about reducing the voting age and we moved on. Dr Mycock told you he was on a journey, but we did not have a chance to hear from Dr Mills and Mr Lee about their views. Shall we take that one up now?

Q50 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** I wanted to ask a question in lieu of what I thought I was going to be asking. It is a specific question for Sarah. Just for the record I should say that we are members of the same school at Loughborough University. One of the things that struck me in your evidence was that your research found that not all NCS programmes encourage youth-led social action. Can you give an example of a successful youth-led social action scheme and the impact it has? More generally, often one can learn from the things that do not work so well as from the things that do. Are there any examples that any of you have of initiatives that have not worked that well but one can learn quite a lot from in terms of what to avoid in the future?

**Dr Sarah Mills:** In relation to youth-led social action, that was one of the areas where there was a real regional geography to it based on your provider. The majority of providers were encouraging youth-led social action and ideas from the young people themselves about what they wanted to do in week three and four. However, some providers were pre-designing projects in relation to logistics, risk assessments, et cetera, that young people would complete. We found that there was less buy-in from the young people, who of course have fantastic ideas of social action projects themselves. It was a minority, but it still impacted their NCS experience.

There are examples of fantastic inspirational NCS projects. One was around a campaign to lower train fares for young people. Michael Lynas mentioned earlier about transport being a political issue. There are some fantastic youth-led citizenship-based engagements with local MPs around train fares. I guess my point there is that those are great NCS social action projects, but they never make it into the marketing and branding in the way that engagement with food banks or community gardening does. I think those projects deserve just as much attention as those that are based around fundraising for charity, which of course is noteworthy and fantastic to celebrate—and NCS graduations celebrate social action and those projects—but it would be great to see more public awareness of the variety of things young people are doing on NCS.

**The Chairman:** Shall we return to the voting age?

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Is there anything we can learn from things that have not worked so well, but yes, the voting age?

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**Oliver Lee:** Failure for it to be youth-led fails the test. Largely speaking, I agree with that. We would certainly see the social action in any NCS programmes that we deliver as fundamentally youth-led. I also think we would see them being broader than purely fundraising, and the series of activities that you have just described there, Sarah, we would absolutely include in that bracket. Another trap one can fall into quite easily—and it goes back to my point about quality—is if the programme that is being undertaken is not adequately demanding. We think that demand and that requirement to stretch the legs leads to a cohering impact between different people. It is very interesting to see those who you would not necessarily expect start to struggle at a particular point in time and start to rely on somebody extremely different from themselves who they might not previously have met in any other walk of life.

We do not have a particular organisational position on the voting age. I do not have a particularly strong personal one either. Political literacy can be excellently delivered and perhaps more so through NCS. We had a number of NCS graduates in these buildings yesterday. Bite The Ballot was referred to earlier; registration for voting and physically making sure those forms get sent; political discussions with a small “p”; 150 or so MPs over the last year have visited NCS through our organisation. I think we can do more and more of that.

**The Chairman:** A last word from Dr Mills on the voting age.

**Dr Sarah Mills:** It is interesting that the voting age was one of the key topics on some of the NCS programmes that included elements of political debate. Those topics generate a lot of discussion between young people and I am encouraged by the work of Bite the Ballot in relation to securing a range of young people’s views. I would love to see in every NCS programme a discussion about those types of political engagement.

**Lord Blunkett:** Can I just clarify with Andrew, in the 2008-2009 work that you did with Professor Tonge, young people were pretty well split down the middle at 16 and 17 as to whether they thought it was right to have a vote?

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** That is right, yes, there was only a slight majority in favour of it. Other work done by YouGov has produced very similar figures. One of the interesting things about lowering the voting age is the way in which it has gained momentum as a cause. It was noteworthy when we took evidence during the Youth Citizenship Commission that the vast majority of those who submitted evidence came from youth organisation groups. I am still not quite convinced that the demand for a vote at 16 is emanating from young people themselves as much as there is a sort of commodification of it.

**Lord Blunkett:** If I could be mischievous, Chairman: I belong to a political party that likes doing things top down to people.

**Dr Andrew Mycock:** The danger of it is that it is sold as a panacea to all ills in terms of youth political disengagement. As I said, there is a far wider scope and lens through which you need to produce evidence-based policy

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to lower the voting age. That said, I would advocate lowering the voting age, but only after this process has taken place rather than, as we have seen in Scotland, simply lowering the voting age instrumentally for a particular reason.

**The Chairman:** Thank you all very much. We have kept you late but it has been a very worthwhile session and you have given us a lot of food for thought. Thank you very much for coming along.

Dr Avril Keating, Senior Lecturer in Comparative Social Science, UCL Institute of Education; Liz Moore, Chief Executive, Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT); Tom Franklin, CEO, Citizenship Foundation; James Weinberg, University of Sheffield – oral

**Dr Avril Keating, Senior Lecturer in Comparative Social Science, UCL Institute of Education; Liz Moore, Chief Executive, Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT); Tom Franklin, CEO, Citizenship Foundation; James Weinberg, University of Sheffield – oral evidence (QQ 51-60)**

Wednesday 18 October 2017

11.35 am

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Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beddoe; Baroness Stedman-Scott.

Evidence Session No. 6

Heard in Public

Questions 51 - 60



## Examination of witnesses

Dr Avril Keating, Liz Moore, Tom Franklin, James Weinberg.

**Q51 The Chairman:** Thank you all very much for coming along; we are very grateful to you for giving us your time and access to your expertise. A list of interests of members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. This session is open to the public and is being recorded for BBC Parliament, and a verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and put on the Committee's website. A few days after the session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check it for accuracy, and it would be helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after this evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence, or have any additional points to make, you are welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. Perhaps I could ask each of you to introduce yourselves, and then we can go straight to the questions.

**Tom Franklin:** Tom Franklin. I am from the Citizenship Foundation and we help young people develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to be actively engaged citizens.

**Liz Moore:** I am Liz Moore. I am from the Association for Citizenship Teaching. We are a teaching association, the subject association for citizenship education. We have a membership and we promote quality teaching and curriculum in citizenship across the country and beyond.

**James Weinberg:** I am James Weinberg. I am from the Sir Bernard Crick Centre in Sheffield. For the last two years or so, I have been the research lead in youth politics there and, for the last year, I have been co-opted as the lead fellow of citizenship on the All-Party Group on Democratic Participation.

**Dr Avril Keating:** My name is Dr Avril Keating. I am the director of the Centre for Global Youth and I work at the University College London Institute of Education. I am primarily involved in citizenship education through my involvement in the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study, which I have been involved in leading on since about 2007-08.

**Q52 The Chairman:** Thank you all very much. Let me open up with a strategic overview question. I would like each of you to describe the current state of citizenship education: who is receiving that education, how good is it and, equally importantly, who is being left out and how have you found people view citizenship education?

**Tom Franklin:** Our current view is that citizenship education is withering on the vine at the moment at a time when it is needed more than ever. If we look at the polarisation of society and the undermining of the faith in democratic society, there is such a need for young people to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence, yet what is happening with citizenship

education is that the support for the subject has been dismantled. If we look at the fact that education regulators no longer focus on it; that there is not the support needed for teacher training; the fact that it is in the national curriculum, but more and more schools do not follow the national curriculum and, therefore, do not teach citizenship education; and the fact that support for NGOs such as ourselves and others which provide support to schools has been withdrawn, meaning that we very often have to charge for our services rather than provide them to schools for free, it means that, although it is there in name for many schools, it is not happening. Whether young people are receiving high-quality citizenship education is a lottery; it is by chance as to whether they are getting it in their school or not, which is a great shame.

In terms of young people and what they want, now, more than ever, there is a cry from young people for this sort of education. The Youth Parliament has voted to have a curriculum for life as one of its core campaigns at the moment, teaching young people about politics and engagement. In this very place tonight, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on a Better Brexit for Young People will be publishing its report based on a whole series of focus groups, which have taken place with young people around the country, that we were very involved in. One of the core messages from young people is that they feel they are not given the information and the skills they need in order to take part and feel very let down and angry about that, so the state at the moment is not very favourable.

**Liz Moore:** I would completely support what Tom said there and say that our evidence base for what is going on in schools is virtually non-existent, so it is very difficult to speak with certainty about the true picture of citizenship education. I would like to clarify that the comments that I will make focus on the situation in England. You may be aware that we also work with colleagues across the UK, in Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland through our Five Nations Network, but I will focus my comments on England.

Citizenship education can work well and there are very good examples of practice out there, but they are just too few and far between. In a conversation that I had with a specialist citizenship teacher at Altrincham Girls' School on Friday, she told me about how high-profile citizenship is in her school. It is an outstanding school, a teaching school. She has status within her school, as does the subject, and they have proper teaching time for the subject. These are all necessary for citizenship education to flourish.

The problem at the moment is that, despite policy having not particularly shifted in the sense that citizenship remains a national curriculum subject with a GCSE—the A-level is going but is still there for the next year or so—the focus on the subject and the quality of what is going on has diminished because other policies have detracted from it, so the position of citizenship education, we believe, is on the wither. If you look at the school workforce data, the decline from 2011 suggests that there are about half as many

people who self-identify as a citizenship teacher as there were in 2011. In 2011, there were about 10,000 self-identifying citizenship teachers and there are now fewer than 5,000. The amount of teaching time, according to that DfE workforce survey, also has diminished and is non-existent in some schools. The Association for Citizenship Teaching primarily works with those teachers who come to us looking for support with the subject. There are teachers out there who want to do this, but they are being marginalised and disenfranchised from doing their job well because of the undermining of current government policies, which I will say a bit more about later.

**James Weinberg:** I know that the Committee is looking more broadly at this notion of a civic journey, and it is excellent that you are taking the concept of education seriously. Previous academic and policy work on civic engagement has tended to focus more on methods of democratic design, whether that be welfare reform or voluntary service initiatives, such as the NCS. Those are, in essence, what we might term in political science as “supply-side reforms” aimed at facilitating public interest and, possibly, modes of engagement, but they have overlooked the power of demand-side reforms in general and the role of education in cultivating political interest and efficacy, in particular. On the question of why citizenship education is important in this debate, that is a very brief answer to the question.

To address holistically the state of citizenship education today is also to look at where we have come from, and you can go back as far as 1975 and the Trilateral Commission on the state of democracy then, which already was able to identify that, if social and economic structures stayed as they were, they would undermine democracy by concentrating wealth and learning in the hands of a few. We are, arguably, no different today. We have evidence showing that those in the top quintile for household income are five times more likely to participate in political activities than those in the lowest. The reason I mention this is because that intergenerational transmission of political inequality is evident already at school age. Citizenship education can redress this balance. We have evidence from pre-2010 that shows that citizenship education, where it is done effectively and consistently, can predict political efficacy, participation and levels of knowledge. Avril knows far more about this than I do, having been involved in the longitudinal study.

In terms of broader inequalities, you cannot get past that point where you are considering a wider understanding of the civic journey. We also have evidence abroad, especially in Chile, to show that, where citizenship education has been done well, it can mitigate socioeconomic inequalities, which is vital in discussing the idea of a civic journey in the 21st century UK context.

It is also worth acknowledging that what we are debating here is not new. In fact, in this very room, in discussing this and considering it as a policy

initiative, we stand not only on the shoulders of many previous philosophers but those in the 20th century, such as Sir Bernard, the namesake of the centre I represent, who worked very hard from the 1970s onwards with a political association to get a policy response on citizenship education. His vision was “for people to think of themselves as active citizens, willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life”, and it remains just that, a vision. I would argue that there are two central reasons why that potential for citizenship education has been eviscerated. One, there is an implementation gap, largely under Labour but it carried on under the coalition and Conservative Governments, and, secondly, there was a significant vision shift under the recent coalition and Conservative Governments. Each of those has specific symptoms which I hope we can discuss more broadly in this session.

**Dr Avril Keating:** My fellow panellists have summarised the key challenges that we are facing. I will take the opportunity to reinforce the inequalities of access to citizenship education. The challenge is that, as it currently stands, it is the schools which have an interest and are invested in citizenship education which are providing good citizenship education. This often means that it is selective and fee-paying schools that are providing good citizenship education because it is part of their ethos. This means that you have children and young people who are receiving it based on their income or status rather than their entitlement to receive education about democracy. This creates problems in the short term and the long term for society and politics more broadly.

Q53 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** A number of submissions, including those from the Citizenship Foundation and the Association for Citizenship Teaching, have referred to the importance of primary school level. What are the priorities for teaching citizenship education at primary level, and do you think it should be made compulsory at that level?

**Tom Franklin:** Absolutely, it should be made compulsory, particularly for key stage 2, so from seven to 11. We run a programme, Make a Difference Challenge, in some schools, which is helping children of that age to select the issues that they care about the most, and they are involved, between them, in making those decisions as to which they want to focus on, and working with them to draw up a programme of action to make a difference, and it might be volunteering, fundraising, campaigning or letter-writing, to follow through that course of action and, at the end of it, to review how they have done. It is all about giving those children confidence that they have a sense of agency, that, even at that young age, they can make a difference. We find that the amount of enthusiasm and buzz they get from taking part in that sort of way is incredible, so it is a critical age. It is too late to wait until secondary school and it should be in the national curriculum for key stage 2, absolutely.

**Baroness Redfern:** I would like to focus on citizenship education. You mention that it has been undermined by government policies. Could you

elaborate more on that, please?

**Liz Moore:** We have seen a persistent exclusion of citizenship from key government programmes and policies. It is constantly left off the list when policies are being rolled out, notwithstanding more recently that the National College, which has responsibility for teacher training, has created a programme to create specialist leaders of education. Citizenship teachers cannot apply to be specialist teachers of education; they are being discriminated against on the basis of what? Every other subject is included in that programme. We cannot understand why citizenship is not there. This is having a direct effect on the career prospects of our existing citizenship teachers.

**Baroness Redfern:** That is all colleges that you are talking about?

**Liz Moore:** Teachers cannot apply to this programme, Specialist Leaders of Education. In addition, there is now a crisis in initial teacher education. In 2010, 243 trainees in citizenship were going through programmes of initial teacher education; this year, it is 40. We cannot sustain this system. We need a massive push to train existing teachers and new teachers as citizenship specialist teachers. They make an amazing difference. I have described citizen teachers as “national assets”. They come with subject knowledge, with pedagogy, with proficiency in helping children look at controversial issues, difficult political issues, building a sense of agency and the skills to take action. This needs a specialist teacher to do this properly and well, particularly in our current climate with issues of extremism, et cetera. We cannot just have non-specialists teaching this, we need more specialist teachers urgently.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** This is a quick question to Dr Keating, given your longitudinal study. I suppose there are two arguments about the number of teachers, and I accept that, but you still visit schools where good citizenship education is going on, where teachers do not call themselves “citizenship teachers” and there is not an hour given in the curriculum. In your longitudinal study, not the content but the structure of citizenship in schools, what are you defining that as? Are you looking at lessons called “citizenship” which are taught by a teacher who teaches it so many times a week, or are you looking broader than that at what else is happening in the school?

**Dr Avril Keating:** Looking at what citizenship means in schools is one of the most challenging tasks.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** It is easy to do the form, but it might not be accurate, I suppose.

**Dr Avril Keating:** Yes, this is the thing. When we went to all schools, and bear in mind that the study has not been in schools since 2008, so we do not have that recent data, what we would have asked is, “In what ways are you delivering?” We looked at whether it was a formal citizenship class,

whether it was combined with PSHE, whether it was the whole school or whether they were doing all of these approaches so that it was additive in that way, and we asked schools and teachers to report what they were doing, so we tried to take a holistic approach to that.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Why do you think there is such a dismissal of this subject in terms of policy?

**Liz Moore:** I can only put this down to party politics meddling in our children's education. I do not know what other reason we can use here. It makes absolutely no sense. The arguments for why citizenship education is so critical, particularly at this time, are well established. Bernard Crick's vision was for citizenship and democracy education. We have some critical challenges facing our democracy, and I believe it is government's duty to educate citizens in democracy education and if that is not happening in school as an entitlement then it is left to chance, and that is not good enough. When I have been in meetings with Ministers and occasionally with DfE officials, they will tell you in private that it is important, but they will not get on a platform and tell schools, "This is an important subject and we expect all schools to be doing it", and that is completely unacceptable. It does not happen for any other subject. This is a real problem.

**The Chairman:** Mr Weinberg, you have been very patient. You have the floor.

**James Weinberg:** Perhaps I might jump in to add something to each of those questions. On this idea of why it is being undermined, choices about citizenship education are political choices with political consequences, and it is worth remembering that. The move towards character education in place of citizenship education after 2010 is key in this narrative. That has, essentially, replaced the active element of citizenship education that was in the original Crick vision. We have moved from this justice-oriented approach to one that is far more individualised, and that is following the work and advice from the Jubilee Centre and others working on character. Even though citizenship was retained as a statutory feature of the curriculum in 2014, I think, and I used to be a secondary school teacher, it has become a ghost feature of our education. Instead, it is increasingly marginalised as other policies have come in that are far more resource-intensive and have incentives attached to them. I am thinking of social, moral, spiritual and cultural education which has been pushed forward and the Prevent programme, fundamental British values. All of these are taking far more symbolic time away from teachers, especially senior leadership teams in schools, and they are being followed up on as well, whereas we no longer have an assessment procedure with Ofsted for testing how citizenship is being delivered.

On the issue of teachers, I did some research last year with teachers from more than 60 schools in England. I was specifically thinking about Avril's longitudinal study which found that it was delivered in diverse ways and

not always as a discrete subject, as the curriculum might have intended, and, as Liz pointed out, there is a significant lack of specialist teachers, so my research was specifically with non-specialists. That showed that all these teachers, who had not been trained in citizenship but were delivering it in the classroom, did not have a shared understanding of citizenship and the purpose of citizenship education. There was a distinct gap between academic work on good pedagogy for citizenship education and the practice that they reported, and they were open in admitting that this was because they had a lack of initial teacher training in citizenship education. They all agreed that citizenship education was sorely neglected within their secondary schools due to lack of resource and importance; and where it was taught, they described the delivery of citizenship education in individualistic and inward-looking political conceptions of good responsible citizens rather than active citizens, which is contrary to what Bernard Crick would have wanted in his report 20 years ago.

**Q54** **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** In our first oral evidence session, we talked with officials and I asked about the criteria against which we should be assessing citizenship education, but I did not get very far. What is citizenship education attempting to achieve, and what is being done to measure if current approaches to citizenship education are achieving it? I think you have partly touched on this already, Liz in particular: do good enough data exist on the quality of citizenship teaching? Are school inspections adequately covering the subject, and what should the role of Ofsted be? There are a lot of things there, so perhaps you could pick out the questions, particularly this question how we judge whether it is being effective or not.

**Liz Moore:** This is a very difficult issue at the moment. We know that Ofsted is looking at the curriculum and is doing a special review at the moment, but by what standards is it making judgments about the curriculum? The national curriculum is not national any more as there are so many schools that do not need to follow it and even schools which say they are following it do not seem to be following it in every regard, so by what standards can we make any judgment about the quality of teaching or the curriculum if we do not have standards to measure against? It is completely crazy, to be quite frank. There is an absence of good data. I thought it was disingenuous of the DfE director to refer to the 2013 Ofsted report, which took two years to be published, so the data was drawn from 2009 to 2011. Basically, this is data from the previous national curriculum developed under the Labour Administration, which was much fuller in content, breadth of study and the types of skills, knowledge and understanding required, so we cannot refer back to that other than in broad terms to say, "That's where we were. Where are we now?" We do not have good data now and we need Ofsted to start looking at this much more urgently.

**Tom Franklin:** One of our concerns with the current curriculum is that citizenship has been narrowed and is much more now a list of bits of

knowledge rather than more of a rounded programme. We would describe it as learning to play an instrument where there is the theory, which is very important, but, to learn to play an instrument, you need to play it. We think it is the same with citizenship, and what is needed is a review of the citizenship scheme of study there so that it includes much more about action, so it is about practising being a citizen and, therefore, developing the confidence in young people to take part, which at the moment is largely not there; it is a much more narrowed-down focus than is needed.

**Dr Avril Keating:** The first question you asked there is one of the most challenging because you asked the question of what citizenship education is trying to do, and I am not convinced there is a shared understanding either cross-party or cross-society as to what we want citizenship to be, or even agreement at this table as to what is in the curriculum and what citizenship is doing or should be trying to do. That bleeds into having this conversation about whether citizenship education in schools is good or not, whether we have enough data and measures and how we measure it and what are we trying to measure—is it simply skills, knowledge or attitudes?

My personal view is that it should be more rounded than it currently is in the curriculum and that there has been a reduction to focus too much around political institutions and how Westminster works, which is an absolutely vital dimension of citizenship, but only one. If you look internationally, there is much more of a movement towards trying to develop measures. I am a social scientist and I will never agree that they are perfect, but they are trying to take a more holistic approach that will look at knowledge, identities, values and skills. Currently, we have almost no data on what young people have in those domains because we are not participating in these studies.

**James Weinberg:** It is worth acknowledging that, as an abstract concept, citizenship education has myriad potential impact areas. I know from doing some work in the DfE last year that even there they are not entirely sure what citizenship education means, and it is certainly not a priority. It might be worth thinking about this more in terms of input and output. From my own research, when it comes to input, what we need to do is re-orientate the way we look at it to include pedagogy as both content and skills, thinking about the skills to do with critical debate and public speaking, which will set young people up for life, and the content. Yes, the formal curriculum mentions political institutions and the processes in Westminster. There are a lot of teachers who do not know about that themselves and are not teaching it and that is getting in the way of that knowledge being transferred. The content, as it is currently conceived from a character perspective, needs to be re-politicised. I am not talking about politicising young people but, with a small “p”, understanding the law, the machinations that drive industry and trade, formal and informal avenues of political campaigns and exerting pressure and systemic change; that needs to be introduced. On the output, we are looking at whether we can improve young people’s sense of political efficacy, their participation rates



after school and their social attitudes. Evidence from around the world says that citizenship delivered in different ways can achieve different levels of those different outcomes, but considering them all in a remodelling would be useful.

**Q55 Lord Blunkett:** Mine is a very practical question, but perhaps I might say that, 18 years ago, when the working party was set up, there was cross-party agreement and it was not seen as a party-political issue. In fact, the only party politician who was on the working party was Ken Baker. I just want to put that on the record.

I have a very practical question about training. We have the figures, and you have mentioned them already, regarding the drop in initial teacher training. There are no bursaries any more, despite the rest of the curriculum subject areas having bursaries. What do we do? How do we, through continuing professional development and in-service training, at least in the short term, ensure that there are people who are knowledgeable and committed to being able to do what you are advocating?

**Liz Moore:** First, we need a shift in some government policies here. There are things that we can do as citizenship organisations, but, to be quite frank, without a shift in national policy, it is very difficult for us to gain the reach that we need to train enough citizenship teachers, both existing and new, so that every school has a subject specialist citizenship teacher to lead the subject in their school. We need probably about 400 trained every year for the next 12 years to have any hope of ever reaching that ambition. We need to make citizenship a priority teacher-training subject, with the appropriate financial support, so that all potential trainees from all social and economic backgrounds can train as citizenship teachers. We need to establish a national programme of CPD, and the citizenship organisations in front of you would be more than happy to be partners in developing that national CPD programme, and we want to work with government on this. Apparently, there is new money available for CPD, continuing professional development, and some of this urgently needs to go towards citizenship. Also, we need to end the exclusion of citizenship from key national programmes such as the Specialist Leaders of Education programme which I referred to earlier, so that citizenship teachers are not marginalised and not discriminated against but have the same right of access to professional development and career progression that any other subject teacher has.

**Dr Avril Keating:** I would add to that simply that it has to be clear that this policy will be sustained into the long term, otherwise schools and teachers will shrug their shoulders and say, "Oh look, here's another little tinkering in the system, another policy initiative. Next month, next year, it'll be something else. Let's just put that into a drawer and we'll forget about that until the next one comes along".

**Tom Franklin:** I agree with that. It is also very important that there is training for senior leadership teams so that they also understand the

importance of this. The other thing that is of real potential is about outside experts coming into schools. One of the things that we do is Lawyers in Schools where lawyers will go into schools and work with young people to help them to understand the rule of law and how that works, and there are others where there are financial experts going in and teaching young people about the economy and taxation and so on. There is a real potential for an expansion of that with national support as well. If we think about civil servants, politicians, local government, journalists, lawyers, financial experts and others, there is a real opportunity. With some of the young people that we work with, it will be the first time that they have spoken with a lawyer, the first time they have had that sort of contact, and it can open their eyes completely in terms of the potential. We know lawyers today who are lawyers only because of the fact that they were given those sorts of opportunities to meet and to see what they might be able to achieve, and we could expand that on a big scale across all schools.

**James Weinberg:** I would urge caution that you cannot plough money into initial teacher training for citizenship and expect anything to change if you do not also add the resource for improving its significance within individual schools. I know a lot of citizenship teachers who, out of that small pool who have trained in citizenship, are not teaching citizenship in the schools where they are based, so, unless it is re-prioritised as a curriculum subject, that initial teacher training will not have any impact.

Q56 **Baroness Morris of Yardley:** James has mentioned this, and I will change the question a bit because it was trying to look at the change to character education from citizenship education, so let me ask this: would you agree that both are necessary and that, in a way, to pit one against the other is not great, but you end up doing that when one has priority and one does not? Can you see, in the best of worlds, a situation where we can deliver something that has both of those elements, the inward-looking inner strength and the outward-looking active citizen, or do they have to be pitted against each other in the curriculum?

**Liz Moore:** Character education has not been described or set up as a subject. It is an outcome of good, well-rounded, broad and balanced education; it has a personal development focus and it is about the individual. Citizenship is about the knowledge, understanding and skills that you need to be an active citizen, so to pit them against each other does not make sense as they are of a different order.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** The Jubilee Centre, as one of its characteristics, says of character education that it can be taught.

**Liz Moore:** Through other things.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I am not sure why that matters.

**Liz Moore:** Possibly, but it creates a different order of things. We would not be arguing for specialist teachers in character education. We would

expect every teacher to be supporting the children's personal development and development of character; that is a natural outcome of good, well-rounded education. I do not think we can look at them entirely similarly, although, in some respects, their aims and ambition, in the broadest sense, are quite similar.

**James Weinberg:** They do not have to be entirely antithetical, I agree with you. Some of the issues that Liz has mentioned come from the fact that the Jubilee Centre has tried to almost territorialise citizenship education as one of four components to character, and they describe it as "a civic virtue, such as service and volunteering". In doing so, they denude it of the politicised aspect that citizenship education should also have. I would quote an academic article here, that, "National policy discourse must redress the imbalance between the two by clarifying the distinction between learning through volunteering with social capital as a learning outcome for young people"—character education—"and learning through community involvement with democratic citizenship, which includes an understanding of the political base of the community as a learning outcome"—citizenship education. Only if you can stress the fact that the two have very distinct inputs and outputs and need to be taught separately, not in shared curriculum time, can both co-exist.

**The Chairman:** Are you saying that all teachers should have some citizenship education or only a few should have deep citizenship education—that is, are we going narrow and deep or broad and shallower?

**Liz Moore:** In the past, we have had both. In the past, every trainee teacher has had at least a little element of some citizenship education. It is part of the moral purpose of teaching, in a sense, but we need subject specialists to lead and co-ordinate the curriculum, the teaching and learning and the activities that comprise a good-quality citizenship curriculum.

**Lord Blunkett:** So, given that at the moment it is the secondary schools where the curriculum is supposed to be encapsulating this, do we need someone who, even if it is through CPD, has responsibility for citizenship in that school? At the moment, someone can have responsibility for maths, English or for the history curriculum, but not for citizenship.

**Liz Moore:** Absolutely, there has to be a specialist leading the subject. In some respects, I agree that schools should have freedom to determine how they put their curriculum together, but it should be based on good practice and what quality looks like. The research that has happened over past years demonstrates that discrete specialist subject teaching led by a specialist trained citizenship teacher creates much better outcomes for learners and is everywhere and nowhere. It needs leadership in the school and that person needs the status and backing of their head teacher, and it needs to be given the same treatment and parity of esteem as other subjects in the curriculum.

**Q57 Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** The Government require British values to be taught in schools as part of the curriculum. I know from my experience on the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life that there is a very close link between this introduction and the Prevent programme. Certainly, the faith groups and secular groups we talked to found that this was very unsatisfactory and various religious groups felt “othered”. What, if any, experience do we have from people who teach on the ground and from schools themselves as to whether this has had a detrimental effect?

**Liz Moore:** British values are an interesting concept. I do not think anybody has any problem with what is contained within them. Democracy, the rule of law, respect for different values and religious beliefs are the fundamental principles, if you like, that underpin a thriving democracy. The choice of “British” is interesting, given that they are only promoted in schools in England, and that does not seem to make sense to a lot of people, nor are those values, as described by government, peculiar to Britain; they are quite universal in their nature. I do not think that should be the issue here. The problem is that schools have often equated British values with Britishness. There has been a proliferation of pictures of the monarch and union flags being put up on classroom walls just in case an Ofsted inspector pops in and wants to see some evidence of how the school is promoting British values. This is superficial and meaningless. We need to embed these democratic values, as I would see them, in a proper citizenship curriculum. They should represent the content and things that are taught as part of a good-quality citizenship curriculum.

**Tom Franklin:** What is quite interesting is that, having downgraded citizenship and not provided the resources for us to do anything about it, it then pops up in these other areas and suddenly the Government create new initiatives, whether it is around Prevent in schools or British values, which sort of replace it and it all becomes a bit of a mish-mash. These issues, as Liz said—debating controversial issues, discussing British values and what they mean and everything else—are all part of a good, rounded citizenship education. We would say that, instead of the Government creating new initiatives and new programmes, they should focus on making sure that the core subject is taught well and these other areas will, therefore, be covered.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** What you have said so far bears out what you said right at the beginning: there is so little data. We do not know from teachers how they feel about this if there is no data.

**James Weinberg:** I have data.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** You do have data?

**James Weinberg:** Yes. All the teachers in my study were highly critical of the concept of fundamental British values, and those criticisms can be reduced to one: a misunderstanding of why or how they should be teaching something that is solely British. They were worried about teaching

fundamental British values and they did not know legally what they could do without overstepping the mark in terms of at what point this becomes almost nationalistic and partisan, in a sense. They also had worries about delivering it in a pedagogical sense. A number of the teachers raised concerns that, "If we are simply told we need to tell young people that these are fundamental British values, then surely forcing something down someone's throat will not work because they go home and tell their parents, 'Well, I've been told that these are now the fundamental British values I have to adhere to'".

Those who have had some training in cognate specialisms to citizenship, such as history and politics, raised the point that a far better way of delivering these values, British or not, would be through the medium of citizenship education, if that is based on critical debate. You want young people to discuss these ideas and come to a conclusion of their own. You do not want the teacher to have the responsibility of telling them, ad hoc and without deliberation, that these are the values that are British and must be adhered to.

**Dr Avril Keating:** We come back to the issue that teachers themselves need the training, the confidence and the experience to know how to deliver this part of the curriculum effectively, whether that is through *Citizenship* or through some other part of the school.

Q58 **Baroness Newlove:** I am listening to very valid evidence, articulated very well. My confusion is that, if anybody could describe what citizenship and British values are about, it is very convoluted and complicated. Has it ever been embedded, what should it look like and why has it splintered so much? You have mentioned government funding and social issues, which have changed, but there are a lot of things that need to be put back in. Like you say, teachers cannot just say things and put it down their throats. With youngsters today, you have different dynamics, with people who are really interested in politics and history and very articulate and others who are only interested in TOWIE and base their lives on that. For me, it is about how we embed it. From where we are, how will we embed it and make it go forward, if we had the money and with a Government, as you say, of whatever colour? For me, it is about the next generation understanding those British values, and they could educate their own parents who have never been taught British values.

**Dr Avril Keating:** Your core question is about whether it has ever been embedded and why it never quite took off in the way that it was hoped it would. Part of the reason comes back to the very beginning and the way that it was set up in the early 2000s. There was a bit of nervousness around making schools have something that was too formalised and too uniform, so schools had more autonomy to do what they wanted. This was a wonderful aspiration, but, in practice when it was rolled out, school autonomy meant that good schools could do it well and bad schools just went, "Here's a video, guys. That's all you need to watch this week" or,

“We’re talking about drugs and sex education. That’s *Citizenship*, and that’s all we need to do”. That has persisted and, coupled with that, there came a policy drift; a policy problem emerges for example, community cohesion pops up - and citizenship starts to be redefined as community cohesion. A new Government comes into place and they redefine what citizenship is, so nothing is ever stable and no consensus on what citizenship could or should look like in schools is ever really established. It has been weakened over time, which is how you end up with more and more splintering, which makes it very hard for teachers, students, parents or the people in this room to get a good grip on this. It is possible to define what citizenship education is and should be, and I could lecture here for hours, though the Chairman would be very upset about that, but these are some of the fundamental policy structures which have helped to create this confusion.

**Tom Franklin:** I wonder if there is an opportunity at the moment. I would not want to go a whole hour without mentioning Brexit in some form, but things are in flux at the moment. There is a sense of things moving, and we would urge the Government, as part of their discussion about the way that we are moving forward in the future, to think about some sort of charter for citizenship, setting out the responsibilities that people have for active citizenship and the rights that they have to the education that they need for that. We wonder whether, if the Government would take it, all the discussion about our national future could be a platform that could be used positively in getting more of a consensus around this going forward.

Q59 **Lord Rowe-Beddoe:** We have heard a lot this morning which has covered a number of issues, obviously. We have seen and heard of a significant fall in the number of teachers teaching the subject and a fall in citizenship being taught as a dedicated subject. Is there any evidence, in your opinion—and, Dr Keating, you just touched upon this—that this is being dealt with in schools in other ways, or is it a total disaster, which is what I am hearing?

**Liz Moore:** Going back to an earlier point I made, it is very difficult to be sure what the national picture is at the moment. We know that where it works well—and it is working well and I do not want anybody in this Committee to go away with the impression that it is absolute doom and gloom everywhere, because there are still models of high-quality citizenship teaching, curriculum and practice—it is in the schools with specialist trained teachers, with head teachers who support the subject, with proper curriculum time, and which are using the GCSE in citizenship studies. Unfortunately, lots of things are driven by metrics, and a GCSE, for all its issues, gives a subject certain status and credibility among students, teachers and parents. Where those features are in place, we see good-quality practice, curriculum and provision. Where those things are not in place, it is much harder to identify clear citizenship education. There might be bits and pieces. You heard last week from our friends in the social action arena with huge amounts of resource, massive programmes and huge reach. If we had anything like the level of funding in citizenship

education that some of those providers have, we would be in a very different place. They have the support of a government department. At the moment, it feels like we are on our own. The DfE does not show any leadership here and, in order to change things, we have to change that perception. We also need Ofsted to do a special study to uncover what is working and why and what the quality looks like. Without that, we will never be sure of what is going on.

**The Chairman:** Is one of the problems that citizenship education is not seen as an academic subject? I would use the analogy of, instead of going to university, doing vocational training.

**Liz Moore:** It is very interesting because citizenship exists at postgraduate degree level quite widely and there were previously undergraduate courses in citizenship. Unfortunately, those have, apparently, dried up. If you look on the UCAS website, you will not find citizenship courses, but you will find political science and social science courses which have aspects of citizenship within them. So I do not buy the argument that it is not academic because there is an academic underpinning to the knowledge and understanding of the concepts that we want children to be addressing in their citizenship education.

**James Weinberg:** I do not take the criticism that citizenship is not academic and I do not think Avril would either, or anyone else on this panel, but I certainly agree with you, having been a secondary school teacher, that that is how it is viewed within schools. Where it is not viewed like that, it has the backing of senior leadership teams. One excellent school I have been to recently, School 21 in Newham, has that ethos surrounding citizenship as an academic and an active component of what they teach. They provide their staff with ongoing qualifications in various aspects of pedagogy, including how to teach community action and citizenship, and they have community involvement woven into what they teach.

The problem from a national policy perspective is that this is a subject with long-term outputs and outcomes—i.e., participation and knowledge, the civic journey—being fitted into a short-term test-oriented education system. Someone needs to put the money behind a proper study to get new data and a new design of a proper assessment structure for citizenship education that is going to give it heft in schools.

**Lord Rowe-Beard:** Is it leadership or financial, or both?

**James Weinberg:** They go together.

**Lord Rowe-Beard:** To drop from 96,000 GCSE successes in 2007 to fewer than 20,000 this year is incredible.

**Liz Moore:** It is criminal. The point on GCSEs is that we have had substantial GCSE reforms. There are new qualifications in citizenship studies being taught now and we will not know the effect of those until we

have student entries for next summer's exam. Next summer, 2018, is the first time the new qualification will be examined. The nature of the qualification has shifted dramatically, which is another worry to our citizenship teachers in that the active citizenship component, which was a key part of the previous GCSE, has been diminished and is now a much smaller part, and it is critical to citizenship education.

**Tom Franklin:** The leadership point is crucial. The thing that distinguishes schools such as School 21, which James mentioned, is the leadership and that understanding of the role of schools and the role of education in preparing young people for life as a whole. We can see these islands of excellence, but we are lacking leadership at the national level and the help to school leaders right across the country to understand that that should be the purpose of their school rather than just ticking the boxes of attainment in a very narrow curriculum.

**James Weinberg:** We have not even touched on post-16, where finance really is an issue. Not only has the A-level in citizenship been scrapped, arguably at a time when teaching 16 to 18 year-olds about the kind of issues we have been discussing is most critical, but you saw under the coalition Government a cut of up to 75% in entitlement funding, which was how FE colleges funded citizenship-oriented extra-curricular activities for young people, so the capacity to deliver citizenship beyond the age of 16 has also been eviscerated.

Q60 **Baroness Barker:** A civic journey depends upon there being a pathway that is logical and follows on. Some of us have been very concerned about the way in which the National Citizenship Trust has been set up and we are keen to look at ways in which it can be better integrated with other parts of that civic journey. Would you like to talk about that in relation to citizenship education?

**Tom Franklin:** It is vital that the NCS is not just an island because, if that happens, it is a wasted opportunity for all those young people going through it, unless they have had the opportunity beforehand to learn about the skills that they need and everything else. It is seen as a rite of passage and there has been a huge investment, but if it is just this island, it just happens, they go away and then it is over.

**Baroness Barker:** So how can it be joined up?

**Liz Moore:** We did some work with the NCS Trust several years ago to develop some examples of how preparation for NCS and learning about it, the skills, knowledge and understanding that you need, could be developed and integrated into citizenship education in schools. The reality is that young people are in school and it is a perfect moment to introduce them to a programme like that. We also need to recognise that, for many young people, going away on a residential with unknown people is a frightening prospect. We are also concerned about some of the quality of the social action that is included in National Citizen Service. It lacks a political



dimension and the programme is set up such that undergraduate students work in providers around the country with young people who may themselves not have very much of an idea about what meaningful social action and active citizenship is. We have done some work with the National Citizen Service Trust and we had hoped that that work would be disseminated with their support and that we could offer providers training. But, unfortunately, that has not happened to date. We are still very much in contact with colleagues there and working with them, but we believe there is a connection between the citizenship curriculum in schools and the NCS programme that could be made but is not being made at the moment.

**James Weinberg:** The NCS was, essentially, a big idea for the big society, to put it bluntly, and it was a flagship policy. It was symbolic and it was dominated by character in the same way as other education reforms have been since 2010. I submitted suggested amendments to the NCS Trust Bill, along with Sarah Mills, who I believe you spoke to last week. In that, we both said that there was no reason why you could not integrate a formal citizenship education aspect to the NCS programme, which could fit quite neatly within the summer that students were spending there, and that would provide more direct links to curriculum-based citizenship education as well. Although those amendments were not accepted, Michael Lynas emailed me afterwards to say, “This is something we’d like to look into and we’ll be getting further help”, but I have not heard anything since. That could be pushed.

**Dr Avril Keating:** There have been three questions about three different aspects of the current education system—fundamental values, character education and the NCS—which are often treated as distinct from citizenship education and can cause confusion in schools when there should be more policy co-operation, more joining up between all these different programmes. A simple way to join with the NCS would be to make citizenship education compulsory throughout that 16 to 18 period both in academic selective schools and in vocational-track students who often do not get any opportunities whatsoever to have any sort of citizenship education during that period.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Mr Weinberg, you have mentioned Chile already, but where might we, as a Committee, look around the UK or internationally to identify relatively low-cost but high-impact citizenship education? Where should we look?

**James Weinberg:** Low cost?

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Value.

**James Weinberg:** There are many examples of citizenship education being done abroad. Before I mention some positive examples, I would stress caution in taking leads from other countries, especially the Far East where China and Korea, for example, have, ostensibly, citizenship

Dr Avril Keating, Senior Lecturer in Comparative Social Science, UCL Institute of Education; Liz Moorse, Chief Executive, Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT); Tom Franklin, CEO, Citizenship Foundation; James Weinberg, University of Sheffield – oral

education programmes which were initially about overwriting that perceived civility and subjectivity of their citizens with a focus on knowledge and responsibilities, but that has become highly nationalistic and cultural. I fear that what you see there is maybe the other end of a slide where character education could take us, so we should heed warnings from other countries as well.

For some good examples, you could look at New Zealand, where schools are given a lot of autonomy but within some broad basic instructions and where a whole host of initiatives outside the curriculum and through informal curricula in individual schools are taking place. South America has a much bigger emphasis in citizenship education on collective goods, and their citizenship education programmes have a big impact on preventing youth crime and gang culture. Specifically, there was some good research done in 2012 in Colombia on the use of citizenship education to re-orient vulnerable young men away from gang crime and towards socially oriented movements, protests and formal participation. Bahrain as well, surprisingly, has had a very good programme of social movement-oriented citizenship education since 2012, so you could look there as well. That is a good intro.

**Dr Avril Keating:** The saddest thing about all of this, of course, is that in the early 2000s everyone was looking to Britain to copy its model.

**Liz Moorse:** To England.

**Dr Avril Keating:** To England, pardon me; apologies for my mis-speaking there. We are very fortunate that next month there should be some new international data released in a comparative study of citizenship and citizenship education across about 20 different countries from the Far East, Europe, Asia and Latin America, which could give you some insight into which countries are doing well. Of course, this depends on what we consider good citizenship education to be, so, just because they have high test scores and know a lot about how Parliament works, it does not necessarily mean that it is good citizenship education, but that might be an interesting place to start.

**Lord Blunkett:** Is that next month?

**Dr Avril Keating:** Yes.

**Tom Franklin:** It is also interesting to look at the different nations within the UK because there are different examples. In Scotland, it has been far more embedded for much longer. If we look at Wales and the new curriculum there, the curriculum for life, having active, confident citizens is one of the key principles.

**Liz Moorse:** Closer to home, probably Ireland is the closest model to citizenship in England in the sense that it is established as a subject. In the other parts of the UK, it is done slightly differently with different levels of

Dr Avril Keating, Senior Lecturer in Comparative Social Science, UCL Institute of Education; Liz Moore, Chief Executive, Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT); Tom Franklin, CEO, Citizenship Foundation; James Weinberg, University of Sheffield – oral

impact and effect. I know that colleagues in Scotland are quite worried about what has happened to citizenship education there. Some of the Scandinavian countries are also interesting, Norway and Finland in particular, and some of the Danish model—but Norway in particular—is probably good to have a look at.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** When you say Ireland, do you mean Northern Ireland or the Republic?

**Liz Moore:** The Republic has a model. Northern Ireland has a slightly different model, but it is set up in a particular way because of the particular context in Northern Ireland, so it focuses on local and global citizenship without so much of an emphasis on national.

**The Chairman:** We are over time, but I thank you very much indeed. You have given us a lot of food of thought and, in particular, your passion for the subject has impressed us all. Thank you very much indeed.

Saskia Marsh, Adviser to the Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life (The Missing Muslims); Dr Therese O'Toole, University of Bristol; Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal, West Midlands Regional Prevent Lead for HE and FE – oral evidence (QQ 61-68)

**Saskia Marsh, Adviser to the Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life (The Missing Muslims); Dr Therese O'Toole, University of Bristol; Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal, West Midlands Regional Prevent Lead for HE and FE – oral evidence (QQ 61-68)**

Wednesday 25 October 2017

10.45 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beddoe; Baroness Stedman-Scott; Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 7

Heard in Public

Questions 61 - 68

Saskia Marsh, Adviser to the Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life (The Missing Muslims); Dr Therese O'Toole, University of Bristol; Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal, West Midlands Regional Prevent Lead for HE and FE – oral evidence (QQ 61-68)

## Examination of witnesses

Saskia Marsh, Dr Therese O'Toole, Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal.

**Q61 The Chairman:** Welcome and thank you very much for coming to join us this morning. We are looking forward to your contribution to our investigation.

A list of the interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. The session is open to the public and is being recorded for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and put on the Committee's website. A few days after this session, you will be sent a copy to check for accuracy. It would be helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after this evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence, or have any additional points you wish to make, you are welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us at that time. First, can I ask you to introduce yourselves? Then we will go to the questions.

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** I am the West Midlands regional Prevent lead for further and higher education.

**Dr Therese O'Toole:** I am reader in sociology at the University of Bristol.

**Saskia Marsh:** I am adviser to the commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life.

**Q62 The Chairman:** Thank you very much. Can we begin with an overview question? Could you describe the current state of integration and engagement among minority communities in the UK?

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** I do not think that is a very easy question to answer, to be quite honest, because when we talk about minority communities in this country the fact is that we have many different minority groups. We have groups that have been here for 40 or 50 years, since the 1950s, and we have groups such as the more recent Syrian refugees who have also come in. The level of integration has varied depending on those communities and where in the country we are talking about. It also varies according to which generation they are from, their gender, their religion and their levels of education. This question of integration is not a new phenomenon. I grew up in West Yorkshire and I remember this conversation happening in the black African-Caribbean communities: whether they were integrating and whether there was more we could do around getting them more involved with local communities.

It varies, particularly among the younger generations. Our younger generations are taking more of an interest in improving their communities and using the knowledge and skills that they have acquired in this country in engagement, and in civic engagement in particular. There is a lot more commitment from our younger generations to improve the quality of life for themselves and their older generations.

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There are good and bad examples depending on where you look. The integration and the commitment of people in communities up in Manchester, Leicester and Leeds towards their communities is very good, but unfortunately there are also communities in other parts of the country—I could name a few cities, but I might refrain from mentioning which communities I am talking about—where the integration and the level of civic engagement is as good as it could be, and that concerns me.

**The Chairman:** It would be helpful to the Committee if you could name them. It is all very well telling us where things are going very well, but we may wish to try to spread good practice to areas where practice is less good.

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** I grew up in inner city Leeds and I have seen the changes that have taken place in Leeds. I have seen fantastic examples of civic engagement. I have seen fantastic examples in parts of Birmingham and Manchester, but we still have communities in places such as Dewsbury and Luton, which unfortunately have pockets where that engagement with wider society is not taking place.

**Dr Therese O'Toole:** There is a mixed picture on integration among minority groups in the UK. On the one hand, in studies looking at the identification of Britishness or attitudes towards democracy and democratic values you tend to see patterns of quite high or positive levels of identification with British identity and democracy. That is also true of Muslim minorities, which are often a focus of a lot of concerns about these sorts of debates on integration and identity. It is also true of young Muslims. I agree with the comments about the appetite of young Muslims for engaging politically and civically.

I was involved in research with a colleague from the University of Bristol, Siobhan McAndrew, in which we looked at levels of political and civic engagement among young Muslims. We found that if you compared them to older groups, their levels of political engagement were a lot lower, but if you compared them to the levels of political and civic engagement among non-Muslim white British young people you found a much more positive picture. Young British-born Muslims are a bit more likely to vote than non-Muslim white British young people. They are more likely to protest, more likely to be “very satisfied” with democracy, and much more likely to volunteer. That fits a profile of what you might call a “critical citizen”: that is, a citizen who is invested in democracy but who has high expectations of it. The mixed picture, of course, is the contrast on the socioeconomic indicators.

**Saskia Marsh:** Perhaps it would be useful to give a little context to my involvement in the commission. That will help also to give context to my remarks. My background is in international conflict resolution, community engagement and countering extremism, so I come to the commission as an adviser looking at those issues internationally, and I helped to shape

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some of the recommendations that the commission put together on the specific challenges facing British Muslim communities and their engagement here in the UK.

I concur with what has been said so far: that there is a mixed picture. If you look at historical settlement patterns for British Muslim communities in the UK, you see that in some geographical areas we have a very high concentration particularly of British Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities living together without very much interaction with other ethnic groups. In some cases that has led to a de facto system of segregated schooling in specific areas. I would challenge the notion that British Muslims across the board are not integrated or do not wish to be integrated, which is a prevailing discourse that is increasingly apparent in some aspects of the media.

First, the lack of integration is most apparent in areas of high deprivation, and that points to the need to address structural barriers. You can see from the figures in the commission's report that Britain's Muslim population has some of the highest rates of deprivation of any community in the UK, so there is a correlation there. Secondly, assumptions about the extent to which British Muslims are integrated or not integrated are often inaccurate. There is plenty of research to show that British Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, for example, are just as politically engaged as their white counterparts. There are some statistics on that in the report. As a commission, we also heard in over 500 hours of travelling around the country listening to communities, both Muslim and non-Muslim, many examples of very positive community work that has been done by ethnic minorities outside their ethnic minority groups. Often this is interfaith work and is driven by minority women, who are very good at breaking down boundaries across their communities.

Finally, integration goes both ways. The white British population lives on average in districts where 85% of the population is white, which means that significant numbers of white Britons have very little engagement with ethnic groups. Integration is an effort that goes both ways.

Q63 **Baroness Pitkeathley:** I am going to ask about Prevent. We will have further questions about Prevent, so can I ask you to be relatively succinct in answer to this one, please? What effect does the Prevent programme have on integration and civic engagement? Hifsa, we will come to you last because of your particular involvement.

**Saskia Marsh:** The commission's original remit was not to look at Prevent, but it came up time and time again and a significant amount of evidence was presented about its impact and the general perceptions of it. I should emphasise that not everybody the commission spoke questioned the safeguarding principles behind Prevent, but there were concerns about how it has been communicated and about specific aspects of it, how it is being implemented and its impact on integration.

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**Dr Therese O'Toole:** In some ways it is difficult to audit the effects of Prevent on civic engagement and integration, because it is difficult to research the effects of withdrawal and retreat from public and civic spaces. A few things have happened in recent years since Prevent has been revised. In 2011, Prevent was revised quite significantly, and among those changes were a number of revisions that have some important implications for civic engagement that included the expansion of the definition of extremism to include non-violent extremism, which brings clear tensions with some aspects of democratic engagement and civil liberties.

There was also a growing emphasis on a more centralised model of implementing it, which stepped away from more locally-driven models of civic engagement. There has been a drop-off in the extent to which local actors have been able to engage in Prevent. That has been accompanied by a general diminution of the mechanisms for engagement by government with Muslim civil society organisations. The mechanisms for critical input and feedback into the ways in which Prevent is formulated and its impact on communities have greatly reduced, which is very problematic.

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** Being a Muslim, when I meet Muslims for the first time one of the questions they tend to ask me is what I do, and I tend to say, "I work in Prevent", simply because I want to see their reaction. On the vast majority of occasions, people will look at me and say, "Prevent what?" This impression that we have of all Muslims knowing what Prevent is and being very anti it is very misleading. In the vast majority of cases, people have no idea what it is about.

At an event last year I spoke to an audience of about 350 people, and those who responded made very negative comments about Prevent. It was what happened after the event that was quite surprising. The people who approached me were approaching me to say, "Well, we agree with Prevent, we understand what it's about, but we will not speak out because of fear. We do not want to face the type of abuse that you have just faced". I do not believe that it is Prevent that is stopping integration or civil engagement; it is fear, and the scaremongering by some groups and individuals. Leaflets have been produced saying that Prevent is all about spying and about targeting Muslims. That has a bigger impact on engagement than Prevent itself.

**The Chairman:** What would be the purpose of that? Why would anyone wish to be a scaremonger?

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** There is a belief out there, and Prevent has been portrayed for a very long time as targeting Muslims and spying. Unfortunately there are groups out there that are still using that, and that is scaring communities. Ordinary Muslims on the street who hear this are very fearful of being targeted. People are being told that if you look Muslim, if you are a conservative Muslim, you are going to be targeted as a violent extremist or a potential terrorist, and that scares people.



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**Q64 Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The Casey review argued that the Government need to be more robust in countering false perceptions about Prevent. Do you agree? How well do you think the Government are doing this? I am conscious that in your written evidence you have given us some perceptions about Prevent, et cetera, so it would be good for you to build on those, too.

**Saskia Marsh:** There are clearly some extremist groups and organisations, including within British Muslim communities, that wish to see Prevent fail for their own ideological reasons. Some of the commission's respondents also raised concerns that the Government have tended to view any criticism of Prevent as being made in bad faith. There are some legitimate concerns to be raised and areas for improvement.

I come from the perspective of working on countering violent extremism abroad. I run a Prevent-style pilot in Tunisia and have spent a lot of time looking at the evidence on what is more likely to work when it comes to countering violent extremism and what is definitively not going to work. The evidence is quite clear that building trust between communities and government agencies is essential to the success of these types of initiatives, and we are clearly not there in the UK with that.

To draw on the point made earlier about the issue of non-violent extremism, there are some very understandable concerns about tackling non-violent extremism, but the definition as it is currently used is open to being applied—or misapplied—in a way that is perhaps not beneficial for communities. A clearer definition and a review of the boundaries of who is included or excluded within that definition would be very useful. A very pragmatic evidence-based look at the benefits and drawbacks of non-engagement with those who have been labelled as extremists would also be very useful, again looking at the international evidence on what works in this instance.

**Dr Therese O'Toole:** It is not simply a communications problem. Some of the issues boil down to the ways in which Prevent has become, conceptually and operationally, much more expansive in recent years. That brings it into tension with a whole host of other public sector duties and professional values, including equalities duties in higher education, in relation to the duties to uphold freedom of speech, and for health professionals in relation to patient confidentiality. There are tensions for some teachers about whether the conception of safeguarding that is promoted by Prevent is compatible with the conception of safeguarding that is prevalent among teachers. That is a consequence of the way in which it has been expanded out across public sector institutions with this much broader definition of extremism, which becomes part of the remit of Prevent. We need to look at the proper definition of extremism that ought to form the remit of the Prevent agenda.

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** The British Government are clearly trying to counter some of the misconceptions that are out there. The one that I heard most

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recently was that they are trying to rewrite Islam. A lot of work has been done on that, with face-to-face engagement and Ministers going to local communities and having that dialogue. For me, the answer is dialogue, which is taking place, but, as somebody said, there is always room for improvement, and I know that is currently being looked at.

**The Chairman:** Do the leaders of the Muslim community, the Muslim council, provide appropriate leadership to say, "Come on, let's get this into perspective"?

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** In some parts of the country, yes, but it very much depends on who we are talking about when we talk about leaders. We have Muslim leaders and we have gatekeepers, and for me it is very important that we go past those gatekeepers to get that message out into the communities where it needs to be heard.

Q65 **Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Critics of Prevent have suggested that it should do more to involve local stakeholders. Are the Government doing enough to ensure that local stakeholders are consulted and supportive of Prevent in their area? Should more be done?

I would like to widen that out a little beyond local stakeholders. Could you say a little more about the Government's policy towards non-violent extremist groups? Is it on public record which groups they are not willing to relate to? Presumably we know what those groups stand for. I was thinking this morning of a parallel. A classical Marxist does not, of course, believe in social democracy, and they might very well speak against it. I am trying to draw a parallel between that and a Muslim organisation that perhaps does not believe in social democracy. Could you unpack that a little if it is on the public record?

**Dr Therese O'Toole:** The levels of local engagement have tailed off significantly in recent years. There is a contrast with the quite locally-driven model of Prevent that was in place prior to 2011, which, although it was a very criticised model because local authorities had a certain amount of leeway to shape its implementation and to adapt it to local contexts, offered a variety of ways in which to implement it. That resulted in variety in the quality of the implementation, but you also got models of quite effective, and sometimes innovative, engagement in Prevent in some places. That has fallen off, partly because the mechanisms of civic engagement have reduced and partly because Prevent has become much more centralised; it is much more directed by the Home Office.

**Lord Blunkett:** Why do you think there was such enormous antagonism to the earlier Prevent programme? I sat in meetings where politicians in the Palace of Westminster were almost apoplectic about it, as though somehow it had completely failed. Where do you think that came from?

**Dr Therese O'Toole:** It is very difficult to disentangle Prevent from other parts of the counterterrorism agenda, such as Pursue. In 2009, for

instance, there were lots of allegations circulating that front-line Prevent personnel were being used as surveillance agents as part of the Pursue agenda. It has been quite difficult for Prevent to shake off that association with surveillance. There is also the difficulty that engagement that occurred through Prevent, while it was helpful in some places, and useful and needed, and created new spaces for civic engagement, those initiatives found it very difficult to shake off the difficulties of engagement through a counterterrorism rubric. It was always dogged by concern that when Muslims are approached it is as suspects rather than as citizens. That is a perennial problem for most kinds of engagement under Prevent. Helpful things got done, but the efficacy of those initiatives would have been enhanced had they not been implemented under the Prevent agenda. They would have been helpful to the Prevent agenda, but they would have been improved by being run autonomously from it.

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** One of the things that we cannot ignore is that, prior to its review in 2010, Prevent was seen very much as being about targeting Muslims. In 2011, when the new strategy came out it made it very clear that while the biggest threat to national security was coming from groups and individuals who associated themselves with the religion of Islam, there were other forms of violent extremism and potential terrorism in this country that we cannot ignore. I do not believe that message is getting out to our Muslim communities and the wider population loudly enough. We have had recent instances, such as the murder of Jo Cox last year and the proscribing of National Action last December, and there are other issues that are going on in the country that are not related to Islamist ideologies, but I do not think that has been made very clear. Whether that is down to the Government or to our media is a question that we also need to consider.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** We have not had answers to my question about non-violent extremism. It is a very important question, and we need to tease it out a little. We have the experts here, so let us hear from them.

**Saskia Marsh:** I am not aware of the current blacklist. I know that a list was circulated a couple of years ago on institutions that would not be engaged by the Government. The commission's, and my own view, is that even with individuals you vehemently disagree with there is a need to engage if there is any hope of changing or moderating their viewpoint. The general principle of broad engagement is important, and that has been lost over time. That goes back to the question of whether enough has been done to involve local stakeholders, and to the point raised earlier about who is engaged, because there is certainly a widespread perception that it is the gatekeepers, who are not necessarily representative of British Muslim communities, who engage, and that there is a general lack of willingness to engage more broadly in the communities, because that requires a broader geographical scope and requires engaging across the theological spectrum. Unfairly or not, a perception emerged very clearly in the commission's evidence sessions of quite deliberately selective

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communication—that it was not a genuine exchange but a rubber-stamping process; you engage with certain self-appointed spokespeople within British Muslim communities to rubber-stamp a process rather than have a two-way exchange.

**Dr Therese O'Toole:** It is very difficult to know where the bar should be set for who should and should not be engaged with. The difficulty about that kind of stance is that it seems to exclude lots of organisations that are otherwise strong advocates of Muslim democratic participation and engagement with British society. It feels as though their definition of extremists has become very wide. It is catching a lot of organisations and actors within its remit who then become part of a group of people who cannot be engaged with. That is very problematic for democratic and civic engagement, and it is not very transparent either.

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** I have never been told that there are organisations that I should not be engaging with. We have seen a number of campaigns, such as the Prevent lobby last year. Certain campaigns have been run by various groups trying to prevent engagement with Prevent, but otherwise I have never been told that there are groups or individuals that I should not be engaging with.

**The Chairman:** You have used the word "gatekeeper". What sort of people are we talking about when we talk about gatekeepers?

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** As a Muslim, I have lived and worked in Muslim communities for many years, and I know that we have gatekeepers in our communities. They are the individuals who are seen as the go-to person, whether they are involved with the local mosque, are the local councillor, or are the oldest person within the community, and they are seen to know about Muslims. We have a number of what I would call gatekeepers across the country.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** We will probably hear more about that in the next session, because I think the gatekeepers tend to be men.

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** I was trying to avoid using that word, but you are right, yes.

**Lord Verjee:** Can I ask for some more clarification? Can you give us an idea of the types of gatekeepers you would refer to in the host community, the non-Muslim community? There seem to be people who do not understand this concept of gatekeepers in the Muslim community. What is the equivalent in the non-Muslim community?

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** That is a really difficult question for me to answer, because I personally have not experienced in the non-Muslim community. I am thinking about the small community that I live in. I know that when issues come up, there are two individuals who people will instinctively want

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to make sure are okay with what is going on. It is very difficult for me to make that comparison with non-Muslim communities.

**Dr Therese O'Toole:** It is a very common feature of civic engagement that there are people who are nodal points in local governance networks and consultative forums. There is something very asymmetric about the idea that there is a Muslim leadership to which government can go should it require an answer on what Muslims think. You could see over the 2000s a move towards a much more differentiated model of consultation and representation, and a greater recognition on the part of government that there might not be Muslim leaders whom government could use as interlocutors, and that you might need a much more diverse array of Muslim organisations. Helpfully, some of that, through Prevent, did prioritise or emphasise the inclusion of women in those representative structures. That has also fallen off in recent times.

**Saskia Marsh:** One very basic point to make is that there is not just one British Muslim community. There are many different communities, and it is not a monolithic structure or community. Your starting point is to think of it as many different communities.

**Lord Rowe-Beard:** I am getting mixed signals. Is it a positive development, or have there always been gatekeepers in these societies?

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** I use the term "gatekeeper". Previously we used the term "Muslim leaders", and, exactly as you said, those Muslim leaders have tended to be the men in the communities.

Q66 **Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I have a little question to help me with my thinking. That was my experience. Years ago—I am going back to the 1970s—I used to teach in an inner city school, and you are absolutely right; there were people we went to, and we did not talk to the Muslim community unless we spoke through those gatekeepers. It was clearly not helpful. It disappoints me that it is still as strong as it is, but I absolutely understand that.

One of your earlier comments was about the engagement of people from a Muslim background in wider civic life. I sometimes worry that there is a danger that when somebody from a Muslim background stands for the local authority to represent a ward and gets elected, we assume that they are the voice of the Muslim community. Because you are Muslim does not mean that you always have to speak for Muslims, just as, if you are a woman, sometimes you do not speak for women; you are speaking because you are in that position. Is there a danger that as more people who want to be part of mainstream society take on mainstream posts, the people who choose not to do that become the gatekeepers by default, so they are the ones who are less likely to want to integrate? Does that make sense? It is a period of transition. People who would be more progressive voices for the Muslim community might not do that. They might say, "I don't want to do that. I don't want to be associated with my ethnic community all the time. I

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just want to be me and do what I want and speak for lots of groups. I want to speak for white groups, for men, for women, for disabled people”, or whatever.

**Saskia Marsh:** I guess that is a fair point, but a solution to this—there is never a total solution—is encouraging more diverse voices into the fray in the first place. That is work in progress, but we are starting to see that happening in certain areas.

Q67 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Going back to Prevent, some of your answers have already touched on this, but I specifically want to ask whether you think it has had, as was feared earlier, a negative effect on democratic debate, particularly in schools, universities and colleges.

**Dr Therese O'Toole:** In universities it is difficult, I guess, to gauge the impact of Prevent on student engagement and democratic debate in universities, partly because, as I said before, it is difficult to plot the effects of withdrawal and retreat and so on. People talk about a chill factor of Prevent in universities. I guess people are primarily concerned about what they feel are the discriminatory aspects of Prevent and its impact on freedom of speech. If you look at the picture across higher education, you get a lot of variation in the ways in which universities have implemented their Prevent duty. Some universities have taken their duty to uphold freedom of speech as a primary duty, and taken the need to have due regard to the need to prevent drawing people into terrorism as a lesser duty, and organised their external speaker policies on that kind of basis.

It is not helped by the fact that there is a difference in what the statutory Prevent duty for universities stipulates, which is the need to have due regard for people being drawn into terrorism, and the guidance to universities that asks universities to perform risk assessments that include non-violent as well as violent extremism. That goes beyond the statutory duty and is where you start to get concerns that universities are now putting very difficult processes in place for external speakers. That is having a deleterious effect on debate. People either cannot clear the administrative hurdles for the external speakers processes or the university is taking a very risk-averse approach and blocking people from speaking on contested issues. I do not think that those sorts of things will be applied consistently across the sector, because different institutions interpret what are not very consistent messages from government about the extent of their duties under Prevent.

**Saskia Marsh:** I can only report on the evidence that was presented to the commission, a substantial amount of which came from young British Muslims. Their very strong perception was that the room for debate on contentious issues is shrinking, and that is linked partly to the lack of clarity over the inconsistently applied principle of what extremism is and how that relates to Prevent. That is of concern, because the ability to constructively debate difficult issues is a cornerstone of democratic society, and it is that

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debate and engagement that is part of the process that helps to moderate different opinions. Again, that came out quite strongly in the evidence.

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** A report was produced by three universities earlier this year in July that found no evidence that Prevent is stifling debate in our schools and universities. There was some evidence in that report that since the Prevent duty was introduced there has been more open discussion about extremism and radicalisation. It also found that 73% of respondents who were teachers understood that ultimately when we are talking about Prevent we are talking about safeguarding and a form of grooming. They found no evidence that this is contributing to more racism, Islamophobia, hatred or intolerance.

The Salman Butt judicial review not long ago found that there was no evidence to suggest that this was infringing academic freedoms or free speech. We know that there have been isolated incidents, and we have anecdotal evidence about conversations that have taken place, but, again, one of the things that I have found in my work is that a lot of that has to do with individual teachers' and lecturers' fear of having this conversation with young people.

My background is equality and diversity, and I can remember having conversations about racism and intolerance. Staff used to feel very nervous about having these conversations. I think we are at that same point now with lecturers and teachers, who do not always know how to have those conversations and what terminology they should use when talking about radicalisation and extremism. This goes back to what I was saying earlier; that, for me, the issues are the lack of understanding and the scaremongering that has gone on, and some of the some false media reporting on this.

**The Chairman:** There is anecdotal evidence, and this may be media false news, of Muslim societies in universities trying to have separate meetings for men and women. Would you like to comment on that as a part of civic engagement in our inquiry?

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** Again, as a Muslim, I do not think there is any need for that. I have heard examples of it. Clearly, praying facilities are a completely separate issue, but certainly in some of the universities where what you describe has taken place, universities and student unions have taken that on board. It should not be happening on our campuses.

**Lord Blunkett:** Should we open up these issues in schools and colleges as part of the citizenship curriculum?

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** It is really important that these conversations take place. For me, if you try to stifle a conversation, if you try to prevent something being discussed, it goes underground, and as soon those conversations go underground they will take place without challenge. What Prevent should be doing, if you look at the strategy, is trying to encourage

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these debates so that we can encourage our young people in our schools and colleges to have these conversations in open and safe environments where they can have that alternative view.

**Dr Therese O'Toole:** The open and safe environment also depends, of course, on whether there is an obligation on lecturers or teachers to report people to the police. I think that is a key issue, whether Prevent is compatible with free speech, either on campus or in schools.

Q68 **Baroness Redfern:** Following from the previous question, do you see Prevent and fundamental British values as inextricably linked? Do you think this is a good or a bad thing? Saskia mentioned the implementation of Prevent and Therese mentioned its centralisation. Could you comment on that question, please?

**Dr Therese O'Toole:** Like many things, if we were to debate British values under the rubric of the Prevent agenda, it would be likely to have quite harmful and toxic implications for that debate. You can see that replicated across a range of different domains, whether cohesion or integration. There is a risk that the very valid debates about gender equality will become contaminated by concerns about securitisation in those debates, because they are being tied or hitched to the counterextremism or Prevent agenda. We could have a debate about British values—it would be good if it was a debate and not simply a prescription handed to us from the Home Office—and to have it in a way that is autonomous from the security agenda.

**Saskia Marsh:** Among respondents to the commission this discussion on British values has been perceived as divisive, again because the term is being perceived as focusing on very exclusive values rather than on universal values that individuals of different cultures hold. That effect is obviously counterproductive to the safeguarding aims of Prevent, and I suppose also to the original aims of wanting to define British values, which for me are about defining acceptable standards of engagement towards one another in a multicultural, multifaith society. Again, it comes down to the definitions employed and thinking about what we want to achieve. Imposing a definition of British values is likely to be an exclusive process. What you want to do is encourage a modicum of debate and discussion about these issues.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Can you just say a bit more about that? One of the criticisms that we heard in the past is that the values are not just British values but values that would be subscribed to by huge sections of the world. You have not said that. Could you give a few examples of some of the values that you think are not inclusive, or some of the ones that are missing?

**Saskia Marsh:** I would have to think about that in a little more detail. Give me time and I will try to come up with some examples.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** What I and quite a lot of our evidence is



Saskia Marsh, Adviser to the Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life (The Missing Muslims); Dr Therese O'Toole, University of Bristol; Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal, West Midlands Regional Prevent Lead for HE and FE – oral evidence (QQ 61-68)

saying is that universal values of democratic citizenship are being presented as uniquely British, which then has an excluding effect. Is that what you were trying to say?

**Saskia Marsh:** You said it more elegantly than I can.

**Lord Blunkett:** It is like a "Today" interview on Radio 4.

**Lord Verjee:** Can we get an idea of numbers? How many people are being referred under the Prevent programme, and how many people are under active surveillance under it? Does anyone know the rough numbers?

**Saskia Marsh:** I am afraid I do not know the universal numbers on that. It is quite hard data to have access to. I have been given access to it in very localised cases with individual committees, but I do not have the bigger picture, I am afraid.

**Dr Therese O'Toole:** There are figures for Channel referrals that I can send to the Committee if you would like to see them and how they break down. The numbers have been going up. I guess what they do not tell you is the number of people who are reported to the police but who are not then referred to Channel. From discussions with Prevent police officers, it sounds as though a lot of people are contacting the police but that perhaps only a small proportion of them will end up as a Channel referral. They often end up being a front-line service uncovering a lot of social issues that are emerging from the communities, and they are acting as a referral agency to other agencies such as mental health services or directing people to help with family breakdown or substance abuse and so on. It will be difficult to find out what the workload of Prevent police officers is, but you can see how much of that gets sent in the way of Channel referrals.

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** I do not have access to any figures. We know—and, again, I do not remember the exact numbers—that of the Prevent referrals that are made nationally, 30% are from far-right extremism as opposed to Islamist ideologies, but there are parts of the country where it is a 50:50 split, but, again, I do not have access to specific numbers.

**Lord Verjee:** It would be very useful to try to get those numbers if we can. We have covered a lot of this, but should Prevent be reviewed or reassessed? If so, what elements should change and what should be retained?

**Saskia Marsh:** Our view as the commission is, yes, Prevent could benefit from independent review. That could comprise an independent panel of experts with the relevant range of expertise and include individuals at the front line of service delivery and representatives from the local community.

**Lord Blunkett:** But not the gatekeepers.

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** Definitely not.

Saskia Marsh, Adviser to the Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life (The Missing Muslims); Dr Therese O'Toole, University of Bristol; Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal, West Midlands Regional Prevent Lead for HE and FE – oral evidence (QQ 61-68)

**Saskia Marsh:** Exactly, and such a review could consider the growing body of policy and practice from overseas initiatives to counter violent extremism and therefore provide constructive suggestions on how Prevent could be refined to better achieve its goals. You may be aware that David Anderson QC, who also gave evidence to our commission, has recommended a more limited review, i.e. just looking at the most sensitive and high-profile aspect of it, which is the operation of Prevent in schools. We have also suggested that each local community could have its own review board made up of carefully selected local stakeholders to provide an ongoing assessment of how Prevent is working in practice.

**Dr Therese O'Toole:** I agree that there should be a review of Prevent, and that it should look in particular at a proper and correct definition of extremism that should legitimately form part of the Prevent agenda, and that it should say whether that should include non-violent extremism and, if so, how that should be defined, with a particular eye on its implications for equality, civil liberties and democratic engagement. A Prevent review should also look at the scope for local actors to develop more locally-sensitive and contextually-specific models and responses to tackling extremism and the ways in which that might engage with local communities; not local leaders but what we call democratic constellations of Muslim civil society organisations, of which there are many.

There has been a growth and maturation of Muslim civil society organisations that could be part of this process of looking at what locally-specific and sensitive models might look like. There also needs to be a more general conversation or debate about the appropriate mechanisms for civic engagement with Muslim civil society organisations more generally, both to look at the implications of Prevent on Muslim communities and to deal with a whole host of issues that affect Muslim communities. I suggest that should be run autonomously from Prevent.

**Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal:** Very briefly, a review is always a good thing, and I cannot see that a review or assessment of any strategy would do any harm. I think Prevent is a good strategy, but there are some areas that we need to work on, particularly community engagement. I would like to see our Muslim communities almost taking ownership of Prevent. They are the biggest community that this is affecting and they need to be a key stakeholder in this and in any of the changes that take place.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much indeed. You have been most helpful. It has been a really interesting session and yet more food for thought.

Dr Khursheed Wadia, Muslim Women's Network UK; Nazir Afzal, Former Chief Crown Prosecutor for North-West England; and Dr Line Nyhagen, Loughborough University – oral evidence (QQ 69-78)

**Dr Khursheed Wadia, Muslim Women's Network UK; Nazir Afzal, Former Chief Crown Prosecutor for North-West England; and Dr Line Nyhagen, Loughborough University – oral evidence (QQ 69-78)**

Wednesday 25 October 2017

11.35 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts (Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beddoe; Baroness Stedman-Scott; Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 8

Heard in Public

Questions 69 - 78

## Examination of witnesses

Dr Khursheed Wadia, Nazir Afzal, Dr Line Nyhagen.

**Q69 The Chairman:** Thank you very much indeed for coming to give evidence to us this morning. We have an hour, during which we are looking forward very much to having your expertise and knowledge made available to us. A list of the interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. The session is open to the public and is being recorded by the BBC for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and will be put on the Committee's website. A few days after the session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy, and it would be most helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after this evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence, or indeed have any additional points to make, you are welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. Could you, please, introduce yourselves and then we will go into the questions?

**Dr Khursheed Wadia:** I am Khursheed Wadia and am here today on behalf of the Muslim Women's Network UK.

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** I am Line Nyhagen. I am a reader in sociology at Loughborough University.

**Nazir Afzal:** I am Nazir Afzal. I was the chief prosecutor for the north-west of England and the chief executive of the country's police and crime commissioners and I am now doing various other things.

**The Chairman:** Could we start with an overview question which is: is there a problem of social inclusion in the UK, and is the problem greater or less for women within certain communities?

**Dr Khursheed Wadia:** Yes, there is a problem of social inclusion in the UK. It is not a new problem, but, on the other hand, it seems to have become a lot more profound over the last few years in particular areas of the country and among certain population groups. There are a number of factors for that, and one that I would highlight is the economic downturn that took place after 2008 and the politics of austerity which have held sway since then. As far as minority faith communities are concerned, the Muslim community in particular, the downturn in the economic situation with the implementation of austerity politics has been coupled with rising levels of Islamophobia and racism which have had an impact on the level and extent to which such populations are included within the majority society in this country.

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** Yes, there is a problem of social exclusion in the UK. First and foremost, it is related to existing broader structures of poverty and deprivation as well as processes of marginalisation and discrimination. If we are talking in particular about the social exclusion of women, it is related to many factors, including low income, unemployment, poverty and gender-based violence. Gender-based discrimination and sexual

harassment are also factors that contribute to the exclusion of women, as is racism, as already mentioned, and religious discrimination and homophobia.

Recently, we have seen the reporting of widespread sexual harassment in cultural industries, the racist treatment of women in sports and women in the media industry being paid less than men for the same work, so gender inequalities and discrimination against women are not unique to certain communities. We tend sometimes to speak about gender inequality as if it no longer exists in the majority society but continues to exist only in minority communities. I would emphasise that gender inequalities and discrimination against women are endemic to society, relating to politics, education, work, civil society and intimate life. I would also say that women within some conservative milieus and groups sometimes face additional problems of social exclusion—for example, in instances where religion is used by men to control and limit women's opportunities in society.

**Nazir Afzal:** I agree with colleagues here that there is a link or a correlation between social exclusion and the levels of poverty and deprivation as there is a link between integration and deprivation. That also affects white, working-class or low-income boys, which we know from recent research, so they are impacted in the same way. There are, as has been said, vast gender inequalities. I would say exactly the same as Dr Nyhagen, that, when women are being harassed in the workplace, denied basic rights at home, being oppressed in communities, et cetera, what hope is there for social inclusion? We need to get to those root causes. In the same way we recognise that there is discrimination in the workplace where there are issues in relation to pay and precarious working conditions, with women often working part-time or doing flexible working, which in itself creates significant issues for them, and reduced access to services. One thing that has happened as a consequence of our need to reduce our funding nationally, as some Governments would say, is that some services have gone, so NGOs are now slipping into where the state would ordinarily have provided those services. NGOs do not have any money and, invariably, they operate on a shoestring and without any support. I am a patron of six of them and I can assure you that it is tough for them to do the work that local authorities, the state and everybody previously did. Yes, to answer your question, there is a significant problem of social inclusion, it is worse for women, and we will talk about the answers during the course of the next hour.

Q70 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** My question follows on quite nicely. Perhaps I should say for the record that Line and I are colleagues in the same department at Loughborough University. You have outlined the problems that women generally face, discrimination and so forth. To what extent do you think these create barriers? We are talking mainly about integration in this session, but we are also, as you know, interested in citizenship and active citizenship. To what extent do you think the factors that you have outlined create greater barriers for women being active citizens than perhaps men face?

**Nazir Afzal:** In this House, or if you want to become an MP, you will be ready for the substantial abuse that you will receive online. If you are in a position of high-profile employment and want to get to the next level, you can rest assured that somebody somewhere will try to take you down. That is true for anybody in a minority and certainly true for women, so those barriers are real and the experience of women, particularly women from minorities, is extremely real.

To answer your broader question, women from minorities face triple discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity and religion. As has been said, these multiple barriers mean that they cannot access basic rights. It is always a tougher battle for a woman, particularly a woman from minorities, to get on, to succeed and to do so with the same level of commitment as any man might do, particularly a man from a relatively middle-class background.

On the conversation that you had earlier about gatekeepers, the majority of Muslims in this country are now under 25 and female from low-income backgrounds. All of their gatekeepers and leaders are male, middle class and in their 50s. Those of us in authority have a responsibility to go beyond them and talk to the people who do not have a voice, but we do not do that and we are extraordinarily lazy in who we engage with. That means that those who would want to progress, share their success and contribute more to our society fail to do so because we make it so difficult for them.

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** Your question was about which barriers?

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** It was about the extent that the kinds of factors that you have outlined act as barriers to active citizenship for women in both the minority and majority communities.

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** There are structural barriers to civic engagement and participation by women in overall society which include discrimination, harassment and stereotyping based on gender, race, sexuality and religion. This takes place on the street, on public transport, in education, in the labour market context, in media outlets and elsewhere. We can speak about both direct forms of discrimination and indirect forms of discrimination, such as an unconscious bias that women are facing, for example, when they apply for jobs or promotion.

There are also structural barriers to civic engagement and participation by women within specific contexts, such as organisations, and here we can include Parliament, the BBC, churches and mosques and all kinds of organisations which have particular barriers to the inclusion of women as opposed to men. That includes a lack of women in governance structures, a lack of spaces for women and a lack of acceptance of the particular contributions that women can make. Some of these barriers are due to entrenched patriarchal attitudes towards women and are present in the overall society as well as in particular organisations, some of which I have mentioned.

Q71 **Lord Blunkett:** What would you suggest in practical terms that is not being endeavoured at the moment which should be, because you are painting a picture of victimhood?

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** In my own research, I certainly do not portray women as victims. When I speak to and interview women, they demonstrate a lot of agency and empowerment because women have a lot of capabilities and skills to navigate through some of these structural barriers and find particular spaces for themselves. It is not my intention to paint a picture of victimhood.

**Lord Blunkett:** I am clear that women are not victims—they are active citizens—but I am trying to get the balance right because it came across that those of us who are men are somehow engaged in this conspiracy to oppress. There is, undoubtedly, male oppression, and there has been historically, but I am trying to get at what we do about it, not at how awful we are.

**Nazir Afzal:** One of the things I did a few years ago was deciding never to go to a meeting that is all men; you can change behaviours by changing your own. When you talk about places of worship or sports organisations, I ask, "Can you tell me who's attending?" It has caused an enormous hoo-ha sometimes. I remember one individual saying, "Don't worry, his wife will be there", and I did not go, so you can change behaviours by changing your own behaviour as a leader. That is one thing. Do not accept the fact that they say, "No, our committee happens to be all men", or, "We have one female representative who is responsible for families", which the Muslim Council of Britain used to have. It has changed substantially, but it used to have one woman who was responsible for family issues. We can do a great deal more ourselves and there is a responsibility on us to do something.

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** Can I just reply to the particular question about whether there is a conspiracy to oppress? I do not believe that there is a conspiracy to oppress among men. However, my point in pointing out those structural barriers to engagement in overall society and specific organisational contexts is that we should not only point to ethnic minority or religious minority communities when we talk about gender inequality but we need to speak about a broader range of contexts.

**Dr Khursheed Wadia:** There are two points to be made. One is to do with the reality of the strong link between economic advantage and civic and political participation. There is no doubt that if you have the time and the resources you participate at a higher level in civic and political life. The other point is that there is no conscious conspiracy to oppress women, but, when people are in a position already, they are very reluctant to step down from that position and to make way for people who are disadvantaged and excluded from those positions. To give you one example, about a year ago, the Muslim Women's Network campaigned on having more women entering political life at the local level, talking about councillorships in the West Midlands. Going back to the previous session and the conversation about

gatekeepers or self-appointed community leaders, there is a problem in that there is a preference for political parties, from the local to the highest level, to have their preferred interlocutors among local communities. Traditionally, those interlocutors have been men who are very reluctant to make space for women, so there has to be a change in culture in political parties, NGOs and other organisations. There are women among Muslim and BME communities who are qualified and keen to come into civic and political life, but it is very difficult to fight against the not wanting to make space for those who are not there already.

**The Chairman:** Perhaps we can take Lord Blunkett's question a stage further. We can produce a report which is full of statements of motherhood and apple pie and how we should do this and that but, if our report is going to be valuable to society, we will have to have some quite crunchy things to say. Mr Afzal, you said that we should reach past the gatekeepers, but, as we have just heard, gatekeepers will not say, "Yes, thank you very much. I realise I've passed my sell-by date. I enjoy your new ideas". It would be very helpful if, now or before we reach the end—or in writing—you could say, "These are some of the things that could be done", which will not mean that we get stuck on the issue of "You're interfering with our religious and cultural specialities", whatever community they are in.

**Nazir Afzal:** To give you one example, after the terrible terror attacks that we had throughout the summer—and this is no comment on the people who organised the meetings—you had emergency meetings set up and the people who turned up at those meetings were the same people who turn up at every meeting. Whenever you have a meeting at short notice, if anybody turns up, they are the people you turn away, in my personal view. This is why I keep saying we are so lazy. All the time we should be trying to identify who we should be engaged with and go to them. When we had a spate of knife attacks a few years ago in London, I remember going above a bookmaker's in Willesden where all these young men with bandanas on came to talk to me. They would never have come to my office; I had to go to them. I did not feel guilty. We carried out due diligence, risk assessments and the rest, but it is important to do that. At the moment, we do the simplistic thing, have a meeting, because that is the way to do it, and you can rest assured that those gatekeepers will turn up.

The other thing that we do badly, and I have shared this with government, is that these organisations which are doing the work, which are invariably women's groups up and down the country, do not have the capacity or the capability to bid for enormous sums of money; they are too busy. They are out there protecting us and families on a daily basis, yet we expect them to fill in a 50-page document to access some funding from the Home Office or whoever. We need to give them the capacity and capability to do that. In the north of England, there is a coalition where particularly NGOs from BME groups are coming together and identifying among themselves somebody who has the capacity and capability to do these enormous bid documents and sharing that responsibility among each other. It is a big thing for them, but they do not have the wherewithal of the enormous



government departments or the large NGOs. That is one mechanism by which you get the right people doing the right things and it is not rocket science, as they would say.

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** The question was what we can do. To follow up on what Nazir has said, in *The Missing Muslims: Unlocking the British Muslim potential for the benefit of all* report by Citizens UK, they suggest introducing a voluntary standard for mosques and Islamic centres of reform to mosque committees and a strategy on access for women, which also comes out of my research. The Government should encourage the representation of women in the governance of religious organisations. The proposal by Citizens UK of a voluntary standard for mosques and Islamic centres is a way to do that. Generally, it is helpful to have specific targets or policies and broader policies which are not necessarily targeted at Muslim organisations but religious organisations more broadly and civil society actors and stakeholders. Why not be bold and say that anyone who receives public funding should be required to report on the gender balance of their governance structures, for example? There is an example in the written evidence from the Muslim Women's Network to this Committee which cites that Birmingham Central Mosque, a registered charity, has an all-male governance. Perhaps there could be a policy developed in relation to permitting organisations to register as a charity that there has to be a gender balance in the governance structure. All kinds of things can be done in this regard.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** This was a follow-up about 10 minutes ago to Mr Afzal's opening comments, when you were talking about the barriers to women in ethnic minorities. I accept that it is a pretty dire picture. Very often, you tend to think that the answer to this is education, qualifications and achievement. If you look at the educational achievement of girls and women, and of ethnic communities, they have improved in recent years and are a lot better than they used to be and are not now the most underperforming group and women are not the most underperforming gender. From your experience, why is that not enough to get people involved in civic life and to have better opportunities, or do you see that happening, but it is not enough?

**Nazir Afzal:** I am positive that it is happening, but there are two extremes here. You have those who are doing very successfully, going to university and graduating—my niece is a doctor—so that is happening.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Can you sense that is more than it used to be?

**Nazir Afzal:** But you still have, I think, 57% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who are inactive in the workplace, so you have a sizeable chunk of women.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** But are they using their qualifications, if they have them?

**Nazir Afzal:** I am not a researcher—the universities are here—but it would be helpful to carry out the journey of these women. Time and time again, I hear from the NGOs that I work with that there are a number of pinch points. At 16, will they go on to further education? How many drop off? At 18, how many will go on to even further education? In the first year of university, how many of them are forced into marriage or have an arranged marriage and leave, and how many of them, when they have graduated, go into the workplace? Too often, they do not. It would be helpful to understand what is happening and where those pinch points are in order for us to develop with the communities what the interventions should be, but time and time again I hear it. I remember one father saying to me that his job or his duty was to ensure that his daughter did not have a boyfriend, did not go clubbing, was educated and continued in education until such time as he could find her a husband, and that was it, nothing about what her aspirations or ambitions would be. I do not want to generalise, there are some phenomenal success stories, but we have two distinct extremes here.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** So within the community, even if they have those keys to the gate that we are always talking about, they are less likely to be used and capitalised on.

**Nazir Afzal:** Absolutely, and most of them come off at some point.

Q72 **Baroness Barker:** Reflecting ahead at what needs to be done without looking at the root causes of discrimination, as I listened to your opening remarks I remembered—I do not know about anybody else in the room—that I happened to be in Oldham when the riots happened, and a lot of what you have said today could have been said and was said then. In the light of that, it is worth going back to ask: what are the root causes of discrimination between and within communities?

**Dr Khursheed Wadia:** There are multiple causes of discrimination. If I talk about Muslim women in particular, you can find those causes in three areas: the majority society, the ethnic community and the Muslim community. In the majority society, as I said in my opening remarks, there is evidence of stereotyping of Muslim women, who are seen as passive, uninterested in life beyond the doorstep of their home, and so on. Those stereotypes have an impact; they are not out there doing nothing. That is one cause of discrimination that takes place and feeds into how employers might regard women. It is a fact that Muslim women tend to be 70% more unemployed than white women from Christian communities, to call them that. The reason that they are unemployed boils down very much to the practices of recruitment and retention of those women in the workplace, which is partly fed by those stereotypes that I talked about.

There is also discrimination that women suffer as a result of ethnocultural attitudes of their own communities, that there are certain gender roles that they play and certain gender expectations where they are expected, first and foremost, to be a good mother, a good wife, a good daughter and a good homemaker, "good" meaning that you devote your time to all those

things to the detriment of anything that you do outside of the home. If you are looking at Islam, although many women will tell you that they use Islam as a tool to fight cultural attitudes, and they do, there are different interpretations of Islam, and those who are in positions of power in Islamic institutions will say otherwise and find ways of restricting women from Muslim communities going beyond the role of mother, wife, good daughter and so on. Those are different sources of discrimination that women face which prevent them from going out and participating to their capacity.

**Baroness Barker:** Given that in the previous session we were told strongly that a key part of the answer to all this is dialogue, how do different communities and people within communities start and maintain a dialogue that addresses those factors that cause discrimination?

**Dr Khursheed Wadia:** If you are talking about dialogue, it can only take place between those who are excluded and those who are not if there are spaces where those who are excluded can enter. As long as that does not happen, there will be no meaningful dialogue. The dialogue cannot be between people who claim to represent women in particular communities; it has to be with those women. Therefore, unless there is a space, whether it is provided by political parties, NGOs, employers, et cetera, a real dialogue cannot take place. You have to invite people into those spaces. That goes back to what Nazir was saying, that you have to go out there and be able to talk to people.

One of the successes is that in certain campaigns where women from Muslim communities have come out and voted extensively, political parties have gone out there and talked to them and encouraged them in the spaces where they find them to try to bring them into the spaces where they are not found. If you want to create dialogue, you have to have the people who matter speaking.

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** Could I make a couple of points about the causes of discrimination? When we speak about different forms of violence against women—domestic abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other forms—when those occur in ethnic minority communities, we tend to blame it on religion or culture. When those very same acts are perpetrated in the majority society, we say they are caused by men with individual pathologies or by gender inequality, so we do not use the same type of analysis of violence against women when we talk about it within white ethnic majority communities, which is quite unfair. It is not religion itself that is necessarily patriarchal; it is about how people interpret and practise a religion. This has been evidenced by a lot of feminist religious scholars and by people in organisations who are working on interpreting religious texts and promoting religious practices that support gender equality. There are, for example, feminist ways of interpreting Islam and there are lots of Muslim feminists trying to advocate reform within Islam. Of course women are discriminated against in some religious organisations and communities and we must not overlook that, but we have to look at the specific contexts in which this discrimination takes place.

**Nazir Afzal:** To answer on the root causes, there is a generational gap as well. With older people of my mother's generation and my generation, there are language barriers. My mother can speak English, but she never really learned to speak English in order to be active in the workplace, which will be a barrier. There is a lack of formal education. You often hear about being the first in your family to go to university—I was pretty much the first in my family to go to school—so that is an issue in itself. There is a lack of understanding about the United Kingdom: what is the health service, what is the education service, what is available to me, what is my potential and how can I get there? Of course, and we have touched on it and it needs to be said, there is a tremendous amount of hate towards minorities which, as a prosecutor, I saw and see. After the Brexit vote, we saw it. We have seen it after every terror attack, and there are certain individuals who get to a terror attack before the emergency services in order to make their point. That creates a culture of defensiveness and fear and everything else that flows from that.

Younger people also have issues. I am glad you mentioned Oldham. In response to Oldham Council's report, they had one school which was 98% Asian and one which was 98% white, so now they have one school which has 50% of each, and there was a report last year which said it has not really achieved everything that it was meant to achieve.

You can manufacture something, but, sadly, in large parts of this country—I do not want to keep mentioning my family—there are members of my family who would not engage with a member of the host country at all ever. They might run a shop and their only customers will be from the minority community, they will go home to their minority community, watch minority community television and engage on the radio, which in itself creates issues. It was said earlier that there is a responsibility on the host community as well to make it extremely easy. We know the history of east London is that it was a substantially Jewish community, and people stick together because they feel secure. Nobody should blame people for doing that, particularly when there is a hostile environment or a perceived hostile environment.

Q73 **Baroness Newlove:** I declare an interest because I have worked with Nazir on many things. The question has been answered, so I would like to ask a supplementary. My question was whether cultural or religious beliefs within a community about women cause a problem for social cohesion between communities, which you have already addressed, in a sense. In my role as Victims' Commissioner, there are a lot of issues, which you highlighted, about forced marriages and domestic abuse. When I go around these communities, we talk about the gatekeepers being men of 50-plus, and Nazir talked about how we break this down now that we have a younger generation. There is another dynamic to look at, which is that, in forced marriages where there is a death, and there are horrific deaths from forced marriages, the female role within that family is more or less an aider and abettor to this and the Muslim community is an aider and abettor. How do we get that dialogue to break that down? One is the religious belief and,

secondly, how do we re-engage as a society to say that there is a crime here? The most recent one I saw was horrendous. It is an ongoing case so I will not go into graphic details, which Nazir will understand. Within a community there was a man who was a Muslim butcher who was asked to cut the victim's body up. There are lots of dynamics about the communities and it is understanding that a crime is a crime within this country and we have to accept that. Also, the male of the family, her brother, was very supportive and wanted to find out what had gone on, but the main instigators were the female mothers and aunties who just sat there but knew what was going on. How do we gather all that to make for better cohesion within our communities to work together? On the other side, I see great young Muslim women who have broken and have gone into the western world, but they are on their own and very scared. How do we make this better? We do all the talking and walking, but how do we break these barriers?

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** It is very difficult, but the key issue is to empower girls and women. You have to start in school to empower girls about their rights so that they get the vocabulary to name practices for what they are.

**Baroness Newlove:** But the education system does not allow some schools to, which is another barrier, so while we say that we need early intervention and education, there are a lot of schools we cannot get into to educate where it is very important. How do we stop the blockers for that? It is for the Government to act and work with the leaders. We seem to do all this, but it does not tally up to having that empowerment because it is an enabler and a blocker.

**Nazir Afzal:** I have prosecuted more of these cases than probably anybody else in the world, so I know a little about the subject. Very often, the women in this scenario are not complicit. Tulay Goren was murdered by her father and it took 10 years for his wife, the mother, to eventually have the courage to explain what had happened. With Shafiea Ahmed, which you know about, it took 10 years for her sister to finally tell the police what happened.

**Baroness Newlove:** She is in hiding.

**Nazir Afzal:** She is in hiding for the rest of her life. You are absolutely right that there is no religious basis to any of this; it is cultural, patriarchal and misogynistic. The honour of the family is only held by the women on their shoulders and the men can do what they like, which is a significant issue. There is a communication issue. Every time they do something horrific, as you have just outlined, we used to have a phenomenal media strategy and would go out there in the communities and say, "This is terribly wrong", and ensure that people realised that we take it very seriously, and we have impressed upon other jurisdictions to do the same so that they will extradite people. We have only extradited two people ever from Iraq, who are the two people who murdered Banaz Mahmod. We have done what can to build those links and to recognise how important it is.

We have always seen this issue as organised crime with multiple offenders generally, silence within the community or the group. I know that the police and others have tried to build stronger links. You know the charities, such as Karma Nirvana and others, with which I work, which provide substantial support to the families and victims, and we are in a better place. The number of honour-related murders has gone down by half over the last 10 years, which is still too many; one is too many. Our engagement, our community work and our support for victims' groups have got better. It goes back to what I said earlier that NGOs are doing this on a shoestring. How can they possibly? The national helpline, until recently, was nine to five, so, if you discover at midday on a Saturday that you are going to be killed, who do you ring? We have to recognise that our response, as statutory bodies or authorities, has to be better to give confidence and, as was said earlier, for esteem-building and empowering women.

**Baroness Newlove:** We could add money to that, but it is still the other side. If you give them an open cheque, you are still not breaking down those boundaries, so you can blame it on austerity but it is a challenge.

**Nazir Afzal:** It is a challenge as well.

**Baroness Newlove:** It is breaking down those communities to empower those women to make them the leaders of the next generation. How many more conversations do we need? I totally agree, but, even in the conversation with the previous witnesses and yourselves, there is still that male domineering gatekeeper and a huge gap for the generation. We are not filling that gap and the experiences are different.

Q74 **Baroness Stedman-Scott:** We have covered the ways in which the barriers manifest themselves. On a specific point, you talk about educating girls early, early intervention and empowering them to challenge and understand what their rights are, but you are asking them to go against their family and religion. I am listening to the issues you raise about Islam, but we have had this in the Catholic community and the Jewish community, and it is still king and you do not go against the faith. There are all these barriers, we can have early intervention and do all we can to support girls, but is it realistic to think that they will stand up to a centuries-old religion and culture? I hope so.

**Nazir Afzal:** It is one part of the strategy. The other part must be to challenge those voices, and they often do not say what they really believe and think, and it is about support. There are organisations—and there is one here, MEND—which work within the communities and try to develop skill sets, empower people and give people information. There are plenty of things that we can do, but we cannot simply focus and put all the burden on victims and potential victims and signpost them for help; we have to challenge the potential perpetrators.

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Who does that?

**Nazir Afzal:** We all do. This is a responsibility for the communities. To go back to my point, talk to the usual suspects and find the organisations which are doing this work. I can think of plenty of organisations. As I said, men are the problem here. Baroness Newlove, you are absolutely right that women, in some respects, are involved, but men are the problem here. They think that giving away power is what they are doing, but sharing power is what they should be doing; it is about sharing power within families and communities. I get tremendous pride from the fact that my daughter is at Bristol University and that our children are succeeding in life. We have to get that narrative embedded, and you said it has been for thousands of years, but I hope it does not take thousands of years.

Q75 **Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Is the focus on fundamental British values helping or hindering the situation? We heard a general answer to this in the previous session. The Committee would be particularly interested to hear whether there is any significant difference in the responsiveness of women and women's groups to the wider communities on fundamental British values and whether they are helping or hindering this situation.

**Dr Khursheed Wadia:** I do not want to go too much into the generalities, but fundamental British values is a fuzzy concept. It is not shared across classes or across the four nations that make up the British Isles and it is not shared among all women. The problem is that the way in which fundamental British values are spoken about at the moment is very general. We talk about democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, but we do not talk about things and ideas which maybe relate to women and have meaning for women. For example, among the British values that are spoken about, we do not find gender equality, anti-discrimination or anti-racism, so that is partly a problem in terms of how I, as a woman from an ethnic minority background or from a particular minority faith, relate to these concepts out there of democracy, respect for the rule of law and so on.

One of the problems with fundamental British values is that it is presented in a way that there is an assumption made that there is something superior about these values, that those who are deemed not to have them should take them on board, but that their own values and their own belief systems are not as important, so it feeds into this idea of integration as a one-way system. If we are to have a discussion about fundamental British values or British values—"fundamental" is a real problem because values change over time and space—it cannot be a top-down thing and has to include people to whom these values are targeted and to ask those people what they would like to see as part of British values. The concepts of equality, gender equality and others is very important to include in their concepts of not discriminating against people, of being anti-racist, anti-sexist and so on, which also have to be included in those values.

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** In the previous session, it was said that to name specific values as British can have the opposite effect to what is intended, which I agree with. Rather than promoting social inclusion and integration,

it can lead to more exclusion and alienation because people with origins, heritage, backgrounds and beliefs that are different from the majority population feel that they are being targeted and held accountable for, allegedly, not living up to so-called British values in their everyday lives. I would like to see the Government replace the British values agenda with a shared values agenda, which would support social inclusion and integration in many ways and underline existing commonalities between individuals and communities living in Britain regardless of their heritage, origin or belief. My research, for example, shows that, for the Christian and Muslim women who I interviewed, the values they hold regarding citizenship are the same; they centre around participation and belonging, caring for other people, including families and neighbours, obeying the law, voting in political elections and showing compassion, tolerance and respect towards other people. Those are the values that unite people living in Britain, but are not uniquely British values; they are values shared by people coming together from a multitude of backgrounds and origins, and it is very important to emphasise commonality and shared values.

**Nazir Afzal:** I agree with everything that has been said and, specifically, that our shared values ought to be more aspirational—not just about what we think we are now but what we would like to be. What we would like to be has been articulated, that we do not oppress women, we are in favour gender equality and we do not hate on the basis of the projected characteristics. If we had those, there would be a chance for all of us, the whole country, not just those who have arrived in recent years, and it is a shared response to this.

**The Chairman:** Before we leave this, perhaps I can ask one question, because you are splendidly trenchant witnesses giving very clear views. One of the issues that we are struggling with is that of faith schools and their role in civic engagement. This is not just about Muslim schools but about other faith schools as well. Bearing in mind that we are looking at civic engagement, how do you see faith schools of all faiths, to make that clear, playing a good, bad or indifferent part in the creation of civic engagement?

**Nazir Afzal:** In isolation, I do not want to interfere with the education system. Last year, the GCSE results of the two Islamic schools in Blackburn were the best in the country and the development for those at those schools was substantial and significant. Attainment should be our main driver—our children attaining and improving their potential. Personally, I struggle with the concept of faith schools. I did not go to a faith school; I went to a comprehensive and we were mixed. We might have an issue about same-sex schools, but I will not go there either. Certainly, the need to have a particular school based on a particular faith does seem a little bit out of date.

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** I do not have any research expertise on faith schools, so I would rather not comment on that question, if that is okay.



**Dr Khursheed Wadia:** I do not have any research expertise either but, ideally, I would like a public education system which has no place for faith schools. As faith schools are accepted, they have to be accepted across all faiths. As long as they pay heed to equality legislation, uphold gender equality and provide an anti-sexist, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory, in any respect, education, there is not a problem.

Q76 **Lord Blunkett:** Chair, I know that we are getting close to the end, but I would like to explore the issue of how people can engage, communicate and be empowered if they do not speak the English language in a country which is predominantly speaking English. To put it in context, about 15 years ago, when the Government decided—I was the Minister taking it through—that we should insist that the English language was acquired for naturalisation and that we should endeavour to reach out to communities with English as an additional language, teaching and learning, we had a very strange reaction. It was strange then, but still now in terms of patronising, politically correct, middle-class people who live in a world of their own. In that case, it was an organisation called the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, which condemned us for appearing to suppress the mother tongue. I would like the contributors this morning, because we have been feisty and, incidentally, had a very good definition of the values we might all espouse, to indicate what we can do to reach those who are disempowered and who cannot communicate outwards but do not hear the messages inwards either because they are not acquiring the English language, which, in one sense, imprisons them.

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** On this question, I have personal expertise since I am a Norwegian living in the UK. The lack of English proficiency is a barrier for some women and we definitely need to speak about that issue. The question is how it is being addressed. Again, are we targeting women from specific communities, namely, as we often mean when we talk in this context, Muslim women or Muslim communities, or should we use another strategy, reach wider and not name particular communities by their religious identities as particularly lacking, because the lack of English proficiency is also the case for women from other religious backgrounds, different nationalities and so on? The Government should offer flexible community-based learning tailored to women's needs in local communities, so free language courses in the recognition of childcare needs, whether they be during the school day when their children are in school or in the evening, whatever an individual woman needs to become proficient in English. In other words, we should offer tailored solutions on this topic.

**Dr Khursheed Wadia:** I agree with what Line Nyhagen says. If you want people to be able to speak a language, you have to provide the resources for that, and those resources in recent years have been reduced. Women from BME and minority faith communities want to speak English and be able to engage in public life.

**Nazir Afzal:** Again, there are major obstacles if you cannot speak English. I do not believe in mandating or legislating for it—there are too many laws.

There is an issue because a lot of women who are not able to speak the language will take their child out of school as a translator, so it has a knock-on effect which we need to recognise. I agree with everybody here. One of the charities I am a patron of is the JAN Trust and their most popular course is English, the ESOL course, with 150 women a week. They get no money for it; it is all paid for by philanthropy and local donations. They could be doing so much more if they were properly supported in doing that, which is the answer.

**Lord Blunkett:** I ought to declare an interest, Chair, because I am a patron of my own local organisation.

Q77 **Lord Rowe-Beattie:** We have just been talking about faith schools. Leading on from that, how do you believe that the participation of women in faith and community groups can be encouraged and supported?

**Nazir Afzal:** I have a view, which is that there is a real appetite for voluntary work and community engagement, capacity and working within their communities, but there is a capability issue. You cannot simply expect people to work in their local NGO or their local women's group or whatever without giving them a skill set. One thing we do very badly in our education system is soft skills. We teach people the stuff they need to know, but our soft skills are poor. One of my privileges is to be pro-chancellor of a university and, when I attend the graduations, most of the people cannot even shake hands. Soft skills training, capacity building, showing them what is out there, mentoring and supporting them is not rocket science; we can do it and should be doing it.

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** I agree that there is a hunger among women to participate, and there are ways of encouraging women's participation. One of the areas which we have already touched on is women's participation in religious organisations, so having designated spaces for women as worshippers in mosques, because many mosques do not have room for women, and more mosques lack women representatives in their governance structures, and Muslim women have an appetite, which I think was the word you used.

**Nazir Afzal:** It is not just Muslim, but any minority.

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** Yes, and beyond Muslim communities, which is a very important point. Women have an appetite for participating, but they are prevented from doing so in instances where the men cling to the power which they have traditionally had.

**Dr Khursheed Wadia:** I have done research on women from Muslim communities and, apart from voting, what they are most involved with is voluntary work with faith and civil society organisations and that appetite should be exploited, taking into account some of the suggestions that Line Nyhagen has made in terms of opening up organisational structures to women.

**Lord Rowe-Beedoe:** As this session is about to close, I am interested that throughout our morning there has been no mention of the words "sharia law". Was that on purpose?

**Dr Khursheed Wadia:** No.

**Nazir Afzal:** No, you have not asked any questions about it.

**Lord Rowe-Beedoe:** No, I have not, but so much of this to do with women and their rights has a background in sharia law.

**Nazir Afzal:** I would probably disagree with you on that. I am not a theologian and I would need to be fully briefed in order to answer any questions on the subject.

Q78 **Baroness Morris of Yardley:** The Government tell us that they are planning to publish a new integration strategy. What are the two or three things that you would most like to see in it?

**Dr Khursheed Wadia:** A new integration strategy, so more support for the excellent work done by organisations, such as the Muslim Women's Network UK, which has had various campaigns, role model campaigns and campaigns to counteract stereotypes, et cetera. We also need more ESOL classes to get women to learn English and be able to participate more fully in public life. Those are two suggestions.

**Dr Line Nyhagen:** I agree. I would like to see a strong government commitment to include feminist and women's organisations, including those which are faith-based, in policy-making processes related to issues of integration. I would also like to see a truly inclusive strategy which not only focuses on the perceived problem populations but, instead, genuinely takes a comprehensive view that encompasses all citizens. We urgently need a political discourse that stops highlighting difference all the time and starts to highlight commonality, and commonly shared values is one way of doing this. We need to overcome the fact that we isolate a particular religious faith or faith communities, which continues to be problematic. We need to make sure that we always talk about broader groups or make comparisons between groups when we are envisioning a new inclusive strategy.

**Nazir Afzal:** I am always concerned about the word "integration" because a lot of times it is confused with "assimilation". I am keener on "contribution"—what contribution people make and being able to ensure that their contribution is enhanced and improved. I cannot add to what has been said; I agree with it entirely. Additionally, the Government should be encouraged to engage with as many organisations as possible, even the ones that they do not engage with right now, to get as much buy-in and support for whatever strategy they develop.

**The Chairman:** We have had two cracking good sessions this morning, and thank you all very much. The French have a phrase, "l'esprit d'escalier", which means that you think of the best ideas as you go down

Dr Khursheed Wadia, Muslim Women's Network UK; Nazir Afzal, Former Chief Crown Prosecutor for North-West England; and Dr Line Nyhagen, Loughborough University – oral evidence (QQ 69-78)

the staircase from the meeting room. If you have brilliant ideas that occur to you, we are interested in having some practical solutions and suggestions, so do not be embarrassed to write in and say, "I wish I had said that to you". We would love to hear from you. This applies to the people from our earlier session as well. Please give us practical ideas that we can put into our report. In the meantime, thank you all very much indeed.

Sean Harford, National Director for Education, Ofsted; Scott Harrison, Former Ofsted Specialist Adviser for Citizenship; Ryan Mason, Assistant Head Teacher, Addey and Stanhope School, Lewisham – oral evidence (QQ 79-87)

**Sean Harford, National Director for Education, Ofsted; Scott Harrison, Former Ofsted Specialist Adviser for Citizenship; Ryan Mason, Assistant Head Teacher, Addey and Stanhope School, Lewisham – oral evidence (QQ 79-87)**

Wednesday 1 November 2017

10.40 am

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Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beedoe; Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 9

Heard in Public

Questions 79 - 87

## Examination of witnesses

Sean Harford, Scott Harrison and Ryan Mason.

**Q79 The Chairman:** Thank you very much for coming along. We are very grateful to you for giving up your time to help us today. I have to read you the normal police caution, which is that a list of Members' interests that are relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. This session is open to the public and is being recorded for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and will be put on the Committee's website. A few days after this session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy. It would be helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after this evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence, or have any additional points to make, you are most welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. Could I ask each of you to briefly introduce yourselves?

**Sean Harford:** I am one of Her Majesty's inspectors and the national director for education for Ofsted.

**Ryan Mason:** I am curriculum lead for humanities and head of citizenship at Addey and Stanhope School, and a member of ACT.

**Scott Harrison:** I was an HMI when citizenship was introduced and had the responsibility for citizenship at that time. I retired from the Civil Service in 2000. I am now chair of trustees of the Association for Citizenship Teaching and a school governor.

**Q80 The Chairman:** Thank you very much. Could I open up with an overarching question? What is citizenship education attempting to achieve? What does Ofsted look for in citizenship education? What else should it look for?

**Sean Harford:** The national curriculum is clear on what it is trying to achieve. In the broadest terms, it is trying to make sure that we have young people who grow up to be decent citizens of the country and the world. When we inspect citizenship, we look to see that schools are building a curriculum that encompasses the things that are going to contribute to that. One of the major contributions across the curriculum is in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of young people, and looking to see how a school would do that. Clearly, it is up to the school how they would go about doing that, and there is no prescription as such, but we would look, through inspection, to see how the school is doing that and how successful they are in doing that. That manifests itself in a number of different ways, including the personal development and behaviour of the pupils, their response to each other and, more recently, their response to the fundamental British values agenda. All those things combined are where we would draw our evidence from.

Sean Harford, National Director for Education, Ofsted; Scott Harrison, Former Ofsted Specialist Adviser for Citizenship; Ryan Mason, Assistant Head Teacher, Addey and Stanhope School, Lewisham – oral evidence (QQ 79-87)

**Ryan Mason:** For me, citizenship education is about trying to encourage engaged citizens and ensuring that the students we are teaching today want to take part in society and in democracy, not in a tokenistic way of just going to vote but wanting to change things, advocate an opinion, get involved in things in the community and care about things that are going to have an impact on their lives. In my school that means the police, the media, politics, this building here. It is about ensuring that students are fully aware of all the different things that have an impact on them. Every time I start a year 7 lesson at the start of the year 7 curriculum, I start with how politics impacts on them. We go through the entire list—it is about an hour long—of how their life is impacted by politics and how citizenship education is going to impact on them, and allow them to understand all the different ways in which politics will have an impact on their life.

The question on what Ofsted is looking for is quite difficult to answer, because Ofsted has not released a report specifically on citizenship education since 2013. A lot of Ofsted reports do not necessarily mention citizenship. They look at social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects or British values. Sometimes citizenship can get lost—a later question looks at this—in the overarching topics of British values and SMSC where people get all the different things mixed up. I am not entirely certain what Ofsted is looking for.

**Scott Harrison:** ACT's vision for every child and young person is to become confident and empowered to make a difference in the world around them as active and informed citizens. You have heard our chief executive explain that well, and that is the view that I hold. We have a vision for young people to be enabled to take part in society and to be well informed, active and responsible. As for what Ofsted looks for, I can only give you a perspective from the past when it was my brief, and that may be better taken as part of a later question.

**The Chairman:** You touched on an issue that this Committee has come across quite a lot, which is that the citizenship part of education has drifted off, although not entirely, but has become de-emphasised compared to personal behaviour and aspects of that. That is what I think you were hinting at. Would you like to amplify your thoughts a bit more on that?

**Ryan Mason:** I do not know if it is confusion, but new things get sent out, such as fundamental British values, and citizenship can be the vehicle to deliver those things, but sometimes when schools are inspected, fundamental British values and SMSC overarch and take over citizenship.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Ryan, you have said you are not sure what Ofsted is looking for. What do you think it should be looking for? What do you think the criteria are by which your teaching of citizenship should be judged?

**Ryan Mason:** As with every other subject within the national curriculum, you have to start with the teacher having strong subject knowledge and

the ability to teach to A-level in a way that is acceptable for students. There is also a need to look at the engagement of the students, at where the school is in the heart of the community, at what the school is doing for that community, at how those students are using what they are learning within the classroom and going out into the community to take that forward. That was one of the key things that really attracted me to the subject. I continue to push that now in my role. I try to get my students to go out and do things with the knowledge they have gained within the classroom. I would want Ofsted to look at that.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** That is very helpful.

Q81 **Lord Blunkett:** I would like to pick up on the reference to the report in 2013. As I understand it, the evidence base for that was taken in 2009. I am not at all clear where Ofsted currently gets its data from, bearing in mind that the national curriculum is not applied directly in many schools but it is a national curriculum subject. How is the data being collected? If it were English, maths, science, history, geography or language, and there was no regular report from the Ofsted inspections of schools on citizenship, or it was somehow included in a broader comment rather than citizenship itself, we would be outraged. I am just trying to get a picture of where the data is coming from, how it is being reported and why Ofsted is not treating it as it does other national curriculum subjects.

**Sean Harford:** We need to clarify that the report that Lord Blunkett is referring to was part of what we used to call our triennial survey programme, which covered all subjects of the national curriculum. We no longer do those reports in any of our subjects. Frankly, this is due to resourcing constraints. In the 2013 report, there were probably a few other national curriculum subjects in the last couple of years of their triennial surveys that reported up to 2014-15. Since then we have not done any other national curriculum subject surveys. It is not treated any differently in that respect.

We get our data from our routine inspections. In addition, we are currently doing a curriculum survey, which will look across the curriculum, including citizenship, at the richness, depth and breadth of the curriculum and how the subjects take part in that. That is where we get our current work for the curriculum. You are right that that focus on individual subjects has been lost, and that is a direct result of funding.

**Lord Blunkett:** To follow up, and maybe the other two contributors would like to comment as well, I appreciate that you are the messenger so you are not being shot for something that you are not responsible for determining, but is this not making it extremely difficult to collate data on a national basis to give a full picture of what is taking place? Given the spasmodic nature of the reports on citizenship from individual school visits, are we in a fairly powerless position?

**Sean Harford:** It is wrong to say that this is spasmodic, in that every school report will look through a lens, as Ryan said, of spiritual, moral,



social and cultural development. It will look at the promotion of fundamental British values. It will look at whether subjects stick out as being particularly well or particularly badly provided for. We can retrieve that from the inspection reports that we publish for every school across the country roughly every five years; more frequently for some, less frequently for others.

One thing that plays into that is that we no longer routinely go into outstanding schools because of the regulations on that. We will not be seeing the vast majority of those schools and how they do that particularly well. That is a regulation that may be worth looking at. I do not think it is as bleak as that analysis may portray, but I take the point that that kind of look in depth at a single subject is not done now and may be missed.

**Scott Harrison:** Could I just say something about how this evolved? When citizenship was introduced as a subject, Ofsted was largely still an organisation with a subject-based workforce. I was recruited as a historian in 1990, and most HMIs were recruited on a subject basis. When Ofsted came in, its inspections at first were mainly the old Section 10 subject-based inspections, I think it is fair to say, but when they moved away to Section 5s, a team was established that had a subject brief and a subject specialist. I had the resource of a stratified sample of schools, 30 a year over three years, plus good practice examples, which gave us a pretty good evidence base of 100 schools upon which we could write our first report, *Towards Consensus?*, and our second report, *Citizenship Established?*—a good evidence base across mainly secondary schools.

We also inspected ITT and looked at the DfE citizenship CPD training for staff and sampled that. The Department for Education commissioned us to inspect 16-to-19 provision, and we did a sample of colleges, workforce providers and others. Times were different and my departure from Ofsted—this is coincidental; I retired as a civil servant, as I said—was at a time when Ofsted changed its approach to subjects and the subject team that I was responsible for was dissolved. Sean has given you the reason for that: resources.

I have to say in answer to Lord Blunkett's question that I go into schools now looking at different subjects, but if I go back, say, to the 2013 science report, which was the last one, they were great subject reports. I re-read the citizenship ones, and I am a bit biased but they were great reports, and it is a loss that we do not have them any more.

Q82 **Baroness Redfern:** You have just touched on the good evidence base, Scott. How might you describe the evolution of citizenship education in England since it was first made a statutory component of the national curriculum?

**Scott Harrison:** Briefly, at the start expectations were high. The circumstances were propitious because there was policy behind citizenship. The QCA, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and its predecessor were very powerful groups in supporting schools' curriculum development.

It no longer exists, of course. The teacher training establishments, the NGOs and strong pump-priming from the department set off citizenship quite well, but there were very great difficulties in introducing a new subject. I would cite five: confusion, complacency, inertia, other priorities, and hostility. The weaknesses in citizenship in the early years were because, in these propitious circumstances, those elements had to be overcome. Schools took the bull by the horns, and by the time citizenship was established we were saying that over half the schools had good provision. By the 2013 report, we were saying that two-thirds of schools had good provision and some had outstanding provision, but that report was already seeing a fall-back in the final year. That can be seen in the data on the numbers of students doing the GCSE, falling teacher training places and the lack of prioritisation by the Government.

Good work that had been done such as Assessing Pupils' Progress, a massive project to exemplify the standards in citizenship, was there and ready to go. Unfortunately, in my opinion, the Minister of the day decided that none of that work should be published, so it was archived. All these messages to schools, including a slimmer national curriculum and other pressures, has meant that from 2012-13 the subject has fallen back and does not have the same status or drive as it had in those early years of development.

**Sean Harford:** The history that Scott sets out is quite accurate. A number of initiatives that have come on since that 2002 opening—community cohesion, the fundamental British values agenda, Prevent—have tended to get pushed into this area. Of course, when you push those things in, other things may well get squeezed out. It is fair comment, and if you look at the entries for the GCSE over the last few years for the subject of citizenship education you can see a significant drop-off. I think they have halved in the last four years to around 18,000, currently. That could be an indicator of schools' focus and commitment to that subject.

**Q83 Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** What does Ofsted look for in terms of British values? Are schools currently doing well at promoting fundamental British values? What distinguishes the best schools from the rest?

**Sean Harford:** We look at how schools are promoting the key values set out and defined by government. It was helpful that they were set out in the 2015 document: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and tolerance. We will look to see how schools go about promoting those values to their pupils.

The vast majority of schools are doing well in this area. However, we have concerns about a very small minority of schools in the independent sector of the independent-sector schools that we look at; it is not, as you may well know, the full cohort of independent schools—it is about 1,000 to 1,100 of the non-association independent schools. A small number, about 40 or 45, have been identified as providing inadequately and failing the independent schools standard for promoting fundamental British values. They are predominantly from the faith sectors. Clearly, that is of concern,

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because where that is most acute they tend to be in communities or serving communities that are quite insular anyway, so, ironically, they probably need more promotion of fundamental British values as set out than other places where there is more connection with the wider community.

In summary, it is mostly pretty good, but with concern, and quite acute concern, about a very small minority of schools.

**Ryan Mason:** What is going to distinguish the best schools from the rest is using the citizenship curriculum to go through those fundamental British values. When they were released, it was interesting to me, and to colleagues who deliver citizenship in other schools, that everything that was mentioned we were already delivering through our curriculum. In some places, delivery is by means of drop-down days and one-off initiatives. I have friends who work in other schools and they have said they have covered it in a day and have looked at fundamental British values and “all the students know what they are”. For me, that would not distinguish that school as the best.

It should be done through the curriculum. There should be schemes of work examining the rule of law and democracy; what a democracy is; and the differences in different governmental forms, such as theocracies and dictatorships and comparing them to democracies. That also gives the students the theory and they are not just one-off tokenistic things, as can happen in some places.

Ofsted guidance on British values mentions—please correct me if I am wrong—“acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values”. In some schools, the engagement can be a one-off thing; it needs to be built into the curriculum.

**Sean Harford:** We need to be clear that the Government have defined them and set out what they are. This is not Ofsted.

**Ryan Mason:** I know that.

**Scott Harrison:** May I add one small point about the guidance? I was talking about the feeling in schools that citizenship is perceived as less important than it was in those early years. The guidance says, “include in suitable parts of the curriculum—as appropriate for the age of pupils—material on the strengths, advantages and disadvantages of democracy, and how democracy and the law works in Britain, in contrast to other forms of government in other countries”. That is a little example. The document in no way mentions citizenship explicitly. It is like it came from another department that did not even know that citizenship had been a national curriculum subject and was already being done in schools. For what I would call the citizenship community, which ACT represents, it is very disappointing that a major initiative does not harness what schools are already doing and acknowledge them.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Would you like to tease out a little more

the kinds of failures that these 40 to 45 schools are exhibiting. Presumably, they are all to do with sexuality and gender issues, are they?

**Sean Harford:** Not all, but there are faith schools that find it difficult to consider appropriately the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. We have been working on this recently and I have had a series of meetings with Jewish community leaders and representatives of Jewish schools. We find that orthodox maintained schools are more than able to provide a curriculum that does just that. However, a number of independent orthodox Jewish schools—nobody in those communities is saying that one is more orthodox than another—seem unable to do that. We have suggested that those schools talk to each other to help each other to see how they are doing it, because clearly it is possible for orthodox schools to do it, and we think it is really important that schools learn from each other to be able to comply with the law while giving their children a good education.

Q84 **Lord Rowe-Beard:** Can we move to the contribution of schools in the question of community cohesion? We understand that it is no longer an explicit duty of Ofsted to examine this. What does that mean in practice? Do you think it should be reintroduced? Is community cohesion now being undervalued?

**Sean Harford:** I do not think it needs to be reintroduced. One of the concerns with the approach to community cohesion, as introduced some years ago, was that it required schools to work with and demonstrate that they were connecting with communities in the school, in the locality, at regional, national and, indeed, international level. We started to see schools making links with other schools just to tick a box that they were meeting the requirement. That is an inherent issue when requirements are introduced and schools feel that they need to do it just to meet them, when it needs to be embedded solidly in the curriculum. As Ryan said, it needs to be dealt with seriously through subjects. There could be a discussion about whether that needs to be in the box of citizenship as a subject or whether that can be delivered through other subjects such as history, RS in a more cross-curricular way. We want to see that it is embedded in an effective way through the curriculum, and that requirement was not really doing that.

As to whether it is falling away or not, which was your question, I do not think it is. We report through our routine inspections, and it was picked up earlier that that is mainly through fundamental British values, through SMSC and through the way that schools decide to address and deliver citizenship. The combination of those things inculcates a respect for the need for cohesion in communities. I do not think it has fallen away in the way that could be perceived, because the requirement has been taken away.

**Lord Rowe-Beard:** Because it is not a requirement, how do you measure that it is being taught as part of the general curriculum?

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**Sean Harford:** That is one reason why the curriculum work that we are doing at the moment is so important. Ofsted is revisiting this after some years. It sounds stark, and lack of interest is not the right expression, but Ofsted's focus on the curriculum has not been as sharp as it might have been in the last few years. The reason why we need to do this work, and we have been doing it, and the new chief inspector has been so keen on doing it, is because the structure of the curriculum has changed enormously over the last few years. The compulsion to do certain subjects has been taken away. Academies do not need to follow the national curriculum, and neither do free schools. The structures that made schools do those things have been taken away. It is a really fertile time to look at the curriculum and all aspects of a deep and rich curriculum, a broad and balanced curriculum, not just citizenship and community cohesion.

**Ryan Mason:** Are they already sufficiently covered when a school has good citizenship teaching? If a school has good citizenship teaching, community cohesion will happen. My year 8s have done a lot of work with the Jimmy Mizen Foundation. I do not know if anyone is aware of that foundation. Last year, we organised a conference at which the local police, our local MP Vicky Foxcroft, our head teacher Jan Shapiro, and lots of other local people tried to look at all the different issues that there are in our local community of Deptford, and tried to work out different ways to do that. We are having a follow-up conference this year. Community cohesion as a subject lends itself to allowing you to work with the community. Citizenship teachers are usually one-person departments, and we are very good at looking at what there is out in the community for us to work with and to bring in to help us make things happen.

**Lord Blunkett:** I understand that the Cabinet Office has announced that there is going to be a National Democracy Week next July to coincide with the beginnings of the enfranchisement of half our population 100 years ago. How do you see schools being able to contribute in the way you have just described to make that a meaningful exercise?

**Ryan Mason:** I am not sure how it is going to happen. It would be fantastic for people to be able to celebrate what happened in 1918 and do things, but the curriculum time that we have is probably not going to allow people to do it. At key stages 3, 11 to 14—if schools are doing year 7 to year 9 as the key stage 3 curriculum—we will have time to look at females getting the vote, but once you get to key stage 4 things are so rigid: "We have to cover this, this, this and this to get to where the GCSE is". So I do not think we will be able to.

**Sean Harford:** That is a key point. We are seeing more and more schools contract key stage 3 to two years and give an extra year to key stage 4, which is effectively GCSE study. That has meant that young people are choosing their GCSE options at the end of year 8, at the age of 13, and inevitably subjects are being squeezed and dropped. Of course, citizenship is compulsory at key stage 4, but so is RS and PE and a number of other

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things, and schools have ways of delivering that that sometimes leads to the kinds of things that Ryan mentioned, such as drop-down days.

To answer Lord Blunkett's question, the implementation of weeks to look at specific things can be really helpful. There has been some excellent work on things like Black History Month across the country, but putting it in into a box of one week a year can lead to the kind of tick-box approach that we talked about earlier.

**The Chairman:** Across the piece, how are examples of good practice and exciting things spread? How is good news spread? Do you hear what other schools have been doing? Are there ways that you find out?

**Ryan Mason:** I am quite lucky in the local community, because I have Deptford Green School down the road, which has a very strong citizenship department. It was the beacon school for that. I speak to my colleague Charlotte Carson at Deptford Green. I have people who I trained with, and I know people who have trained under the person that I trained with, but apart from that it is very difficult to get things, unless I speak to ACT, which helps me quite a bit by telling me, "This is going on. You can speak to this person". We are doing some TeachMeets very soon where we can meet up with people, but it is difficult if you do not have that help to find out.

**Sean Harford:** On what I said earlier about independent faith schools and there being a particular issue in a small number, I would like to put on record that there are excellent examples in that community, too. I have a quote here from the Jamiatul-Ilm Wal-Huda school in Lancashire. The inspection report picked up in particular that, "Pupils have very recently completed a joint project with pupils from a school in a rural part of Cumbria. Such work gives pupils a broad understanding of the range of people and contexts in modern Britain. Aspects such as democracy and the rule of law are taught formally and ... emphasised in the daily life of the school". We can see that there is good and great practice and that it is an outstanding school overall. People can pick up on where things are being done well. It is not necessarily, "We will do that", but it might be, "We will pick up the phone and talk to that school and maybe see what they are doing".

Q85 **Lord Verjee:** We have covered a lot of this already. To what extent has the focus on citizenship education become overlaid by a number of related but very different agendas? We have talked about fundamental British values. We have not really talked about Prevent and community cohesion. Is there too much dilution and confusion and lack of clarity? Do we need more clarity in citizenship education?

**Scott Harrison:** Your question leads us down the right track. There is confusion. It does seem to be one thing after another and it would be good to see some joined-up thinking.

**Ryan Mason:** I agree with Scott.

**Sean Harford:** There are always pressures when government initiatives are brought in for all the right reasons. You mentioned Prevent. Sometimes it has been translated as a way of shutting down discourse. The whole Prevent agenda is about opening up discourse and should, where it is done well, allow young people to discuss those very things in the context of democracy and of modern Britain. If that is done well, it absolutely can support all those things that Ryan set out earlier. Where things are diffuse—this goes back to the cross-curricular approach—how thoroughly and rigorously they are delivered can get lost in the tracking of them. That manifests itself most acutely in primary school, frankly, where the themed approach to a lot of work can mask the fact that particular subjects are not being covered in the way they might. There is a danger there. You need a knowledgeable professional to be a citizenship lead, as Ryan is, to be able to track, monitor and make sure that it is being delivered in a way that is effective.

Q86 **Baroness Barker:** I am not sure if you saw any of the previous sessions of this Committee, but at the opening session in which we discussed issues with the officials from several government departments, by far the main source of evidence and data about citizenship was Ofsted. There were many references to Ofsted. That gives your answers a particular importance for us in our work. Do you have evidence of there being parts of citizenship education that are less well delivered in schools? In particular, would you care to talk about the issue that was raised with us by some of the academics, which is that there has been a move away from community-based understanding of the world in which one is a citizen towards a greater emphasis on personal behaviour, tutoring and that sort of thing?

**Sean Harford:** The one area where we see much less work is in understanding—this sounds very basic—how community and society around you do things for you, such as knowing how your services are delivered to you, knowing that if you need housing you would not go to your MP but to your councillor, where responsibilities lie. These are simple but very important things, especially in vulnerable communities. That is probably not done as well as it might be. We rarely see that coming out in reports. It tends to be about community cohesion, the acceptance of others and learning about Parliament and what have you. That would be an area.

We need to remember, though, that a lot of people look at Ofsted and say, “Why is it not failing more schools and why are they not coming out with lower grades as a result?” The overall effect of the judgment that we make about a school has to be a balance of all things. Yesterday in the Education Select Committee the idea of careers was brought up quite forcefully by a Member. No, it might not always be done exactly as you would wish it to be done, but it is a balance of all the things a school does that relates to its overall effectiveness. It needs to be that way, otherwise it really would get down to a tick box, a list, of things that you do for Ofsted, and we really need to avoid that.

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**Scott Harrison:** Standing back from Ofsted's evidence base, because I cannot speak for that any more, I work in a number of schools as an educational consultant and, as I said, I am a chair of trustees. My view is that the weakest aspect of citizenship is not so much covering what was the national curriculum but depth. If I told you that we are going to teach atoms in science in one lesson or the Tudors in history in another, you would say that that could not possibly be adequate, but many schools will have in PHSE or in their tutorial programme a lesson or a couple of lessons on democracy or on the law. Students cannot begin to get into what citizenship should be about to the extent that they know their role in arguing about the current issues of the day and thinking about the work of Parliament. We are in an age where there is more shouting and less political discourse and where students need to be empowered to know about issues in depth, but this is not available to them. I would say that the issue is richness and depth. The concomitant of that is more engaging citizenship is missing. You will find that schools are doing the coverage but not the depth.

**Ryan Mason:** From the perspective of my school, I am in a very lucky position where my head teacher values the subject quite a bit and has given me not a lot of time but more time than most of the colleagues who I know. I have one hour a week at key stage 3 and three hours over two weeks at key stage 4 to deliver the subject, so I am in a very lucky position. Schools are less good at delivering the active element as the students become older, and this is starting to happen to me now with the new GCSE. In the old-style GCSE, there is a requirement for them to go out and do an active citizenship campaign, and two in the Edexcel one. In the new GCSE specs, there is a requirement for the students to do something, but it has very little weight in the overall GCSE, so less time is given to that.

In the past, I have had students doing campaigns about the Investigatory Powers Act and campaigns about Black Lives Matter. I have had lots of different campaigns where students have been outside Parliament campaigning and getting out and trying to do things. The new spec has restricted that. The element that schools are going to be less good at delivering now, although the students are getting the theory, is the active aspect of us getting them out. I know the subject itself should inspire kids to go out and do it themselves, but sometimes it is very difficult because you have to show them how to do it first before they can go on and continue to do it. That is going to be the weaker element of it.

**Sean Harford:** That is right in some respects, but the issue here—and this goes back to the chief inspector's recent commentary on the curriculum—is that schools need to be looking beyond what is meeting the GCSE specification. If schools think that youngsters learn better and are more able and more knowledgeable as a result of the kinds of things you have said, presumably they would put the time in to do it and do it in that way. If they do not think that is how youngsters learn and improve their knowledge, presumably that would be an inefficient way of doing things. I understand what you mean and I understand that teachers are always



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under pressure, and as a teacher I felt exactly the same pressure to deliver within a specification, but if you believe that a method of learning is the best way of doing something, surely you would do it because that is the most effective way of doing it.

**Ryan Mason:** I believe that is the best way of doing it, but when you are hampered by the content you have to deliver and get through, it becomes very difficult to do the active part of it, which is the bit that the kids love the most.

**Lord Blunkett:** If all head teachers were really good and knew how to do it, we would not need Ofsted.

**The Chairman:** We have not touched on the National Citizen Service. Could you fill us in on how your school has seen that developing and how it has played a role across the piece in the issues that we are discussing?

**Ryan Mason:** We have had quite a good relationship with the National Citizen Service. The National Citizen Service uses our school as a base for delivery over the summer. We also have them coming in, doing assemblies and speaking to our students and recruiting students to do it over the summer. We have actively encouraged it into the school, but we have only had it for the last two years, so I am not entirely certain of its overall impact and effect.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** I take the point about GCSEs, but I got the sense from your reply, Sean, at the beginning of this round that you were not really putting the emphasis on the kind of active citizenship that Ryan is talking about. If schools feel that Ofsted does not really value it, perhaps this makes it more difficult. I really like what you say about going out in the community, but some of the evidence that we have had talked about schools as sites of democracy themselves. To what extent can the way schools are run also help develop young people as citizens?

**Ryan Mason:** We have a school council. Last year, the young mayor of Lewisham came from my school. Our school promotes democracy. Each form class, of which there are 20, has two representatives who are going to represent students at school council. We have debating clubs, essay competitions; we have everything to try to encourage students to understand what democracy is as well as the citizenship education they get. As I said, my head teacher really believes in giving students a voice and allowing them to see what will happen when their voice is given.

Q87 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** We were going to ask when Ofsted was planning on the next investigation into the state of citizenship education, but from what you have said, if I have understood you correctly, there are no longer subject reviews as such and it does not sound as though there will ever be. If that is the case, I would like to ask two related questions. The first is: why did England not participate in the last IEA study? Could it do so in the future as one way of trying to monitor what is happening with citizenship education?

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The other more general question is to you all. The Crick report recommended the formation of a standing all-party commission on education for citizenship to monitor provision in schools and colleges. If citizenship is getting lost in the Ofsted role—and I think that is what we have heard from other evidence as well—is there a case for promoting this idea of a standing all-party commission to do some of that monitoring?

**Sean Harford:** I would argue that it is not getting lost. As I set out earlier, we no longer do those triennial surveys, partly because we were not noticing the impact of them over time. Quite often if you looked back—and I am not talking specifically about citizenship—those subject surveys tended to say very similar things every three years, and you need to look at where you put resource and see impact. I do not think it is getting lost as such, although, of course, if you did a word search for the word “citizenship” across all our reports, it would not come back that frequently, but if you did the same for French, or whatever, you would find a similar thing. I think that is the case.

I do not know about the IEA particularly. It is not for us to do it, it is a government thing, but it might well be helpful to implement the Crick report recommendation in order to oversee this. I would not want the Committee to go away thinking that Ofsted does not care about it or that we do not consider it, because we absolutely do consider it. I know that this comes back to, “That is just SMSC or Prevent or FBV”, but we look at the combination of all those things and what is going on in history and in RS. It is up to schools to work out how they deliver it. Ryan’s school has gone down a certain route. Others will go down different routes. You need to look at the impact of doing that rather than saying, “This is the right route and that is the wrong route”.

**The Chairman:** We have come to the end of our hour.

**Scott Harrison:** In policy terms, the main thing about Crick was that it talked about political apathy. Times have changed, the need is greater, and I would urge you to do all you can to monitor citizenship, and our association will support you however it can.

**The Chairman:** Ryan, since I cut you off, you may have the very last word.

**Ryan Mason:** An all-party group would be a very good idea, because sometimes citizenship gets lost in history and RS. It would be good for a group of people to look at it across different political ideologies to see what is happening in the subject.

**The Chairman:** Thank you all very much for coming along. We have benefited greatly from your expertise. Thank you very much.

Philip Connolly, Policy and Development Manager, Disability Rights UK; Fazilet Hadi, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Advocacy, RNIB; Angela Kitching, Head of External Affairs, Age UK; Dan Jones, Director of Innovation and Change, Centre for Ageing B

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Wednesday 1 November 2017

11.35 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Baroness Eaton; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beddoe; Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 10

Heard in Public

Questions 88 - 95

Philip Connolly, Policy and Development Manager, Disability Rights UK; Fazilet Hadi, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Advocacy, RNIB; Angela Kitching, Head of External Affairs, Age UK; Dan Jones, Director of Innovation and Change, Centre for Ageing B

## Examination of witnesses

Philip Connolly, Fazilet Hadi, Angela Kitching, Dan Jones

**Q88 The Chairman:** Thank you all very much for coming along. I know, Ms Hadi, that you are visually impaired and would like the Members of the Committee to introduce themselves briefly.

**Fazilet Hadi:** That would be helpful, thank you.

**The Chairman:** If I may, I will do that in a second. Perhaps I can begin with the normal opening words which are read on to the record. A list of the interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. This session is open to the public and is being recorded for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and will be put on the Committee's website. A few days after this session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check it for accuracy, and it would be most helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after this evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence, or have additional points you would like to make, you are welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. Could I ask you to introduce yourselves, starting with Ms Kitching, and then we will get the Members of the Committee to introduce themselves?

**Angela Kitching:** I am Angela Kitching. I am the head of external affairs for Age UK, the older people's charity.

**Philip Connolly:** My name is Philip Connolly. I am the policy and development manager for Disability Rights UK. I am a disabled person and chair of my own residents' association, so I have been civically engaged myself for a very long time.

**Dan Jones:** I am Dan Jones. I am the director for innovation and change at the Centre for Ageing Better, the foundation for a better life for everyone.

**Fazilet Hadi:** I am Fazilet Hadi. I am the deputy chief executive of the Royal National Institute of Blind People.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much. Perhaps we could now go round the Members.

**Baroness Barker:** Hello. I am Baroness Barker. I am a Liberal Democrat Member of the House of Lords.

**Baroness Newlove:** Hello. I am Baroness Newlove. I am a Conservative Peer and Victims' Commissioner for England.

**Baroness Redfern:** I am Baroness Redfern, a Conservative Peer.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** I am Baroness Lister of Burtersett, a

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Labour Peer.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Richard Harries, an independent Cross-Bench Peer.

**The Chairman:** Robin Hodgson, the Chairman.

**Lord Blunkett:** Next to me is Professor Matt Flinders, just in case you feel in the atmosphere that there is somebody between us, as there is. I am David Blunkett and I am a Labour Peer.

**Lord Rowe-Beddoe:** David Rowe-Beddoe, an independent Cross-Bench Peer.

**Lord Verjee:** Rumi Verjee, a Liberal Democrat Peer.

**Baroness Eaton:** Margaret Eaton, a Conservative Peer.

**The Chairman:** That is the dramatis personae on our side of the table. Can we begin with a general opening question: how would you describe the current state of civic engagement among older people and disabled people? Ms Kitching, would you like to start?

**Angela Kitching:** It would not be a surprise to you, I am sure, as very civically engaged people yourselves, that the vast majority of older people are civically active, vote, volunteer, are engaged in their communities. Some 41% of people aged between 65 and 74 volunteer and 32% of people aged 75 and over volunteer, which is on at least an annual basis, if not above that. However, within that, you have to remember that we are talking about a 30-year-plus age span and those who are furthest away from formal volunteering roles or civic engagement are those who are in poorer health who tend to be the oldest old and people who are in lower socioeconomic groups, so I do not think you should take all the people as a bloc and presume civic engagement is all fine and dandy among them. That is to give you a broad picture.

**Philip Connolly:** My own impression from looking at the data is that disabled people are civically engaged, where around two in every five are volunteering, but there is a democracy deficit and engagement deficit when you look at the data. The trend over the last four or five years has been a gap of between 3% and 8% in the engagement of disabled and non-disabled people. I spoke to the Electoral Commission to look at the voting figures and they told me that, as at December 2015, the only time they had data, three-quarters of people with mental health conditions were registered to vote and nine out of 10 people with disabilities, but this was against a general population of 96% registered to vote. I would characterise it as there is a strong base to build on, but we could look to, expect and hope for more.

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**Dan Jones:** I would echo what Angela said, that there is a consistent pattern of volunteering, civic engagement and participation across that age range. There is very little evidence of an age-related decline until people are probably into their 80s, which is almost certainly related to health and a wider reduction in engagement activity. We see a pattern though where health conditions, income, education and ethnicity, all of which we know map on to lower levels of participation earlier in life, those differences are exacerbated in later life.

**Fazilet Hadi:** I would echo those who have spoken before me to say that it is a story of two halves. Disabled people have a very impressive track record of civic contribution; I can think of the struggles in the 1980s and 1990s to get the first Disability Discrimination Act and of blind people marching to try to get equality in terms of disability living allowance. Every day, people campaign for better services, better streets, better transport, but there are enormous barriers to that participation for some, accessibility and attitudinal barriers, which can be overcome, I would agree, but they would need thought and intent.

In terms of political activity, the picture is bleaker. There is not much debate around disabled people in political life or in public office. I can think of the debates we have had around gender and race and we need that debate around disability. I am afraid to end on the fact that blind and partially sighted people still struggle to vote independently and in secret, which, given the week of democracy coming up next year, is not acceptable.

**The Chairman:** Is there, in your view, any difference between different parts of the country? The points you have made, are they universal geographically or is social capital more scarce in different parts of the country?

**Angela Kitching:** I can answer so far as formal and informal volunteering opportunities are concerned. Formal volunteering opportunities are more structured and available in places where there are higher socioeconomic groups, so there is the kind of regional pattern that you might expect from that. If you look at informal volunteering in terms of reaching out beyond your own family into wider networks and communities, you will pick up people of all backgrounds, ages and socioeconomic groups, so there is less of a clear pattern about who is engaged. In terms of voting patterns, it maps purely on the socioeconomic basis.

**The Chairman:** Mr Connolly, do you want to come in on that?

**Philip Connolly:** Yes. Disability has been mapped; the University of Sheffield did the mapping exercise. We know that there are higher prevalence rates of disability in former industrial areas of the country, in the north and in seaside and coastal towns, which is thought to be

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associated with retirement patterns. Whether these map across to the levels of social capital, I do not know, but that clearly could be done.

**Fazilet Hadi:** There are other areas we could look at apart from geography, such as access to digital where a variation would have a big influence. Only one in 10 blind people are in employment. For working age disabled people, if you struggle to contribute in the way you are expected to in being in work when you are of working age, there will be particular issues for you. There are other dimensions but, for me, geography is not the biggest, except maybe in rural areas where getting from A to B is a big struggle for disabled and older people.

**Baroness Redfern:** My question was on rural transport. Obviously, there is a disadvantage for people wanting to volunteer because of not very good rural transport.

**Dan Jones:** We have begun a programme of work looking at patterns of social capital among older people in disadvantaged communities, which will include work in north Yorkshire, in Skipton and Scarborough, areas which are disadvantaged and have pockets of quite deep rurality on the edge of the Dales. We have a hypothesis that we will find out different things about the social capital and transport in those rural areas compared with inner-city areas, where we are also doing work.

Q89 **Baroness Barker:** Do you think that older people have different ideas about citizenship from younger generations? Is there a generational difference? Does being disabled change a person's conception of what citizenship means?

**Philip Connolly:** On disability, there are other factors in the debate around citizenship. Citizenship tends to be framed around a discussion between rights and responsibilities. For disabled people, there are other factors, which I would characterise as self-determination or agency, participation and contribution. To understand disabled people's experiences of civic engagement, you need to understand their experiences of these three issues.

There is certainly an issue that old and disabled people are increasingly having their care provided in institutional settings, so old and disabled people are being removed from our communities and located in residential and care homes rather than having the opportunity or the right to have care in their own homes where they can be civically engaged or feel part of the community. This is a very disturbing trend and a fallout from what is happening in the cuts in social care.

**Fazilet Hadi:** It is quite a challenging question. People who have grown up being blind or partially sighted have more of a sense of rights and their disability being part of their identity and their wanting society to acknowledge that, accept it and to include us. For older people who then become disabled much later in their lives, it is hard to compare because it

is apples and pears. If you are in your 60s or 70s and have lived as sighted all your life and then you lose your sight, I do not think you have that same idea about rights, but I may be generalising wildly because I am sure there are some older people who are very hot on rights.

**Dan Jones:** The overlap between a long-term condition or disability and age is quite important in this because of this issue of slow-onset conditions and issues which become impairing to the point that they are a long-term condition or a disability, but which people have not grown up with and, therefore, tend not to self-identify, so you do not find people coming forward in the same way seeking adaptations or claiming their rights as you do for younger people who self-identify as disabled. I suspect that there is, therefore, an issue that we do not see in the UK, an older people's movement, in the way that we do in the States, which again is to do with how people identify themselves. I suspect what you find is that the most important thing for how most people identify themselves is in the ways that they have always identified themselves and, therefore, age itself is not a driver of attitudes towards citizenship or participation, but those are driven by your life experience, education, employment history and all those other things about you.

**Angela Kitching:** I take entirely what Dan says. I would like to remind the Committee that there are 280 self-organising older people's forums in the UK, which we are aware of, so there are people organising around the principle of age who are very active in their local community and wish to address issues relating to ageing and there are some people who use that as a lever to engage with civic society. That said, 12% of people aged over 65 feel entirely disengaged with the society around them and feel that it is rushing past them at a great pace, they are unable to engage with it and it is no longer interested in their interests. It is this pattern of deep distance from society and some very sizeable numbers of active participants, and it is a tricky question to answer because of that.

**Lord Blunkett:** Is that partly about isolation generally or is it about people being isolated and lonely?

**Angela Kitching:** Yes. Around a million people would say that they are chronically lonely, using the English longitudinal study on ageing, so the older people within that study. Around a million people would say that they want a lot more social connection with the people around them or their society, and lack it, which is how it is measured in that study.

Q90 **Baroness Redfern:** This follows on from those comments: what do you think we can do about raising awareness to get more elderly people involved?

**Angela Kitching:** The willingness to volunteer is certainly there. There have been some significant positive moves, such as the removing of age barriers to certain roles in volunteering. Organisations which had cut-off ages previously are slowly understanding that they can adapt those roles



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and there are other ways of valuing older volunteers, so there is some positive movement there. We can work, particularly with colleagues in the disability sector, to think about how else we can adapt roles. For example, Age UK has a telephone-based befriending scheme that allows older people to befriend other older people and younger professionals to befriend older people. It is quite a defined contribution and they are able to make that contribution from anywhere, so it works quite well as a way of providing that kind of support. In terms of volunteering opportunities, I would say to go for flexibility and rethinking the way that volunteering can be done.

In terms of civic engagement, there is a question about how much particularly CCGs and local authorities are prepared to recognise the value of self-organised forums and groups of people. I know that the Centre for Ageing Better is doing some great work in Leeds off the back of the World Health Organization's age-friendly cities initiative to say, "How can we work with forums and engage them in changing our community to make it work better for older people?"

**Baroness Redfern:** So more information, say, from local authorities would help that?

**Angela Kitching:** Yes, and basic support, such as printing materials, not always relying on an online way of communicating, providing some free space to allow people to meet and self-organise and thinking about using the principles of the public sector equality duty properly when making decisions that affect older people.

**Baroness Redfern:** My question has been answered on barriers to older people taking part in volunteering. Do you think the main issues are connectivity in rural areas, income and a lack of awareness?

**Angela Kitching:** The over-reliance on digitisation is a significant issue which has been brought up for other issues too. If you advertise and communicate everything relating to volunteering digitally, you will miss a significant proportion, not all by any means but a significant proportion of people who do not operate in that way. There need to be volunteer managers in place who think carefully about how roles can be adapted and have honest conversations about the point of retirement from a role and moving on to another phase of volunteering, that those conversations are handled well and there is not a solid cut-off to say, "You've hit this age. We therefore don't believe you can do this role".

**Baroness Redfern:** So town and parish councils could be part of that activity?

**Angela Kitching:** Absolutely.

Q91 **Lord Blunkett:** Back in 2009-10, the House of Commons Speaker's Commission recommended, and the Government then installed, a small fund for enabling people with disabilities of whatever kind to engage in the

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formal business of getting elected either to local or central government. I want to fit that into the broader question of government programmes which are funded where disabled people, on all the evidence we have been supplied with so far, are doing very badly in terms of either knowing about them or engaging with them, including the initiative for the National Citizen Service, of which I am a trustee, so I am part of this problem. How do we communicate and get that across and what barriers do you think exist? It is a fairly broad question, but if we are pumping money into things, small or large, and disabled people are finding themselves excluded from them, we are excluding a very substantial part of our community.

**Philip Connolly:** The Equalities and Human Rights Commission did a report, *Disabled in Britain*, which drew attention, in a chapter on participation and civic engagement, to some of the omissions that go on at the moment. For example, Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010, requiring political parties to publish their diversity data, has never been implemented. There are lots of ways in which the political parties operate which produce, in a sense, and perhaps it is an unconscious bias, more a monoculture and do not reflect their community. There are very few disabled MPs who are knowingly disabled. There is an issue about how Parliament looks to disabled people, whether they feel it reflects them and how they are supported to stand for office. The fund which you spoke about, Lord Blunkett, I understand, was abolished about two or three years ago. It is a great shame that there is no support, with reasonable adjustments, to stand for public office.

**Fazilet Hadi:** Because I am employed, I receive money from Access to Work, which is probably one of the most amazing government schemes in supporting disabled people to play their part in society through the workforce. Thought should be given to what similar fund there should be to support people to volunteer and contribute, because volunteering now has become a path to employment for many and it is inequitable that disabled people who need some support to deliver work, whether it is a technology change or a support worker, are denied that because that stops them getting into the labour market.

More broadly than that, on Philip's point about the Equality Act, things would be very different if the Equality Act were actually implemented, never mind the section Philip was referring to. What about equality in terms of reasonable adjustments that volunteer schemes could make? We heard earlier that, as disabled people, we do not always hear about the opportunities, we are not always given the support to get to the opportunities in terms of transport and, for some of us, the information that we need is not made accessible. All these things are doable with the commitment to do them.

**The Chairman:** I cut you off short on barriers to volunteering in my anxiety to make sure that we were keeping up with the clock. Is there anything further you want to add on that earlier question which Baroness

Redfern asked?

**Dan Jones:** There are points about the adjustments to the way in which roles are organised, the kinds of things that people do and how they are supported to fulfil their roles, which cuts across volunteering, paid employment and civic engagement. Although we talk a lot about information, and certainly for some groups access to information is an issue, we know that in terms of volunteering—and I suspect this is true, although I do not think it is as well researched, in terms of civic engagement—most people find out about these things through people they know. Formal public information is a very small part of the issue of raising awareness, but if the people you know are people like you and the people you see in the organisation are people like you, that tends to create quite monocultural things within politics, volunteering and many workplaces. There are some cultural barriers around being more deliberate about inclusion as well as the very practical structural barriers which Fazilet has talked about in terms of adaptation.

**Fazilet Hadi:** I asked our volunteer team before I came here about how many volunteers we had who had disabilities, and the figure for people with sight loss was 21% and it is a slightly bigger percentage if you add on other disabled people. The things that we do are obvious: we adjust roles, look at flexibility, whether people can contribute through doing telephone roles, et cetera. We have a technology bank of equipment that we can give people for access to technology. We will buy special chairs, if they need them, for their desks. It is a mixture of being flexible about the role and putting some practical things in place and doing what you do with any person, reviewing and supporting. It is not rocket science, but it needs intent.

Q92 **Baroness Newlove:** What positive examples are there of government initiatives or third sector organisations which have succeeded in helping older and disabled people to volunteer?

**Fazilet Hadi:** I gave you my answer to the last question, so I will not repeat that. We do have some good voluntary sector examples of disabled and older people volunteering and we need to think about how we spread that practice.

**Baroness Newlove:** Perhaps I can put it in another way. Was there a good practice but, unfortunately, because of austerity and other issues, it has not been carried forward, so it is a bit of a mixed picture? Does that help?

**Dan Jones:** I looked at this question and, as an evidence-based organisation where the evidence on how good some of these things are is not that strong, it is slightly awkward for us to back a particular horse. I would say two things. Older people in general do volunteer a lot, and they volunteer with a formal volunteering role in organisations, so quite a lot of volunteer-involving work reaches older people. It does not reach older

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people from black and minority ethnic groups, older people with long-term health conditions or poorer older people, so I would sort of push that question to ask: what are the initiatives that have helped people who are excluded from volunteering to volunteer?

The other thing that to some extent we know or appears in the data is that those differentials are much less sharp if you ask people about neighbourliness, helping their community and being part of things that are happening where they live. I suspect one of the big gaps is how the formal voluntary and public sector can be better at supporting those kinds of self-generated, organic, community-driven activities which we know everybody participates in and everybody derives value from.

**Philip Connolly:** I would like to mention two international examples which are relevant here. In Japan, they have a system called "fureai kippu". In Japan, there is an enormous issue with the ageing population. If you are a woman born today in Japan, you have a one in two chance of living to 100. Many people live a long way from their relatives. With fureai kippu, you can do an hour's shopping for an elderly couple who might live in your neighbourhood and earn a credit which you can redeem against somebody doing the same service for your parents, particularly in circumstances where you live a long way from your parents. It is a brilliant example of what is possible in volunteering and helps both your own and other people's parents to be able to live in their own communities.

Similarly, another example comes from the United States, where, because they have massive problems of urban sprawl, in many of the suburbs of the cities there is almost no public transport. They have schemes whereby you can offer lifts to people to be able to carry out their activities of daily living and you can earn a credit which you can redeem when you are forced to give up your car because of your own age, disability or long-term health condition and you can get credits back for lifts for yourself in your own retirement.

These are examples of what should or could be possible in the UK, but I do not think anybody is doing this in the UK. There are huge possibilities, but not very much happening. I do not know if that is because of the seed capital, the infrastructure or training, I am not sure what the issues are, but there is huge scope for this kind of thing.

**Angela Kitching:** I would mention two initiatives, one urban and one rural. To be specific, the East Sussex Seniors Alliance works extremely closely with the health bodies and local government in East Sussex around Lewes to work on an initiative which started off with "How do we celebrate Older People's Day?", and has turned into a much wider "How do we work on issues that are based around ageing?", using Older People's Day as the annual lever to get everybody together and, off the back of it, provide printed materials and opportunities to come together and have fun. Belly dancing has been mentioned and other such classes which have come out

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of these types of initiatives. I am not saying they are wonderful and world-changing, but it is a good rural example of where, with a little bit of convening power from the local authority, they have managed to bring in all sorts of different groups to work on ageing issues.

**Lord Blunkett:** We do not have time this morning to deal with this, but does this not bring in the issue of co-delivery, where we are getting people engaged in the delivery of services in two ways?

**Angela Kitching:** Yes. My other urban example speaks more to that, which is around the Age-Friendly Communities initiatives which you will find in Bristol, Manchester, Leeds, Coventry and various other areas of the country where, working across different local authority boundaries and different sectoral boundaries, people have united around identifying a number of issues in their area which they wish to address together. Again, it is that place-based element which brings people in and trying to work, with everybody's tags of where they come from removed, to address those issues.

**Dan Jones:** Thank you. As the secretariat for the UK network of Age-Friendly Communities, I am pleased to hear that praise by someone else. It is a good example of a principle of involving older people from the start in how places are shaped and using the particular role of local government to convene it. Fureai kippu is a good example in relation to Baroness Newlove's question, in that what has made it work is that the state, the Japanese Government, guarantee the vouchers, and therefore you trust that. Indeed, the lift that you give to your elderly neighbour, or the shopping that you do, will be cashable in 20 years when you want it, because it is essentially money, a state-backed time voucher. With the time voucher/time credit schemes which exist in the UK, because they are voluntary, people often do not trust them—"How can I be sure that I will be able to cash that in when I need it?" It is quite a good example in relation to the question of what the state might do, and the state plays a very active role in fureai kippu.

**The Chairman:** Ms Hadi, do you have anything to add?

**Fazilet Hadi:** No. I am fascinated by the example, but I do not have anything to add to this particular question.

Q93 **Lord Rowe-Beddoe:** Do you think that older and disabled people feel that they are involved in how they are governed?

**Angela Kitching:** In terms of disengagement from an older person's point of view, as I said, 12% of people feel cut off from society and 16% often feel ignored or invisible, so there is a significant proportion, although it is obviously nowhere near a majority, who feel they are not well engaged with society. On the question of whether that relates to loneliness or the increasing time that you spend in the home—and once you are over 80, 90% of the time is spent in the home—if you are looking on a population

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level, there are some significant barriers to get over. It is not an uncomplicated question because, clearly, older people are still the largest proportion of people who vote, albeit if you look at the turnout data from the last election there was a significant reduction in older people's voting activity. In general, if you look at trends over time, older people engage civically, yet still feel invisible and ignored to a certain extent.

**Lord Rowe-Beddoe:** We have received a lot of written evidence which would indicate that people do not feel they are involved, and there was that 1990s mantra, "Nothing about us without us". Would you like to comment as to where we are today?

**Philip Connolly:** The issue is not so much that there is not a lot of consultation, as there certainly is, but the problem is that the loop does not get closed and people cannot see the effects of being involved in the consultation. For example, at the moment London is currently facing planning applications for 400 high-rise dwellings. My own neighbourhood experienced a planning application, and we are a tiny neighbourhood of south-east London of only 74 houses surrounded by industrial estates. We learnt that the planning department had four meetings with the planning applicants before they had any consultation with the community, so we were left wondering, "What is the weight of our involvement compared to the developers?" At the moment, although that planning application has been deferred because we managed to change the supplementary planning guidance, they will undoubtedly come back, and have the resources to take their appeal to the Mayor's office and, ultimately, the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol. The issue is what is the weight of the various contributions that you can make, what is the weight of your involvement in consultation, do you see the effects of your influence in the consultation, do you ever get any acknowledgement or credit back for what you have done, said, researched or been involved in, and the answer largely is no. You may have been involved in one consultation but feel that you have had a bad experience from it.

**Lord Blunkett:** We will have to think about that at the end of this, will we not, Chairman?

**Fazilet Hadi:** The other layer of "nothing about us" is around how many disabled people hold public office and are MPs. There are 13 million disabled people in this country, so surely there should be over 100 MPs. It is not debated, and I do not think there are over 100 MPs with disabilities. It feels sometimes, as disabled people, that we are on the outside looking in. There are notable exceptions to that obviously, but it feels like that sometimes.

On Philip's point about consultations, given that the Disability Discrimination Act has been around since 1995, in particular, the fact that government departments produce excessively long consultations, not always available in the right formats and with short timescales to respond,

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does not make you feel that good or that your view will be taken into account. There are some very good consultations, but there are some very poor ones, and as Philip says, I am sure the loop is never properly closed unless a disabled person has the energy to read an excessively long response to all the consultations. It is about us being on the outside and sometimes not being paid the courtesy of consultations designed to get our input, but designed in Civil Service speak and jargon, which is probably quite off-putting to many people.

**Baroness Barker:** A number of people in this room might remember that, about 10 to 15 years ago, there was a programme, Better Government for Older People, which had considerable funding and a high degree of political support. What, if anything, has been the legacy and the learning of that, which was in its day quite a big programme?

**Angela Kitching:** The funding that the Department for Work and Pensions provided to the English regional forums on ageing was finally withdrawn last year or the year before. For a long time, they were able to provide a structural support to a regional set of forums, so nine different forums. It is done differently and there is still significant support for such structures. In Wales, the office of the Older People's Commissioner in Wales provides support and via some of the elected mayoralities, London and others. I am not saying that there are no levels of formal support for that type of engagement, but they are much less prevalent than a number of years ago. I would say, anecdotally, that the use of the Equality Act to engage people at an early stage in changes to services that affect them is very poor.

**Dan Jones:** I think that is right. It strikes me that many of those points around consultations, where decisions are made, and information management, are general citizenship points, certainly in relation to older people. Therefore, people who are excluded more broadly from citizenship on the grounds of language, education, status or employment history, health, will continue to be excluded in older age. As Angela said, the rates in voting and rates of participation remain quite high later in life. Consultations, in a context where many public bodies feel that their space for manoeuvre is limited, become quite a difficult political process because organisations are consulting, because there is a duty on them to consult, but, in fact, they feel very constrained in the decision that they will make.

Certainly, in the work which we have done in Leeds with older people around transport, people have said, "We've been consulted to death. We've been asked hundreds of times about transport, we have said the same thing and nobody's done anything". If you go to talk to civic bodies in Leeds and west Yorkshire, they will say, "We are operating under very hard constraints and some of the things that have been asked for are not things which are either in our gift or things that we can afford", but that dialogue is one that is not common practice in consultation, which is much more, "Oh, tell us what you think" and, in fact, we are unable to make the decision

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in any way that the consultation might suggest, and now we are sitting here slightly embarrassed about that.

**Baroness Newlove:** It is quite refreshing to hear that about consultations, which is, outside of this Committee, what I say about victims—that they are consulted to death, and the Government, any government, need to take it on board, that you feed in but you get nothing back, not a thank you or anything. That dialogue needs to carry on in a two-way to get better consultation and better policies and understanding for organisations also to feed back that information.

Q94 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** I am not sure if it was Philip or Dan who talked about the democratic deficit earlier, which, in a sense, is partly what we were just talking about. What do you think are the main barriers that older and disabled people face in taking part in the democratic process? I do not mean simply voting, although voting is part of it, and we have heard a bit about elected office, but in the wider, as it is sometimes called, “informal” politics.

**Philip Connolly:** I subscribe to the model of the economics philosopher, Charles Eisenstein. He said that there are four types of change, the first of which is charity, where you do things for people; the second is empowerment, where you help people to do things for themselves; the third is institutional change, which obviously the Peers in the room are engaged with; and the fourth and most important change that we can deliver is the narrative change—what is the story of our lives that constrains us or liberates us?

Hillsborough provides a fascinating example of this. For a long time, the dominant story was that these fans had turned up late for the football match, they did not have tickets, they forced their way in, they contributed to their own deaths and hindered the relief effort. Then, when the inquest came out, a different story emerged: the fans had tickets, they arrived early for the match, they were not drunk or had drugs in their systems, they were directed into the pens by the police, they did not contribute to their own deaths and they supported the aid efforts to help their fellow supporters. The story changed and now it is the police who are facing prosecutions, not the fans.

One thing we can be doing is telling a story that is helpful to the civic engagement of older and disabled people. The stories which are out there at the moment, such as the resilience strategies of local government, for example, are not helpful where older and disabled people are seen as vulnerable and needing help and there is not a story about them being actors and active and engaged in providing their own help or help to their fellow disabled or older people or, indeed, even younger and non-disabled members of their community. There is not a dominant story out there, which is where we can make the greatest change of all.



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**Angela Kitching:** Building on that narrative point, going beyond the practicalities of getting to vote and the challenges of judging mental capacity in care home settings, which are the technicalities of supporting people to exercise their democratic rights, there are two points of narrative which older people feed back to us quite regularly that they find very difficult at the moment. One is of newspaper commentary and debates around intergenerational fairness polarising people as though there were blocs of younger people and blocs of older people who were on the cusp of engaging in battle with one another, which is utter rot and not the experience of anybody who lives within a family. That is a significant barrier to people feeling able to engage in civic conversation about the rights, duties and responsibilities of people in the public space. We do what we can to try to chip away at that with as much evidence as we can, because the evidence points in a different direction.

The second is, more broadly, a civic engagement point, which is that the influence of the Lobbying Act on organisations, such as Age UK and the federation of 150 Age UKs around the country, and on our ability to allow people to engage civically in electoral processes, is quite significant. For example, at the last election, when the political debate turned to social care, it became extremely difficult for organisations, such as ours, which constantly talk about social care, to offer reasonable opportunities for older people's voices to come out and be reflected in their local communities on this issue because of the restrictions that are placed around charities' ability to provide a platform for that debate. That question of narrative and the point at which you want older people to engage in a narrative about their lives is vital to looking at how much you are interested in what they have to say about their experiences of the life around them.

**Fazilet Hadi:** I would like to say something about the practicalities of voting and link that to belonging. A few weeks ago, when the £10 note came out I was really pleased. It sounds silly, but I like the little tactile dots. That is because it felt like people like me were part of the society; we are going to be here, so why can I not tell a £10 note? I give that example because there are things about belonging which are linked to the voting process. When people go out to vote for local or central government, most people take it absolutely as their God-given right to do that, but it does not feel like that if you are blind or partially sighted; it is not an accessible process, the materials do not come to you in an accessible form. If you want to do a postal vote, you do not necessarily get things in Braille or large print and, if you want go to a polling station, the template does not quite work and the staff have not been trained. Our report, *Turned Out 2017*, shows that only one in four blind and partially sighted people could cast their vote secretly. These things make you question, 22 years after the Disability Discrimination Act, "Do I belong and why can't I vote?"

As one little shred of light, I must praise the Cabinet Office and the Minister for the Constitution on the new certificate of visual impairment so that, when people lose their sight, their ophthalmologist gives them a certificate

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if they have gone past a certain threshold. That certificate will go to local government and can now be used by electoral services to make sure that people get what they need in the format they need it. That has to be implemented, but it is a step in the right direction. If people cannot vote easily, that is not the right psychology for being a citizen.

**Dan Jones:** I would echo the points about narrative and the practicalities of engaging. Particularly picking up on the question about the broader set of democratic engagement and citizenship, there are three spaces which we need to be mindful of which are becoming increasingly difficult for people of all generations to use collectively and collaboratively in ways that generate that kind of democratic engagement. Physical space is becoming increasingly segregated in terms of age and has always been quite segregated in terms of disability. The online spaces are very clearly segregated in terms of age. We know that with straightforward civic services, such as getting your bins collected or paying your council tax, two-thirds of people in their 50s have used those services online, but fewer than half of people over 75 have. As those services and spaces move to digital by default, there is a large group of people being excluded from them by default.

That is equally true probably of some of the activist spaces online because if, increasingly, many people's expression of debate, democracy, engagement and activism is online and 49% of people over 65 have never used the internet, you are clearly creating an age-segregated space, which makes the kind of informal engagement that enables that democratic discussion to happen very difficult.

The third space, which connects to online, is news media. We see a very clear increasing age differential in terms of how people access news and information, with older people still tending to be more likely to access information through radio and print and younger people decreasingly likely to access information. If people are having entirely different conversations about public matters, it makes it extraordinarily difficult for anyone to be having joined-up democratic engagement.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** That is very interesting. I have an observation and a follow-up question. I am struck by the extent to which disabled people are using social media online as active citizens. When the Welfare Reform Bill went through this House, we had a lot of lobbying from disabled people who were making very good use of social media as active citizens. A number of you have mentioned in passing questions around socioeconomic disadvantage and income. Could you say a little about how you see that that, and poverty in particular, can create a barrier, be it to civic or more political engagement?

**Philip Connolly:** The Joseph Rowntree Trust brought out a report on poverty last year, and the headline for us, as advocates for disabled people, was that a half of all households in poverty had a disabled person living in

them. The socioeconomic issues play out in the fact that disabled people are the biggest demographic group that is not internet connected and with proportionally fewer digital skills. As I say, the digital by default process tends to be marginalising more and more people. We are seeing it also play out, of course, in the benefits system with more and more people being impoverished and becoming destitute with the cuts in benefits or cuts in entitlement to benefits. This is making it harder for people to become civically engaged because, as I say, it is the connection to the internet and travel costs to get to meetings. It is the engagement with your fellow human beings that tends to get cut back on and people are increasingly spending more time indoors and less time in the company of other people, either online or otherwise. For disabled people this is quite disastrous because a lot of disabilities play out in the information deficit anyway. If you are blind, you can potentially be losing three-quarters of the information that comes into your mind and you have a problem if you have a hearing impairment or a cognitive disability. An information deficit is a real manifestation for a lot of people with disabilities, so the poverty issues are quite detrimental to civic engagement.

**Fazilet Hadi:** We did a survey a couple of years ago on 1,200 blind and partially sighted adults from 18 to 100. I would endorse everything Philip says, but I was quite shocked at the level of disadvantage among working age disabled people. That is not to say that all the older people with sight loss are living the life of Riley, but the working age disabled people had had cuts to benefits, cuts to social care and were not in employment, so it felt—and somebody asked about austerity earlier—like that group of disabled people were at the sharp end. There used to be demonstrations around being the hardest hit, and it felt like that group was very hard hit. That is an age when probably you do want to get out there and get involved. The Government have an aspiration to close the disability employment gap, and we will see in December whether their plan to do so matches the aspiration, but if you are not in work, your social care is not as much as it needs to be and your benefits have been cut, this is a very bleak story.

**The Chairman:** You were asked about two conversations; that is to say, between people who were disabled and not disabled. Is there a division between age, where well-known technophobes like me will eventually die out, and my successors will be technically competent, whether they are disabled or not, and the conversations will come back together again once everyone is technically competent and familiar?

**Dan Jones:** There is clearly a cohort of people who did not have in their education or their working life any real engagement with digital online, computers and ICT and, for that group of people, it is particularly difficult for them to see the value of going online later in life. That is probably a cohort and it is certainly larger now than it will be in 20 or 30 years. Having said that, there will remain people who have not had very positive employment histories and who have not, through their education or

Philip Connolly, Policy and Development Manager, Disability Rights UK; Fazilet Hadi, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Advocacy, RNIB; Angela Kitching, Head of External Affairs, Age UK; Dan Jones, Director of Innovation and Change, Centre for Ageing B

employment, had particularly active engagement with ICT. We know that particularly people in lower socioeconomic groups are quite likely to stop using the internet on retirement, so even if they have used it at work, they withdraw from it, so they lapse. I expect that those educational and socioeconomic barriers will continue and there will still be a group of people. Although there are some very positive moves around disability, and my colleagues can speak to those better than I can, my sense is that there is still quite a big disability access gap which will continue to be the case.

The other thing which the techno-utopians tend not to mention is that it keeps getting harder, more complicated and there keep being new things, however savvy you are now. It seems to me that the potential game-changer in that is voice. If you get to a point where whatever device it is interacts with you when you speak to it, that will genuinely change the way in which we understand these things.

**Lord Blunkett:** I hope it will be in my lifetime.

**Dan Jones:** Until that happens, I do not think we will see that gap close as sharply as some people hope.

**Fazilet Hadi:** I completely agree with that. The technology keeps changing, so whatever you were used to will be out of date and the minute you leave the workplace, as Dan says, you will not be keeping up to date with the latest. Even if you have used technology all your life, if you then lose your sight, you would have to interact with that technology in a very different way. If you lose your hearing, your sight or your dexterity with your fingers, it changes the way you can interact with technology, so I do not think there will be a time when that gap is completely closed.

**Lord Verjee:** As a follow-up to Lord Hodgson's question, it seems to me we are on a journey to a much deeper and more difficult problem when finally we get older people who are tech savvy, as they will reach a different problem in terms of isolation through technology. Are we studying that or looking at it? Young people today have much more isolation through the use of technology than through human interaction, it would seem.

**Dan Jones:** Certainly the data on isolation and loneliness is interesting in that, broadly speaking, it appears that around 10% of people in any age group report quite high levels of loneliness and isolation and there is not an age gradient. In fact, there is a sharp increase in the teens and early 20s and an increase at 75 and 80 up, so there are two age spikes, but they are not necessarily where you would expect.

There has been some research, which is quite limited and tends to be with US college students, who seem to be the people who are easiest to research in these things, which pretty clearly shows that online friends do not have the kinds of benefits that actual friends have, so they do not make you happier, make you feel better about yourself, provide support for you

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or give you a genuine sense of enhancing your social connections. To the extent that we move to a world where that is the way in which many people express friendship, it is not necessarily a world where we will see the kinds of benefits of friendship that we see now.

**Q95 Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Building on your very positive example a few minutes ago, Ms Hadi, from the Government, what are the positive examples of the Government, political parties and other bodies including older and disabled people in the democratic process?

**Fazilet Hadi:** I struggled on this, but I came up with one example. For some years now, at the annual UK Labour Party conference, they have had a transcription service on-site. I do not go to the party conferences myself, but they produce information on the day, resolutions, et cetera, and, if people need stuff in Braille, large print or in electronic formats, they have that facility of the transcription service. They also have a group of volunteers, or they may be paid, called "enablers" who will assist disabled delegates around very complicated conference venues. That is the only example I could think of, but any big political event should have both those things.

**Angela Kitching:** A good example would be when there was a move to individual voter registration and greater attention was given to how people who lack capacity, or have varying levels of capacity, are treated by the current electoral system. All of a sudden, we were contacted quite extensively by electoral returning officers, who were concerned about ensuring proper registration for older people in care homes or who were previously in group house settings where managers had been responsible for registration, that proper attention be given to how capacity should be judged and the training that was available to local staff. There are some examples and it usually comes about when there is a change.

The other one is that the regional devolved governments seem to be taking citizen engagement from older people on a place base much more seriously than local authorities have done for a period of time, but that is very patchy and there are places where it works extremely well, and places where local authorities have felt that was the first cut to be made.

**Philip Connolly:** An example I would like to mention is not from the Government, but it is called the "Digital Eagles" by Barclays Bank, helping older people to become upskilled in digital skills from younger people with digital skills. That is an example of where to go, a direction of travel, with connecting, mentoring schemes and schemes which I would describe as connecting the people who aspire to the people who can inspire, and that is a good example. I do not know how well it is working, but that is one I would commend.

**Dan Jones:** To pick up on Angela's point, the Older People's Commissioner in Wales is a strong example of an institution of government seeking to put the rights of older people at the heart of its deliberation.

Philip Connolly, Policy and Development Manager, Disability Rights UK; Fazilet Hadi, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Advocacy, RNIB; Angela Kitching, Head of External Affairs, Age UK; Dan Jones, Director of Innovation and Change, Centre for Ageing B

**The Chairman:** We have overrun, but you have given us a lot of very interesting and, indeed, moving insights, so thank you very much indeed. We will bear it all in mind as we start to wrestle this into some proper framework and order. Thank you very much.

**Philip Connolly:** Thank you for the invitation.

Sir Stuart Etherington, Chief Executive, NCVO; Neil Jameson, Citizens UK;  
Matthew Bolton, Civil Society Futures – oral evidence (QQ 96-103)

**Sir Stuart Etherington, Chief Executive, NCVO; Neil Jameson, Citizens UK;  
Matthew Bolton, Civil Society Futures – oral evidence (QQ 96-103)**

Wednesday 15 November 2017

10.40 am

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Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Baroness Eaton; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beddoe; Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 11

Heard in Public

Questions 96 - 103

## Examination of witnesses

Sir Stuart Etherington, Neil Jameson and Matthew Bolton.

Q96 **The Chairman:** Thank you very much for coming along today. Some of you will be known to, and know of, the Members of this Committee. I have to read the formal police caution that you get on all these occasions. A list of the interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. This session is open to the public and is being recorded for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and will be put on the Committee's website. A few days after the session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check it for accuracy, and it would be most helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after the evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence, or have additional points you wish to make, you are welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us at that point. Could I ask you to briefly introduce yourselves and then we will go to the questions?

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** Stuart Etherington. I am the chief executive of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, which is the umbrella for charities and voluntary organisations in England. We have 13,000 voluntary organisations in membership.

**Matthew Bolton:** Good morning. I am Matthew Bolton. I am the deputy director of Citizens UK, so I work for the same organisation as Neil, to my right, but I am here today representing Civil Society Futures, which is an independent inquiry into civil society. Citizens UK is one of four organisations which are taking forward an inquiry, chaired by Julia Unwin, into the role of civil society in the future.

**Neil Jameson:** Good morning. I am Neil Jameson, the executive director of Citizens UK. If I may, Chair, I will pass round a little flyer, which summarises on the front exactly who we are.

**The Chairman:** We can pass those round at the end.

**Neil Jameson:** We are a civil society alliance made up of faith institutions, schools and other civil society groups and we have been going for 30 years. Our aim, which is specifically helpful, I hope, to you, is to help people participate in public life and to strengthen the groups they come from in the process.

Q97 **The Chairman:** Thank you very much. If I could start by opening up with an overarching question, could you give us your views of how you would describe the current state of civic participation and civil society in the UK?

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** We would look at this through the lens of volunteering and people engaged as volunteers, both in terms of civic participation and supporting the causes that they care about and coming forward often to form voluntary organisations. The health of that aspect of the voluntary sector is reasonably good. We see about 22 million people involved in volunteering activity at least once per year and about 14 million



about once a month. In that sense, volunteering and engagement rates are very stable and have been for some time. They tend to peak around major sporting events, and the Olympics was no different—there was a peak, but nobody who has organised these major events has been able to sustain the legacy of that in terms of an overall increase and it tends to drop back.

One of the interesting parts under the surface in relation to that data is that there has been a steady increase in the number of younger people coming forward. The notion that young people are not engaged or involved is not true. We are seeing a fairly steady increase in activity among the 16 to 25 year-old cohort, which is encouraging. We do not know why that is happening. I am sure some people will argue that it is a particular initiative, but I suspect it is not. We are not sure why there has been a steady increase.

We will distribute to the Committee after this session a piece of work we did some years ago, *Pathways through Participation*, which is still a pretty definitive piece of research work about why people become involved, what causes them to continue to be involved and what turns them off. That is quite valuable in setting a framework for understanding, so we will make sure that you get a copy of that report.

**Matthew Bolton:** Civil Society Futures has been set up to investigate the health and role of civil society, particularly looking forward to how we can have a civil society in the future which will help create a good society. I will predicate this by saying that we are one-third of the way through and interim findings are not out yet, but I will talk a bit about some of the thinking going into the inquiry which is relevant to the question and lift out a couple of things which we have found to be somewhat surprising.

It is worth saying that one of the research partners to the inquiry is indeed the NVCO. In the formal submission that we have made to this Select Committee, we are resting on some of the research that the NVCO has done into the charitable sector. One of the aims of Civil Society Futures was to investigate the more informal part of civil society—the associations, both online and face to face, which are out there and often do not register in investigations into civil society activity of this sort, which tend to focus on the formal organisations, I guess, because it is easier to try to understand what is happening there.

Alongside the research that is going on, we are doing some place-based deep dives into particular areas to understand the rich texture of what civil society is like in certain places, which is partly the role that Citizens UK is playing.

One of the things that we have been reminded of is that there is an inequality in who tends to form the cohort of core participants; it is people who are wealthier with more time who do most of the participation, but we were interested in the question of hot spots and cold spots. If you engage with some of the charitable funders, you will hear a lot, in terms of where

they get a lot of applications for funding from, that there are certain hot spots in the country where there is more charitable activity of that formal sort. We have done a number of deep dives into areas which are hot spots and cold spots in that way of understanding it. One of the things that has been surprising to us is that, even in those cold spots of less formal charitable activity, once you get under the surface—and we have been in parts of Sunderland and Shirebrook in Nottinghamshire—there is a rich texture of mutual support and local associations often built around some of the institutions that exist. Churches and schools, which are everywhere, often have an ecosystem of civil society activity of that informal sort around them, and there are other organisations which do not have names and are people coming together to support each other. That has been one of the positive and surprising initial findings that has come through this focus on looking for and trying to understand the less formal aspects of civil society and going into particular places to do these deep dives.

**Neil Jameson:** In anticipation of this question, I was reflecting on my journey here past this great building, which is now guarded by people with guns and there is fencing where there was no fencing. I was frisked downstairs more than I ever was at an airport—maybe there is a special alert on, but there was frisking and so on. I read the *Guardian* this morning and there were three reports about 70,000 Girl Guides who cannot be Girl Guides because there are not enough people volunteering to support that institution. Also, a Fabian Society report has just come out about the decline in participation and membership of trade unions as a result of all sorts of things.

That is significant for Citizens UK because the organisations that we recognise are the organisations whose roots have been around for a long time and were membership organisations, so we do not talk about volunteers but about leadership. Our role is to strengthen participation, which means governance—for civil society to have a seat at the table, if you like. If these institutions are floundering or if there are barriers to stop people participating, as I described in coming here, that is very serious because most people learned how to work together not at their parents' knees but—as it used to be—when they joined a union or a voluntary association or they went to church. We are a civic organisation, not a religious organisation, but it is critical that people learn how to do democracy. Cicero said that citizenship is learned; to be a citizen is something that you learn rather than something you are born into.

These institutions are floundering. The Church of England has admitted that it has fewer than 1 million members for the first time for a long time. The trade unions, as we know, are also floundering and are, for many people, irrelevant. I am a Quaker myself and we have proudly announced, which is a terrible thing to be proud of, that we have declined from 23,000 to 13,000 in the last 10 years. The Methodist Church could be irrelevant and gone in 10 years' time. This is very serious for this Commission. If the institutions are irrelevant, maybe they need to change, which is partly what we are trying to help them to do. They need to play a part in civil society, to be relevant to their members, to teach people how to be civic leaders

and, therefore, to be organised much more effectively to have a seat at the table in the way that often these institutions have had—sometimes represented by bishops, but not always by clergy and certainly not by laypeople. I would say that there is a mixed feeling about civil participation over the last 30 years and people have to try much harder to participate, particularly in governance. It is not so much about volunteering for the elderly; there is a great tradition of that, and I come from that tradition. It is whether what we have in civil society is relevant and respected as a significant, if not the most significant, player in the struggle between the state and the market. The people who keep the peace at local level are members of civil society. The state does okay, but, without civil society and these institutions I mentioned, it is a terrible nightmare of shopping malls and, if you like, yourselves, with the market, of course, playing an increasingly significant part.

**The Chairman:** We obviously get evidence from—and this is not in any way a derogatory phrase—the usual suspects. You talked about deep dives in cold spots, and we are worried about the left-behinds and how we will hear from them. What are you doing there, and is there any evidence available that we could get before we conclude our evidence-taking?

**Matthew Bolton:** Yes. The good news is that, although the inquiry as a whole is for two years and we are only a third of the way through, the final deep dive will be completed by the end of this calendar year. Indeed, depending on the availability of the Select Committee, there is one this Sunday in Barking and Dagenham. There is a community centre based in a church building and we are holding a meeting on a Sunday. We tried to hold a meeting on a weekday evening, thinking that it would be a good time for people to come and participate in a conversation about what the community is like here, what the people care about and what they see as some of the opportunities and challenges in the future. The big learning from the mistake of holding it in the evening was that, for a lot of people, their work does not follow predictable hours; people are on zero-hours contracts, they do not know when they will be working, they are doing part-time jobs in the evening, it is not nine to five and they have caring responsibilities and so on. We are aiming for a Sunday in the hope that we will get greater participation. So that is one. We will also be holding one in a seaside town. We have done six out of eight, and there are reports of each of them that we can send in.

**The Chairman:** Thank you; that would be very helpful.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** That is very interesting, and I agree entirely, but are you, therefore, saying that the opposite is not true? I take your point about the old institutions and their importance, but were you also saying that nebulous groups of people volunteering together or new institutions cannot fulfil that role?

**Neil Jameson:** We look all the time for them. We are a membership organisation and we have in London about 198 institutions in membership

and a vast number of them are faith-based. They have roots and they have people still attending.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** They tend not to be new organisations though.

**Neil Jameson:** My colleague, when he joined us, thought, “What about football supporters’ groups?” They are partisan, quite naturally, and they will not work with other groups, and it is this approach to public life.

**Lord Blunkett:** Do you find that charities work with each other?

**Neil Jameson:** There are competitions with them, naturally, depending on their purpose, so none of us is perfect, but I would honour those which have roots, have been around a long time and are training people in how to work together. Schools and parents’ associations are not bad, but universities are not so good these days. Because we are a membership organisation, one of the conditions of joining Citizens UK is that you have to pay to join and you have to agree and sign a little document to say that you will work with other people and on their issues and that you believe in the “common good”—and that obligation to work with other people seems to put a lot of people off, because everyone has a very strong view on the world and what should happen.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** They are more like pressure groups.

**Neil Jameson:** More pressure groups; we are multi-issue. To answer your question, Chairman, the living wage campaign of Citizens UK started in 2001, or the “real living wage”, as we are now calling it, the purpose of which was to give people time to spend with their children, to help with the nurturing of children. It was never totally about more money; it was time because the problem, particularly in east London, is that people are absorbed by work and two parents work and they cannot volunteer, particularly if they are on a lower wage.

Also, to answer your question, I think Dr Barry spoke to you about our report on the missing Muslims. One significant crisis, which Dominic Grieve chaired a commission recently to look at, was the plight of the Muslim community here and it concluded that, if you are a Muslim in Britain, you mostly do not feel very welcome. Feeling welcome is critical to the state, to the plight of democracy. If you have not seen our report, I can send it to you.

**The Chairman:** Thank you.

Q98 **Baroness Redfern:** You have touched on part of my question, which is: who is not taking part in civil society, and what are the barriers that these groups have? You have mentioned that faith groups and some universities have been involved, so could you elaborate a bit more on that question, please?

**Neil Jameson:** Every city has primary schools, and they are a significant target for Citizens UK and recruitment because parents are participating

more than they are in secondary schools. We look for, and welcome, new institutions. We have never had a book club join, but maybe one day we will. As I say, the obligation to pay and to work with other people reduces the number of people who join. The purpose of Citizens UK is to help people be more powerful, and we have to define what we mean by "powerful", but that also puts people off. They do not particularly want to be more powerful, they want to be more effective, but we say, "That means power, and you have to have power to be more effective". We have these large alliances now where the persuasion has happened. We do not mind where people come from, but they have to be in a group. Tenants associations are not anything like as effective as they used to be and they are parochial in the way that they operate, so it is only institutions which can join Citizens UK. We just launched Tyne & Wear Citizens, which covers three cities and has 18 groups in membership which are diverse.

**The Chairman:** Stuart, I am sure you would like to come in on this.

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** There is no shortage of organisations out there. There are 160,000 charities, and the number fluctuates a little, but it roughly stays around that number, so people are coming together. I do not know whether the restriction is about whether or not people want to work together, because the picture in relation to voluntary organisations is inevitably mixed and there are certain competitive pressures on them which drive them in slightly different directions.

What is difficult to get a handle on, and I do not know if Matthew has picked this up in relation to the deep-dive exercise, is the emergence of new types of organisation, which are not formal charities but are more networked organisations. They tend to be more of the enterprise type, the social enterprise movement, which is very different in character from what we would see in traditional charities in that it is focused on developing earned income as a key part of their make-up, where there is a blurring between the commercial and civil society going on. They are emerging as an important force, and I wonder whether some of the things that we are seeing in the rise of the number of younger people coming forward in civic participation and engagement is not being reflected in new types of organisation. It seems to me that there is a group of people who no longer think that there is a clear distinction between public and private benefit, and they are engaged in organisations which are providing public benefit and an amount of private benefit for the individuals involved. That is emerging. There are increasingly, if you like, permeable boundaries between types of organisation, public and civil society, civil society and corporate. We may well be missing, because we are not picking it up anywhere, the growth of organisations which are of a different type.

**Baroness Redfern:** You said that at 16 to 25 you saw an increase in volunteering.

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** Yes.

**Baroness Redfern:** Are there barriers to volunteering if you live in a rural

area compared to an urban area?

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** I am sure there must be, in getting to places and mixed messages from people involved in welfare benefits so that not everybody knows that you can claim benefit and volunteer. Often, the messages are very mixed—“Well, that type of activity means you are not available for work”—and there still is quite a lot of confusion about what you can and cannot do as a volunteer.

**Baroness Redfern:** Also, if you are relying on transport or there are transport issues.

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** Yes, there may well be issues about rural isolation.

**Baroness Redfern:** Yes, it is a barrier.

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** Yes.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Matthew, in your written evidence, you put great emphasis on the socioeconomic divisions that we need to understand when understanding the patterns of active citizenship. I would like to ask you, and others may have views as well: what are the particular barriers that people in poverty face, what can we do to reduce those barriers, and am I right in thinking that they are more likely to be involved in the kind of informal ecology that you are talking about rather than the more formal organisations that Neil and Stuart have been talking about?

**Matthew Bolton:** In the written evidence, we emphasise that inequality and the way that income and income relating to time is a primary aspect of it. Building on the different forms of civil society that we might find, when we were talking about the boundaries and the scope of the inquiry, we were interested in the private sector and some of the larger employers, who are increasingly investing some money into supporting employees to have civil society-type activities, be they social or cultural, around the place of employment. Again, there is an inequality because you will find that more in the higher-paid FTSE 100 companies than in low-income cleaning contractor work. It relates to time and to questions of confidence and belief in any positive change coming from it. When we are listening to communities, particularly when their experience has been for decades, or sometimes generations, that change has happened to them and there is less confidence that their participation could lead to positive results—but, again, some of this is surprising.

When we did the deep dive into Mansfield, which is an area which has faced industrial decline, a lot of the work there is insecure and low paid and it is an area which voted 70% to 30% to leave in the referendum, surprisingly, what was galvanising people in Mansfield to come together and want to do something was that they wanted to be known as a place of welcome. They were miffed that some of the media coverage had painted them as a place which was somewhat inhospitable to newcomers, so they wanted to get together, particularly some of the church-plus groups, around the church

but not necessarily with the church itself driving it, and they wanted to be known as a place of welcome. There were some surprising aspects to it, but we have found that a combination of income inequality leading to time inequality and this question of a belief that things will change play out in inequality.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** I wonder if I could tease out one or two things you said, Sir Stuart, about these new organisations which are difficult to identify; the social enterprise organisations. Are you able to give us an example as I am finding it difficult to envisage exactly what we are talking about? Going back to your first statement about the steady growth in young people, where has that been taking place, and has some research been done on this? The intriguing factor, which I was not aware of, is that there is a great peak at times of a national sporting event. Could you tease it out to give us a bit more of a feel for what we are talking about?

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** Going to the second question first, the question of young people's engagement is an interesting one. There is an enormous amount of public policy focused on that area at the moment. If you ask the Office for Civil Society, it is principally interested in two things, one of which is social investment and the other is youth social action. There is a lot of money being put in, and the National Citizen Service is the obvious main thrust of that policy, but there is also Step up to Serve, which was a cross-party initiative championed by the Prince of Wales. There is a lot of interest in youth social action. It may well be that that is beginning to pay dividends, but we do not quite know why this increase is taking place and why this interest is increasing.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** You said that there is an increase in government commitment and interest, but is there an increase in numbers?

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** Yes, absolutely, there is an increase in numbers. Whether the two are related—because of the time difference—I am not sure. We do not know enough, and it is incumbent on us to do a little bit more work to understand exactly what that phenomenon is about, where it is occurring and what is happening.

On the social enterprise question, it is clear that there is a growth in activities in organisations. The normal legal form for social enterprise is the community interest company, which was an invention of the last Labour Administration. I envisage it as public benefit organisations at one extreme and private benefits at the other and, in the middle, there are these organisations which have an element of both where they are there for the public interest and their assets are locked, but they can pay a capped dividend so there is an element of private benefit. There has been a growth in those organisations. They do things such as furniture recycling, agricultural projects in cities, public space-type projects and they are often taking over some elements of public space and running them, so there is a whole range of organisations that are growing.

If one comes back to the sporting event phenomenon, and we observed it in the Olympics and before in the Commonwealth Games, there are particular issues about that type of activity, and some of them are translatable. The amount of times that people are thanked is a key, in my view, motivator of people who volunteer; thanking volunteers and recognising voluntary activity. These people had specific roles, uniforms, a name, they were on the telly and they were praised a lot. I do not know the exact data, but I think there were three times more applicants than available volunteering places for games-makers, and this is a phenomenon. You get to feel very special, which is a key factor in volunteering generally. It is about the fact that you are giving something and the recognition of that. We know, and you will see it in the Pathways through Participation work, that the reason most people carry on is the quality of the experience they are engaged in and—which would be true in relation to what Neil was saying—that they are having some positive impact, that they are doing something effective and they are being treated well while they are doing it. Those are key motivators, and you get them in spades at the Olympics.

Q99 **Baroness Pitkeathley:** Before I put my question, I must declare an interest as the incoming president of NCVO. What can government do to support civil society and civic engagement?

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** Part of our submission to the Budget this year was a focus on the development of independent sources of finance for organisations, which is pretty critical. There was a lot of public investment, not so much now, in voluntary organisations, and the real problem was sustainability because the sources of funding were not sustainable. Community foundations, endowments and the development of assets are of crucial importance to supporting local voluntary activity, and they all point to sustainable solutions. One of the problems with public investment is that it is not sustainable and, when the voluntary sector became more and more engaged in contracting, it is vulnerable to changes in patterns of public spending, which we have just witnessed. Thinking through how you encourage sustainability in civic engagement and civic action is crucial. A lot of it is to do with money, but it is to do with how that money is structured in a way which is likely to be more sustainable, which is about assets and endowments, and that is crucially important.

Ultimately, if you look at where we are going as a society, we will need more civic/civil activity because, whatever the levels of public spending, the demand for public services will outstrip the ability of taxpayers to pay for it. You have to fill that gap, and part of the solution is more civic leadership, more civil engagement and more people doing things mutually. That has to be part of the solution and, if we want more of it, we have to think about ways in which we can encourage it and finance it in a sustainable way.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** Does government have a specific, direct role in fostering that leadership that you mentioned?



**Sir Stuart Etherington:** Yes. We are talking at the moment about the availability of the second tranche of unclaimed assets and, because it is a honeypot, various bees are starting to arrive. We have to think about sustainability. That is investing in the capacity of organisations to stand on their own two feet and to be governed, effectively, as trustees, and we need to think about the role of trustees, in particular. My own view is that that leadership could be about saying, “How can I deploy this windfall”—which it is—“in a way that creates sustainable organisations at a local level?” That is critical, and that would be a leadership stance for government.

**The Chairman:** With an eye on the clock, do you want to contribute briefly to this?

**Neil Jameson:** One of my favourite quotes is from John Stuart Mill, who said, “That which people get for themselves is more important than that which they are given”. Citizens UK’s policy is that we do not take money from the state because we try to teach people that the money they have is power and, if they mix that money up with people and participation, they can come up with solutions. We want the Government to recognise it when civil society comes up with a solution. There are a variety of initiatives which the Government have picked up, and it is a pleasure to see Lord Blunkett here. The brief, fleeting moment when citizenship was a compulsory subject in schools has gone. It is not compulsory any more, and schools are helping that and the Government are blessing that—and not being alarmed if young people come up with radical proposals is quite important. The role of the state should be generous and, if civil society is recognised and people can participate, that is helpful. We need to look to the lobbying Act, which may have been raised with you before. It is a positive discouragement from people getting involved in the process of election, which is so important of course, and Lord Harries has played a very significant part in trying to see it off.

**Lord Blunkett:** The Chairman of this Committee produced a report as well.

**Neil Jameson:** The programme Prevent, of course, also has a mixed press. Our position is that it needs reviewing and it does not go down well with large numbers of young people in universities, who feel that people are spying on them. There are various policies and we need a generous state, not financially but to recognise that people coming up with their own solutions is liberating for them and to recognise that, if they behave, are responsible and work with others, it needs endorsement.

Q100 **Baroness Newlove:** Part of my question has been answered on the benefits side. As somebody who championed volunteers in my previous role, it saddens me to still hear that there are a lot more barriers, when it was about breaking the barriers and making it more open to people in every walk of life. I have seen duckling watch and tractor watch, so I come from a good place in this. My question is about resolving the legal issues for volunteers on national insurance, credits, ill health and personal development training. I know from a lot of volunteers, who have done a

lot of hours and have lots of skills that they can transfer over to help in nursing for maternity wards and midwives for asylum seekers, that they still seem to have a barrier to enhancing their skills and to keeping those quality workers for the organisations themselves.

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** The argument is principally around full-time volunteering on this issue. There are very few full-time volunteers in the UK; we estimate no more than 1,000.

**Lord Blunkett:** As few as that?

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** It is as few as that, full-time volunteers, people who are volunteering for the whole period. Increasingly, the trend is a slightly different one towards micro-volunteering of people who have an hour in a day or they might go online. You see the growth of apps, and I use one at Greenwich, and they will come on and tell you, "I have half an hour's gardening I can do". I cannot claim to get a volunteer to do my garden, but that sort of interaction is facilitated by social media, which will go on. To give you an example of that, several of my staff go running and there is an app which allows you to register and you can break your run to spend half an hour with an older person who is isolated where maybe that half an hour in a day is quite important. The trend is towards micro-volunteering because people do not have the time to say, "I will always turn up on a Tuesday to do this".

In terms of full-time volunteering, I am not completely convinced that these are huge constraints. The three areas which have been identified are national insurance, sickness pay and training. The one which it would be useful to focus on is the availability of training, which is particularly true for all types of volunteering, not just full-time volunteering. If you go back to the youth question, it may well be that this is differentiating, that young people are trying to differentiate themselves in the potential employment market, so, "I've been to school, I've done my degree, I've done my apprenticeship and, if I can demonstrate wider citizenship interest, it improves my employment prospects". That sort of training-related, apprenticeship-related and social action-related stuff could be potentially beneficial.

If you come on to national insurance contributions and sickness, I have some concerns. Does it really make a difference in terms of the number of people coming forward to volunteer, and how much of that is a serious constraint? When international examples are pointed out, the situation is different from country to country. In Germany, it happens because it was a way of replacing national service, which was a particular example. The other thing that worries me slightly is that you are differentiating between those who volunteer full time and those who volunteer for short periods and you are saying, "This group gets these benefits and this group does not", which is problematic. The other one that worries me most of all is unscrupulous people—I am not suggesting that the people who are suggesting this are unscrupulous, but unscrupulous people might use this to blur the distinction between employment and volunteering and to get round the minimum wage. It worries me that there is a point at which you

are blurring the distinction between voluntary action and engagement and paid employment, and the unintended consequences of this could be quite significant.

**Lord Verjee:** You touched upon some comparative studies in different countries, but could we enlarge on that a bit? What can we learn from participation in civil society in other countries, particularly our neighbours or globally? Are there best practices that we can pick up on or areas where we can strengthen the weaknesses that we have here? It would be very interesting to hear that.

**Neil Jameson:** I should have said that we are a community-organising network and we have a long tradition of organising people for this purpose, to play a part in participation. I saw this work being done very effectively in the United States in 1979. There is a growth of organising networks across the world of people who recognise the power they have. They have to fight to be recognised, of course, which is the most significant thing. There are now organising networks in Denmark, Sweden, Germany and Australia of people not taking money from the state but using their own money to get recognition and using the same idea of helping the institutions which teach people about democracy to be more effective. The issues are different, of course, the concerns and campaigns are different, but the process is pretty impressive, and it is historic. This is not a new idea but what people used to do; they used to organise, with their own money, to get what they wanted. Of course, rich people do that all the time, but the difference is that we focus on people with fewer facilities and less opportunity to do that. That would be my specialism, I guess.

Q101 **Baroness Eaton:** Before I ask my question, I declare my interest as chairman of Near Neighbours, which is a charity involved very much in working for more community cohesion. What more could charities do to build bridges between communities and promote social cohesion?

**Matthew Bolton:** I did not know you had that interest, but the response I was going to give on that is the important role that funders can play. Our experience in the initial rounds of inquiry with civil society organisations as part of this is that people get very busy doing their thing. Sometimes their thing has an inherent collaborative diversity aspect to it, but often it does not and it is about working with a particular group of people in a particular place, and organisations in civil society are determined to try to do the best by that group, which is understandably their preoccupation.

Why I mentioned the role of funders—and Near Neighbours is a very good example of this—is that, if it were an increasing focus and a requirement of the funding that forms of collaboration were needed in order to access it, that would definitely drive change in a positive direction. In terms of collaboration and integration, with people working together, and the big challenges that we are all facing—the affordable housing crisis in London, for example, and looking to the States, where often charitable funders cooperate to create pooled funds with a big goal in mind, “Let’s tackle the housing crisis”, or the one I know of in the States which is focused on improving the quality of care for elderly people—funders have collaborated.

They have set up a fund and there is a requirement that a variety of civil society advocacy groups, advice groups, campaigning groups and organising groups have to come together and create a united bid for that money. That shift in the way the funding works drives new forms of collaboration which, otherwise, because people are very busy doing their thing, do not often happen.

**Baroness Eaton:** Where does the quality of outcomes feature? We are talking about joining up and having a united view about what we are trying to achieve with all these people, but how important is the assessment of success?

**Matthew Bolton:** It is critically important in the case of those collaborations between organisations. People may have received the book that was sent which I have written, *How to Resist: Turn Process to Power*, which is a book about effective social change. The recommendation, speaking to experts from 38 Degrees or experts in how film is used to create social change, is that the way to get the most effective outcome through new forms of collaboration between different organisations is that each of those organisations brings its best game. If you can get very effective organisations which are using digital technology, doing face-to-face organising or making film, each of those organisations needs to bring what they are expert at to a new collaboration, which will help us get the best outcome.

**Baroness Eaton:** But it has to be measured.

**Matthew Bolton:** It has to be measured.

**Baroness Barker:** All charities have to fulfil public benefit requirements, but we have heard a lot during our inquiry about discrimination and inequality and, particularly, about the discrimination that is felt by the Muslim community. The concern which has been expressed to us is that some organisations perpetuate that division and inequality. Do you think that is the case, and do you think that something should be done to make sure that they do not do that in the future—for example, the requirement that there should be one woman on the board of every charity?

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** Let me focus on that governance question because governance and the way it is perceived sets the tone for organisations. This is Trustees Week and it started with the Commission releasing a piece of research, which we assisted them with, which showed that there is not a great deal of diversity in the governance of voluntary organisations. In fact, there is a civic core of white men aged 62—and I am, in fact, a white man of 62—and they are quite significant. There are two reasons. One is the social justice issue, which you are raising, and the other one is the sustainability issue. These people are going to be 72 in 10 years' time and, unless we find ways of reviving the governance of organisations, we will be in deep trouble, and everybody is focused on governance at the moment, for pretty obvious reasons.

The question is: what do you do about that? That profile has probably not changed for a considerable period of time, and I wonder whether we need an initiative of some kind, not necessarily a financed initiative but, in legislating for this, there would be a backlash against this, and finding trustees is difficult enough without that. If you take the Davies report on the private sector, it had some effect in the diversity of boards—maybe not as fast or as great as people wanted but it had an effect. Maybe we should be looking at something similar in relation to charity boards and there should be an initiative about how to create more diverse boards because we are stacking up quite a lot of problems in the future if we do not address that issue. That diversity could apply not just to gender but to sexuality, disability, and the shape and the number of younger trustees coming on to boards, for example. There needs to be a much more significant initiative there.

**Baroness Barker:** You have talked, Stuart, about the collapse of locally funded charitable organisations and, if we were in the worst possible scenario, there would be the statutory services and, apart from that, the only other organisations left standing would be religious organisations, which are not bound by equalities legislation, and I think you are right. In a previous inquiry we talked to the Church Urban Fund about its presence, and there is a challenge for religious organisations of all denominations around equalities and their exemptions from the equalities legislation, if they are increasingly going to have this important residual position in local communities.

**Neil Jameson:** It is quite difficult to make that compulsory, but clearly voluntary codes are very important. The Missing Muslims report is suggesting, and we are working with the Muslim Council of Britain on this, that at least a third of the board of any mosque should be women and that that is monitored through a gold, silver and bronze system of awards, effectively, for the mosques that are doing the right thing. That has gone down quite well, and we cannot force mosques to do that, unless the law requires it, but that is a reasonable thing to do.

To return to the point that Baroness Eaton was raising about the purpose of charities, there is a wonderful book in the States about why philanthropy should make democracy the first charity. It is a preoccupation for us that people need to learn how to be democratic. If that is ignored and it is just left to the voting cross, which has been around for a while, civil society and democracy is under some stress and strain, people stop voting and do not feel they have a part to play, so it is the role of trusts and foundations to recognise that.

I want to praise the Big Lottery. A condition of getting a lottery grant now, which we play some part in, is: who will benefit from this, who will grow and which leaders will be developed through this process of helping old people or what-have-you? It is the same with the ESRC grants and there is now an obligation on universities to say, "Who are you working with?" They do not say, "What roots do they have?", but they need to be rooted. Universities do all sorts of abstract stuff, but they have to have partners

who have roots locally. These are good initiatives we would applaud, but equally the foundations are now moving in on this. The gap in training for people to learn how to work together is a serious one, and it should be.

**Lord Blunkett:** You may want to just write to us about this, but there is a parallel set of volunteering going on and that is with the increased responsibility which has come with academy trusts and multi-academy trusts. They are volunteers in the sense that they are not paid, but they have enormous responsibility, and governance issues are arising all the time. You may want to write to us with thoughts on that because they parallel some of the issues with the bigger charities.

Q102 **Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Do you think that major state-funded policies—such as citizenship education as part of the national curriculum or the National Citizen Service—are building social capital and a flourishing civil society? As an extension of that, do you feel that your particular organisations have a role to play, not only in civic engagement, which is the second part of our title as a Committee, but on building citizenship? We have heard from you, Neil, that that is very much in your line, but what about more widely and which of the NCVO members focus more on volunteering, and do you also have a role?

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** Yes, and, echoing Neil's point, the fact that people come together to form voluntary associations, that they get experience of how to do that, how to work together and how to govern themselves effectively needs to be supported. Many of the organisations that would be in membership of the NCVO form the groundwork on which you can build civic engagement of a wider sort. Finding the direct relationship between voluntary associations and building democracies is not always easy, but, if it quacks and it has feathers, it is probably a duck, so the idea that people are engaged and learning almost inevitably leads you to the conclusion that they are more likely to be civically engaged. Certainly, there is some evidence from the States that that is true, that people who are engaged in civil associations are more likely to vote and to be participants in the democratic process, but I think Neil would have a view.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Do you have any views on the effectiveness of citizenship in the National Citizen Service or centres of education?

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** The NCS has been very successful at doing what it does, which is the programme. One of the anxieties, which it is trying to address, is what happens as a result of this experience. People do the programme and generally, I would have thought, would value the programme; it brings them together with people they would not otherwise have been brought together with. For me, and this may be an issue as much for voluntary organisations as it is for the NCS, then what? You have had this experience, but how do you then go on to say, "What can I do now in my community? What are the opportunities?" We need to do a little more thinking about how that experience relates to ongoing social activity and social action.

**Matthew Bolton:** To build on that and connect it to the other part of the question, which was about citizenship in schools, we have spoken to a couple of the larger NCS providers about that exact challenge. After the summer, the institution that young people return to which they belong to over time is the school, and we would urge, in trying to answer that question, that recognition is given to schools—and there is encouragement, recognition and judgment by Ofsted. We should encourage schools—because that is where they belong over time—to enable young people to have ongoing social action experiences, which could answer the question in a way that the NCS will struggle to achieve because of the way that it is structured, and how long people are part of that as opposed to how long, for example, they are part of a school.

Q103 **Lord Rowe-Beard:** We have received certain evidence, including that of the Big Lottery Fund, that funders need to do more to support civic engagement with charities. Would you care to comment on that?

**Neil Jameson:** I would just like to praise it; it has just given us £900,000 to do just that; to develop citizens' groups in 10 major cities where the glue of civic activity is not strong.

**Sir Stuart Etherington:** There is a question that could be posed by funders about civic engagement. We have seen a phenomenon, which has been driven mainly by public procurement, where organisations have had to operate at scale and where the people who can secure national contracts are not necessarily able to demonstrate their engagement with local communities. There is a growing tension, which has to be acknowledged, between local voluntary organisations and large organisations which are bidding for contracts. Funders, which would be not only charitable funders or the Big Lottery Fund but, very importantly, public funders, should place within contract proposals—the letting of the contracts—some demand, if you like, or some contract obligation to establish how those organisations are engaging people in local communities. They do not do that, so you get very transactional contracts which do not ask that question. So funders are crucial, but I would add to the BLF's suggestion that public funders are crucial in the way in which they contract in order to assist that.

**The Chairman:** Any final thoughts on that?

**Matthew Bolton:** It would be good to know what "good" looks like. There is a shift that is happening towards an increasing importance of people in the lead or civic engagement, who previously might have been described as "beneficiaries" or "clients", somehow being in control. That is good, but there is not enough work on what good looks like, what is not tokenistic, what is real and what kind of infrastructure and training is needed to help organisations to make that shift.

**The Chairman:** We have run over time, but that is because you have given us some very valuable thoughts and evidence. Thank you very much indeed.

Dawn Austwick, Chief Executive, Big Lottery Fund; Sir John Low, Chief Executive, Charities Aid Foundation; Patrick Murray, Head of Policy and External Affairs, New Philanthropy Capital – oral evidence (QQ 104-113)

**Dawn Austwick, Chief Executive, Big Lottery Fund; Sir John Low, Chief Executive, Charities Aid Foundation; Patrick Murray, Head of Policy and External Affairs, New Philanthropy Capital – oral evidence (QQ 104-113)**

Wednesday 15 November 2017

11.40 am

[Listen to the meeting](#)

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Baroness Eaton; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beard; Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 12

Heard in Public

Questions 104 - 113



## Examination of witnesses

Dawn Austwick, Sir John Low and Patrick Murray.

**Q104 The Chairman:** Thank you very much for coming along. I am sorry that inefficient chairmanship has led to you having to start late; I apologise for that. Can I give you the formal words again? A list of interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. This session is open to the public and is being recorded for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and will be put on the Committee's website. A few days after the session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy. It would be most helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after this evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence, or have any additional points to make, you are most welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. Could you introduce yourselves briefly, and then we will get on with the questions?

**Sir John Low:** I am John Low. I am the chief executive of the Charities Aid Foundation. We undertake a lot of research into a whole range of areas. I hope that some of our evidence has been useful to the Committee so far.

**Dawn Austwick:** I am Dawn Austwick. I am the chief executive of the Big Lottery Fund, which distributes 40% of National Lottery Good Causes funding and that is about £600 million or £700 million a year, to communities in the main.

**Patrick Murray:** I am Patrick Murray. I am head of policy and external affairs at New Philanthropy Capital. We are a think tank and consultancy that works specifically with charities and funders to improve their impact.

**Q105 The Chairman:** Thank you all very much. How would you describe the current state of civic participation and of civil society in the UK today?

**Sir John Low:** Remarkably healthy. We see many people supporting charities. It is a very active area of life in this country. Some £10 billion is donated and we can see through our research that nine out of 10 people have said to us that they did something for charity or something charitable in the last year. It is quite reasonable to say that it is healthy. However, the aftermath of the EU referendum has left us with a very difficult situation, I would suggest. In our research, we have found that 14 million people, when you do the estimates, felt that their community was more divided than at the beginning of 2016, and so there are some serious and worrying trends. The levels of community spirit are worryingly low. Some 33% of people thought it was worse after the referendum over that period, which is quite worrying.

However, what is interesting is that, as a result of that time, far more individuals are politically active and have a desire to be politically active and are campaigning or involving themselves in some kind of protest; either street protests or written ones. Yes, it is remarkably healthy, but.

**Dawn Austwick:** I would echo that there is a plethora of diverse civic participation at a very grass-roots level. It is often below the radar, very quiet, local and small; and it is very voluntary. If I look at our National Lottery Awards for All funding, where we make about 11,000 grants each year for under £10,000, I see that the sorts of groups we are supporting there are often very small and very much in the neighbourhood. They are doing extraordinary things for the sheer joy and pleasure of serving their community.

If you look beyond that very local aspect, you can also see a desire to engage among citizens. I noticed that some of the previous witnesses spoke about the Olympic volunteers. You could also talk about the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, where a group of homeless people became the volunteers for the games, and that changed their lives in many ways. What that says is there is a latent appetite in society and among people to participate and a lot of that is at its most beneficial when it is very voluntary, very local and not overengineered or overplanned. In some ways, somewhat chaotic and anarchic—I mean that in a positive sense—civic activity is a very positive thing in communities. When one looks at the charitable sector, I would say that 160,000 charities is a blessing, not a curse.

**Patrick Murray:** From our perspective, we did a big piece of research over the last 18 months looking at the state of the sector, with interviews, round tables and surveys with chief executives, trustees and charities of all different sizes. From that perspective, where civil society sits, the interesting part is people definitely feel under pressure. There are a number of things going on. The thing that came up time and time again was increasing demand and decreasing resources, against a backdrop of wider social and demographic change, with the digital revolution changing a lot of things. The interesting part of this is what people are doing in response is looking more towards civic participation and civic engagement models. In the face of changing ways that people are expressing demands for more personalised services and products, people are thinking about how they can create more personalised responses and work more closely with communities to achieve change themselves rather than delivering things to them.

There are some good things in that and some challenges. One example in the research we did was the leader who talked about his refugee organisation—and this gives you a bit of a timeframe—and the Calais situation. He said the people in Calais were being kept going by random people getting stuff together in a van, driving it down to Calais and doling it out. There is a challenge for existing civil society organisations about how you do that in a way that generates the greatest impact. Accepting that civil society at the local grass roots is always going to be quite rambunctious, and that is quite a good thing, there needs to be some thought about how larger charities might be able to provide some of the infrastructure that enables some of that action, and how you work with that. Other charities talked about, “We started off as a cause; then we

became an institution; and now we're thinking about how we can be a cause again, a campaign of like-minded people trying to achieve change". Civil society is under pressure but people are trying to think more about civic participation.

One thing to say on engagement in communities is there was some work earlier in the year from the ONS which suggested that volunteering had dropped by 15.4% between 2005 and 2015, so, notwithstanding a spike around the Olympics, there is a challenge about how we can get more people engaged in their communities even if there is a broader trend towards more civic engagement that people are trying to tap into.

**Baroness Redfern:** Patrick, do you think local authorities could play a more significant role in bringing charities together and involving public participation and giving advice?

**Patrick Murray:** Local authorities are under a lot of pressure at the moment and have borne the brunt of austerity over the last few years. However, local authorities are thinking much more about a convening role and how they can bring together different actors. In the last session there was some talk about the role of community foundations as well. We had quite an interesting example from research we published. We published a booklet of essays, one of which talked about the London's Giving movement, which started from the Cripplegate Foundation, a community foundation in Islington, bringing together lots of different actors, including the local authority, the public sector, local businesses and the local community, to try to knit things together and create a much more place-based approach. Local authorities are the democratically accountable body in a community and need to be part of this, absolutely. There is a danger in thinking that local authorities can do everything when they are under a lot of pressure at the moment.

Q106 **Baroness Redfern:** My question is: who is not taking part in civic society? What are the barriers these groups face?

**Sir John Low:** Some 9% of people account for 66% of charitable activity. You have this huge skew where this small number of people—9%—accounts for two-thirds of charitable activity. That is why this inquiry is so important, because that focus does not deliver what is required. One in 10 people over 65 volunteer, but many want to, and the real question is why we have this polarisation; they want to and the benefits are quite significant. Out of a piece of work that Lord Blunkett helped us with a couple of years ago, we have created the concept of a post-careers advice service. People out of employment need advice on their volunteering career. We think that could be taken up and would deliver significant change.

At the other end, if you look at younger people, they are the future leaders of the sector, but more could be done to engage them. If they are in work, they tend to be time poor and have little money, and so their ability to give in terms of both time and money is constrained. If you go to the

universities, people want the experience but, again, there is a lot of pressure on time. We did some work with UCAS to include in the application form details of volunteering and community and charity activity, which counts towards the application process to university. Of course, that changed the whole attitude of schools towards this because there was some value in it; and introducing people early is a really important thing to do.

We find that there is a difference in what people do. Younger people would be much more interested in trying to influence public policy. They would be interested in being active in a political sense, not necessarily party political. They have less time to volunteer in a charity shop or to spend time with an older person who is on their own, or whatever. You get different things happening in different demographics, which is good, but there are gaps. One in 10 older people volunteer; many more want to do it and yet only 9% are carrying the burden.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** We have heard from you and the previous witnesses that the volunteering sector is basically in good heart, but two things you have just said to us seem to be in stark contrast to that. First, Sir John, you said that a huge percentage of the volunteering is undertaken by a tiny percentage of volunteers. That is a rather startling fact. Secondly, Mr Murray, you said that volunteering over the last 10 or 15 years has gone down significantly. That seems to rather contradict what was being said before.

**Dawn Austwick:** Can I comment on some of the barriers because that links into your point? There are significant barriers to participation for substantial parts of our population. One might argue that volunteering and all kinds of other participation are in good health among some parts of our communities but not all. There are some significant access barriers to people. Certain communities do not have access to resources and are unfamiliar with what others might see as standard processes. They are not familiar with a very professionalised sector and find some of the systems and networks are not accessible to them. I can use an example of our own funding where we have struggled to fund in some areas, at some points. We rejected an organisation because it did not come through our filters, which are largely risk based. We looked at it again, and visited, and found that all the reasons we felt the organisation might be risky were activities that they were undertaking to achieve their mission. I could give you a very small example: excessive use of mobile phones on international calls. For us, that would be a risk alert for all sorts of reasons. We subsequently discovered that this was an organisation that was working with a particular refugee community and those calls were to refugees on boats in the Mediterranean. Sometimes you have to dig beneath the surface to try to remove some of the barriers that one has inadvertently created for all the right reasons.

There is another section of society that is also excluded and these are often people with what I would call "lived experience". Whether they have multiple complex needs or mental health problems or whether they come

from the disabled sector or whatever, very often the way in which we organise ourselves, think and make decisions makes it very hard for those people to participate.

I am not an expert in this field, but I can refer you to a really fine report by a young woman called Baljeet Sandhu which talks about how the charitable sector has not engaged with those with lived experience, but, very optimistically, talks about the things that could be done to change that. It is possible to change it, but we have consciously to invest time and effort into doing that.

There are also parts of the population which feel excluded from participating in our civic life because they feel a little alienated. Again, there are some fantastic organisations, such as RECLAIM in Manchester or UpRising, which some of you may be familiar with, which actively work with young people in particular to draw them into and expose them to civic action and activity. The beauty of a model such as UpRising is that it does not simply say, “We will work with this community or this community”; it says, “We want a broad range of young people to participate in our programme so they understand they are part of a whole”. There are a lot of things that can be done. There are a lot of grass-roots things to be done. At the moment, we are funding an organisation called Participatory City to work in Barking & Dagenham on a project called Every One Every Day. It will work through five high street shop fronts to engage the community in thinking, “What do we want to do with this place that is our home?” There are barriers and participation is patchy. The urgency is that we address the patches and recognise there is a lot of success in the other areas, but build on those who have expertise in addressing where we have gaps in our provision.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** I am happy with that answer, but I think we need to receive that report that has just been mentioned.

**Dawn Austwick:** We will happily send a link.

**Baroness Redfern:** I was going to come back to Dawn to tease out the barriers but you have answered the question to Lord Harries.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** I am picking up on what you were saying about people with lived experience and relating to Patrick’s written evidence, which referred to a number of studies that show a link between high levels of income inequality and low levels of civic participation. As I said in the earlier session, I am particularly interested in people’s experience of poverty, which would include—and I do not know whether Dawn would agree—people with lived experience to give. Can you say anything about the particular barriers that groups such as people in poverty face? It links a bit to what you were saying, Dawn. What can be done to reduce them? Would I be right in thinking that they are more likely to be involved in the below-radar informal groups that do not get sufficient recognition?

**Dawn Austwick:** I would absolutely agree that you can go all over the country and find vibrant associational life which is not entirely dependent on economy. However, some factors cause those who are in poverty to find it harder to create active associational life. Those will be to do with some of the things I have talked about already. They will not have access to resources and probably will not have the confidence. There was also a very interesting piece of work that was done quite a long time ago now. It uses slightly unfortunate terminology, but it looked at “the village” and “the estate”. In the village—and this was not really about the economic position—you had a very active civil society and participation and a lot of volunteering and a lot of groups. The groups, because they were active and had the time because a lot of their members were retired, were able to generate income themselves through activities and fundraising and whatever.

On the estate, there was a lot of money coming in through funding streams and there were a lot of professionals working with those people to improve their conditions, but all those professionals went home in the evening; they were not there. Therefore, things were coming in and activity was provided, but the moment that external architecture went away, there was nothing left. When one is looking at those sorts of programmes, it is incumbent on us to build in not just financial sustainability but sustainability in the community to be able to feel that it can take the lead. Matthew talked about putting people in the lead and that is the byline of our strategic framework. Where we come from is to start by asking people not, “What’s the matter with you?”, which is what we all typically do and we have all been brought up to do, but, “What matters to you and what do you want to build on and what are the strengths that you bring?” The other little mantra we use is, “Nothing about us, without us, is for us”. In other words, we have to enable communities and people to build from the inside and we have to support them to do that.

**Patrick Murray:** I would endorse a lot of that, particularly on this idea of people with lived experience. It points a little to the limitations of the charity model, because if you think about the way accountability works, if you are in a business, if you do not produce what your consumers want, they will shop elsewhere. In the political world, if government makes a “courageous” decision, in the words of Sir Humphrey, you can be turfed out, but in the charity world the people paying for a service are different from those receiving it. Often, you do not have that clear accountability loop. I would endorse the points that were made about the issues of people with lived experience, but it points to where the limitations of the charitable model might be. It is quite interesting that you talked about the estate and village model. In a previous life, when I was a councillor, I represented a ward on the edge of Oxford city, where I am from, where you think of dreaming spires, et cetera. Essentially, this was an estate on the edge of the city with a commuter village stuck on the end and—exactly to that point—to the outside world it looked as though associational life in the estate and the village was quite unequal, but when you were in the estate

you realised there was a huge amount of community activity going on. One of the people driving it ran the local newsagent in a row of five or six shops and every day everyone would come in and buy their papers and milk, and she knew everyone. She got to know how to work the system a bit to get things for the estate and ended up being part of a very active community association. There is a lot to be said about how you can grow social capital, and it does not necessarily come from the areas that you think it is going to come from.

Q107 **Lord Blunkett:** It is a rather broad question so we probably need to tune it down a bit. It is really about the role of government, what is good about enabling government, what might be scaled up, what is getting in the way and what barriers government provides? It is a two-way street. Two years ago, a CAF report, which has already been mentioned, came up with some ideas about what more the Government could do in support. I was pleased to explore that with Andrew Percy, who was then a junior Minister in the Department for Communities and Local Government, and with Claire Tyler before I was in this House. We might be able to pick up on some of those separately to your answers, but if you can have a go at what you would like to see from the government and what you do not like, that would be quite helpful.

**Sir John Low:** Many people get involved in civil society and civil engagement because they want to make society better. That is why they do it. They want to have a positive effect on public policy. We often forget the role of civil society and civil engagement in democracy, in enabling the democratic system to function well between elections and to function well for minority groups which will never have the power in general or local elections. We want a vibrant civil society. We want it engaged and we want people engaged, but, frankly, it is pointless if, when we come to an election, it is all shut down—you cannot speak, you cannot speak on behalf of minorities, you cannot participate in that process. It is quite remarkable that government does not take the actions necessary to enable civil society to strengthen and make democracy better, but does in fact the opposite in many of its actions. There are real opportunities for a new, positive relationship between government and charities where charities will feel confident that the Government of the day understand the role of charities in society and want to work with them to tackle the challenges that the country faces. It needs a relationship based on mutual respect and understanding, a positive climate in which civil society can operate. Sadly, that is not universally the case.

**Dawn Austwick:** I would suggest a rather more invisible hand than central planning in the government role with regard to civic engagement, because, in a sense, it can nudge and encourage rather than prescribe. It was interesting listening to the previous folk talking about possible government investment in capital plant. There is an interesting role for government to look at existing provision and how that is made open and useable by communities broadly. I have a background in the dim and distant past in the museum sector. Museums and civic spaces are safe

places for citizens to come together, debate, meet each other, congregate and consider. There is the opening up of schools in the evenings and so on. For me, it is not so much about government encouraging the development of new facilities, but how one can use existing space, how one can create public space—maybe outdoor space—that enables people to bump into each other and congregate on the corner. I have always thought the moment at which you are most part of your community as a parent is when you pick your child up from the school gate. A regulatory or planning framework could help make it easier for those sorts of places to happen rather than harder and harder.

The Government could also celebrate the amazing diversity that already exists. This has already happened, but they could encourage people to see what wonderful activity there already is up and down the land, and do that across a very diverse range of organisations. That is another way of demonstrating how important this is to us as a society.

**Patrick Murray:** From our perspective, our chief executive, Dan Corry, wrote a pamphlet earlier in the year on the shared society and what it would mean to make that a reality. Essentially, he put forward the argument that often policymakers start from the point of view of saying, “The markets do this, the state does this, and civil society mops up the residual at the end and fills in the gaps”. The argument was if people are more than consumers and more than recipients of public services, which I think we all agree they are, active citizenship and community action should be at the heart of where we start from in these questions. Government could do well by starting by looking at three questions: first, what communities can do for themselves; secondly, what they can do with support; and, thirdly, and this bit comes at the end, what still needs to be provided, but that is still an important bit because we have to recognise the limitations of civil society, what it is good at and where it is not so good.

Obviously, by nature it is voluntary, so in some areas where people get together and do things, it will happen, and in some areas—picking up on some of the points about exclusion in the last section of answers—it is a problem. Some of the things civil society is doing point to a wider policy failure. Food banks would be an example of this. They are a great example of community action and people rallying around to try to help people deal with quite serious hardship, but in an economy that is as rich as ours, is that not an example of a wider policy failure that needs to be dealt with at a structural level? We have that but maybe we should not have it.

I will give some specifics on what government can do. One of the things it can do is help us to understand existing assets. All local authorities have to do a joint strategic needs assessment, so they are very good at mapping out what the need is so that they can try to fix it, but, increasingly, no one has any money to fix it.



Going back to this point about communities being more in control, helping to map assets, both physical and community assets, associations and things such as that, would be very helpful. We need to redress imbalances of social capital. The OCS could do more to build on the ONS work looking at mapping social capital in the UK, to do research about where it is weakest and channel funding there. Previously, people talked a bit about dormant assets, and money could be part of that: the successor to the EU funding, and channelling some of that to areas to try to build social capital.

It is about recognising the independence of it. Active citizenship should be uncomfortable for Governments sometimes. The lobbying Act was mentioned previously. There was a very good report by the Lord Chairman. Part of the issue with this is not necessarily the specifics of it but the message it sent out. While I appreciate that Brexit is ruling all in terms of the parliamentary timetable, the messages that go out need to be about the importance of civil society voices. We are seeing some of that from the new Minister, to be fair. I go back to understanding the limits of civil society. There are limits to what charities can do and what active citizenship can do, and there are basic rights that need to be secured by the state and by funders.

**Lord Blunkett:** Chair, in the interests of time, could I ask Dawn if she would be kind enough to send us a note on the criteria the Big Lottery Fund uses for its funding of social action programmes? I am interested as to whether it includes citizenship education in the funding that it makes, because it is a crucial funder. A lot of building of social capital and the things we are talking about would not be happening at the moment were it not for the Big Lottery Fund.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** When you talked before you all used the word “community” a lot. I was trying to hear whether that was a physical community or a more diverse community. We know there is a difference. Is geography and locality an issue here? When we talk about the role of the Government, it is all right when they can see the community, put a boundary around it and find the space, grow the leaders and all the rest of it, but could you say a bit about when you talk about community how much in your head locality matters?

**The Chairman:** I think Baroness Lister wants to add to that.

Q108 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** It goes to my question and follows on nicely. Patrick, in your written evidence you say that local authorities could encourage or even fund community development officers. We have had some other written evidence that points to the demise of community development. Community development is not necessarily geographic, but what might the role of community development be? Do we need to look at it again to strengthen the promotion of civic engagement?

**Patrick Murray:** The role of place is still very important. It is where people live and people still experience things in a place.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** It is where they live, but that might be—

**Patrick Murray:** I was going to go on to say that you have community but technology has brought together communities of interest in a very different way. That is where you are seeing some of that explosion of civic engagement around particular issues. It is quite challenging sometimes for some charities to manage the engagement—we talked about a refugee charity. The role of local authorities is important. As I said earlier, they are stretched and are trying to work out what that role should be, but we have certainly found in our research talking to charity leaders that people in local authorities are thinking very differently about how they use their role as conveners and what more the community can do.

The ones that are really taking charge of the agenda are going through those three questions: thinking what communities can do for themselves, what people can do with support, and what they can bring afterwards. There is also a knitting-together role. It has to bring in other actors. I was a councillor back in 2004 and we were talking about silos then. We are still doing that, but the devolution agenda in city regions is an opportunity to get beyond that and break down some of that. Some of that is quite exciting potentially and allows for that convening role. CAF and ourselves worked together at the party conferences this year in a couple of sessions about the role of philanthropy and the metro mayor as being a figurehead and able to bring people together. There are definitely some possibilities there as the state moves down.

**Dawn Austwick:** Can I very briefly comment on that because we have run a number of place-based programmes in England that bring together multiple public sector agencies and the voluntary sector? Place matters but it is not exclusive in terms of the definition of “community”. There are all sorts of communities, and technology helps some and not others. Patrick is right; I do not think we can go back to community development as was, because we have moved on from that. In some ways, the challenge to the public agencies is that they need to play a very different role, which in some ways requires a different culture and different set of behaviours. It is much more enabling and facilitative. That is quite difficult when you have been brought up to a different way of thinking. I would not underestimate the challenge of moving to this brave new world. I do not think it is straightforward. The evidence from places we have worked in is that that is quite a tough call. Having said that, we are right in the middle of moving our staff out of two centres in England into being community and locally based, for exactly this reason: because we feel we need to be much closer to the people whom we fund.

Q109 **Baroness Newlove:** For me, reading the joint submission to this Committee from the Scouts and National Citizen Service, there seems to be this legal limbo, as they say, for full-time and part-time volunteering. Do you think there is a need to resolve legal issues such as national insurance credits, ill health and personal development training?

**Sir John Low:** We have to be careful not to have a different effect from the one we intend. That issue is quite challenging. Charities do not want to inherit by accident employment obligations over a very large number of volunteers. It would completely destroy many charities which are running with large numbers of volunteers if the volunteers gained employment rights that were very expensive to resolve. Frankly, it is hard to see how many there are. Sir Stuart made the comment about the number of full-time volunteers, and certainly the number is small. Many older people who are volunteering are not caught by national insurance anyway so it is not an issue for them. What does paid sick leave look like for a volunteer? If they do not come to their role, the role does not get done. What does it look like? Training is really important, but we have to avoid the benefits problem.

One thought I had—and I offer you this without much consideration, frankly—is about the effort that many charities, including my own, are making to benefit from the apprenticeship levy so that charities can benefit from the money that we are obliged to pay in and scoop up the money that many businesses see as an extra tax and are not going to take much benefit from it. One thing you may want to consider as a Committee is whether there is any opportunity to access the apprenticeship levy for volunteers. Could there be apprentice volunteers? I do not know if that is an oxymoron, but it is a thought for you.

**Patrick Murray:** I would like to comment on the full-time volunteering issue because Sir Stuart said there were 1,000 full time-volunteers in the country. The organisation I was vice-chair of was responsible for at least eight of those. We had quite an interesting debate as a board about all the questions about exploitation that you have to think through very carefully. In the end, we did a pilot and took students from Germany where, as we heard earlier, it is much more regularly done, to see whether it would work. For us, it was very much about a specific bit of work that was much better done through volunteers and not necessarily a job description role. It was about working with someone in a particular way. You had a different power dynamic between the volunteer and the person receiving the service than you would do with a support worker. It is very interesting.

It is certainly worth looking at whether some of these issues can be resolved. At NPC we have some broader questions about what this means for diversity. The charity I was involved in had to put a lot of infrastructure around that to ensure people were able to take part. I am sure we will talk about governance. The report that came out on Monday said that 75% of trustees earned over the national wealth—I am not sure if it is income because so many are retired. Do you just replicate that at the other end? Do you make it so that only young people who have independent wealth and who have the time do full-time volunteering? You are not getting paid for it as, by nature, it is voluntary. There is a challenge around diversity there.

There is a broader question around the labour market effects of, effectively, holding young people out of employment for a year while they do full-time volunteering. To look at the volunteering stats more broadly, the number of 16 to 24 year-olds has gone up. Part of that might be because people feel they have to do work placements and volunteering in order to get a job. It has not been easy for young people in recent years to get into the employment market and we do not want inadvertently to make that more difficult.

**Lord Blunkett:** I think we are going to have to try to find a definition of a full-time volunteer. The Prince's Trust does 12-week full-time volunteer programmes as does Volunteering Matters, and City Year UK does a nine or 10-month programme. We will have to have a look because I was quite taken aback earlier on.

**Patrick Murray:** To clarify, our placements are for between six and nine months. Obviously, people can drop out if they want, but they are selected carefully as people who want to make that commitment.

**The Chairman:** We will investigate that further.

Q110 **Baroness Eaton:** I had better start by declaring my interest as chairman of Near Neighbours, which is a charity which deals with community cohesion. Your charity, Sir John—so perhaps I will start with you—suggests that charities are uniquely placed to monitor levels of threat in communities, and there is a suggestion that the Government should work more closely with charities in that area. What more could charities do to build bridges between communities and to promote social cohesion?

**Sir John Low:** That is a brilliant question. When I saw it I thought that was the right question. On the ground, charities are very aware of the levels of social cohesion. They are great watchmen of what is happening in our communities. They are out there, experiencing it and touching people. Local authorities could keep in touch with civil society organisations for the purpose of discovering what is going on because they are the eyes and ears. However, I feel strongly that you cannot contract charities to monitor social cohesion. It would be a hideous outcome. Yes, there are opportunities for charities to change social cohesion in their actions. One that I was particularly impressed with is a small charity called Newham All Star Sports Academy. A Russian woman started a basketball charity to reduce knife crime. It brought huge numbers, hundreds of children together, and their families, changing behaviours and changing social cohesion; and they were just playing basketball. That is all they were doing. Social cohesion does not come into any of their language—you will not see it on their website—but the reality is that is what they are doing. The money it takes is very small but even that is very difficult for it. It is quite significant, but it cannot be mandated. There is a wee tricky line there between the role of civil society organisations and the engineering of social cohesion from the state.

**Dawn Austwick:** I would endorse what John was saying about the level of activity that draws people together. We launched a funding programme in the summer of 2016 to celebrate Her Majesty's 90th birthday. It was very small grants, even smaller than National Lottery Awards for All. The aim of it was for communities to celebrate something that had brought them together, whether that was a group of young people or old people. One of my favourites was in Sheffield, where a community hall had been refurbished by a group of offenders doing community service. They had an event that brought those offenders back and they had a celebration together. What was really interesting about this was we had to double the amount of money we put in because within six weeks we were overwhelmed by applications.

There are a lot of on-the-ground examples of where people really enjoy bringing people together, but it is not choreographed. The Big Lunch is another fantastic example, where 9 million people across the country came together in their local streets and had lunch together in the summer. Projects such as the Big Iftar are very interesting because that is an opportunity that the Muslim community uses to draw in people both from within and without its own community to celebrate at the end of the day when they break their fast. There are examples and specific charities, such as the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation, that only work in this area and do a very good and effective job.

**Baroness Barker:** I wanted to query the initial assumption that charities are uniquely placed. I know that charities have traditionally existed and thrived on having a far more detailed knowledge of their communities than anybody else. Those of us who sat on the Select Committee on Charities, which Baroness Pitkeathley chaired, will know that we asked every single person who came to give us evidence, "If you lived in a poor community, who would know more about your community and who would you be more pleased to see: Lidl or a charity?" The answer to that might once automatically have been a charity; I do not think it is so now. It is partly to do with data—to refer back to one of previous questions about what government might do, it might help the charitable sector with digital skills. That, in turn, might help charities to get back to what they could do, which was to spot trends and troubleshoot. Do you agree with that?

**Sir John Low:** If the data is helpful. Forty-six per cent of people believe that charities can help improve community cohesion. When we went out and asked, that is the result that we found. Interestingly, 55% of people said that charities are most likely to provide effective support for those who need help in times of political and economic uncertainty. That is 55%, compared to 36% who said local authorities were capable of doing it and 16% who said that central government was capable of doing it. The evidence would appear to be that the public feel that charities have a significant role in social cohesion, but I accept they are not exclusively the custodians of social cohesion and all that relates to it. Of course not.

Q111 **Baroness Barker:** My question carries on in a similar vein about charities

and the role that they play in overcoming discrimination and inequality. We know that all charities are under a duty of public benefit, but they serve minority communities, sometimes exclusively. Do you think there needs to be something within the governance code of charities which means they have people on their boards from minority communities such as women?

**Sir John Low:** Whether a code of conduct is the right way to do it, we could discuss. There is no doubt in my mind that charities work very hard at diversity. When I was leading RNID, as it was called at the time, we employed significant numbers of deaf people and other disabled people simply because we were able to accommodate them, and we were open to it and it was the norm, and therefore people were willing to come. As part of that, we also had had much higher levels of gay and lesbian staff than other organisations and a very good gender balance.

The experience that I have is that charities work hard in this area. If I look at my own organisation, like many charities, 70% of employees are women. As we go up through the grades in the organisation to the more senior level, it remains at about that. We have worked very hard at it. At the top level of the directors, immediately it flips over to being male dominated, in spite of vigorous efforts on my part in a leadership role to not be in that position. When you get to the trustee board, we have a good balance. It is not the same as the staff group—it is not 70% women and 30% men—it is maybe 60% men and 40% women, something of that order. It is extremely difficult to force the issue all the way up through the organisation, for all sorts of reasons. Bringing in young trustees and people from a whole range of backgrounds makes a huge difference to the governance of organisations. If you have someone who is unemployed on your board telling you what it is like, not just listening to the theory, it makes a huge difference. What we must not do, in my view, is put more obligations on charities than we put on business. We cannot be in that position.

**The Chairman:** Do you want to add briefly to this, with an eye on the clock?

**Patrick Murray:** There are a couple of things. Tied to this question and referring back to the previous one, we need to recognise that civil society is not perfect in all ways. Some of it is about bonding social capital and bringing together groups which can be quite exclusive, rather than bridging social capital and reaching out across communities. That is very real and we need to be a little careful about saying that charities, echoing Baroness Barker's point, are the only people uniquely placed to do this. Some of them are, but we certainly found in our research, when the question of Brexit came up, that our staff might have been rather ardent remainers and yet the area we worked in voted strongly leave. How connected are we? There is a lot of soul searching going on in some organisations about how they reach out.

On the diversity of trustees, the report that came out earlier this week sets out the scale of the challenge. It is not that people in this sector do not

care about it. It was a big topic that we explored in our research, and people certainly thought it was important, but they did not link it to anything; they did not link it to having a greater impact and being more effective, so it ended up falling down the list of priorities that they had. There is some work to do to build the case for why it is important, around sparking innovation, about being more representative and reflective of communities. We had a very interesting blog from Mike Adamson about the challenge to the British Red Cross in the post-Grenfell environment, where people were associating the words “British” and “Cross” with an establishment Christian organisation when a lot of people from very diverse communities had just been failed by institutions, so it was quite difficult to engage in some of that.

As society changes and becomes more diverse, it is going to be mission critical for people to reflect the communities that they work in more. What can you do? It is difficult. As I say, we need to build the case for diversity. It is difficult to mandate things, but there are certain nudges that we would suggest. We think the Charity Commission could do more to ask people through the annual return. Getting people to report on diversity and things such as that would certainly help nudge trustees in the right direction. A lot can be done in the sector by sector bodies, et cetera.

**Q112 Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** The Committee would like your views on the effectiveness or otherwise of citizenship education and National Citizen Service.

**Sir John Low:** The range of initiatives that has been in place has worked, up to a point. I would urge that these types of initiatives are much more closely integrated with existing civil society organisations. You have organisations across every community: Scouts, Girlguiding, a whole range of others, I am not being exclusive. It is rather sad that they are not integrated. We do not need, with all respect, endless political initiatives. We need to move forward in an integrated, cohesive way if we are going to build community cohesion.

**The Chairman:** Ms Austwick, would you like to add?

**Dawn Austwick:** On whether they work, one has to look at the evaluation on the National Citizen Service, and it is probably a bit too early to know the answer to that. Fundamentally, a little like John, for me it is about having a menu of different things happening in different ways. I sat in a shed in east Belfast and talked to a gentleman who was an active participant in that shed. It was the Men in Sheds project. He said, “When my wife died, I turned in on myself. I stopped going out. I didn’t see my friends. I didn’t see my family. I thought my life wasn’t worth living”. One of his neighbours said, “Come down to this shed one afternoon”, and he started talking. He is now there three or four days a week. He teaches some of the youngsters joinery. His life has been transformed. You need that whole menu of different ways of citizens engaging and learning about how to be active, and learning by doing is possibly as useful as didactic learning in the sense of citizenship.

Q113 **Lord Rowe-Beedoe:** Let us focus on funders for a moment. Dawn, I am sure we were all interested to see in your written evidence that you thought that your funds should be more open to risky projects. I was also interested, Patrick, in your comments about infrastructure as being toward the middle or the bottom of the table. What can be done to encourage funders to give more support to engagement with charities?

**Dawn Austwick:** I would go back to one of the places I started: about enabling funding to be accessible. I used the example of the refugee group. Another lovely example that we came across recently was a group that was not good at writing, but was perfectly able to articulate orally. We filmed their application and are now going to film the creation of the funding contract with them, so we will have a different mechanism to enable them to participate, and therefore develop. There is a whole plethora of things we can all do to make it easier for people. We can also look at specific types of funding that encourage participation. For example, Young Vic runs a neighbourhood theatre project which enables young people to have free tickets to their shows as well as engaging them in conversations about those shows, and that is an exploration of their civic understanding of issues and so on. For us, our mantra of putting people in the lead means that we ask every applicant, "How are you demonstrating that? How are you bringing that to life? What is your governance structure? If you are a project that is about young people, are there any young people on your board? If you want to work with homeless people, and want to design a process to encourage them and enable them to lead a different life, are they involved in the design and development of that process?" For us, there are specifics that are around topics of civic engagement, but there is an underpinning of all our funding that asks organisations to demonstrate how they really are living that, and sometimes they struggle and sometimes we get a bit of kickback from it, but we try to be firm.

**Lord Rowe-Beedoe:** Is that what you call risky if you then go ahead and invest in them?

**Dawn Austwick:** That is not risky per se across the board. The risk is where you will be thinking about funding a group in a way that you might not have done before; for example, the group I was talking about earlier. That is really what we are talking about there.

**The Chairman:** We must call it a day. We have overrun, I am afraid. I am sorry not to have given you all a chance on that last question. We found your evidence and information very valuable. Thank you.



Fiona Wilson, Head of Research, USDAW; Katerina Rudiger, Chief Community Officer, CIPD – oral evidence (QQ 114-121)

**Fiona Wilson, Head of Research, USDAW; Katerina Rudiger, Chief Community Officer, CIPD – oral evidence (QQ 114-121)**

Wednesday 22 November 2017

10.40 am

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Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Baroness Eaton; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beddoe.

Evidence Session No. 13

Heard in Public

Questions 114 - 121

## Examination of witnesses

Fiona Wilson and Katerina Rudiger.

Q114 **The Chairman:** Welcome to you both, and thank you very much for coming along to talk to us today.

**Lord Blunkett:** Chair, I have an additional small interest. I wrote a recent preface for a City Year UK publication, so I thought it might be useful to note that.

**The Chairman:** A list of the interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. The session is open to the public and is being recorded for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and put on the Committee's website. A few days after the session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check it for accuracy, and it would be helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after this evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence or have any additional points you wish to make, you are most welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. Could I ask you to introduce yourselves?

**Katerina Rudiger:** Thank you so much for having me. I am Katerina Rudiger and I work for the CIPD. We are the professional body for HR. We are also a charity and we have over 146,000 members who work in various HR roles, so it is not companies but individuals. I lead on all our social action volunteering programmes and am working on embedding this idea of professional citizenship within the HR profession, which I am looking forward to telling you a bit more about

**Fiona Wilson:** I am Fiona Wilson, head of research and economics at the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers. We have 435,000 members, many of whom volunteer in a range of capacities. We focus on supporting them through training and skills development and we are very keen to encourage employers to do the same.

Q115 **The Chairman:** Thank you. Perhaps I can open up with a general question for a bit of slow bowling to get the match going, since we are starting the test match in Australia later today: how do you view the current state of civic engagement in the UK, and how does employment affect civic engagement?

**Fiona Wilson:** Civic engagement in the UK could definitely be improved. From an USDAW point of view, we want to see more of our members involved in society, in everyday life and in areas they can influence, such as public policy and other engagements. We have a view that well-paid and secure employment enables people to have more time to volunteer. Many of our members are low paid, moving on to the issue about employment, so some are chasing two or three jobs to make ends meet and feed their families, et cetera, so the opportunity for them to get involved in civic engagement is restricted by the amount of time they are spending earning their income. In terms of changes to the labour market, the gig economy

meaning that people are not employed, the lack of flexibility for workers and the levels of pay, which could be significantly improved to enable people to find more time to do civic engagement, are the issues that are reducing the ability of our members to get involved in civic engagement.

**Katerina Rudiger:** I would agree with Fiona that we can definitely improve things, but the second thing to note is that there is an issue around the recognition of what people do already, both on the employer side and by the Government. We see our role in driving this and we want to get our members to engage with their communities and volunteer, so we have a number of programmes where our members are involved in helping jobseekers in local communities, working with schools and promoting the benefits of the HR profession, and we have thousands of volunteers. We also, as I said earlier, want to embed this idea of citizenship within the HR profession because HR people have such a pivotal role in the labour market and are in a unique position where they can be responsible for somebody's working life. We want HR professionals to recognise that privilege and the responsibilities that come with it, so we do a lot of work around how HR people can use their skills for the benefit of the wider society and of individuals.

Back to the point of recognition, we also work with employers. Again, because HR professionals have such a pivotal role in organisations, we want them to drive civic engagement and volunteering among employees and embed this into learning and development practices. We have seen a lot of progress, but more can be done.

**The Chairman:** To ask you a question about the employers, what do they get back from it, as they will want to see what their rewards are? Do you do case studies about how you have created greater employee commitment and involvement in the business once they have had a chance to see something of wider society?

**Katerina Rudiger:** Yes, we do, and we do guidance for employers where we share those case studies, best practice, et cetera. The business case is very clear, so employers get a lot out of it in terms of staff engagement, health and well-being and skills development, such as communication skills and team working. There is lots of evidence that people would improve in those, so employers get something out of it. If you think back to the point about engaging with local communities, it is a great way for staff to understand the communities they are operating in and the customers, so there are numerous benefits for employers.

**Baroness Barker:** I am struggling here a bit. Do you think skilled volunteering and civic engagement are the same thing, or are they different? Could you give me an example of what you are talking about?

**Katerina Rudiger:** I am talking mainly about volunteering, which I believe is the key part of civic engagement. That can be anything from helping a jobseeker into work, using your skills from an HR perspective, or working with a school. We have a programme where our members volunteer to

work with the boards of schools to embed careers education into lesson plans, working with the Careers & Enterprise Company. We have our members supporting local charities with HR advice and guidance and we have things such as members campaigning for the living wage in their organisations. Fiona was talking about the challenge that many employees who are low paid probably find it difficult to engage, so we need to work on that. It is not just about the communities; for us, it is about the workplace as well and using your skills. If you think about the recent scandals around sexual harassment, it is standing up against this in your organisation and demonstrating that this is not acceptable and helping employees, so it is going over and above your day job, which is what citizenship means for us.

**The Chairman:** Ms Wilson, I am sorry, I cut you off.

**Fiona Wilson:** I wanted to add to the point that has just been made about the importance of training and development and how I see union members who come forward to be active in the union and then go on to stand for local office and are, hopefully, elected as councillors. They develop those skills very significantly and they become engaged in the community, they understand more about their community and they take all those skills and benefits back to the employer. The civic engagement side of it and becoming a councillor or a local representative enhances an individual's skills, confidence and ability to take that back to the workplace to enhance the workplace as well.

**Baroness Redfern:** You talked about the workforce. Do you think there is a difficulty for small companies of fewer than five people to give time off for their employees, and do you think it is a barrier for people who want to get involved because of poor connectivity, probably in the rural areas?

**Fiona Wilson:** The larger the employer, the easier it is to give leave of absence. With small employers it is more difficult to give people leave of absence, but it depends on what is happening in terms of civic engagement and the benefit the employer gets back in community support for what they are doing. For example, if somebody is in a volunteer mountain rescue team or is a retained firefighter, employers will want to support that and, when there is an emergency, let people go, so it depends on the civic engagement and how often that might be.

In terms of connectivity, there is a significant problem in the UK in that broadband speeds and accessibility need to be significantly improved in rural areas. Certainly, where I live in quiet Cheshire, there is a great deal of difficulty with access to broadband, which needs to be improved, yes.

Q116 **Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Fiona, you referred to the change in the labour market, the gig economy and people having more than one job, and there have been other changes, such as in technology or people getting used to having more jobs than previous generations used to have. What impact have these changes in the way the labour market works had on citizenship and civic engagement—the good and bad, the opportunities and

the problems?

**Fiona Wilson:** The key change from an USDAW point of view is that people have less time to give to civic engagement because they are either chasing more than one job or they are working in the gig economy where they do not know when the next time off will come and there are difficulties with flexibility in terms of shift patterns, et cetera. That means that it is more difficult to plan people's engagement.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** You are the researcher, I am not, but, if you go back so many years, the number of hours we work cannot be more than it was then because it was pretty awful, especially in the jobs that you represent. Is it the pattern of work, not necessarily the total number of hours worked, and the way it spreads across the week?

**Fiona Wilson:** It is still both. We find that our members work longer hours to earn the wage to make ends meet, and that has not changed. Technology is impacting on the workplace in the retail sector, but they are still open all hours with 24/7 working in retail, which then expands into distribution because stores need to be stocked up. From an USDAW point of view, people work longer and harder than they ever have because of the pressure to earn a living.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Is it also the total amount of time? Overall, on average hours, perhaps we all think everyone is working longer, and it may be that your members are, but is there something about people having to stitch together a number of different jobs so that working 33 hours in a standard job is rather different from working 33 hours in two or three jobs? You both seem to be nodding to that, so that is important to bear in mind, is it not: that sort of insecurity and, as you said, the inability to plan—so perhaps it is not the total number of hours that is at issue?

**Fiona Wilson:** The inability to plan is a key issue and it links back to the number of hours that people work. With retail, in particular, being a 24/7 service, people work different contracts and different hours and there is now that period of availability when you need to be available for work. With people chasing two or three jobs, if an employer says, "Can you come in and work tomorrow because we have a need to do that?", somebody who is concerned about where the next three hours will come from will not say, "No, I'm going to go off and do something in the community"; they will work instead. It is linked with an issue about having a contract for the hours that you actually work. There are many people who work in retail who may have a contract to say they work 12 hours a week, but they work significantly more than that because they are asked to roster on and do more hours. One of our strong arguments is that there should be a right to request a contract that reflects the hours you actually work because that gives more security to the individual and they have a contract which reflects the fact that they work 30 hours most weeks, which gives security to ensure that income will be coming in. The flexibility side of things, linked in with people doing two or three jobs, is impacting on low-paid workers getting involved in civil and community activity.

**Katerina Rudiger:** To come back on the employment relationships, what is interesting for this Committee is the connection with identity and civic engagement, because you do not just identify with one employer any more; you will not be for 20 years with the same employer. That is why, having said that employers need to support and encourage civic engagement and volunteering, it is not all down to the employer. That is why we are so interested and we are still at the beginning of this idea of having a professional identity instead. If you think about an HR person working for one employer or as a consultant, we want to foster an identity of what it means to be a good HR professional and to tie that civic engagement to that identity.

As a professional body, we looked at what it means to be a good professional, which is having the right skills, keeping those skills up to date, having situational judgment—all the kind of things you would expect of someone to do their job well. Beyond that, we have identified social and ethical responsibility and commitment to something bigger than yourself, which is what we are currently developing: what does that look like, and how would you express that? If we tie a person's social and ethical responsibility not necessarily to the employment they are in but to the identity of a professional, we can work with something here, which is the concept that we are currently embedding into all our professional standards and qualifications. We are saying, "What can you do beyond your day job to demonstrate that social and ethical responsibility and that commitment?" That is something interesting we can work with. In your terms of reference, it says that you are looking for new ways to bridge gaps within communities and to find new ways to foster civic engagement, and this is one good, new and innovative way in which we can do that.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** What we have heard this morning about longer working hours is certainly borne out by a lot of anecdotal evidence. The paper we had before this meeting says, "In terms of hours worked, the average worker worked 33 hours per week in the first quarter of 1995 and, as of the second quarter of 2017, worked 32 hours per week". In other words, we have a problem to resolve between what we have in the paper here and what we have heard from you, which indeed is borne out by a lot of anecdotal evidence.

Q117 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** That is the point I was trying to get at—that it is not just the total number of hours but how those hours are made up and the different sectors. You have partly answered the next question, whether those in low-paid work face additional barriers to civic engagement, and you have talked about time insecurity, but are there any other barriers over and above those for people doing low-paid work and, for the ones you have already talked about and any others, what can be done to reduce those barriers?

**Katerina Rudiger:** This starts within organisations with their HR practices. Quite often, somebody will say, "Well, if somebody needs to be on the till, we can't have them out volunteering". This makes complete sense, but it comes back to your resourcing strategy: do you plan for 100% or 80%? If

you plan for 80%, you can have people going off to do volunteering because somebody else will cover it—so it comes back to embedding this into your HR practices.

In terms of the barriers, a big barrier that we see is confidence, where people think they do not have anything to add. A number of times somebody has said to me, “But I’m not sure I can mentor a young jobseeker because what can I possibly add?” “You’re working in HR and this person has never worked. You don’t even have to do anything; you just tell them about what it looks like from the other side”. This plays out in many different ways with lots of people where they do not think they have anything to offer, so it is about building their confidence. The mere fact that you are coming from a different point of view, you are giving your skills and time for free and are motivated to help someone to do something good is a huge contribution, so it is about building people’s confidence and sharing those stories as to what they can offer.

**Fiona Wilson:** I have already talked about the difficulties of low pay and people chasing many hours to be able to make ends meet, but there are some additional things that could be addressed, which would be very good for the Committee to consider. The first is the living wage or the national living wage and how much that is. An uprating would give people the need to work fewer hours if they were able to get more money from the national living wage or the living wage.

The carer’s allowance is set at £120 and, if you earn more than £110 a week, you will lose your carer’s allowance. There are a lot of people who are caring and volunteering in the community by the fact that they are carers and, if it could be uplifted for more people who are already caring, volunteering and doing significant things for their families or a family member, that would make a difference.

Public transport is massively expensive. If you are a low-paid worker and you want to go somewhere to assist in the community but you have to find the money to pay for your bus or train fare, that will put you off as well.

Childcare prices have shot up compared with inflation, and a lot of low-paid members struggle to meet the costs of childcare. If you are going to have to find childcare to cover you to be able to go and volunteer, it is another barrier. Low pay and all the things linked with low pay and the cap on the carer’s allowance all add up to prevent and deter low-paid workers from getting involved in civic engagement.

**Baroness Newlove:** I am interested because the work I have done in my previous role was about communities and volunteering, and I do not think there is a straight message here. It is quite interesting to learn about low pay, but we are looking at how we can get civic engagement and get the younger generation to engage with values and other community cultures. For me, one thing is missing, and I do not know what the evidence shows, but we have young people going to the jobcentres looking for work, and I know from personal experience—and it is something the Committee should

look at—that, if they cannot find work but they are skilled graduates in IT, Jobcentre Plus asks them to go in and train people for free. That could be looked at as volunteering, depending on how it is interpreted, but that gives low morale to that individual with the skills when they are not getting paid and they sit at a computer, so how do we bring that on? Low pay adds an issue to this, I agree with you, and transport is an issue to get to jobs, so it is how we engage.

I do not know if your members could transpose those skills to start their journey of work and feel part of the community, which is making them feel low when they have gone to university or they have come out of a job and have gone expecting to get a support package and they do not, so perhaps you could add a bit to that. Volunteering with those skills—I have worked with the Civil Service—is not just about painting a shed, which is not what this is about; it is about transposing your skills. As you say, you train professionals for templates, but I have faced the other side where employers will not let them go or some government departments have specialised HMRC people and say, “You go in that area. Go out and tell them about tax”—which does not help reach communities as they do not want that help but rather other skill sets to promote them. We are not going for the basic here where you get people coming into low-paid jobs who do not feel self-worth, and I am trying to tease out how we raise aspirations to go in a workplace in the first place.

**Fiona Wilson:** From an USDAW point of view, we focus on encouraging our members to take part in our lifelong learning programmes, which is another thing the Committee could support us on, because lifelong learning funding has been successively cut by the Government, which is reducing the programme of support we can give. One of the most popular courses for young people in particular is learning British sign language to enable them to support and communicate with colleagues and friends in the community, which is a real skill and benefit. People also like to learn languages and train to be representatives in the workplace, which then helps signpost other people they work with to sources of help.

Moving on to the issue about mental health in the community and the difficulties that everyone is having with mental health, we cannot counsel or deal with mental health issues, but we can signpost members at work to be able to go to get support where they need it, so it is about training and developing—the confidence point that Katerina mentioned earlier—and about raising people’s self-worth.

**Baroness Newlove:** But if they are not available for jobs and they want to go off and do something, that stops their payments. There are lots of ducks to line up here and it is not just about political parties or funding but nurturing that person to want to engage. How do we bring that forward?

**Fiona Wilson:** I agree. At the end of the day, if somebody is unemployed and they have a skill that they can bring to the community, I do not believe that person should be forced to work for nothing, and nobody should be forced to work for nothing; their labour is worthy of hire at the end of the



day. If someone has a skill that they are passing on, there should be some ability within the benefits system or the support to enable people who are contributing to receive some support for doing it.

**Katerina Rudiger:** I am glad you are asking this question as it is so important. It is why we have been running for five or six years a programme called Steps Ahead Mentoring, where we get our members to work with young jobseekers. We work with 570 jobcentres across England, Scotland and Wales and we match the jobseekers with a mentor, who is one of our members, so an HR professional, and they give them advice on how to do a CV and how to do an interview, and it is also about that self-worth, that confidence, which is always coming through. We now have over 3,500 people mentors supporting young people and we have reached over 5,000 young people. We now also have a programme of ambassadors where 40 of our members promote this programme with jobcentres and say, "There is some help out there", and we have had huge success where seven out of 10 of the young people on the programme have found employment. For us, it is not about getting any old job but about that person's career and their aspirations, so our support is personalised, tailored and face-to-face, and it is volunteers doing it. We also work very closely with the Step up to Serve #iwill campaign, and you probably know that this week is #iwill week, where we encourage people to do volunteering as well because it is a good way to hook them into volunteering and to gain skills—so it is joining those two up.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** You mentioned the cuts in lifelong learning and your written evidence said something about the impact of austerity on civic engagement. Could you say a bit more about how you see the impact of austerity on civic engagement?

**Fiona Wilson:** The first impact is that people struggle to make ends meet. Our cost of living survey indicated that 21% of people regularly miss meals to save money for their bills, 44% have been late or missed a rental payment, one in five of our members has taken a payday loan, 78% of them struggle to repay the loan and 75% have cut down on other essentials to pay for transport costs to get to work. The direct result of austerity is that people struggle to make ends meet, which means that their everyday lives are around childcare, feeding the family, going to work and finding the money for transport. That is a direct result of austerity and is stopping people getting involved in community and volunteering activity because there are not the hours spare to get involved in community activity.

Q118 **Lord Blunkett:** I do not think it would be unfair, Chairman, to say that we have two of the most progressive representative organisations in the employment field in front of us today, both of whom have demonstrated some practical measures that they know about and are taking. We are after practical ideas. On the idea of lifting the carer's allowance and the issue of lifelong learning, perhaps Fiona could say a bit more about whether the Union Learning Fund still exists, which was set up almost 20 years ago, and whether it would be possible to combine what is already there with newer ideas that you have thought about and want us to recommend. For

instance, USDAW was involved all those years ago in encouraging members to become special constables, which was not just about doing good in the community but was also about protecting small retailers who were facing racist attacks and all kinds of things, so there was a dual element of both the wider community being engaged with this and gaining as well as a direct benefit to the employers, small and medium-sized. Would both of you reflect on further things that you think practically we could recommend not just to the Government but to trade union and employer organisations?

**Fiona Wilson:** You have mentioned the Union Learning Fund. That is currently under threat and is being reduced, and we would like to see it being increased because it is that fund that enables us to train our reps and activists to become more engaged in the workplace and in society and builds the confidence that individuals do not always feel to get involved in community activity. I am not aware of any initiatives in terms of training special constables, et cetera.

**Lord Blunkett:** That was 15 years ago and you are far too young.

**Fiona Wilson:** You are very kind. We run the Freedom from Fear campaign and we have just had our Respect week, the first week in November, which is about tackling the aggression and violence in the workplace that our members face from members of the public. We work very closely in that campaign with our employers, who are obviously as concerned as we are about the levels of assault in the workplace. Those campaigning activities are often curtailed by the amount of money we can spend on them because of the Lobbying Act, which is one thing the Committee could look at. The Lobbying Act has meant that unions have to now look very carefully at the amount of money they can spend on campaigns that might have a political angle and, of course, the number of police on the streets is definitely a political issue. That is a practical thing the Committee could look at: how the Lobbying Act is constraining unions such as mine from campaigning on issues that members will be keen to get involved in where we have to be careful about the amount of money that we spend on those issues.

**Katerina Rudiger:** For me, it is about recognition and promoting what we do, and there is initial recognition at the macroeconomic level. Interestingly, the Bank of England's Andy Haldane, the chief economist, looked at this a few years ago and said, "Roughly estimated, volunteering contributes 3.5% to GDP". Why do we not hear more about this, why are people not looking into this and why is this not getting recognised, if that is what we want to promote?

The second point is around the HR profession. We have asked our members and 74% are involved in some volunteering activity, so that is hugely above the national average, which is probably around 30% or 40%. We have so many programmes. I mentioned our Steps Ahead mentoring programme, working with schools and our Enterprise Adviser programme. We have 52 branches which are growing in local areas where people work with the community, not just to promote the profession but doing all sort of things, such as supporting small charities, et cetera, and it is about recognising these contributions. As I said, we are working with 570 jobcentres, which

has been a great delivery partner for us, connecting us with young people, because we have the mentors and the volunteers but we do not have access to the beneficiaries. It is still a struggle, because jobcentres will prioritise paid provision, and sometimes the evidence of the paid provision is not that clear. We are offering something that is free by skilled professionals, offering their skills and good will, and we want to see a bit more recognition and support and have the HR profession recognised as a force for good in society because that links to our purpose to champion better work and working lives.

**The Chairman:** Could I pick up one point of Lord Blunkett's inquiry, which was about practical examples of what is going on? I may be completely wrong, but might I draw the impression that you might have worked overseas and elsewhere and, if so, have you had CIPD experience of what other countries might be doing better than or different from what we are doing?

**Katerina Rudiger:** I have not, actually, but last year, with the Step up to Serve campaign, I went on a study visit to the US where we were looking at volunteering. Obviously, it is much bigger because the context is one where the state does less and it is up to individual citizens. What is striking is that they are quite pragmatic about it and, for them, quite often volunteering is mandatory—so, in order to get into university, young people have to demonstrate a certain number of hours, et cetera, so they have a very pragmatic approach. I am not sure that this would work in the UK or that we would want to promote it, but there are certainly lessons we can learn from that. They have been doing a lot of work around how volunteering changes you as an individual and an engaged citizen, so you start by doing something and then, as a result of having this disruptive experience, you become more engaged in general and change as a citizen. That is quite interesting for you to look at. I have brought it back to the HR profession to look at how having a disruptive experience can change HR professionals and make them operate better in their organisations and in society.

**The Chairman:** If you have any specific additional information on that point and can send it to us, it would be very helpful.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** This is possibly a question more for Fiona and it goes back to the question Baroness Barker raised about the breadth of the issues we are talking about. We talk about volunteering all the time and we talk about civic engagement in terms of taking an active part in democracy, working for change and the rest of it. The picture you paint of tougher times for working people might indicate that there are more people getting engaged in civic issues along that campaigning line. Without going into legislation, my feeling of the trade union movement, reflecting on my own background, is that they are less successful at engaging their workforce in that wider involvement in democracy than they used to be a generation ago. Is that the case, or do you see a change in that? Forgetting the volunteering, what is the state of play in your world in terms of engaging people in that wider civic activity and democracy, so in being

active citizens in keeping democracy vibrant and alive?

**Fiona Wilson:** We encourage our members to get involved in political activity, we support them to stand for local councils and to become Members of Parliament and we train and support individuals through our training programme. Personally, in the 12 years I have been in this job, I have seen that people are very keen to do that.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Not less keen than 12 years ago?

**Fiona Wilson:** No, I do not think it is any different from when I first came into this role. We always find people who want to come forward and we always try to support those individuals, because people who work in retail, distribution and shop work are in the community. They are hearing all the time from the people they deal with at the tills, in the stores and on the doorstep, delivering groceries, of the concerns that people have. You hear the phrase, "Well, I'm not interested in politics", but politics will find you out wherever you are and whatever you are doing. I do not think there has been a reduction and I could not say there had been a big increase, but we are still doing that sort of work and supporting individuals to stand for elected office.

Q119 **Baroness Pitkeathley:** You have talked a lot about volunteering and people having time off to do it, but what more could employers do to encourage both the volunteering and the civic engagement? I was quite struck, Fiona, by the two examples you gave us about mountain rescue and about being firemen. What about having paid time off for something rather less glamorous than that—to be a trustee of a mental health charity, for example? What more could employers do in that regard?

**Fiona Wilson:** Employers could see the benefit of their staff members getting involved and engaged in the community, both for the benefit it gives with their link back to the employer and the development of the individual, which is what Katerina was saying the CIPD is looking at. It is important to emphasise to employers the benefits that they receive in return both because they are engaged in the community and in their staff members getting experience from doing that. It is a question of talking to employers and making sure employers can see it other than as a cost to their business because that person is not there.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** Who should be saying this to employers?

**Fiona Wilson:** The unions are doing it and we are doing it. We are encouraging them to be engaged and Katerina is encouraging HR people, so we have a pincer movement going on here.

**Katerina Rudiger:** It is for the Government as well. There was a debate a few years ago around three days' volunteering, which has been scrapped, so it might be good to look at that again.

On your point around political engagement, looking beyond volunteering, we tested this a bit. We are a charity, so we have to be apolitical and quite careful about what we can do to get people to engage with the political

system on important issues such as employment and education. In the run-up to the last election, we encouraged our members and prepared a tool whereby they could write to their local MP and raise the issues that we think are important, such as connecting employers with schools, helping disadvantaged jobseekers and working on other stuff, so we have done that and it had quite a good response. I am sure we can do more of it, but we have a fine balancing act with that.

The other initiative we have just launched is around the living wage and all the points Fiona just made. We are asking our members to campaign for the living wage in their organisations, which is, in a way, going above and beyond HR because, in some cases, it might be difficult for the HR person to do that as they might say, "Well, why would I pay somebody the living wage?" As the people professional and somebody representing the interests of people in the organisation, the HR person has to stand up for this and say, "These are the reasons why you should pay the living wage", so we have just launched a new initiative around that which I wanted to mention. You had a question around what employers can do.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** Yes, and could you come back on what you said about the three days' volunteering, which was an issue at one time?

**Katerina Rudiger:** We ask employers to do more around skills-based volunteering, which is very important, so that they are not painting a fence, unless that is their skill, and using their accountancy, HR or whatever skills they may have, and employers can do much more, as I said earlier.

On the three days of volunteering, it was a good tool to promote a debate on whether we necessarily want employers to offer three days. A lot of employers who believe in that would offer more anyway, so it is more around having a debate about the benefits, et cetera. It was quite helpful to have that at the government level and it somehow has disappeared now.

**Fiona Wilson:** If I can add one further point to the question you asked earlier, one important thing would be to have government support to encourage employers to develop a comprehensive public duties and community roles policy where they are encouraging staff to get involved in community activity by having a policy that states what will happen, including some element of payment and support for that or maybe some element of flexible working so that, if people want to volunteer to do charity work, they can flex their hours to enable them to do that. That is something that the Committee could encourage the Government to do so that employers have a very clear policy on it which enables employees to be aware that there is support in their organisation for community work and volunteering, and they will be more likely to come forward to volunteer if they think their employer is going to be receptive to their request for time off.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Going back to your point that, if employers paid the living wage, lower-paid workers might not have to work so many hours and might have more time, you will be aware that, under

universal credit, in-work conditionality will be rolled out, which could be pushing some people to work more hours than perhaps they want to. Do you think that could have a knock-on effect on people's willingness to engage civically?

**Fiona Wilson:** I am certain it will do, yes, because, if you have to chase the hours you need to meet your universal credit commitment, you will be doing that first.

Q120 **Baroness Eaton:** We have talked largely about volunteering and civic and community engagement. My question is more about the workforce and the relationships within it, so what more should employers be doing to encourage integration through the workplace, which is rather a different take?

**Fiona Wilson:** The first thing employers could be doing is encouraging people to join their trade union so that they can engage in their workplace. At the end of the day, employers should be encouraging people to join the union. Many of our employers do and we have very good agreements with key companies which are very supportive because they see the benefit, which works both ways, of employees being engaged in the workplace and their union. Another example would be providing ESOL training to immigrant workers to remove the language barriers that see workers isolated in the workplace. Another is fostering an environment of respect and having a published grievance procedure so that, if people have an issue in the workplace, they know how to resolve that, which is particularly relevant at the moment with some of the issues that have been coming out recently, and having an equality and diversity policy which makes clear the company expectations of employees and contractors. Moving on, it would be encouraging voluntary sports and social clubs and other issues, but the key thing from USDAW's point of view would be to encourage workers to join a union and work together to participate in union activity.

**Katerina Rudiger:** I am not sure if your question is about the culture or the make-up of the workforce. On the culture point, with what we have seen recently around sexual harassment, it is a good hook for us to investigate a bit more what we can do to have an inclusive and safe workplace culture. Again, it is up to all of us to create that culture where people feel that they can speak up. I want to see HR leading on this, but it is not just about HR; it is about everyone, line managers, the senior team, et cetera. Of course, there need to be good processes in place when something happens, but it is bigger than this.

If you are talking about the make-up and diversity of the workforce, it starts with outreach and recruitment, so what can employers do? They can go into schools and promote opportunities and they can look at their recruitment processes and at how inclusive they are. We did a huge piece of work a few years ago when youth unemployment was such a big issue, and it transpired that a lot of employers were not recruiting young people and that some of their recruitment processes were barriers to employment, and they asked about experience when young people did not have any, et cetera. We have challenged our members on this and said, "Look, there is

a big problem. Sure, the Government could do better in equipping young people, but what can you do to adapt your recruitment processes?" This comes back again to this idea of citizenship, so going above and beyond your day job, even if it is a little uncomfortable, and saying, "We'll reach out to more disadvantaged jobseekers, even if it's a bit more hassle for us and for line managers, because it's the right thing to do and because it gives us access to a different talent and skills pool".

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Fiona, from the USDAW point of view, are you relatively sanguine about integration at the moment in the workplace? Is it getting better, is it getting worse, or is it about what you would expect?

**Fiona Wilson:** Since the European referendum and some of the issues that came through as part of the discussions, we had a great deal of concern expressed by our members about some of the public things that were being said about immigrant workers. We organised our No Room for Racism campaign, which directly addressed the issues about racism in the workplace. It was a big campaign in which our members engaged significantly because they were concerned about the people they were working with and the way that people from Europe were being vilified in the media. We worked through lifelong learning on developing and supporting our members and reps to enable them to deal with racism in the workplace and, as a direct result of the European referendum result, that campaign was up and running immediately because of the concerns that were being expressed to us by our members. As I say, it has been very successful in addressing those issues, because our members are very concerned about the people who sit next to them and how that individual then feels—will they have to go home, will they stay?—and the unions responded very quickly to that. It was a very positive response and a very good campaign.

Q121 **Baroness Newlove:** What could the Government do to improve integration in the workplace and to get employers to do more to support civic engagement?

**Fiona Wilson:** There are a number of issues we have already covered, and I would emphasise the importance of getting paid for the work that you do, the living wage and the national minimum wage, and that it is very important that those issues are addressed and enforced. The national minimum wage is not always enforced, so there is more that could be done by the Government to enforce it. We have not discussed a great deal something I mentioned earlier—the right to request flexible working, which is a key issue. At the moment you have the right to request it, but you do not have the right to have flexible working. That should definitely be looked at, which our members would benefit from, if they could request flexible working to fit in with, usually, caring or domestic responsibilities, so there is more that can be done there.

The second issue is the Union Learning Fund, which was mentioned earlier, and it has been cut and cut again. That is the fund that unions use to train, support and develop their members to be more engaged in a range of issues, including British sign language, learning other languages and other

civic engagement. The apprenticeship levy, which is currently in situ with employers, if that could be expanded to include a skills levy, it links in with what Katerina has been saying about developing skills that, if people feel more competent and able to engage because they have the confidence to do something, they will be far more keen to do it with the other issues we have talked about of encouraging people through the workforce.

**Baroness Newlove:** Does that cause further barriers to integration in the workplace with the Government not seeing this? I am trying to get at integration in the workplace and civic engagement because it comes down to the individual. I was interested, when you said you went to the US, that the state does not get involved and it is down to that individual, and I think we are losing that, that it is about the individual and how they feel. Is there enough integration in the workplace for them, or are they saying that the Government are blocking them from doing that?

**Katerina Rudiger:** For us, it is more about promoting all these topics to our membership, getting it embedded into HR practices and then the Government supporting that, so supporting flexible, safe, inclusive workplaces and promoting dialogue around that, which would be key, and recognition when it happens of what “good” looks like.

**Lord Blunkett:** Fiona mentioned earlier the idea of trying to encourage employers to have a policy. Katerina, is there a lot more we could do with medium and larger companies to ensure that their corporate social responsibilities have to be built into their annual reporting system?

**Katerina Rudiger:** Reporting is an interesting one because, at the moment, the people issues are left out of it. This is not quite my area of expertise, but the CIPD is doing a lot around looking at how we can have people issues raised in annual reports and whether, when investors come to look to invest in organisations, they look at the people side. We need to do a lot more to have people issues represented at board level, which is hugely important, so it is not just about volunteering and what companies do as that will be addressing just one element of it, and we are looking at something way bigger, which is how we can make sure that people issues are represented at board level, are recognised and accounted for and that that is what investors are looking for because only then will all this be truly taken seriously.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much for your very informative and interesting evidence.



Rt Rev Richard Atkinson, Inter Faith Network – oral evidence (QQ 122-128)

**Rt Rev Richard Atkinson, Inter Faith Network – oral evidence (QQ 122-128)**

Wednesday 22 November 2017

11.30 am

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Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Baroness Eaton; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beard.

Evidence Session No. 14

Heard in Public

Questions 122 - 128

## Examination of witness

Rt Rev Richard Atkinson.

Q122 **The Chairman:** Good morning. A list of the interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. The session is open to the public and is being recorded for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and will be put on the Committee's website. A few days after the session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check it for accuracy, and it would be most helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after this evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence or have additional points you wish to make, you are welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. Could I ask you to introduce yourself and then we will get on to the questions?

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** I am Richard Atkinson and I am here in my capacity as one of the two co-chairs of the Inter Faith Network, along with Mr Jatinder Birdi. I am also, along with Baroness Eaton, a trustee of Near Neighbours, although that is not why I am here.

Q123 **The Chairman:** Thank you very much. The first question is a general one, to ask you to describe the current state of civic engagement in the UK. How do you see that?

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** I am obviously responding on behalf of the Inter Faith Network. Just to be clear, it is a linking body with 200 members and, therefore, I will be drawing on the general comments and experience of our members.

That is a very difficult question to answer because, within the faith communities, there will be a range of answers; the opportunities and challenges vary from a body that covers everything from the Church of England through to Druids, Jains and other smaller faith communities. The Inter Faith Network would start from the point of view of people who are committed to civic engagement and to enhancing that and see faith as a positive benefit, recognising other challenges, but, like all good citizens, they would recognise many of the challenges. Our meetings cover everything from engagement of young people in civic life to how we enhance volunteering and a range of other familiar topics.

From our perspective, that there are a number of signs of health. We have just finished Inter Faith Week, covering England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, with hundreds of local initiatives and people coming together for faith—everything from an inter-faith seminar in Omagh to a community justice conference in south Lanarkshire to sharing learning and building for faith with the Cornwall Faith Forum through to Young, Free and Religious in Cardiff. It has been a very healthy week in terms of faith and civic engagement. I would also point to the responses to the atrocity in Manchester and the tragedy in Grenfell Tower, where lots of people responded and, among those, were significant signs of faith communities engaging with civic need and responding as they could.

Q124 **Baroness Barker:** What do you think the role of faith communities is in promoting civic engagement, and what do you think those faith communities which engage in civic engagement, and not all do, are trying to achieve?

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** It seems to me that the role of faith communities in promoting civic engagement comes under a number of headings, and I can expand on each if you want me to. There is an important role within faith communities, many of them drawing on their theological resources and traditions, to champion civic engagement, but it is not true of everybody—perhaps I can add the general proviso that there is always the exception to the rule within the world of faith. It is part of enhancing the contribution to the common good, part of seeking to affirm and extend participation in civic life and events; it is about supporting democratic engagement, about building a confident identity in a complex situation which gives people the confidence to contribute positively to their society, and it is about encouraging volunteering and charitable giving. So those are some of my headings.

What are they seeking to achieve? Many faith communities, including my own, would have a strong vision of a positive, cohesive, fruitful society in which each participant can contribute and play their part, and they are seeking to do that at the local level. Inter-faith groups, along with other faith groups, often play an important role in building local cohesion and responding to threat, with all parts having a big vision for our society.

**The Chairman:** One issue that we have been struggling with is what the red lines of behaviour are in certain faiths. For example, the treatment of women may not be as fair in some as we think it should be. What is your role in encouraging a set of values to which we can all aspire?

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** That is a complex question. Our primary role is creating open and challenging conversation and debate, because we believe that we both understand each other, move forward and challenge each other in that context. The annual meeting of the Inter Faith Network two years ago took the theme of hard questions, and different people will have different red lines. Within that, the Inter Faith Network is working to understand what it is to be a citizen and a contributor to our society, taking seriously the faith context that people come from.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** It may be that you have touched on this and I have not picked it up, but what can faith groups bring to citizenship over and above what secular groups might be able to?

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** The distinctive thing they bring is their faith, the tradition and the teaching. There are other things. Most faith groups have a strong sense of community and a strong sense of concern for our neighbour, which runs through many faith traditions in similar forms. They are local and grounded and it may not sound dramatic, but concern for neighbour and community is a strong stimulus to civic engagement.

**Baroness Barker:** Can you understand that some of us see a problem in

that faith communities can themselves be a barrier because some of them are based on discriminatory beliefs. They do not value all people equally and they are exempt from the equalities legislation. That is a problem for the mission that you are trying to outline.

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** I completely understand and recognise that and I am not dismissing that in any way. In the Inter Faith Network, we live with people who come from a variety of positions and we think it is important that we engage with that and create the context where those are debated and discussed. We take seriously things, such as the equality agenda, and we have engaged, for instance, with the Equality and Human Rights Commission on the issues of faith in work. That was a very productive conversation and challenged some of the misconceptions out there, and it is part of a positive path within that. There is also a question, and there are limits as to how far I can go in speaking of the Inter Faith Network, in terms of the balance between faith identity and contribution and the recognition of the freedom of the individual to pursue their faith and wider equality agendas, but I am not ignoring that genuine challenge.

Q125 **Lord Rowe-Beddoe:** What barriers do you consider that people of faith confront and, if there are such barriers or you can identify them, how could they be removed?

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** Most of my colleagues would probably start from a lack and a decreasing amount of religious literacy in our society. That has a number of impacts, including often a lack of understanding on the part of those who sometimes carry out consultation and engage with faith communities both of where they are coming from and the complexity of any one of the faith traditions, because they are not amorphous. Within each faith there are different traditions, so there is complexity. That religious literacy is not about people having PhDs in every one of the many faiths but having the basics of understanding of the place of faith in our society and its diversity, and having the tools to distinguish between what we might call “good faith” and “bad faith”, so that is one thing.

There are issues of capacity about engagement. Some of our faith communities are quite small and, whereas the Church of England, for instance, has a range of resources that allows us to engage at a number of levels, including with back-up and whatever, if you are a smaller community, the Jains or the Zoroastrians or whatever, it will be less easy to engage and there needs to be allowance for and recognition of that. There are issues which are not just for the faith community, but we are very conscious of our own need to engage women and young people and of how the voices of women in what traditionally have often been patriarchal communities are changing. There are good examples of inter-faith women’s organisations now, such as Nisa-Nashim, the Jewish-Muslim group, or the Women of Faith Network of Religions for Peace. Is it a barrier? There is work to do there. Maybe “barrier” is the wrong word.

One barrier is particular policies sometimes being badged in particular ways. There is a range of responses to the Prevent initiative, for example, but in some places the perception that it stereotypes particular

communities can be a barrier. Sometimes, we feel that there is a lack of effort to engage with some of the more conservative religious groupings, such as maybe the ultra-Jewish or the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community. Yes, there is a range of engagement and there are questions sometimes where there is insufficient space for genuine debate and proper dissent within the boundaries of civilised society.

**Lord Rowe-Beattie:** Are you actively attempting to dismantle some of the problems that you have highlighted with various faith groups, and how do you talk to people in the inter-faith groups? Is there a mechanism. If I am a member but I am not the leader, how do you talk to me?

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** First, the strength of inter-faith engagement, to my mind, is local inter-faith groups and other local inter-faith activity. I am not here for Near Neighbours, but the work that it does on the ground in a number of parts of our country now is grounded in local people—not just talking but doing. Social action is a significant part of the inter-faith agenda. There are good examples where the faith communities have sought to enhance and respond to the challenge of religious literacy. I might mention the Woolf Institute, for instance, and the work that has done. I was the founder chair of the St Philip’s Centre in Leicester, for study and engagement. It is not just talking but, for instance, at the moment it is working with the military to help it in its faith literacy and new police constables will come to it as part of their training. It is putting religious literacy into public life and public service, which is building a society where there is deeper understanding. I point to some of those.

It is about working with local authorities. The Inter Faith Network over the years, through documents such as *Faith and the Community: A Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities*, has sought to do that. The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Faith and Society has developed the faith covenant, which a number of local authorities have signed up to. In each of the areas, there is good practice, but there is never enough. I believe that Kent County Council and Cambridgeshire are looking at new ways of working with faith communities and are supported by the faith community.

**The Chairman:** Any specific examples would be very helpful because, as opposed to general statements of intent, we are trying to get some hard evidence.

Q126 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** You mentioned dissent, and I was very interested that we were given in our briefing a quote from your discussion paper on faith citizenship and shared life. It says, “There is a strong and important tradition in this country of dissent, and indeed of civil disobedience”. It is an important point because we can think of citizenship and it can get terribly cosy and comfortable, and there is a notion in the literature of dissident citizenship. Where do you think the line comes between what we might think of as dissident citizenship and dissent to be respected? Where is the line and where does it go too far to be antithetical to citizenship?

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** It is an important question.

**The Chairman:** And a difficult one.

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** Thank you, my Lord.

**The Chairman:** That let you off the hook.

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** I would approach it from two ends. On the one hand, there are some occasions—some are misconceptions that need to be challenged—when it seems that things such as conservatism within a religious tradition get confused with extremism. The word “radical” gets used in very broad terms and it often disturbs people who are just passionate about what they believe in, and there is an important distinction there. I do not think my colleagues are much different from most ordinary British people who would say that dissent goes too far when it begins to damage, trample on and oppress other people. That is probably about as far as I can go.

**Baroness Eaton:** I declare an interest in Near Neighbours. It is not the only one, but it is an organisation that is practical in getting people to look at the things that make them the same and not different and uniting them in activity, which is a benefit to all, so that is much more of a community base. A lot of subjects around inter-faith are about talking, but we need surely to look also at evaluating projects and to see what works on the ground, what is just a theory and what might be attractive to academics. We have to look at the outcomes and it is important that we do not lose sight of evaluating projects to see their benefit.

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** I would agree with that, and it is true that Near Neighbours has a very good track record of evaluating its work, and we need to extend that. I did not want to begin with a long list, but under the headings I gave at the beginning, I wonder whether I can pick up one or two of them because they are concrete examples that ground this. Under championing civic engagement, which is again related to Near Neighbours, there is the Catalyst programme, working with young people. Its programme has work on leadership and on identity in our society, working with young people of faith and others.

On the contribution to the common good, there is the Leicester night shelter which is opening up—there are seven different faith traditions, using churches, a Muslim community centre, a mosque and a temple over the winter period. There is the Wakefield Inter Faith Network, as part of the Inter Faith Network, which also includes Baha’i and pagans, and there is planting trees, which is environmental. If anybody wants further details, they should go to the Inter Faith Week site where there is a map of the several hundred events.

On participation in civic life and events, we have just had Remembrance Sunday and there is a growing involvement of faith communities in that, and it is how we tell the story of other ethnic and faith communities who contributed in both the world wars on behalf of our nation.

On democratic engagement, quite often things such as hustings locally will be done by other faith groups or inter-faith, and they are not the only people but it is just one sign, so those are just a few.

**Baroness Barker:** I am an ambassador for the Albert Kennedy Trust, which is the LGBT youth homelessness charity. Twenty-five per cent of all young people who are homeless are LGBT, so that is a higher incidence than in the rest of the population. In some 40% of the cases that the AK team deals with, religion, and not one religion but religion, is a factor in the cause of the homelessness of the young person. In trying to evaluate your list, does the Inter Faith Network deal with some of the harms caused by some faith community actions? It seems to me that you are telling us that faith communities have a unique role in civic engagement, or perhaps they are the only forum that can address those issues which secular organisations cannot.

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** We have a particular role. There is a legacy there and I am not disputing your observation at all. As I say, we are on a journey of enabling people to have harder conversations, of which sexuality is one. It takes time to draw these conversations out. At a recent local inter-faith meeting, there was a session on that and we touched on some things, but, to be fair, there has not been a recent conversation there and I hear what you say.

**Baroness Barker:** That is one instance. I grew up in Scotland where religious division was a terrible blight on society and it has taken a lot of time to work out.

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** The more obvious question is reflecting on the relationship between religion and violence and the tradition. People are very conscious of that, because around the Inter Faith Network table are people who are committed to well-being and safeguarding you. That is a complex conversation, but we are seeking to have it, just as Near Neighbours is seeking to build a series of local conversations—they are happening in Luton and the Black Country at the moment—to enable people to go deeper and tackle the things that really matter. I cover Luton as a bishop, where child sexual exploitation is a particular thing. I am encouraged that members of both the Christian church and the Islamic community have come together to begin to respond to that, alongside other people.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Would you say that, as well as encouraging dialogue on these difficult issues, the Inter Faith Network could communicate a message to its members that, although they may have different views on this issue within their own communities, and we all know which ones do, nevertheless there is a civic duty on all of us as citizens to treat with respect people who are different and to accord them all their proper rights? Therefore, a very clear distinction has to be made, particularly with the faith communities, between the respective roles of what might be their religious teaching and their civic duty to fellow citizens, which, hopefully, would be strengthened by good motivation from their religion to treat people with respect.

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** Treating people with respect is something we would take very seriously and would be conveyed through the organisation. What that means and how that relates to modern civic teaching is, as you will know, my Lord, a complex area and I hear the challenge.

Q127 **Lord Blunkett:** My question follows on from that and what Baroness Lister and the Chair were raising earlier about red lines. In the evidence, you touch on values. I appreciate that you cannot speak for everybody and are trying to reflect a broad consensus in the Inter Faith Network, but we have been struggling with whether there are unique British values or universal values, given that they are certainly not universally applied. Would you like to say a bit more about the value question that we have in the written evidence? I then have a follow-up question which is slightly more practical.

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** You will have seen that we have laid out the values in the IFN member code: service to others, integrity, accountability, trust, consultative and co-operative working, valuing diversity, inclusiveness, listening and openness, courtesy, mutual respect, and respecting dissent and people's right to express this. There is an overlap with the Government's fundamental British values, but there is also a difference. I think that many of our members, which is the best I can say, would see the values that we seek to work to as more fundamental values that go beyond Britain, coming out of faith traditions. There is an emphasis on the way that we live together and relationships, and people find those easier to engage with than maybe with the way that fundamental British values have been done. Equally, the Inter Faith Network and our colleagues recognise that they work in a country where democracy and the rule of law, which may be second-order values, are significant and, indeed, allow the flourishing of inter-faith life within this nation, which is not the case in many parts of our world.

**Lord Blunkett:** Some time ago, when I visited Chicago, there was an enormous amount of work being done by the black churches in the most deprived areas, setting up training and employment programmes, but with considerable suspicion from others that these were exclusive rather than inclusive. When the Government recently, in 2014, did away with the half-GCSE, they also did away with a lot of youngsters, tens of thousands, who were taking half a GCSE in religious studies and half a GCSE in citizenship and looking at and challenging them both. You may want to come back to us on this, if the IFN has thoughts on this in December and gets it back in time, but do you have a reflection on the interplay between the inclusivity and the exclusivity and citizenship and being part of a faith community? It is the combined community of faith versus wider citizenship and whether some people see some of the work of the faith communities as being about recruitment and encapsulating people.

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** There is a long-standing debate about the extent to which particularly public authorities respond in some instances to faith communities and their contribution. We have moved on a long way over the 30 years or so I have been in ministry, but there are still the responses, such as, "We can't work with them because they're religious", or whatever. Faith groups which engage in the public sphere, not all of



them but many of them, are doing it because there is a genuine concern for people in need. One of the structures is the tradition of having days in the different faith communities for volunteering and community action, whether it is Sewa Day, Sadaqa Day, Mitzvah Day or maybe the Buddhist Action Month. The emphasis there is very much on living out one's faith but doing it as a citizen of a country—they hang together—but it is another huge issue.

**Lord Blunkett:** I think I am talking about proselytising, am I not?

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** I appreciate that. There will be some for whom it is a proselytising issue. Most faith traditions have much more experience at recognising the distinction between when they engage publicly to serve the community and when they are acting as a faith community seeking to build their own.

Q128 **Baroness Redfern:** Do you think that our lack of knowledge of other cultures and faiths can lead to suspicion and, possibly, hatred in the community? Therefore, what is the role of faith communities in enabling integration, and how can the Government ensure that integration is a process of mutual engagement?

**Rt Revd Richard Atkinson:** At the heart of many fractures in our society and some of the more substantial fractures is often a fear of the other, and at the heart of that is both a lack of engagement and understanding in the broad sense. Going back to values, people often use the word "tolerance". I think my colleagues would question the use of "tolerance" as the right value because it does not go far enough. We need to live in a society where sometimes the words are "hospitable" or "a genuine love of our neighbour" or whatever the right words are, but it is more than "tolerance". Faith communities, when they play their part well, have a significant role, alongside others, in enabling that. That is part of the integration agenda. The Inter Faith Network at its last faith communities forum, which is when the national faith groups come together to look particularly at the wider questions and some of the more difficult questions, had the deputy director of integration strategy from DCLG there, so it is on the agenda. It is a start.

There is a real concern about what we mean by "integration". There is a positive response to integration where it is about cohesion, affirming diversity and valuing contribution within building a common narrative for our nation, but there is a real concern when it becomes assimilation, a perceived loss of identity and maybe the dominance of particular cultures over others. With integration, we are back to some very basic things. Sometimes, there is a tendency to devalue that fairly low-level, but significant, creation of opportunity for people to meet each other across ethnicity, culture and gender, and that is quite a lot of what our inter-faith groups do. It is about the things I have already said about opportunity to build literacy and it is why engagement with RE in schools is significant—the Religious Education Council is part of the Inter Faith Network—and we take that as a serious part of our agenda. That is a start in responding to your question.

**The Chairman:** Bishop, thank you very much indeed. It has been a reflective session and it has been good for us to stand back a bit from the day-to-day stuff. Thank you very much indeed.

Lord Phillips of Sudbury – oral evidence (QQ 129-132)

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury – oral evidence (QQ 129-132)**

Wednesday 22 November 2017

12.05 pm

[Listen to the meeting](#)

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Baroness Eaton; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beddoe.

Evidence Session No. 15

Heard in Public

Questions 129 – 132

## Examination of witness

Lord Phillips of Sudbury.

Q129 **The Chairman:** Lord Phillips, welcome, and thank you very much for coming along to see us to give us the benefit of your knowledge and experience. If I describe you as “one of the usual suspects”, I do so with affection, and not in any way as a criticism.

As you know, I have to begin by reading you some words, which I will now do, and then we will proceed with the session. A list of the interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. The session is open to the public and is being recorded for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and will be put on the Committee’s website. A few days after the session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check it for accuracy. It would be most helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after this evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence, or have additional points you would like to make, you are welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. For the record, I will ask you to introduce yourself, and then we will crack on.

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** When you say introduce myself, do you want three lines or—

**The Chairman:** Three lines.

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** Right. I am Andrew Phillips, Lord Phillips of Sudbury. I came here in 1998 and resigned at the last election. Is that enough?

**The Chairman:** That is fine. Thank you very much. Could I begin with the opening question? What is your overall view of the current state of civic engagement in the UK?

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** I will preface my answer by saying that I have been deeply and totally personally involved with citizenship education since the late 1960s. For two years, I taught in a state secondary school, one class a week, just to see whether one could interest young people in citizenship and law-related issues. I then got the Law Society to give me a third of a million pounds—and this was 1975—to set up the Citizenship Foundation and go ahead with a big programme in conjunction with what was then called the Schools Council, because there were few, if any, teaching materials to buttress this. I set up the charity the Citizenship Foundation in 1975 to take on the work that we had been doing with the Schools Council. It has bounded along ever since. Obviously, in my 79th year, I have pulled back from everything and I am now merely the president.

All I can say is—and I will get it off my chest, and forgive me—that I feel as passionate sitting here as I did before my first class of bemused 16 year-olds in 1969. Why? Because I believe that democracy is a wonderful thing. However, it does not work if the people supposedly in charge of it—namely,

the populace, the citizen—knows insufficient about its functioning to become enthused, engaged and part of it. My experience in the intervening nearly 50 years is that it has done just that. Democratic virility has declined. It is a deeply complex set of issues—I readily accept that—but I remain here and now, as convinced, and probably more convinced because the situation has got more complicated year by year. We are passing 18,000 to 20,000 pages of new statute law a year. What the heck does anyone think in terms of citizen appreciation and absorption of all this? At the same time, we have become a much more centralised country, with huge companies, where impersonality and bureaucracy rule—the EU being the greatest bureaucratiser of all. The impact on the man and woman in the street, and the young person, has been little short of catastrophic. I feel—

**Lord Blunkett:** Do you feel better now?

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** I do—a bit. I am sorry, David, but you are one to talk. I am sorry.

**The Chairman:** When you talk about a decline in democratic virility being complex, could you sketch out two or three themes that you think we should aware of, and the reasons for that decline?

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** You are probably well aware of them. Many sitting around this Room now know as much as I do—and some more, no doubt. I was in a class of randomly selected 15 and 16 year-olds on Monday at the same school that I went into in the late 1960s and early 1970s. I just wanted to try them out, so to speak. It was as clear as clear can be that there is a detachment of young people from, if I can so put it, the establishment. If I take my home town of Sudbury, we are now subject to five tiers of government. I left questionnaires for these kids and they filled them in and sent them back. They do not understand anything about three of those tiers. They understand a bit about the local council and a bit about Westminster, but they do not know how the parish or town council interacts with the district council, county councils, Westminster or Strasbourg. Most of them do not have the vaguest idea. That's one of the fruits of us not getting to grips with citizenship education so that they have a basic floor and a realisation of how it works; very basic but something—

**The Chairman:** That was f-l-o-o-r not f-l-a-w.

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** Good one. The impact of that, unconscious though it may be, is that a lot of them say, "If they can't be bothered to tell us anything about this, it probably doesn't matter and I'm not going to put myself out".

Q130 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Andrew, you probably know that one of our concerns is what the barriers are to active citizenship and civic engagement. Which groups do you think are most disengaged? What are the key barriers and how can they be overcome? You talked a bit about knowledge, but put that to one side.

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** I am still very involved, incidentally, in the voluntary sector. I am still president of the Citizenship Foundation and of another charity I started called the Legal Action Group, and another one, which is now called LawWorks—the Solicitors Pro Bono Group. My experience is unequivocal: give young people a chance, take them seriously, ask them—instead of constantly telling them—what they should do, think and believe. You will get a ready response from them. It is amazing. If you want to get helpers for your local charity, for example, if you can get a group of young people and talk with them in an unpompous way, as I say, my experience is that most people are ready, willing and, in a quiet and unconscious way, keen to get engaged.

One of the very major drawbacks of our current society is in relation to community. The strength of communities has diluted steadily over the last 30 or 40 years everywhere and has been undermined. In the age I grew up in, during and after the war, there was a huge sense of citizenship, of loyalty to your village or town or city, of a willingness to engage with it and—and I do not think this is much talked of, and should be—the question of exemplars was vital. Most—in the case of my town, over 90%—of the shops, professional offices and factories were locally owned and run. If you were running a shop, a profession—less so a factory, but a factory—for you not to engage in local affairs, and to say, “Well, I’m sorry, I’m too busy”, or whatever, and just go on earning more and more money, you would be written off in short time. Word of mouth was so strong and it would go round the town, “That bloke Phillips, he’s a bastard; he turned my mother away from the office last week because she couldn’t put £200 up front”. Today there is semi-anonymity so that huge impulse towards volunteerism, and the leadership of volunteerism, is not there. If you see the local leaders—and we know what I am talking about—getting their hands dirty and plunging in, it is an encouragement, is it not?

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** You talk about young people, but, obviously, young people are not a homogenous group. We heard in our first session today how those in low-paid, insecure zero-hours-contracts-type jobs, say, find it very difficult to get engaged, even if they wanted to. Are there material barriers and are there practical steps? I absolutely accept the point about talking to people and not at them and so forth, but what are the practical things that we might recommend to try to reduce the barriers that some groups face?

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** I am sorry, when you first put the question, I thought you were talking about people who were still at school but you are talking about—

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Anybody.

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** If you are talking about the young post-school lot—

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** We are talking about not just young people; we are covering the whole age range.

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** I am sorry, I misunderstood you. This could sound a bit wishy-washy, but I cannot find a better word, my feeling is that—and, again, your Committee cannot do anything about it—materialism has now become such a dominant force in our society, at all levels, on all occasions. It is, “Me, me, me. Money, money, money. More, more, more”, and if you take the City, where I worked for nearly 50 years, it is a tragedy to see the decline in engagement by the City in the wider world. Everybody is now working ludicrous hours and not just in the City. Employees are spending more and more time at whatever they are supposed to be doing, which leaves less energy and time to contemplate devoting to the local community if you have any feel for it. Most of the people who come into the new estates in Sudbury, for Pete’s sake, do not feel any strong relationship with the community because they are commuting to work all the time, and what little time they have to themselves, they want to replenish their souls and devote to their families. Dealing with those sorts of issues is immensely difficult. If I were Martin Luther or even old Cranmer, I would be talking about the need to revive our communities; to recover our soul and our spirit. As I say, it is very deep.

In all this miserable stuff, I have huge faith in the average Brit. The decency, kindness and integrity of the average man and woman in the street are formidable. That is partly why they currently have such dismally low opinions of what is going on in big business and big politics. The figures on trust in politics are really worrying. In a recent Hansard Society report, only 15% of people think they are honourable and straightforward. As I say, in other times of great crisis in our nation’s history—say, the period 1720 to 1730—when there was an appalling state of affairs in the country, what saved the day? It was the rise of nonconformism and that really offered a different, new path for them and their communities in the country. It was partly why the Church of England virtually collapsed by 1800. Many churches were closed and not visited.

I am not going to pretend that just by passing a couple of new statutes, one can deal with all this. Most of it has to come through involving large and small organisations in the country, getting them to agree the analysis and to really look into their own country and see what they can do to help. Some statute changes may be necessary. As I say, this is one of those difficult situations, particularly for parliamentarians, where it has got to come from the bottom up, but then, parliamentarians can be more influential than they know.

**The Chairman:** We must not add to the statute book. You have already told us that we are passing too many statutes.

Q131 **Baroness Pitkeathley:** Andrew, I know you have strong views about citizenship education. Can you tell us briefly what you think about the current state of it and what can be done to improve it?

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** I think at the moment it is in as poor health as it has ever been. I wrote down one or two statistics. You know, do you not, that the A-level is being abolished next year? Since 2010, the number of

teachers being trained to teach citizenship has halved so that we now only have 5,000 teachers a year training. The training can take place in only one of four centres; formerly it was more. The most striking statistic of all, I think, is that the number of trainees in that same period has fallen to just 40 a year. The figure I gave before was of teachers teaching citizenship. This figure—40—is the number training now to be citizenship teachers. That is a sixth of what it was in 2010. The number of people taking citizenship GCSE is down 80% since 2009. In a recent Hansard inquiry, over two-thirds of 18 to 34 year-olds purported to know little or nothing about Parliament, and so on. Those are some of the statistics.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** What can be done to improve it?

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** One has to try to persuade schools and heads of schools that they really must provide citizenship education on a bigger scale and an attractiveness that will get to the young people. I know from what I have done that it is a very sexy subject if you teach it in a way that gets through to them, if you know what I mean. You can make it dry and boring or you can make it the reverse. I also think that your report could be very influential if you really put your foot on the accelerator and did not hide the peril in which I believe we stand, because this is working out in profound ways. I have never been so anxious about our own democracy. I have never been so anxious about the ludicrous tiers of local government. It really is not working. I will not go on about that because there is not much time and it is another subject on its own. You are a very influential lot of individuals and collectively I think you can be more influential than you realise, as long as you bring out a summary report, because at the moment all one ever gets is a big document and people say, "It's on the internet". Can you believe my home town of Sudbury has just been the subject of a report by the Babergh District Council on the development of Sudbury and it is 371 pages long? You cannot get one in hard copy form.

Q132 **Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Are you as depressed about civic engagement as a whole as you are about the state of citizenship education? What on earth do you think the Government should be doing to improve it?

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** No, I am not quite as dismal about that, although it is not a bright subject. In my home town of Sudbury, every two years, we have a huge fair of voluntary organisations called Sudbury on Show. It lasts for a day and it takes over the biggest church in the town and the town hall. We have, typically, 200 stalls of voluntary organisations. When you think of a town of only 12,000 or 14,000 people, to have 200 voluntary organisations wanting to show their wares is wonderful, but, as with everything else, the habit of young people engaging has declined and quite a number of voluntary organisations have been lost. Since we started this about 15 years ago, when there were about 260 voluntary organisations, we have lost, in the interim, 80 of those. Most of them will tell you that they do not have the youngsters coming through: "We can't get the younger volunteers because they don't want to take responsibility". I am not pessimistic about that—well, a bit—but, as I say, their lives are so much more pressured, are they not, than even 40 or 50 years ago? That



is the main reason. Having said that, there are lots of voluntary organisations in the town, and everywhere else, that have young people coming through. They have woken up to the fact that they have to be much more proactive in getting out and asking people: “We need you. How about it, Charlie? You like stamps; we need somebody”. You know what I mean.

**The Chairman:** You have knocked around the charity sector long enough to know that quite a lot of voluntary groups are established in a way that does not encourage people to join. The trustees and people at the top are set up in a certain way and, essentially, it is built around the golf club and lunchtime meetings and they wonder why young people do not join up.

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** I agree with you. Spot on.

**The Chairman:** What can we do about that?

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** Your report could trumpet some of these things and get through to what I call the big media. I do not see why you could not start a national debate. It will be inconsistently debated across the nation, but I think people are ready, willing and able to do something about this because in their guts they chime with it. They realise it. I talk to a great number of people and you only have to speak with a couple and they will say, “You are quite right”, and they will go on, and it goes on. I hope you do not think I am avoiding the issue—I am not—but I am very wary of assuming that Governments have powers where they often do not. They have to put more money into citizenship teaching, for a start. They have to make sure that all secondary schools are required to have citizenship on the curriculum and not exclude academies and free schools, because at the moment only 30%-odd of secondary schools are required to teach this watered-down form of citizenship. Did I answer your question, Richard?

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Half, yes. Have you got anything else you wanted to say?

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** What was the other half?

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Basically, what should the Government be doing about civic engagement?

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** All departments could be given a command from No. 10 Downing Street to look at these issues and assess how well or badly they are contributing to the relief of this crisis. I think it is a crisis. We had the Big Society initiative—and I do not want to run that down—and we have got the thing where they go and camp.

**The Chairman:** National Citizen Service.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** NCS.

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** That is fine, but they do not get near the size of the problem, which is total. More could be done to get individual departments together, and I mean getting the people at the bottom of the department together with the top dogs, and talking about this, because it

affects all of them equally. Wisdom does not reside in the top tier. They think it does half the time and it bloody does not. Sorry, you were a bishop.

**Lord Blunkett:** Chair, can I say something here, if you do not mind? I think that Andrew—Lord Phillips—is one of the top three or four people over the last 50 years who has had the greatest impact in this area, particularly in citizenship education, and he deserves a medal.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** Hear, hear.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much for coming along and giving us a diatribe or two, which we have welcomed. We shall certainly bear your thoughts in mind.

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** I meant to start by thanking you for doing this. I know it is a lot of work, but it is hugely important. I wish you all strength and fulfilment, because there is a lot of that in it. If you want anything more at all from me, just let me know and I will do my best to supply you with it.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much, Andrew.

Dr Henry Tam; Councillor Saima Ashraf, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham; Stuart Dunne, Deputy Chief Executive, Youth Focus North-West – oral evidence (QQ 133-140)

**Dr Henry Tam; Councillor Saima Ashraf, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham; Stuart Dunne, Deputy Chief Executive, Youth Focus North-West – oral evidence (QQ 133-140)**

Wednesday 29 November 2017

10.40 am

[Listen to the meeting](#)

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Baroness Eaton; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beedoe.

Evidence Session No. 16

Heard in Public

Questions 133 - 140

Dr Henry Tam; Councillor Saima Ashraf, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham; Stuart Dunne, Deputy Chief Executive, Youth Focus North-West – oral evidence (QQ 133-140)

## Examination of witnesses

Dr Henry Tam, Cllr Saima Ashraf and Stuart Dunne.

**Q133 The Chairman:** Good morning, and thank you very much for giving up your morning and coming along to give us the benefit of your advice and experience. I have to read out the formal wording about the nature of the session. A list of the interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. The session is open to the public and is being recorded on BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and put on the Committee's website. A few days after this session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy, and it would be helpful if you could advise of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after this evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence or have any additional points you wish to make, you are welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. Could I ask you to introduce yourselves, briefly, and then we will turn to the questions?

**Stuart Dunne:** Stuart Dunne, deputy chief executive officer of Youth Focus North-West, which is a small charity working with young people across the north-west of England.

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** I am Councillor Saima Ashraf. I am the deputy leader of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, and I am a councillor.

**Dr Henry Tam:** I am Henry Tam. I am an academic. I was a lecturer at the University of Cambridge and other places, but I have also been a senior civil servant within the Home Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government, and I worked for seven different Secretaries of State, which was a very interesting experience.

**Q134 The Chairman:** Thank you very much. Could I start with the first question? What is the current state of civic engagement in the UK? Do you feel the areas that you have specific experience of and work in are better or worse than the average?

**Stuart Dunne:** Currently, the geographical area we cover is across the north-west of England. The schemes we work with around young people's civic engagement are fairly good, at this moment in time, and the outlook is quite positive. We bring young people from across the north-west together seven times a year. The young people represent their local youth councils, and come to explore and discuss issues locally and regionally around young people's voice.

Recently we have adopted all 23 local authorities that engage in that experience and between 100 and 120 young people come together seven times a year. Included within that are their workers. While the young people are with us, we run functional workshops on how to support and develop the youth forums and councils. We also run some contextual

Dr Henry Tam; Councillor Saima Ashraf, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham; Stuart Dunne, Deputy Chief Executive, Youth Focus North-West – oral evidence (QQ 133-140)

workshops as well to look at issues around social inclusion. Some of the workshops we have run over the last 12 months have looked at anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, young women and democracy. This has provided background detail for young people so they can develop further functional matters.

The group seems to have created a sense of belonging and togetherness across the north-west through action-based work, and some of the success through that has meant that we recently ran the United Kingdom Youth Parliament Make your Mark. Over 200,000 young people in the north-west engaged in that exercise, from a very small budget. I could take all the applause for facilitating and supporting that, but I did very little, if I am open and honest. It was much more down to the young people coming together on a regional basis and looking at the skills they have developed at running things locally.

We are working on more exciting schemes across the north-west. We have two newly elected mayors in the north-west, in the Liverpool City region and Greater Manchester. Both the city mayors are interested in young people's civic engagement. We have created two youth combined authorities that will, hopefully, hold both city mayors to account in the future. We have looked to develop a partnership with United Utilities around their corporate and social responsibility. The outlook is fairly positive at this moment in time across the north-west.

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** Good morning. On that question, I would say that the UK is a divided country and I think the general election and the Brexit vote showed this. Property prices have continued to rise and 58% of Londoners living in poverty are working families. We had the BNP in Barking and Dagenham until 2010 and that was a symptom of the disenfranchisement felt by the white working class. Some 72% of the residents living in Barking and Dagenham from a different background get on well together, compared to white British residents, who are less likely to be satisfied with the area as a place to live. However, we have been doing quite a lot of work, especially in the past two years. We have spoken to over 6,000 residents in Barking and Dagenham: 3,000 of them have been part of the start of a conversation on the borough manifesto, which is a non-political document, and thousands have taken part in a good neighbour guide. This is to establish what we expect as residents and neighbours. These are very simple things, but sometimes talking to people about these things, such as talking to your neighbour, can change a lot. We have recently launched the Big Conversation enabling all resident groups to come together to discuss topics or themes and have a platform where people can come together and openly and honestly have a conversation. The point I am making is that people want to engage. People want to get together; we just have to find the right ways to do so.

**Dr Henry Tam:** If I may make a distinction, at the outset, the term civic engagement is often used to refer to two quite different things. One is

Dr Henry Tam; Councillor Saima Ashraf, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham; Stuart Dunne, Deputy Chief Executive, Youth Focus North-West – oral evidence (QQ 133-140)

volunteering and helping strangers. The other sense, quite different, is about democratic participation. You can do one without the other. Many analysts tend to conflate the two, and a lot of policy development tends to give support to one in the name of helping the other. They are both very good things that we should support. I would also point out that according to 2016 figures from the Charities Aid Foundation, in terms of civic engagement in volunteering and helping strangers, the UK is probably among the best in Europe. In terms of civic engagement as in democratic participation, the UK is lagging behind other European countries, judging by voting patterns and other participatory processes. From my discussions with colleagues working in local and central government, the trend reflects that; there is not sufficient democratic participation. There may be protest and activist actions, but in terms of engaging and interacting with local authorities, central government bodies and political institutions, and understanding how you can shape what they do, their policy priorities and the role you can play, the level of democratic engagement is very low. That is a fair assessment of the state of civic engagement, in the two very different senses, in this country.

**The Chairman:** Cllr Ashraf, can I ask you a supplementary? We have heard a lot about the white working class in Yorkshire and other places. We have been told we must not call them “left-behinds” because it is patronising, but we do not mean to be patronising; we are trying to make a category. Are you making special efforts to reach out to them? If so, what are they, or are they just left behind?

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** Our motto in Barking and Dagenham is “No one is left behind”. We are working with everyone. I am talking about my portfolio. When I say I have delivered the borough manifesto, I have not stopped at producing a glossy document. I launched it in July. Before that, there was massive online engagement with paperwork, which is always the most successful one. However, for a few weeks I was in all the different stations in the borough, from seven to nine, with my officers, talking to people, doing roadshows in shopping malls and markets and going to all the resident associations and schools. I tried to engage with as many people as possible. We are very proud of the Summer of Festivals we have in Barking and Dagenham, which includes a series of events such as the folk festival, the Steam and Cider Fair and the Barking town show. We have quite a few. During those festivals, we were talking to residents and engaging in the best way.

None the less, since I have delivered this document I have not stopped there. I have started roadshows, going to each ward and talking to one mayoral area. The ward councillors can help me on this because they know the main spot where parents gather or where more people gather at one place. It can be a coffee shop or a children’s centre or a school. A lot of parents come to have a coffee and Victoria sponge cake with me and talk about things. It is always very well attended.

Dr Henry Tam; Councillor Saima Ashraf, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham; Stuart Dunne, Deputy Chief Executive, Youth Focus North-West – oral evidence (QQ 133-140)

**The Chairman:** It would be helpful if you had specific examples of initiatives particularly affecting the white working class, to bring them forward and involve them. Perhaps you could send it in to us.

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** Yes.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** I have a question for Henry. I am glad you made that distinction because reading your written evidence it very much struck me. Perhaps this is a slightly loaded question, but do you feel we are putting too much emphasis on volunteering in our inquiry and not enough on democratic participation, given what you have said? You are saying the issues arise in democratic participation as civic engagement, not volunteering.

**Dr Henry Tam:** I am very conscious that support for volunteering has grown for a whole range of reasons, particularly for local community reasons, which are always very important. In response to your question, looking back over 20 years of experience there has been a consistent favouring of more support, whether it is funding or time, for volunteering; much more than for democratic participation. If you look at the need for support it is completely disproportionate to the issue involved. I can understand that partly the reason is that volunteering is seen to be a party political-neutral process; that you do not get involved with contested issues. If you talk about climate change or energy policies, people say, "You should not be taking that stance", because that is favoured by one party or another. If you are saying, "I want to do some good work in my community", everyone pats you on the back and says, "Jolly good. Go ahead". It is understandable why people feel it is safer. You get a lot more praise for promoting volunteering than in taking the risk of supporting democratic participation. In a way, that illustrates why there is a much greater need to support democratic participation.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** This question does not require a long answer, but I was not quite sure whether you were saying the problem is that more effort, resource and focus is put on volunteering than civic engagement. I was interested in those figures when you said there was a mismatch between volunteering and civic engagement. Do you think there is any cause and effect other than the fact that the people with the money and the resources are concentrating on one more than the other? Does that make sense? If it is true that with less volunteering there is more civic engagement, is there a factor that explains that other than that it gets more attention?

**Dr Henry Tam:** If I could generalise, the UK is a very giving country. There has never been a huge problem of people not being willing to volunteer and help their neighbours and communities. It is always a good thing to have more of it, but there is a need for support for democratic participation. The problem is that many policymakers and foundations, when they have the opportunity to support democratic participation, discuss the issues in

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terms of civic engagement and say, “We must help civic engagement”. They ask for bids for projects, which come in, and they come in under the heading civic engagement, and they say, “Right, we are now going to help civic engagement so we are allocating so many millions for civic engagement”. They find they are helping to boost volunteering even further but barely making any impact on democratic participation.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** A quick question for Mr Dunne and Cllr Ashraf. Mr Dunne, you have your seven gatherings a year and you draw on youth councils. Could you say how these youth councils come into being and how representative they are? Cllr Ashraf, you have this big conversation. Are you satisfied that all sections of the community are represented in this big conversation? Do you have facts and figures to indicate that?

**Stuart Dunne:** On the question of how representative the youth councils are, it varies from youth council to youth council. Each youth council has different resources and follows different models.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** How do they come into being? Does the council elicit them?

**Stuart Dunne:** It is a variation. It can either be the council which holds the support for the youth council or it can be a commissioned service, which is part of the council. A good model to look at is the Oldham Youth Council. They have done work recently with MP Jim McMahon on votes at 16. Each school democratically elects young people to sit on Oldham Youth Council. Within that are representative seats for different members of the community. You have representation of SEND, BME and various other groups. With regard to the different youth councils, it varies from one to another. The best youth councils we have seen are those which have a conjoined approach and involve the looked-after children’s forums as well and look at the special educational needs groups.

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** The Big Conversation is very well attended with quite a broad range of attendees. We have different faith groups and organisations. We also have residents coming along. It is very well attended. I do not have the figures with me right now to give you but I am happy to send them.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Following on from what our Chairman said at the beginning about the left-behinds, are they engaging in this big conversation?

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** I would say yes, they are.

Q135 **Baroness Redfern:** Stuart has touched on volunteering as against democratic participation. My question is what role should local authorities play in encouraging volunteering? How could they be more effective? What examples can you give of best practice, as such?



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**Stuart Dunne:** Local authorities can play three roles with regard to volunteering. One is to have a strategic element with regard to volunteering, where they could bring organisations together such as the health service, the police and the fire service, and voluntary sector organisations such as the Scouts, St John Ambulance and Girl Guiding, so they can have that local strategic engagement. Local authorities could provide more volunteering opportunities for young people. In a number of areas, local authorities are the largest employers and, therefore, could give young people, in particular, the opportunity to experience what it is like working in a local authority. Local authorities have a particular responsibility with regard to vulnerable young people, with particular reference to children who are looked after. It is about offering them opportunities to access volunteering. Part of the strategic element is to ensure that it is not a postcode lottery for young people and all young people in different geographical areas have the same access to volunteering opportunities as everyone else.

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** Volunteering is very personal to people, even young people. I moved here from France 15 years ago, and I have to say I could not speak a word of English at the time. It is only by volunteering that I learned to speak English and then by volunteering with the Met that I learned more about the law and the rules of the country. In Barking and Dagenham—we are pioneers on this and very proud about this, to be honest—we have launched the Every One Every Day project, which is a mass engagement and volunteering programme for all our residents. We have around 250 activities and we plan to reach over 25,000 residents.

**Baroness Redfern:** Could you give us some examples?

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** They can be very basic, such as cooking or learning or making something together, but they bring people together. We do not dictate what they should be doing; we want people to tell us what they would like to do and we facilitate it. When I say “we” I mean Every One Every Day which is a funding partnership between the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and Participatory City Foundation. This partnership has created this project, which we launched last Saturday. We have been working pretty hard, and it was very well attended. We had leather-making, sewing, embroidery and cooking. We had so many workshops and all were very well attended. We are starting from two shops, one based in Barking town centre and one based in Dagenham. A lot of schools and other groups are involved in facilitating. We are looking at making it as easy as possible for residents.

**Baroness Redfern:** I am talking about volunteering; helping other people as well.

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** Yes. We encourage that kind of volunteering as well. We have a crowdfunding platform. We have many schemes. The council is offering volunteering schemes for young people and anyone to get involved

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in. We have many volunteers: a lot of mums coming forward, especially in the libraries and to be on school governing bodies. We have a lot of faith group volunteering as well.

**Baroness Redfern:** Is that in the community?

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** In the community, to help others. When we had the Big Conversation a lot of churches, including the Pentecostal churches, mentioned people getting involved in helping the elderly, doing grocery shopping or taking them to hospitals, and such things. There is that kind of engagement too.

**The Chairman:** Mr Dunne, can I ask a quick supplementary? You talked about the postcode lottery. Your area covers extremely dense urban areas and very rural areas. If I am in Ambleside or Barrow-in-Furness, will I still have your services? Will you be able to reach me there? I understand about Oldham and the conurbations, but how are you dealing with the rural areas? That is an issue we have come across before.

**Stuart Dunne:** It is a distinct challenge, especially when we talk about the rural areas of Cumbria, Lancashire and Cheshire. The idea of our gatherings when we bring people together is not to do them in a single place but to try to have them in different venues around the north-west. The way it should work is we have two in Cumbria and two in Lancashire. It works out at seven meetings but we also have a residential on top of that. We should cover the geographical area.

One of the things young people have been working on recently around the ruralisation of young people is to do with the challenges of transport, to do with democratic engagement and volunteering. I know it was one of the priorities in the Make your Mark campaign. It is particularly challenging for young people in rural areas. We have looked to develop digital engagement and how we can take meetings and some of our activities to young people. Again, if you are in a rural area of Cumbria you may not always have good internet access. It is certainly work in progress at this moment in time.

Q136 **Baroness Barker:** You have talked a lot about local initiatives. We need to probe the effectiveness of national initiatives, such as the National Citizen Service. From your experience, do national initiatives work well or are local initiatives far better?

**Stuart Dunne:** The National Citizen Service and national schemes can support local communities. However, I am not necessarily convinced at this moment in time that NCS has bridged the gap around the recognition and identity of local schemes. If you look at the adverts, they are about joining the national scheme rather than making an impact locally. Although I have no evidence to support this, I am not convinced that local communities feel they can have a say in how the National Citizen Service is directed and what goes on in their local areas.

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**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** I do not disagree with what you say. My daughter did NCS last summer. I found it a very good initiative, to be honest, because I have seen her grow and get more involved. She had a lot of opportunities to do quite different things, which she has never had before. However, it is not linked to local. We do not have the data, as a local authority, for example, and we do not know what those young children feel or what their needs are. We need to know how we can help them more, even if it is by getting in touch with them directly. I knew about my daughter, and I was one of the “Dragons” too, so I could see those young people. I thought there was a huge potential that we could not tap into. Personally, I liked the NCS programme.

Q137 **Baroness Eaton:** We have spoken quite a lot about volunteering and the role of local authorities. My question moves on more to Mr Tam’s point about the distinction of democratic engagement. What role should local authorities play in encouraging democratic engagement? How could they be more effective? What examples are there of best practice? Perhaps we could start with you.

**The Chairman:** You might want to answer the last question at the same time, if I did not give you a chance to say something.

**Dr Henry Tam:** Perhaps I can conflate the two things in my response to Baroness Eaton’s question. In terms of good practice in democratic engagement and participation, most of that work is on a volunteering basis. Your Lordships are volunteers. For a lot of people there is an interesting perception with volunteering that local authorities can help both volunteering and democratic participation if you design the volunteering to be in an area which will enhance people’s understanding of democratic practices and processes and help them become more interested and able to play a bigger role in the future. I will mention a number of examples.

At a very simple level, one local authority, I recall, used to have a contract for street cleaning with an outside company. Local people were complaining that they did not do the job properly. The solution that was concocted was that the local authority hired another company to do an inspection, which would then report to the council when they felt that the contractor was not doing a proper job. Local people were still not happy because the contractor that was supposed to be doing the inspection was not inspecting properly, so they were getting complaints about the inspector. Eventually someone came up with the idea of setting up a voluntary street warden scheme where people in the affected streets would be inspectors; they would look at their streets and report what they were not happy about directly to the council. The council would then take it, not as residents moaning but as inspectors acting on behalf of the council, and take action with the contractor directly to say, “We have spotted these problems; do something about it” because the residents who live there have spotted it. That reduced the number of complaints immeasurably and increased the cleanliness of the areas. It hit all the buttons. Those people went from saying, “The

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council never listens to us”, to saying, “Engaging and working with the council, going through the processes, inspecting and correcting errors is wonderful. We should do more of this”.

Another example of volunteering and democratic engagement was part of Take Part, a much wider project encouraging people to learn from people already in political positions how that could affect communities. A lot of people will say, “We can’t do anything”. It is a sense of total frustration—“Nothing ever changes. If we complain, people just dismiss us. Nobody listens to us”. When people say, “Engage with the politicians, talk to them”, they say, “Oh no, they won’t do anything. Politics is hopeless; politics changes nothing. Politics ignores people”. That particular strand of the Take Part project was to say, “Take time out to learn and to talk to people involved in the political processes already—local politicians, councillors and MPs in Parliament—meet people, find out what they do and how they solve problems”. A lot of the people who have gone through this learning process, volunteering quite a bit of their time, came out of it quite energised. As you know, Lady Eaton, the Councillors Commission was set up, which discovered that many people say they do not know what councillors do. However, the view of the great majority of people who have spoken to a councillor and asked them for help or worked with them is that councillors do a very important job and do a good job for them. The more interactions there are, the more people understand the process.

**Baroness Eaton:** May I ask a supplementary to my question?

**The Chairman:** Specifically on this?

**Baroness Eaton:** Yes, it is. Earlier you were talking about the difference between the UK and other countries; we do more volunteering and less democratic engagement than some other countries. Knowing that the other countries have a very different political system, I find it hard to make that connection with what you have said about involvement. Politicians in some European countries are quite anonymous because of the list system and the way they are elected. They do not have surgeries or constituencies in the way that we do. That does not quite sit with what you said about getting people involved locally making a difference to their democratic engagement. I cannot quite get my head around that.

**Dr Henry Tam:** Local involvement is one strand. I am trying to work with the grain of the culture of the UK, where it is already very strong.

**Baroness Eaton:** I was not being critical.

**Dr Henry Tam:** Absolutely. In other European countries there are stronger elements of civil education; for example, a culture of learning at a very early age and not being afraid of the fact that this is a contested, controversial political issue.

**Baroness Eaton:** We avoid it and they embrace it.

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**Dr Henry Tam:** My final example is the use of techniques such as Planning for Real where, again, local people can feel very frustrated with planning proposals. This is a constant headache for local authorities and national government, when everyone would say there is no win, because if you side with one the others will be against you. Back in the 1970s, the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation developed the technique of developing 3D models—and these are not sophisticated models but developed by schoolchildren in the area—and inviting local people in to spend time looking at the models and discussing with each other what is “Totally unacceptable”; “Okay, tolerable”, and, “Yes, it will be great to have this”. People change their cards as they see what other people do and say—“I am not going to put up with any of this if you are going to put the same thing down, but if you’re going to say something I want is tolerable, I will be tolerable towards something you want”. In many cases they come to a resolution of the problem, and the council can steer a way through. That is a very good example of how local authorities can encourage these practices to resolve problems rather than thinking it is a dead end; everyone will lose.

I will finish by saying there are lots of these practices around. I have written enough about them. One of the things I would say is quite important is that the emphasis has been on completely innovative factors. Governments of all backgrounds and colours have been saying, “We want completely innovative practice. We want to come up with something completely different”. We do not want to keep doing something completely different. We have well-tried and tested practices, up to here; if there was funding support for even a tenth of these, democratic engagement would improve immeasurably.

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** Between 2001 and 2016, the population in Barking and Dagenham has grown from 164,000 to 206,500 residents, and is increasing. To date, we have around 208,000 residents. Between 2001 and 2011 the white British population reduced from 81% to 49%. We identify BME communities to have grown from 19% to 50.5% now. We have a very young borough. Around 68,000 are under the age of 19. Engagement and volunteering is very personal to people. For me, in Barking and Dagenham, I can tell you that we want people to get involved, and that to have democratic engagement is also to promote cohesion, which is extremely important, to make people feel they are part of one borough and one community.

Again, we are having the Big Conversation, which is quite popular at the moment. We have also had a Cohesion Hackathon, which is a social cohesion project using participatory design techniques to jointly identify and solve cohesion issues, to bring people together to start to design those issues and address those with residents. Personally, I feel that we, as councillors, have such a huge platform. We can do so much, especially in bringing people together. Again, when we are out there doing roadshows they are always attended by the white British community. I was saying to

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my officers that only last Monday I have seen BMEs, but they are always attended by the white British community, which means a lot to me. To be honest, they are not always very pleasant. They are very concerned and frustrated people. I welcome that because I want to have that platform of engagement where they are heard and where they can honestly have a say. I am starting to have that conversation and putting things on the table but engaging with everybody is the way forward. We have done a lot of work on this but will definitely go on doing so.

**Stuart Dunne:** I suppose I am lucky enough not to work for one local authority but work across all 23 in the north-west. My question would be back to local authorities: if democratic engagement is not one of your responsibilities or foundations, what else is? Developing the citizenry for the future should be a number one foundation for them. If we are looking at how we support and develop more active engagement and democratic practices, particularly for young people, councils and local authorities are steeped in systems and tradition, and they could be more transparent and accessible for young people and certainly be more responsive. Very often when young people we work with engage in some of the decision-making practices in the local authority, it can take two years for a decision to be made. That is far too long if you are trying to enthuse and motivate young people to engage.

I have already mentioned Oldham as an example of good practice. Manchester is very good at attracting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and has a very diverse youth council. Liverpool City Council works on a school-based system and has a very active scheme. Another one is Knowsley. That is a staff mutual where the youth service has pulled out from the local authority and runs its own democratic service within the youth service. I agree with Henry, there are lots of existing practices but we do not necessarily celebrate them for what they are.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Councillor Ashraf, you have talked about bringing people together. We have had a few pieces of evidence that have argued that local authorities could do more to support community development as enabling civic engagement. I wonder if any of you have any views, not only on working with individuals, but enabling communities to be more democratically engaged.

**Dr Henry Tam:** Community development, in one sense, is about having outreach workers who can build up an informal network. That is very important because so often the challenge for local authorities is that they have no way of connecting with local people. They say, "There are all these hundreds of thousands of people. How do we connect with them? How do we develop any projects together"? Where they have community development activities on the ground they find it much easier. The other element of this is trust. If there are community outreach workers helping with community development work where they have been working together, even on small-scale projects, when they say, "There are bigger

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problems we would like to look at and solve with you”, people already have trust, instead of having to spend another three or six months—sometimes a whole year—building trust. The problem is that, without that, it becomes much more difficult. Community development does add to it, but that is one area that has been cut quite a lot.

**Baroness Eaton:** We talk about communities but they are different things in different places. You have communities of interest and geographic communities. I do not know whether the panel has had this experience, but many authorities have neighbourhood engagement. That is largely ward-based. There is a relationship with the councillor and the council where things such as participatory budgeting can take place—not necessarily on major things but things that affect that locality. I wondered if you have had any experience of those things which engage people with the democratic process.

**Stuart Dunne:** The last local authority I worked for was Blackpool. It depends on the individuals leading community engagement in that area. There were some successful practices where the local, elected member worked with local officers and community members to develop the local community. I agree with Henry, though, that one of the areas that has suffered cuts during austerity, particularly for young people, is youth works. Youth workers used to provide that link and a political education for young people in their local areas. Certainly if we were to make a recommendation, we would advocate that some professionals who have that local knowledge would be beneficial.

**Baroness Redfern:** I wonder if I could add that that connects to town and parish councils as well, within their communities.

**Stuart Dunne:** Sorry, yes.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Dr Tam, taking your first example about the council which then employed inspectors, it was a silly thing to pay out more money to employ inspectors when all they needed to do was listen and trust the people. On that example, it was not the people’s failure to be civically engaged, it was the council’s failure to respond. I am wondering if there is an issue here. I cannot quite work it out in my head so I am looking to you to do so. Is there not a danger that those of us who are able to operate in the political system think it is about persuading people to understand our system and take part, whereas what they are sometimes saying is, “It doesn’t work for me”. Would you say a little about how much we should concentrate on trying to persuade local authorities to change the way they do things rather than persuading people to fit in with their structures?

**Dr Henry Tam:** A very important issue is that local authorities and government institutions, in general, need to reach out and find out what would work for people. There has been comprehensive research done on

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neighbourhood management to show that, on average, all the areas in England with neighbourhood management perform much better on all indicators such as crime levels, educational attainment and housing arrears, than comparable areas without neighbourhood management. Clearly, having a focus where people can give their views knowing there will be a constructive response is the way forward. Applying that model, rather than jumping into any problem and thinking, "We have a way of solving it; it will be quicker", it will be better for government institutions to go to a small sample of local people and say, "What do you think would work better on this", and explore the options. How to manage that is very critical because a lot of these meetings and discussions are managed very badly.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** They are difficult meetings.

**Dr Henry Tam:** You need facilitators with good experience and skills. In fact, it is very highly skilled and often underrated. Sometimes an officer or a councillor who does not have experience will chair the meeting, the residents will get upset, they express their anger before they get to the deliberative stage and the whole thing falls apart, and they say, "We're never talking to those people again". You need a properly facilitated process to get through the angst and then consider the options. A very good example is something called Audit to Action, where the police and local authorities will go to people's doorsteps and say, "Tell us your views and then we will discuss it together. We will go down one street after another and we will come back to you with possible options. You do not have to come to our headquarters and have travel costs, we will come round every second Wednesday and talk it through". At a time when fear of crime was going up, even though crime was falling, it was in the areas with that type of engagement that fear of crime was also reduced. Knowing how difficult facilitation is, providing training is the answer.

Q138 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** This question follows on very well from some of the things you have touched on already. Do you think local communities could be doing more to act as sites of democratic innovation? Examples would be participatory budgeting, which has been referred to, citizens juries and, slightly different, the ability to allow votes at 16 in local elections. What more could local authorities be doing and what do they need to enable those kinds of things to happen?

**Stuart Dunne:** Local authorities can be sites of innovation. However, it is all too often down to individuals within the local institution or to individual services; there does not seem to be a common golden thread that supports democratic engagement. With regards to participatory budgeting, I believe more could be done. I was lucky enough to lead on a great scheme launched by Government a number of years ago called the Youth Opportunities Fund and Youth Capital Fund. It was one of the best projects I have ever worked on. Young people were given full control of providing



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financial support for services run for young people. That was a wonderful scheme, which stopped as it started to get going.

With regard to votes at 16, yes, I would acknowledge that I am a full supporter of votes at 16. Following the debate and vote on votes at 16 in the Chamber not long ago, there is no clear evidence on whether people support it or not. It might be a good opportunity to start a national debate on the vote at 16, and the practicalities around that.

**The Chairman:** Does anyone else want to come in on this? The question was particularly about votes at 16, was it not, Baroness Lister?

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Or sites of democratic innovation. They seem to have been lumped together in the question. Votes at 16 is slightly different. Behind the question is the idea that local authorities could experiment in a local area. It is more about sites of democratic innovation.

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** With all the cuts that local authorities are making, it is quite difficult to demand more. Local authorities need to start to do things differently, so reshape and transform the council. This is what we are doing in Barking and Dagenham. It is not easy. You mentioned the police, and we have police cuts as well. In my borough I can tell you that there are many issues that we need to look into. Barking and Dagenham is one of the most deprived areas. Residents in Barking and Dagenham, no matter which class or background, are the working-class people living in poverty. Looking at engagement, volunteering, I am quite overwhelmed when I look at the numbers of people volunteering who are looking after other people. Looking especially at the faith groups—from Christian to Muslim to the Gurdwara—they are all volunteering. As local authorities we need to transform and look at different ways of delivering. This is why we are now looking at a better partnership with the CVS, for example, and at having crowdfunding platforms. We also introduced the Barking and Dagenham Lottery, which is a lottery for local voluntary groups and residents. It is a win-win for both. There is a lot we need to do and carry on doing; engaging with our partners more, which I am doing with the borough manifesto, which carries on with the good neighbourhood guide, involving residents and what they want. It is listening to what they have to say, so no matter how frustrated they are, they have that platform.

**Dr Henry Tam:** Local authorities can facilitate good, effective and innovative practices. There should be a much greater premium put on learning from others and applying it, rather than creating something completely new. The LGA can do a lot in saying that if you learn from others and apply it they would value that even more than you coming in with something completely new.

Participatory budgeting is a very good example. If done properly it is a very good practice, but I have heard so many examples where the authorities concerned are simply drawing in people on a first-come first-served basis,

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which completely defeats the purpose of the random sampling you need to underpin participatory budgeting. Already some people are giving it a bad name and saying it does not work; you get one group of self-selected people who push their projects forward. Local sites of good innovative practice will work if they can help to maintain and sustain proper standards in applying the practices which are known to work, but they are known to work on the basis that they follow certain procedures. It should be flagged that once an area does not follow the procedures it is not an example of the practice itself.

Q139 **Lord Rowe-Beddoe:** Let us move on to integration. I would appreciate your comments on what local authorities are doing and what they can do better on this whole question. I was struck that the Woolf Institute, in part of their written report, suggests that many communities do not have much confidence in local authorities, in this particular area. They give examples of Grenfell Tower and the Finsbury Park attack where multifaith organisations are brought in and seem to play a very effective role. May I have your comments on that? The last point is for you, Councillor Ashraf. You mentioned social cohesion earlier on. Is that synonymous with integration, or were you using it in a different way? Perhaps you would like to answer it when you are ready.

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** If I can start, I would say that integration is a complex issue. There is no silver bullet. We are extremely proud of our Summer of Festivals in Barking and Dagenham. Each summer we have over 10 free events across the borough celebrating our heritage, history and the culture and community of Barking and Dagenham. We have the Elvis Festival, the One Borough show, the Country Fair Pop Festival and the Dagenham Festival. All that is regardless of race, background or who you are; it is about bringing people together. Some 92% of residents agree that the events should continue and are a good way for people of different ages and backgrounds to come together. Again, this is something we are proud of because it brings people together and starts integration and cohesion. Cohesion is about integration and mixing, wherever you are. As I mentioned earlier, and I know I am going to repeat it again, Every One Every Day is such a project that brings together so many facilities, workshops and activities for people.

**The Chairman:** Thank you. Could colleagues on either side of you give examples of best practice and whether Cllr Ashraf's responsibilities in her area are indeed examples of best practice? What can be done to make everywhere like Cllr Ashraf's area?

**Stuart Dunne:** I will start with an example. One of the downfalls of local authorities is their geographical boundaries. Sometimes they are consigned to geographical boundaries, whereas we know that communities breach those boundaries. Obviously, there are communities of interest as well. One of the examples we draw back to is a project between young people in Oldham and Rochdale, called Fusion. That was about bringing together

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two groups of young people, who have challenges with each other, not simply to integrate but to create social cohesion and understanding of each other and their cultures. That was one example.

The role for local authorities can be that co-ordination role of bringing people together. They should have facilities and people working in local communities to be able to understand them, and having an overseeing eye on bringing services together to make sure that local communities' needs are met.

**Dr Henry Tam:** When we talk about integration we need to clarify that there are two senses of identity which, again, tend to play into each other. One is what I would call a sociocultural identity—people's customs, tastes and so on. The other is a civic identity, which is often what we are talking about; that you are a part of this country and under the rule of law of this country. In terms of civic identity, it is very important for there to be very clear integration. People must learn to accept that we are all citizens of the UK, and that identity is non-negotiable. There is a legal process through Parliament to arrive at defining the rules and laws that govern that identity. Everyone must accept it. It does not matter if you can invoke some custom or belief to say, "I don't quite agree with it". I am sorry, that is the democratic system. That identity, if you want to be a British citizen, is what civic identity is about.

There is a separate issue that under our own democratic culture we can disagree with what the legal processes arrive at. There is civic disobedience, and so on and so forth, in order to reform that civic identity, but that is part of the democratic process. Separate from that is what I call the sociocultural identity: what people like, how they dress, what they celebrate as festivals, and so on. On that, far from wanting an integrated, single culture where everyone is the same, what is important here is getting people to understand people's different perspectives, cultures, customs and preferences. If we use the term integration or cohesion, the challenge is helping people understand one another. Evidence has consistently shown that people who are kept separate from each other and do not see each other or come across each other have this fear and anxiety about others. The rate of suspicion and antipathy is always higher among people who have rarely seen or come across people with different cultures and customs, whereas people with interactions with people of other cultures and customs mostly welcome those daily interactions.

In terms of integration, when it comes to sociocultural issues, it is getting people to mix under congenial conditions. Eating meals together is often cited as a very effective example of bringing people together so they can understand each other, but we must not confuse it with the civic identity, which any Government of the day should be quite firm about and say: "There is no compromise. I don't care that you say because you have had 1,000 years of customs therefore you can disobey the laws of this country. You can try to reform it and put forward cases through Parliament, and so

Dr Henry Tam; Councillor Saima Ashraf, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham; Stuart Dunne, Deputy Chief Executive, Youth Focus North-West – oral evidence (QQ 133-140)

on, but until that is done that is the law". Invoking sociocultural issues is neither here nor there. Those are two quite separate issues.

**The Chairman:** Can I ask you a supplementary on the issue of faith schools and how they work between those two quite different issues that you have raised with us? We have had a lot of questions about whether faith schools where you have children from one faith entirely, whatever it may be, are helping to bridge the gaps that you are talking about.

**Dr Henry Tam:** If a faith school understands that they will not encourage their pupils to invoke their faith to disagree with the civic identity then that is a good path, but not if they start to inculcate an attitude that, "Because of our faith we do not have to conform to the civic identity". That, of course, goes back to the very beginning of the 17th century and the challenge for our country, where allegiance to the Pope could be invoked as breaching the civic rule of law of this country, and it became a very serious issue indeed. Faith, if it is about your religion, not departing from the law of this country, is fine. The other side of it, the sociocultural side, is also whether, because of the way you approach faith, you are using a multifaith technique to say, "Although we are a faith school, we welcome the faiths of other cultures; we can appreciate why they believe what they believe, although we stay firmly with ours", or are they promoting an attitude which says, "Only our faith is correct; other faiths are highly dubious and we must look upon them as"—whatever word you want to fill in the blank.

**The Chairman:** Cllr Ashraf, would you like to add something on this? It is an important point.

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** Yes, I think that, on the religious aspect, it is important to follow equality. We are in such a country—and this is the beauty of this country—where I feel there is equality. It is not perfect and it did not happen overnight, but nowhere is perfect. It is not the same elsewhere in other countries. Being from a different country—I come from France and I have lived in other countries as well—I know it is different. The integration aspect of it, no matter which religion you are from, integrating yourself among your community is definitely the way forward. I have to say that in Barking and Dagenham we have different faiths and they are all very much involved in the work we do, especially since we have started to transform the council. We definitely have a better partnership with each group, and each group is active in helping and volunteering in everything we do, along with the council.

Q140 **Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Taking for granted the distinction you make, Dr Tam, between one's social and cultural identity, on the one hand, and one's civic and political identity, on the other—which you also make very clearly in your written evidence—do you, or any of you, have anything to say about the relationship between local identity and national identity and how far it might be necessary to build, first, a local identity before you can help people to feel a national identity?

Dr Henry Tam; Councillor Saima Ashraf, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham; Stuart Dunne, Deputy Chief Executive, Youth Focus North-West – oral evidence (QQ 133-140)

**Dr Henry Tam:** I would say, given precisely the distinction I have made, I do not think it is necessary for that to happen. Local identity is very much an issue of sociocultural identity. People can have all kinds of rich sociocultural identities at a local level, which may be different from the sociocultural identity at the national level, so long as they understand the civic identity at the national level. That is what being a citizen of this country is about. That underpins the national identity. Some of the problems have arisen because people think that in order to have a strong sense of national identity they must have a local identity that reflects that. That causes problems because then they think that the sociocultural practices of a locality must also reflect the national identity, whereas the national identity is simply the laws and rules of the country. We need to encourage a healthy separation: locally you can enjoy whatever sociocultural identity and practices you have, so long as you know what being a citizen of this country is about.

**Cllr Saima Ashraf:** Very briefly, I came from somewhere else and I can tell you that two years ago, after 15 years of being in this country, I decided to become British. It was with great pride that I did that. It was a long process but it is all about where you are and how you feel about your identity. I have different backgrounds. However, it is about where you are, where you live and how you feel about it. I am very proud to say that I am now a British citizen living in this country. I was not born and bred in Barking and Dagenham but I always say that I was made in Barking and Dagenham. It is my pride because I love where I am, and I love my community as Barking and Dagenham. Nationally, yes, I adhere to the rules of this country as best I can.

**Stuart Dunne:** The interesting thing around identity is that it is multifaceted. People change their identity quite often. The work we have done on talking to young people around national identity and how you construct national identity is to make sure that it is not at the expense of their heritage identity. With regards to the local identity and the national identity, the work we have done is around whether, if young people have a good value base, that can spread across their local identity and their national identity, and, just as importantly, their global identity.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much. We have overrun. We have kept you too long but you have given us a lot of food for thought and some very interesting local examples. Thank you very much indeed.

Mira Turnsek, German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth – oral evidence (QQ 141-148)

**Mira Turnsek, German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth – oral evidence (QQ 141-148)**

Wednesday 29 November 2017

11.50 am

[Listen to the meeting](#)

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Baroness Eaton; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beedoe.

Evidence Session No. 17

Heard in Public

Questions 141 - 148

## Examination of witness

Mira Turnsek.

Q141 **The Chairman:** Hello. Thank you very much for coming along. I am sorry we have kept you waiting, but we were deep in discussion with local authorities. We are exceptionally grateful to you for giving up some time because, on this subject we are looking at, we can learn from all over the world. We would like to get your experiences in Germany as to what you have been doing, what has gone well and what has gone less well—as specific as you care to make it. If we ask you questions that you do not want to answer, say, “I do not want to answer”, and do not feel you have to answer them.

A list of interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. The session is open to the public and is being recorded for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and put on the Committee’s website. A few days after the session you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check it for accuracy, and it would be most helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after the evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence, or have additional points you would like to make to us, you are most welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. Could I ask you to introduce yourself and then we will go to the questions?

**Mira Turnsek:** Thank you very much for the invitation; it is an honour to be here. My name is Mira Turnsek. I am a desk officer at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in Berlin. I am not a senior official yet, as mentioned in the paper, but a desk officer. I am honoured to be here and will try to answer the questions that I can answer.

**The Chairman:** Can we begin with a German question: can you tell us a little about the scale of the problem Germany faces in promoting civic engagement?

**Mira Turnsek:** You call it a problem of promoting civic engagement?

**The Chairman:** An issue.

**Mira Turnsek:** I would call it an asset that we have a very big and active civil society in Germany. Our democratic society does not only live by what the state does but by what all those people who are engaged in various initiatives do to support that, independently and willingly. In order to understand the promotion of civic engagement in Germany, I would like to say a few words on how Germany is organised and the specificities of the German system. It is a federal state, as you all know, so the municipalities and the Länder—the 16 states in Germany—are very much involved in all the activities that the state does, which includes civic engagement. In federalism, there are chances and challenges at the same time and there has to be constant feedback between the Federal Government and the

Länder. It is well accepted in Germany that government on a local, regional and national level works very closely with civil society.

Let me give you a few numbers. According to a recent survey, we have seen that civil society is growing in Germany. We have more than 600,000 associations registered and, when we look at the particular topics that I deal with in my unit in the ministry, which is the promotion of democracy and the prevention of extremism, we are looking at around 700 civil society organisations. Looking at the number of people, there are about 30 million people in Germany, in total, engaged in any kind of civil society work, which is 43% of the population aged 14 or older.

Volunteering work changes from region to region. In the federal states of Germany there are big differences. In general, one can say that people in western Germany tend to be engaged in volunteering work a little more than in the east. It differs from rural areas to urban areas when you look at what kind of social work people are involved in.

The Ministry for Family Affairs is sometimes also called the Commitment Ministry. We are trying to encourage civic engagement through favourable framework conditions so that we can support civic engagement over the long term and try to strengthen a culture of recognition, as we call it. We have an annual prize for civic engagement, which is handed over by our ministry, and there is an annual national week of civic commitment.

When we look at the framework and the problems that Germany faces when it comes to promoting civic engagement, one problem we have seen a lot is what we call "Projektitis", meaning that there are a lot of NGOs around, they do their work and lose funding at some point, they stop their work and there are other NGOs starting anew and sometimes reinventing the wheel. We have tried with the federal programme — "Live Democracy!" — which is dealt with at the Ministry for Family Affairs, to overcome that problem. Within that programme, we have some pilot projects and we fund the structural development of nationwide NGOs, for instance. We think that, while there must be room for pilot projects and for projects to try things out (which includes that at some point we may realise that it is not going the right way and stop the funding), but there must also be room for projects to scale up what they have developed on a local and more concrete level at a national level and see if what they are doing can be implemented and rearranged for different settings. In that case, the Federal Government acts as an impulse generator.

**The Chairman:** We may pick up some of these later on. We will take some questions and, if there are things you would like to tell us at the end, we will give you a chance to wrap up, if we have missed some important things.

Q142 **Baroness Redfern:** You mentioned that civic engagement and volunteering is more prevalent in the west than in the east. Can you tell me the reasons why?



**Mira Turnsek:** I would have to ask about the reasons why, as I am not familiar with it.

**Baroness Redfern:** I just wondered why the take-up was more in the west than in the east. The German Government have a strategy to prevent extremism and promote democracy. To what extent do you think that these two are linked? What do you see as the relationship between integration and civic engagement?

**Mira Turnsek:** The prevention of extremism and the promotion of democracy, as we see it in Germany, are closely linked and they have to go hand in hand for there to be overall success. The battle against politically or religiously motivated and extremist violence obviously includes security tasks, but security for the people also includes preventive action that strengthens democratic behaviour and measures that prevent radicalisation processes. Only if these two go together can the battle against any form of extremism and for democracy be successful, in our opinion. Germany believes in an encompassing and multilateral approach. We look at all forms of extremism and how different forms of extremism sometimes go together or reinforce each other. Because we think that these two things go together, we also have very close co-operation between our ministry and the Ministry of the Interior. These are the two ministries which run federal programmes. We have "Live Democracy!" in our ministry, which had a budget of €104.5 million in 2017, and we have the slightly smaller federal programme of the Ministry of the Interior, called "Cohesion through Participation", which in 2017 had a budget of €12 million. These two ministries work together in an interministerial working group on the promotion of democracy and prevention of extremism. With these two ministries, and the shared leadership of that working group, it shows the importance of bringing those two things together. It was within that working group that the strategy that you mentioned was worked out. Your second question?

**Baroness Redfern:** My second question was about the relationship between integration and civic engagement.

**Mira Turnsek:** On one side, civic engagement can be a motor of integration. When we had the big refugee crisis and had many refugees coming to Germany, starting in 2015, the so-called Welcoming Culture, or Willkommenskultur, became quite famous. We had a programme within our ministry, "Menschen stärken Menschen", which translates into People Support People, where we tried to transform that spontaneous engagement that we saw in the wider population into long-term civic commitment. Within "Live Democracy!", we also support migrant organisations, so we have the link between the two, and we have a Federal Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration. According to them, in addition to being a motor for integration, civic engagement is an indicator for integration. Civic engagement is an essential element for successful integration, according to them; it strengthens the sense of belonging on both sides and the intercultural learning processes. We have seen studies from the Federal Commissioner, which have shown that people with a

migrant background are very committed, in particular, and when you compare young people with a migrant background and Germans you can see that civic engagement in the migrant population is higher.

Q143 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** This might follow on from that last point: how successful is the German naturalisation programme for new arrivals in fostering integration and civic engagement? We have been given a brief summary of what it contains, the language course and the orientation course, on your website, so you do not have to go through it all, but how successful is it, and are there any pitfalls?

**Mira Turnsek:** The Ministry for Family Affairs is not in charge of the naturalisation programme; that lies with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, so I am not able to go into much detail. You said that you have seen on the website what it contains. You have to submit an application, there are certain conditions that people must fulfil in order to become naturalised, and there are 33 questions, I think, in the naturalisation test and you have to pass at least half of them to become naturalised.

I would be quite careful in looking at how we measure success, which is the first question you would have to look at. According to the Federal Commissioner, there are very different perceptions about whether naturalisation is the very successful end result of complete integration or whether it is one step in the integration process. The studies so far have not given clear results. Some of those studies have compared wages of foreigners and people who have become naturalised in Germany, and the results leave room for interpretation, from what I know, although the naturalised people, on average, have better wages. They are not exactly sure how to interpret that, whether it simply means that it is precisely those migrants who are economically more successful who become naturalised or whether naturalisation has an influence.

**The Chairman:** Do you have a formal citizenship ceremony when you become a German citizen?

**Mira Turnsek:** I have never attended one, but I think you do.

**The Chairman:** It might be helpful, if you have one—not now but at some point—if you could send us some information about that so that we can see how it compares.

Q144 **Baroness Pitkeathley:** The German Government's strategy mentions democratic values, basic human values and the values of the constitution. Is there an official definition of what these values are? How do the Government seek to promote these values among their citizens?

**Mira Turnsek:** When we look at these different values, we would always go back to the basic law in Germany. This is where there is a commitment to inviolable human dignity and the duty of all state authorities to respect and protect these rights. Those rights are inherent in the provisions of the basic law, which is the basis of our social values. If you look at Article 1 of

the basic law, human rights are the bedrock of every community, so this is what we would always refer to when we look at these values.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** How do the Government go about promoting those values, or do the Government have a role in promoting those values and, if so, how?

**Mira Turnsek:** There are various ways for us to promote these values among citizens. There is a big role to play for the Federal Agency for Civic Education—Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (BpB) —which, together with agencies for civic education at the Land level, promotes citizenship education. If you want, I can say a little more about the work of that federal agency. When we look at the basis for civic education since 1976, there has been the Beutelsbach consensus (“Beutelsbacher Konsens”), which is a consensus that has vital significance when it comes to how we teach political education in Germany. Besides the federal agency, the Federal Government supports political foundations, and we have churches and trade unions, which have their own educational offers. Schools, of course, play a big role in the education and promotion of these values.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** We would like you to say a bit more about citizenship education.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** If I can go beyond that and ask a question about the values, I was struck by various statements and what you said about the key value of the inviolability of human dignity, which is very much a human rights value. Is that kind of human rights approach made explicit in what is written and spoken about in Germany, and do you talk about German values? One of the things we are looking at is the discussion here about so-called basic British values. Do you talk about German values, as such, or, because you have a constitution, is it kind of constitutionalised and made more civic somehow?

**Mira Turnsek:** There are discussions in the German Government about German values. We would rather talk about constitutional values and always go back to the basic law. Depending on what political party you look at, some would probably say or try to explain that there are German values, but it is not the common understanding of the German Government that there are. There are discussions about what we call Leitkultur, a leading culture, but I am not sure how to explain that in English. There are discussions on that which would probably include German values and what it means to be German, but we would always go back to the constitutional values and the human rights approach and the basic law. When we talked about the naturalisation process earlier, one of the conditions for people to become naturalised is to make sure that they adhere to the values in the constitution and there is nothing about adhering to German values, but there are discussions on that.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** I want to ask a bit more about education and where citizenship sits in the education system. Is it a compulsory subject?

**The Chairman:** There is a question later about your comments on how we

are teaching citizenship and, if you have any views on that, we might wrap it up together. Do not hesitate to be frank; we want the truth.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** If you are not aware of it, say so.

**Mira Turnsek:** I am not very aware of the British approach to citizenship education.

**The Chairman:** So back to Baroness Pitkeathley's question.

**Mira Turnsek:** The main responsibility for civic education lies with the Federal Agency for Civic Education, which is subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior and gives information on political issues for all people in Germany. It is trying to promote awareness of democracy and participation in politics, which it does by different means. It takes up topical and historical subjects, issues publications, gives seminars, does events, study trips and exhibitions, and tries to motivate and enable people to give critical thoughts on all these political and social issues. It also supports events that are being organised by more than 300 approved educational establishments, foundations and non-governmental organisations, so it does not do everything by itself and, as I said earlier, it also works with similar agencies on a local level, which are called the Landeszentrale für politische Bildung. As I said before, the political foundations on top of that, the churches, the trade unions and the BPB, which is the acronym for this federal agency, work together with organisations, for instance, which are engaged in the "Live Democracy!" programme from our ministry, so they sometimes step in for co-funding those education projects that we do.

Q145 **Lord Rowe-Beedoe:** The German Government has found discrimination on the basis of race and gender to be barriers to integration. In the written statements here, they have very clearly set out their concerns with increasing Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-ziganism, homophobia and transphobia, so that is clear. The next thing that the Government have said is how the people who are victims, if you like, or are suffering this can report it. What is the Government doing, if anything, to prevent these things from happening? What are they doing in the process of education in these areas?

**Mira Turnsek:** As I mentioned, we have two big federal programmes, one of which is in our ministry, the "Live Democracy!" programme, a very important part of which is to fund projects which try to do exactly that, promote democracy and diversity and prevent discrimination. In the summer of this year, we released the National Action Plan against Racism, which also tries to tackle these issues and looks at different areas—hate speech online and education for instance—to see what can be done to tackle the problem further.

**Lord Rowe-Beedoe:** You mentioned education, so how is the education being delivered to the people in Germany?

**Mira Turnsek:** In schools, that is the responsibility of the Länder and, besides what the federal civic agency does, we have a lot of civil society

organisations which, for instance, go into schools and talk to pupils about democracy, the value of diversity and these kinds of things.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** From my perspective, Germany has been something of a beacon in the way it has responded to the refugee crisis, but I know it has created a lot of problems in German society. How has that affected the work around this area of integration and dealing with hate crime, discrimination and so forth? From outside, it seems it has had an effect.

**Mira Turnsek:** It has had an effect in that it has made this work more difficult and has made the problems worse, but we are trying to be very clear about the fact that all these problems were there before, so they have not arisen because refugees came into the country. Two different things happened with the refugee crisis. We had, on the one hand, the problems that you just talked about, but we have had an amazing welcoming culture of thousands of people being very engaged, very happy to welcome those people and trying to integrate them into German society. Recent numbers from the BKA (Bundeskriminalamt), the Federal Criminal Police Office, show that nearly every day somewhere in Germany there are attacks on refugees' homes or institutions, so it is manifestly a problem that we need to tackle and probably do not have the perfect answer. If we look at the last election, there is a lot of right-wing populism going on and, unfortunately, they have a voice which is a lot louder than we would hope for.

Q146 **Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Do you have any views on the strengths and weaknesses of the British approach to integration?

**Mira Turnsek:** I do not know anything about the British approach to civic education for integration. I know that you have tried at some point to clearly differentiate between integration and extremism, from what I understand, which we would definitely see as a strength and which we try to handle in the same way—to have a very clear separation between integration and any form of extremism. It has not always been the case and in Britain that was a development as well. In Germany, for some time, we have mixed up these two things a lot more than we would today, so maybe this is one short answer I can give, but I do not have an extensive view on how integration is happening in the UK.

Q147 **Baroness Eaton:** Could you tell us about the Federal Agency for Civic Education, the BPB? What are the strengths of having civic education for all ages run by the same institution? How does it work with other parts of federal government, such as the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, or with state governments and their education systems?

**Mira Turnsek:** As I said, it is a subordinate authority to the Federal Ministry of the Interior, so I cannot say much about the strengths and weaknesses of its work, but, because it is the federal agency and started about 65 years ago, it has quite a wide range of knowledge and adheres to certain standards—what I said earlier about the Beutelsbach consensus—and it has the possibility to feed back to the Länder.

**Baroness Eaton:** Different departments do not always relate and work from the same agenda; they have different staff and approaches and the financial arrangements can become complicated. How does it sit together so as not to have different aspects getting in the way of the delivery, because that, I would think, can so easily happen?

**Mira Turnsek:** They try to work ever more closely together, which is also translated in the fact that the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry for Family Affairs work closely together.

**Baroness Eaton:** Do they have joint budgets?

**Mira Turnsek:** No, there are no joint budgets, but, as I said, there is co-financing, for instance. Within the "Live Democracy!" federal programme, there are projects that are co-financed by the BPB, for instance, which would be where both we and the BPB are putting money in and are both involved in and aware of the projects. There are common conferences that we organise within "Live Democracy!" where we try to bring in the Ministry of the Interior to join with people from the BPB to sit and look at the problem together, but that can be difficult when you have these different actors.

**Baroness Eaton:** So it is not all that smooth-running and it does have its issues.

**Mira Turnsek:** I would guess it does have its issues, yes.

**The Chairman:** Who knocks the heads together? We have a saying in Britain of "knocking heads together". When disagreements take place between the various departments, how are they resolved?

**Baroness Eaton:** Who has got the upper hand? Would it be the federal agency?

**Mira Turnsek:** The federal agency is independent and non-partisan, which, for them, is a big asset compared to the political foundations, for instance. I do not really know; it probably depends on the issue.

**Baroness Eaton:** Is it down to the individuals, as is often the case?

**Mira Turnsek:** Yes. You would probably try to handle the problem in the first place at the lower level and, at some point, escalate it to the highest level.

**Baroness Eaton:** I can imagine.

Q148 **Baroness Barker:** You have already told us quite a lot about the sorts of things which the BPB does and you touched on the issue of separating out integration and extremism. How effective is the work of the BPB in fighting extremism?

**Mira Turnsek:** You would probably have to talk about how you measure success and how you can tell whether something is effective or not, which does not only apply to the BPB but to any other work that we do within

“Live Democracy!” or “Cohesion through Participation”. It is quite hard to tell whether they are truly effective; you can never compare because you do not know how things would have gone had you not had these projects and the work that they do. Part of the truth is probably that we still have all those phenomena. Right-wing extremism has been around for a very long time in Germany and is still quite a big problem, along with Islamic extremism and many other group-related enmity phenomena. The question of effectiveness is a very hard one. Within our programme, for instance, and I think the BPB does the same, we have academics who follow the work we do and try to guide the projects and our work when they see that it is not going the right way.

**Baroness Barker:** So evidence-based policy?

**Mira Turnsek:** Yes. To be effective, you probably should not think that there is one solution to the problem but always try to feed back with all the actors involved—so the BPB, together with our ministry, with the Ministry of the Interior, with the Länder and a lot with civil society—to see what is going on on the ground to try to tackle problems, but I am not aware of any. I can try to give numbers or something afterwards, but I do not have them at the moment.

**The Chairman:** One of the things we are struggling with is red lines, points which cannot be crossed, and an important one is the question of women’s rights, particularly among some of the minority communities. Can you briefly tell us what Germany is doing, if anything, in addressing the issue of women’s rights among minority communities? I do not want to put you on the spot now, if you wanted to write in on that.

**Mira Turnsek:** I have a few things. I am always happy to give more information afterwards, but I have some information on it.

**The Chairman:** Yes, a couple of words on how you are tackling that very difficult issue.

**Mira Turnsek:** In the first place, going back to the basic law that I talked about earlier, in Article 3, equality between men and women is firmly anchored. In 1994, a new article was added to the German Constitution, which provided an obligation on the authorities to fight inequality between men and women. We have the General Act on Equal Treatment—the AGG (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz) —which came into effect in 2006. It implemented four European directives: amongst them the racial equality directive and the gender equality directive. When you look at German basic law, women and men have equal rights, in principle, but the reality looks different still, unfortunately, in Germany.

To tackle those barriers, on the one hand, we have a federal antidiscrimination agency to which any person who has seen discrimination can turn. There is a gender equality report and gender mainstreaming is a guiding principle. We have different projects which try to tackle the problem of discrimination, for instance. You asked about women from immigrant background, we have an ESF-funded programme, Strong in the

Work Place, which is run by our ministry and aims at facilitating the entry into employment of mothers with an immigrant background and improving access for them to the labour market. We have had some additional gender equality policies recently, looking at labour market participation, and we had a new Bill passed in 2014 which looks at the equal participation of women and men in top executive positions in both the private and public sectors. These are some of the things that we do.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much indeed for dealing with all our questions so fluently and so insightfully; we are most grateful to you.



Dame Louise Casey – oral evidence (QQ 149-152)

**Dame Louise Casey – oral evidence (QQ 149-152)**

Tuesday 5 December 2017

3.05 pm

[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Baroness Eaton; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beddoe.

Evidence Session No. 18

Heard in Public

Questions 149 - 162

## Examination of witness

Dame Louise Casey.

Q149 **The Chairman:** Dame Louise Casey, thank you very much for coming to talk to us today. We are reaching the end of our evidence sessions; we have one more. We are very grateful to you for coming to give us the benefit of your wide advice as evidenced in your report. I have the cautionary words that I have to read to all witnesses. A list of the interests of the Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. The session is open to the public and is being televised for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and will be put on the Committee's website. A few days after this session you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check its accuracy. It would be most helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. Finally, after this evidence session, if you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence or you have additional points you would like to make, you are welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us then. Could I ask you to introduce yourself briefly for the record?

**Dame Louise Casey:** Yes. I am Dame Louise Casey. I left the Civil Service at the end of July, so I am no longer a serving civil servant. This is my first appearance before a Select Committee as a free individual.

**The Chairman:** You are unbridled.

**Dame Louise Casey:** I suppose, in addition, I am a visiting professor for King's College London's policy institute and I am the chair of something called the Institute of Global Homelessness.

Q150 **The Chairman:** Thank you very much. Could I open up with a question? What is the current state of integration in the UK? Have there been any noticeable changes in the year since you published your review?

**Dame Louise Casey:** The current state of integration in the UK is not as good as it should be or could be. As I outlined in the report I published a year ago, there is a sense of a divided community or society, whichever way you want to describe the country in which we live. It is far too divided socially and economically between rich and poor, and between London and outside London. It is diversity, but in many different forms. We are currently living in a divided society, and in the intervening years since publication I would say that has probably get worse, not better.

My own sense is that the issues of Islamic extremism remain present and very much part of what everybody, including citizens and parliamentarians, is trying to deal with. Austerity continues to bite, and that impinges on action to deal with the issues, as I outlined in my report. I for one am concerned about the festering far-right extremism, which seems to feed off those sorts of issues. It feels as though far-right extremism has got worse in the last 12 months, not better.

**The Chairman:** One of the areas we have slightly struggled to come to terms with is the white working class, what some people describe as the

left behind. You wrote quite a lot about this in your report. In Chapter 6, you said, “Further consideration should be given to the particular reasons why the gap”—this is a gap of aspiration and engagement—“is worse for some White British children than those from minority communities”. Would you like to give us a stream of consciousness on what could be done about that? I do not mean about the children so much but about the communities as a whole.

**Dame Louise Casey:** Be careful when you ask for a stream of consciousness, Chairman. It is a really interesting day to be having this session in the light of the media in the last few days and the issue of white working-class Britain. The evidence we gathered for the integration review last year speaks for itself. Kids on free schools meals in particular—white boys and white girls, who often do not get quite the same level of interest as white boys appear to at times—fare very badly through the educational system and are still twice as likely as their counterparts not to get five GCSEs at reasonable grades. This is all off the top of my head. I could look stuff up, but that is my recollection of the evidence. Obviously, access to universities remains poor for that group.

There is a sense that people are now trying to attach that to a Brexit decision: that people in those communities chose Brexit. It was put to me earlier today that they voted for Brexit because they were not educationally equal to other parts of the community. I find that very tough and very difficult to accept, and it is quite patronising to many people in those communities. It irritates the hell out of me, because a lot of those communities are looking at the future for their own children and realising that it is not flat: it is going to get worse, not better. Meanwhile, they feel, understandably in many cases, that there is this big institution not in their own country that is sapping money away.

At the same time, they also feel there are people who have only arrived in the country who are jumping the queue for things like housing and public resources. Instead of seeking to understand those communities and why those families feel that way, I feel that a lot of people in the liberal intelligentsia, for want of a better expression, have jumped on that and said, “They’re just not clever enough to understand the issues”. I feel that we need to come at the sense of a divided society in a cleverer way than just blaming people, whichever side of the Brexit vote you were on. We cannot just blame people within communities.

In the social and economic chapter in my review, there were three standout issues for me. First, young black men in Britain growing up between the ages of 18 and 25 will be at an unemployment rate of 35%. Their white counterparts will be at an unemployment rate of 15%. I have served four Prime Ministers, and I have served a number of people around this table today, and it has been my privilege to do so. No matter who is in government, this is a stubborn statistic that does not appear to change. White working-class Britain is the same when it comes to kids on free school meals.

The third group, which became the subject of much controversy and publicity in my report—I concentrate on it in an up-front way; I am not backing off from that for a moment—is the population, particularly women, from Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage communities. That group is seriously held back. Women and children specifically from those communities fare a lot less well when it comes to equalities and equalities of opportunity in ways that I did not imagine existed in the United Kingdom at such a scale until I did the integration review. I found that a cause for national shame.

Q151 **Lord Blunkett:** I would like to take that a stage further. We will come back to that latter issue shortly, but related to it is an issue that was raised in your report directly impinging on the question of integration and social cohesion. In a city like Bradford, 80% of the babies born—I do not know whether it was last year or the year before—were to first-generation mothers. In other words, they have been brought into the country under family reunion, often as very close relatives, in first-cousin marriages. These are really difficult issues. The Centre for Social Justice has done some work on this.

If Robert Putnam is right, and this therefore undermines social capital and the capacity of communities to develop a functioning civil society, which is what this Committee is looking at, is there anything positive we can do that does not just light a flame? Forgive me, but I tried this back in 2003, and I got my fingers severely burned by suggesting that the existing diaspora here might consider arranged marriages within the UK rather than from the outside—not that we should impose it but that it should be debated. The world imploded. Has the world moved on at all so that it might not implode if you answer the question in the way I know Louise Casey can answer questions?

**Dame Louise Casey:** Apart from anything else, we have David Goodhart in the room, who was at Demos and is now at Policy Exchange. David has done quite a lot of work in this area, which I looked at very carefully in the integration review. He uses an expression, “first generation in every generation”, which I would like to talk about. If I get it wrong, David, forgive me. There are two things I want to talk about. First, when is a forced marriage an arranged marriage, and where is choice? The second thing is the dynamic of a first generation in every generation. That marks itself out as being one of the most difficult things to talk about in the whole review, interestingly, and it has come up right at the beginning.

At one level, we—this includes me and certainly Governments—ought not to have views in these sorts of places, because we do not feel right or comfortable telling people who to marry, how to marry and those sorts of things. By the same token, there is a metropolitan borough council in the north-west, which is a part of Greater Manchester. On the council at one point not that long ago, every Asian member who was of Pakistani heritage—and the vast majority were—had only married somebody from a village in Pakistan. That immediately means that the people arriving constantly bring with them some of the dynamics of culture and understanding that are not necessarily the same as other people growing

up in that metropolitan borough council, who may be more progressive in their values about equality for women, the position of women in society, how girls are treated as opposed to boys, openness to faiths and the secular nature of the society of the United Kingdom. Language is a barrier in those scenarios. There is a weight to the culture for them.

I saw this writ large in many of the communities and families that I visited and listened to in the over 700 interactions we had during the review. Therefore, the “first generation in every generation” dynamic is potentially small in scale nationally, but quite significant in maintaining cultural norms that are no longer fit for where we are in the United Kingdom.

Just to get this out of the way now, if I can use Lord Blunkett’s question to do so, the one thing I often say to people about forced marriages and arranged marriages is that they are on a spectrum. One person’s forced marriage is another person’s arranged marriage. At one level, people are free to marry whomever they want in one society. Then you might have a religious society where it is preferable if you marry within your own religion. Then you might have a society where people want you to marry not only within your own religion but also within your own caste. Then that moves to: “We have two first cousins and we want you to marry one of them. That is your choice”. At that point, I am afraid my support drops off completely for that. I do not believe that is a reasonable way to treat a woman, or a man for that matter, growing up in the United Kingdom.

There are two dynamics. It strikes to the heart of equalities. I have had to remind myself constantly to say that you do not pick and choose the laws of this country. The laws that protect religious minorities are the same laws that say I am equal to a man. You do not pick which ones you want. It is not a chocolate box of choice; it is something you have to embrace. If you are uncomfortable with that, I now say that is tough. After two and a half years of working exclusively in this area of integration, as we call it, we need to be much more robust about issues like that.

Q152 **Baroness Barker:** In your report, you talked about social action and civil society organisations. The backdrop to our inquiry is a huge drop in local authority-funded generic support, a gap that is largely being filled by faith organisations or organisations that in some way, although they achieve social benefit, are set up for the benefit of a particular group. How is that likely to impact on integration?

**Dame Louise Casey:** Again, I was quite blunt in the review, but probably not as blunt as I would be in person. We completely take for granted some of the things that we became used to having in our society. As austerity has bitten, we have not worked out a game plan to go beyond that. As Lord Blunkett will know, youth services used to drive me absolutely insane, because I felt they were a very unreconstructed and unreformed industry.

I used to joke that I had found myself in an area that had gone from the City Challenge under the Conservatives to the New Deal for communities under the first bit of Labour, and then to the neighbourhood renewal, which then found itself as part of the anti-social behaviour action plan. I went to

this lovely youth centre one Wednesday. It was in a church. It was great. Everything was great. They introduced me to lots of kids, including kids on ASBOs so I could be uncomfortable with kids being on ASBOs. It was a great visit, and it had Duke of Edinburgh awards everywhere.

I said, "It is interesting. Earlier today, I was out with the police and they said the green directly opposite here is a bit of a hotspot on a Friday. How come you're not open on Fridays?", to which, as out of the mouths of babes, one said, "Well, the kids go drinking on a Friday". I have always been quite tough about that. I find that funny myself, but you as a Committee clearly do not. Anyway, the point I was trying to make is that I am not a soft touch when it comes to youth services and more generally charities and organisations. A lot of them are self-serving. They think they are the only people who can get something right, they do not work in collaboration with each other, and so on.

However, the solution to what we are currently facing cannot be left to interfaith communities. We are largely a secular country, although obviously the Church of England is our foundation and the institution of the country. However, we ought to—I put it in one of the recommendations—have much more of an idea, and a plan that goes beyond a little of this and a little of that, when it comes to youth services.

What I would call an integration strategy must have civic organisations at the heart of it. It is great that we have interfaith communities, and often they lead the way in their behaviours on how to deal with these issues, but it cannot be left to them alone. I have felt for some time now that this is the default position: we leave it to the interfaith community to step up to the plate and deal with issues that are about integration in the United Kingdom.

Q153 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** The Migrants' Rights Network, in its written evidence to us, suggested that your review put the onus on migrant communities to integrate, whereas they argued that it should be a two-way process. Is that a fair criticism? Would you agree there are responsibilities on settled communities, as they call them, to improve integration? If so, what are they? How can settled communities fulfil those responsibilities?

**Dame Louise Casey:** There are responsibilities on both communities. We have not worked out how to do that as effectively as we should have done, because it fits into this very difficult box where people often get too politically dogmatic about their position on, for example, immigration.

If I can start with the expression "two-way street", I come from immigrant stock. My father arrived on a boat into Liverpool at the age of 13 to signs that said, "No blacks, no Irish, no dogs". I get some of this. I am now in a highly privileged position and I am well away from that world, but I understand the process by which people arrive in the country. Of course, Irish immigrants were white, as opposed to black, which makes a very significant difference to their experience of the United Kingdom, both currently and historically. I feel that we have got some of this wrong. I see incoming communities more like this: the country is on a bloody big

motorway, and we are all going in the same direction. People arriving are coming in on a slip road. The majority of the population pulls out to the middle because it realises they are coming in, but we still all move in the same direction.

I feel very strongly that we have given a mixed message about what the two-way street is. Does it mean that we have women and children growing up in this country who feel that they are not equal to a man, they are not able to leave home without getting permission or they have to bring up their girls very differently from their boys? Does it mean that they are less likely to speak English than their male counterparts? Beyond that, does it mean that they do not accept that gay people have a role that we should respect in society and now have equal rights to marriage? Are they able to see that is progress towards which we as a country are moving? Do they accept the Royal Family? Do they accept the position of the Army? Do they accept Parliament? Do they accept democracy? Do they accept all those things? If they do not, frankly, that is not a two-way street. It is people going in the opposite direction. If anything, I see them as disruptors in society who are moving in the wrong direction. I do not want young men growing up in this country thinking that I am not equal to them. That just does not work for me.

We have got some of the messages wrong. I get quite a lot of flak for saying these things, but I have been on this journey. Two or three years ago, I probably would have said that immigration was a two-way street. It is as important for the settled community to change, but only in so far as we are changing but moving in the same direction. I know it is a nuance, but it is a really important one.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Are you suggesting that those practices are true in all migrant communities? I am sure you are not.

**Dame Louise Casey:** No, not at all, but we are not clear about this. We have not really had an integration strategy. Dare I say it, in these political circumstances, to a lot of people we interviewed and met during the review, it feels as though immigration is stuck. The right wing would say, "We understand the impact on public services. We are going to set migration targets and we are going to handle the numbers". That did not work. This is a caricature, but the left says, "All immigration is fine". A lot of people living in very tough areas in the north just think that we have lost our minds if we think that people can just arrive here in their thousands and that we have not been on it.

Whether you are pro or anti-immigration does not matter to me. What matters is that as a country we need to be united. We have had people arriving, so we need to make sure that those people know the rules of the game, that we do not abuse them and that we do not make their lives significantly more difficult. At the same time, the settled population have to see that we are managing it. The fact that we have cut English language funding and have not targeted that funding was one of our mistakes, if I am honest.

Q154 **Lord Blunkett:** As you knows, I agree with that. One of the staggering statistics from the material that we have been given is from a ComRes polling report that looked at different parts of so-called British values. Equality came quite low down on people's scale of importance, but the best was equality between men and women. When I looked at it, I thought, "God, this is appalling". It was presented as though it was pretty good: 62% of those polled believed in equality between men and women, which means that 38% did not. Is part of the problem that we have to establish whether the indigenous population believe in the values that we are espousing before we preach them to other people?

**Dame Louise Casey:** That is fair enough. One of the things we did not manage to land in the overall report, and the messages from the report last year, was that as the backdrop to all this we are not clear where we are as a country on issues such as equality. The year has played out rather viciously on that front, with all sorts of examples of women's respect and freedoms not being what they should be in comparison with their male counterparts. In the introduction to the chapter on equalities, I attempted to write about that. I wrote, "Women still do not enjoy equality with men across a range of factors". Clearly, that got lost in the ether.

This is a really difficult thing, but we have to own the fact that this is more likely to happen in certain communities. I was in Bradford. Baroness Eaton knows the area much better than I ever could. I went to a school whose teachers had done a poll of all the 11 to 16 year-olds in that school. Not one child between the ages of 11 and 16 thought the population of this country was less than 50% Asian. That told me something about the closed nature of those kids' lives. I felt very upset, because I know, not only from the evidence but from personal experience with people, that this country is still pretty racist and they will still suffer, not as much as they used to, but it will still affect them in their lives; it will affect their life opportunities and outcomes.

What are we doing in 2017 across the community? I mean that in the widest sense: the schools, the local authority, the churches, the civic groups, the scouts, as well as the Muslim organisations, because they were largely Muslim kids in that school. We need to think about what they are being taught, how they are being brought up and how they are less likely to feel welcomed by the majority population, because we know that and we can see it from some of the polling in those groups.

**Baroness Eaton:** I am not sure this is exactly relevant to this particular point, but in your answers to questions you mentioned a local authority: Bradford, Oldham, or Rochdale—whichever of the small Greater Manchester local authorities it was. You have given us a picture of areas where we know the number of people from immigrant backgrounds is very high. I understand all that. Do you have any observations or thoughts as to other parts of the country where the issue is not as great and there is a different story to tell? There is some really good stuff here. If you are on free school meals in education, whether you are with a few, none or lots of other children who are on free school meals determines your outcome. It is not just you; it is the factors around you.



I know you are concentrating on the areas where the problems with integration are greatest, and I accept that, but can you talk about those other areas of the country where there are immigrant communities, but they are not the highest percentage or not more than 50%? Do you find the same problems there?

**Dame Louise Casey:** It was really difficult to compare the evidence on that. My answer to the question would be that you find fewer problems. If we are talking about Muslim communities, we have to remember that they are poor: Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage communities stand out as extremely poor communities. Men and women on the whole have low-paid jobs. Where those communities are very significant in number, we see more of the issues I talk about in the report, and we see them in the schools. In the body of the report, we talk about where the schools are in that.

This is very difficult for people I have met from other geographical areas. My sense is that they do not necessarily recognise the issues I talk about in my report. In Cornwall, for example, I interviewed a woman Muslim doctor, who said, "This is crazy. If this is what is happening, it does not represent me. It does not represent my religion. It does not represent my life experience". We could not conflate that with—

**Baroness Eaton:** You could not make a comparison.

**Dame Louise Casey:** Yes. It would be an interesting piece of work to do.

Q155 **Baroness Pitkeathley:** I want to ask you about civil society organisations. You have expressed some of your reservations about them, the robustness of their governance and the way they relate to these issues. In your view, what do these civil society organisations need to be doing to foster integration? What about a code that asks such groups to ensure that they have women and representatives of minority groups in their governance structures? There could be a quota or something.

**Dame Louise Casey:** I did not wish to run down the role of civic society. I am ex-voluntary sector, and now I am back in the voluntary sector. I both respect it and think that without it you do not have a thriving society. We are wholly dependent on it to lead the way forward in many difficult areas. I can think of numerous excellent organisations operating in this space, not just the high-profile ones such as Mosaic, which show leadership. That is one of the things I wanted to say in answer to your question.

I would say two things. First, they can often be set up by communities for themselves, which means that they have a greater level of power and authority than state and statutory bodies can have, whether they are church or non-church. They can often meet a need much faster than state or statutory bodies can do. Some of the domestic-violence projects operating in the space for women from different minority backgrounds and non-minority backgrounds can get to women and understand what is going

on in a community a lot faster than local authority housing advice to help them deal with domestic violence.

One of the lessons learned when we made the English language announcement in January 2016, which was the only announcement made by government in the two and a half years I looked at this, was that routing that money through women's organisations and domestic-violence organisations was a very powerful tool for reaching women. Those organisations and their leadership can give us very clever ways of reaching into communities to help them with things like health. We are trying to get to them not only through health but through language. Once you get them to language, they feel more empowered. We learned a lot. I learned a lot during that process.

As you can imagine, I am well up for the idea of a voluntary code on representation. We are at a moment, surely, in 2017, as we end this year and start 2018, when anything that we can do not only to message symbolically but to get change in representation, particularly of women and ethnic minorities, can only be a good thing. The more all institutions and all organisations reflect the make-up of the communities they serve, the less likely you are to see some of the problems that flow when those organisations are not representative. I am very clear about that.

**Q156 Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** You have already referred to the funding of English language classes and the need for it to be better targeted. You referred just now to women's language. What needs to be done to improve English language skills in order to improve integration? I mean that generally, but I also have a particular interest with regard to refugees, for whom there are some very specific integration problems. In effect, you have answered the second part of the question about whether special attention should be paid to the high proportion of women with little or no English. How can we do something about that?

**Dame Louise Casey:** There are probably greater experts on issues such as English as a second language and the structures around that. Because it was seen as ineffective, it could be removed, but it was a bit like throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Just because you think that something is not right does not mean that you should cut it completely. That is my reading of what happened with the structured approach to English as a second language.

You have just got me now that I am free, but I also think that the responsibility is on people coming to learn English before they arrive or to work their way up to speaking English when they get here. We are not paying to help these people learn English. Do you translate leaflets for health for a woman or do you just hope that her son can translate for her? It gets a little political. Some people say, "They all have to learn English and it is their responsibility. We pay enough for this. We are going to stop doing translation". Other people say, "Everybody can carry on speaking whatever language they want and we do not need a common language, because we should be multilingual". It gets caught up in some of that.

It is very interesting that this Committee asked me to appear before it and that it is a House of Lords Committee, and it is very interesting that you are looking at these issues, because I sometimes feel that there is so much politics attached to these issues, rather than trying to find a way forward. The issue with English language is trying to find a way forward.

It is like homelessness, which is my other bugbear. Homelessness is not a state that you exist in for the rest of your life. It is a problem that needs to be sorted so you are a housed worker again, not somebody who has the label "homeless" for the rest of their life. I feel exactly the same about people who are not able to speak English. I am not keen on endless translation budgets; I am very keen on endless language budgets. That is where we are in this country. Some people will not like the fact that a lot of people have arrived in the last X decades or years who do not speak English, but they have. That is where we are, so we need a common language across the country. That is the most important thing, socially and economically, let alone for equalities.

On your other question, we need to be incredibly clever about how we target that money. Although you might want to use different types of approaches for different groups, in order to deal with the issues that I feel very passionately about you need a targeted approach that is not part of—I might as well get it all out—an extremism agenda. It has to reach out to women wherever they are living, because we want them to be able to speak English so that they can take part in our society, bring their kids up and be equal to men.

You would do that anyway. I do not need the threat of terrorism to think it is important that a woman can speak English wherever she lives in my country. You can do it. There are some very good people out there in these community groups who are really clever in how they reach into those communities. I was in one in Newcastle that does sewing. It unlocks a conversation with them that leads to talking about all sorts of issues, particularly domestic violence, in a different way. That involves sensitivity in policy-making and in delivery. People often think this stuff is tough. They say, "God, what do we do about integration?" The issue is tough, but some of the solutions are quite simple, and we could do them better.

**Baroness Eaton:** I have a short question. It is probably a little unfair because it did not sit within your remit, but do you know anything about how the Scandinavian countries deal with the issue of language and immigration? It seems to run quite smoothly, and I do not know how they deal with it. If you do not know, perhaps it is something we should look at.

**Dame Louise Casey:** What they are doing in some other areas of Europe is really interesting. My starting point on a lot of the northern European countries is that they are so much smaller population-wise. Therefore, what they are dealing with is of a different magnitude. We were invited to Germany, which was a fascinating visit, because they had read the review and wanted to talk through it. I was quite struck by the huge volume of refugees and asylum seekers they were dealing with. They put language

classes right at the top of their agenda and spent billions on them. Obviously, their numbers are huge in comparison to here.

They also realised that running alongside their language was citizenship. During a language course, they managed to convey the values of the country they wanted to promote. It was a very clever course. As Ministers and civil servants in Germany, their challenge was about how they could get to everybody within six months of arrival into Germany. They were not at that volume or that delivery capacity at that stage.

**Baroness Eaton:** Was it something they had to do? Was it mandatory or could they opt in or out of language courses?

**Dame Louise Casey:** No, I do not think it was optional. It was expected. They call it an entitlement. They have a right to it, but they have a responsibility to attend.

**Lord Blunkett:** To take this a little further, on the radio this morning, in a short but very interesting interview, you said that 62% of women from ethnic-minority backgrounds were economically inactive, compared with 35% of the population as a whole. In your review, did you come across any evidence as to whether this was to do with access to language skills or whether, in equal measure, it was to do with the social relationship within the family and what was expected?

**Dame Louise Casey:** Economic inactivity levels are almost 60%. They are unusually high among women from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups. At the point we wrote the report, 57.2% were inactive in the labour market, compared with 38.5% of all ethnic-minority women and 25.2% of white women.

**Lord Blunkett:** I shall go back and listen to the interview again.

**Dame Louise Casey:** No, I said “almost 60%”. I hope I did. I ended up getting irritated about the *Guardian*, so I redid all the statistics just because I had a cob on. It is a serious point that you are making. You think that you are clever when writing these reports, but they get completely lost on anybody other than you. If you have economic inactivity levels at that height, and you run alongside that, as we do, the statistics in the next paragraph, which say that this particular group has the lowest levels of English language proficiency of any black and minority ethnic group—in those communities, women are twice as likely as men to have poor English—it tells you a story about their lack of opportunity in our society.

This would take a different type of research report, but when you then come to the issues of misogyny and the lack of equality in those communities, you can understand why. Overall, we know that women who are suffering domestic violence are less likely to tolerate it when they start working. The evidence is very clear on that in domestic violence. I was not clever enough when we wrote this report, but you start to see that you can unlock diversity through social and economic approaches to an equalities issue. If women in this group were working, were able to speak English

and had proper jobs, they would be a lot less tolerant of being told whom they needed to get married to and how their children should be segregated in schools.

Q157 **Baroness Barker:** You will not be surprised that the Prevent programme has featured a lot in our thinking. Indeed, you wrote about it in your review and had some quite interesting criticisms of those who do not support it. One thing that has cropped up during our interviews with people is the sense that it is becoming a much more centrally driven programme. Therefore, it is not as easy for communities that are engaged locally and very concerned about radicalisation to use it productively. I wonder what you think about that.

**Dame Louise Casey:** My starting point on Prevent is that we need an integration strategy. At the moment, the focus is all on Prevent. I am very positive about the need to have a Prevent programme in my report. I have defended the Prevent programme and I stand by it. There is a part of me that thinks, "Why would you not want to prevent extremism and terrorism, whether extreme far right or from any other course?"

Again, we have got ourselves confused. I am afraid the Government have helped this confusion by not being clear about the role of Prevent in society. What we have always needed and what I recommended in the review is an integration strategy that deals with the sorts of issues that a committee on citizenship and civic engagement would be concerned with, in the same way as I have been very open and honest today about the sorts of things that I think are happening in communities, but I would be worried about anyway, regardless of whether there was radicalisation or extremism.

An integration strategy would be part of preventing the need for a Prevent strategy. Does that make sense? We have not got that right. It is a year later and I am still waiting for it to be published. It will be published, and there are really good people working on it across government. I used to say to various people around this table, "You do not pay me to be patient; you pay me to be impatient". I have a sense of impatience about this, particularly when we know that some of the solutions with regard to English language and others could have been got on with. However, I will try to put that to one side.

We get confused. We have allowed Prevent to be knocked and knocked and knocked. I cite some of the cases. I listened yesterday morning to a Radio 4 programme in which women all talked to each other. They all cited the case that everybody always cites, which is a kid who meant to write "terraced house" and he wrote "terrorist house". They say it is terrible and that he was arrested by the police. There is no truth in that urban myth at all. The kid wrote that, but the police did not deal with it in the way that was described and is constantly cited.

There are a lot of people in some organisations who really want to undermine the Prevent agenda. I find that very hard. With the Government and other organisations not being clear about its role and not defending it, we end up where we are. I found myself in east Birmingham with two

young women who had set up their own gym and who wanted to set something up for women in that community. They were of the community; they were exactly the sort of people you wanted to do it. They wanted to do coffee mornings; they wanted to do health. It was an organisation that would have been able to reach into the community in a way that I or anybody else on this Committee would not have been had we opened it. People would attend something opened by them.

I went to see them during the week before half term. I said, "God, what are all those leaflets over there? Why have you not handed the leaflets out?" They said, "It is really tricky, Louise, because we have had to get our funding via the Prevent programme". They got the 3p they were given via the Prevent programme. It was a bit more than that, but not much more; it was serious grass-roots funding. One of the workshops was going to be about jihadi brides. It was no wonder they were not handing the leaflets out. They were a really good community development project that should have been funded as a Prevent project and been part of a wider interfaith community in Birmingham, which they were. It turned out that their only route to funding came attached to something that meant they felt that they had to say something about extremism, jihadis and all the rest of it. That is the confusion the people out there are trying to manage. That is why we cannot keep waiting for an integration strategy; it is too long in the making.

**Q158 Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Some of our witnesses are not happy about the stress on the word "British" in "British values". They would rather talk about "shared values" and would like a wider range of values than the ones that have to be taught in schools. Do you have some views on that?

**Dame Louise Casey:** They probably will not make me entirely popular with the people who have previously given evidence. I might as well be honest. What makes it impossible for the liberal intelligentsia to embrace the word "British"? It is okay to be Irish, is it not? I am very proud of my Irish heritage; I have already mentioned it to you. It is okay to be Scottish, it is okay to be Welsh, it is okay to be a Londoner, it is okay to be a Scouser, it is okay to be a Mancunian, it is okay to be a Geordie. We somehow get uncomfortable when it comes to the word British. That gifts the extreme right wing to use that expression over and over. Therefore, they have ownership of it, not those of us sat in the room today.

I have been on a journey with this. I probably started out as a wet *Guardian* reader, who was uncomfortable with the word "British". I find myself thinking, "Dear God, how did we get to a point where the word "British" is owned by the extreme far right, and therefore we are totally uncomfortable with it, rightly so, I might add, because it is owned by the extreme far right?"

I have watched some of these courses being taught and discussed with students, and they are best when they are talking about what a British value is. Last time I checked, a British value is something like integrity in public life, democracy, the rule of law, equality. They are British values and they epitomise those British values. Left to their own devices, quite a lot of teachers out there use the discussion about British values not to make

them learn the national anthem by rote but to give a sense of the things that a lot of good people—I hope I am one of them—would want to inculcate in young people growing up in this country.

You have asked me a question on a day when I am being blunt. We ought to be less ashamed of the word “British”. We should reclaim it from the very, very, very nasty people who seem to have claimed it. I would like them seen off, really.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** I hope you are not writing me off as a member of the liberal intelligentsia. I think of myself as British citizen. It is my citizenship. I did not get a sense from anyone who has questioned it that they are uncomfortable with the term “British”. I keep asking what is quintessentially British about these values, which are also the values of other countries. It is not that people are saying, “We must not say we are British”. But some people perceive it as exclusionary, because they hear, “We cannot believe in democracy unless we are British”. You talked very fairly about having a discussion about what British values are, but some people who have given evidence to us feel that they are imposed from above, so there is no discussion.

**Dame Louise Casey:** I am of the group of people who say that they do not need the Government always to tell them what to do. The British values stuff came out as part of a Home Office-led strategy as part of an extremism strategy, and it gets everybody’s backs up, including mine. You should be looking at exploring with young people things like what the word “British” means versus “Scottish”, integrity and India’s latest appointment of a democratic leader. Those are the conversations you should be able to have in a wider setting. I am obviously the type of person who believes in citizenship, PSHE and sexual education being taught in school. Despite my demeanour and what I have said today, I am probably a bit of a liberal myself. I believe that those are the sorts of things we should be teaching in schools. We should be clear, though. Fundamentally, I do not mind what you call it, but you cannot pick and choose the laws of the country that we exist in. Those laws apply to us all.

Q159 **Baroness Morris of Yardley:** You have almost answered this. I have the next two questions to ask, and you have just touched on both of them in your answers, so I am going to round them up together. Thinking back to the two women you met in Birmingham, that was a very good example of how things could have been better. As a policy thing, could the promotion of British values, and therefore integration, have been more effective if it had not been wound up with the counterextremism agenda? That is the first thing, and I think you said yes to that.

Secondly, you just mentioned citizenship teaching in schools. That had been going on long before we got obsessed with teaching British values. Should we emphasise teaching citizenship education well, rather than getting schools worked up and inspected as to whether they are teaching British values? They are not inspected on the first; they are inspected on the second.

**Dame Louise Casey:** The answer to the first question is yes, without a doubt.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I thought you had said that.

**Dame Louise Casey:** I am not a specialist in education, so I need to be clear about that. There are two things here. First, a lot of educationalists are on the front line of dealing with the most challenging aspects of non-integration. During the review, I felt that a lot of the heroes in the public sector were the head teachers and deputy head teachers, who were trying to hold this incredibly difficult line, keeping a community or a set of individual parents on board—often the parents felt they had to keep the leaders of the groups happy—literally on things like swimming, theatre and closing on Friday at 1 o'clock; those sorts of things. This relates not only to those of the Islamic faith but to other faiths as well.

In many ways, I thought teachers were the heroes in this. At the end of all this, I thought, "Can we not just ask how to negotiate the best way forward?" Some people are very invested in citizenship, so could you have a component that is about British values, or do you have a wider PSHE that pulls these things within it? At the moment, we are saying that women are equal to men, that it is okay for gay people to get married and that we should respect that even if we do not condone it within our religion. If we are saying these things only because of something called extremism, we are getting something wrong. That is where the integration strategy, or even a different educational strategy, has to be right.

I am more concerned about the fact that the Department for Education, probably not knowingly, has recently left much of the management of those issues to Ofsted. Ofsted inspects schools and finds problems and then there is an outcry. I know that this is not a subject for this Committee, but I feel that it is time to take stock of where we are with many of these schools. We should not keep opening them and then saying, "We do not like the way you are doing it". The horse has bolted. I am sorry; that was a longer answer to your question.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Might I follow that up? Sometimes we are obsessed with what schools teach and not what kind of places they are. Looking back on your visits to schools, you will have learned from the head and the deputy head the problem they have in managing what they think is a good education, and a community that has a different view. Did you sense from the school that for some children the community they were in for those hours of the day exhibited British values, no matter what was taught and no matter what the arguments are elsewhere? Sometimes we underplay the fact that kids are there for quite a bit of time. There is an opportunity for schools to do the right thing as well as teach the right thing.

**Dame Louise Casey:** I could not agree more. On the visits, whether I was gone for a day or overnight, we always did schools. I saw more schools where I thought, "God, these people are amazing. They exhibit the values of integrity, warmth, kindness, embracing people from different cultures and trying to get everybody to the same place. They feel strongly about



educational attainment, because they are educationalists". I also saw examples of schools that made my hair stand on end, but fewer.

Q160 **Baroness Redfern:** How could the naturalisation process for new arrivals be improved to help to create a more integrated society? Are the citizenship tests and ceremonies appropriate and useful? You have already alluded to the lack of integration strategy and language proficiency. Could you elaborate on that, please?

**The Chairman:** It is also expensive. An issue that has been raised with us is that the citizenship tests are very expensive.

**Dame Louise Casey:** The evidence shows that people like the citizenship oaths and ceremonies. They like coming into town hall versions of rooms like this and feeling part of changing their nationality. An English language test is vital, and I questioned whether our bar in English language proficiency was high enough on arrival. I am not an expert in this area, but I was not sure that we had a high enough bar and were asking people to hit a certain standard before they arrived. The population of people arriving from south India was half a million in both cohorts. Those are big numbers. They have a lot to offer, if you look at it that way. Rather than seeing them as a problem, if you see them as having a lot to offer if they come in with English at a certain proficiency, that would be a good thing.

In the review, we tried to grapple with people who stepped off a bus at Sheffield from Slovakia or Roma who were often quite impoverished on arrival. I met people who literally thought they were going to get money that they could send home, and if they were lucky at the end of the week they would get a six-pack of alcohol and a bag of food and be put into lodgings. Quite a lot of exploitation of those sorts of individuals goes on. One of the recommendations in the review, which is probably where you are leading from, is for there to be some more organised way for people who are going to stay in perpetuity to learn to speak English and to have a sense of joining our society and being welcome—at the risk of being liberal for a minute. That is what I felt, but I was not sure how you could organise that.

A lot of this was pre Brexit, and obviously a year on from when I published there are different opportunities, depending on how the negotiations go in the future, in relation to organising migrancy. If I went to a different country, I would expect that country to want me to be economically active and, if I was going to be part of their society, to be able to speak English. I often get the Spanish question: what would I expect of people in Spain? I would expect them to be self-sufficient, not to draw down on their economy, and at least to have rudimentary Spanish.

**Baroness Redfern:** That bar is set and nothing has changed on that bar.

**Dame Louise Casey:** The coalition reduced the English language test. I would put it up.

**Lord Blunkett:** Will we need to recommend, Chairman, that they return to having a look at the *Life in the UK* booklet? Most of us would not pass or come anywhere near to doing so.

**The Chairman:** This does not just apply to people newly arrived; it applies to everybody. Some of the evidence we have heard about engagement is that people should have a series of episodes as they go through their school and early life, such as when they start school, go to secondary school and first vote, that would draw them more clearly into our society. I know that is outside your report, but would you like to comment on that? Perhaps it was in your report.

**Dame Louise Casey:** There is a piece in it where I major on young people. I could not agree more with what you are saying. Integration is about social and economic opportunities. I would like everybody who goes to Eton to meet somebody from the other side of the tracks at some point during their lives, certainly at some point during their childhood, so they can seek to understand where they come from. In the same way, I would like the person who is in a very poor area to have their horizons lifted.

I did this report for Prime Ministers and government, but one of the attractions of coming to this Committee is that I feel we ought to have an organised offer, as close to mandatory as is humanly possible, for every kid. It is not fair to say that we should leave it to chance, but it is not organised enough. For example, referrals from Tower Hamlets to the National Citizen Service, of which I am a supporter, remain incredibly low, whereas referrals from Surrey remain incredibly high. I was trying to be gentle in my report, but between the Duke of Edinburgh, Step Up To Serve and the National Citizen Service we should have something, for the good of the country, to try to heal our rifts.

It would be such a good thing, perhaps when people finish their GCSEs, if they all did something. I know the NCS is three weeks and it is too much for certain people. There are different levels of the Duke of Edinburgh that some people do, and of course that goes towards their university stuff. I still have kids in deprived areas who go nowhere near any of that stuff, let alone kids from the families that I have particularly talked about today. It was in the anti-social behaviour White Paper in 2003 that we wanted to have a national community service for every young person, yet we have never been able to get that over the line. Different Governments have had a go at it, but it is still not there. That would be a really great mixing tool.

Q161 **Baroness Eaton:** A lot of what you have said today has been very honest and has highlighted things that communities and individuals have often found very difficult to discuss for fear of being labelled in all sorts of ways. Thank you for everything that you have included in your report and for your contributions today. In the current political context, are we more willing to discuss these sensitive issues than in the past, or are we not politically prepared to challenge, tackle and deal with them?

**Dame Louise Casey:** I took great heart from the fact that this Committee would not allow me not to appear before you, let me put it that way. I

knew that if I came I would tell you what I really thought. I did the *Today* programme this morning, where it was levelled at me that the *Guardian* had counted the number of times that my report used the word "Muslim" versus the number of times it used the word "Polish". You then think, "For God's sake, there is a reason for that". I love the *Guardian*, so I have to be careful what I say. If you cannot see that there must be a way to get this discourse out there, we are letting down the very people we think we are protecting.

I did the inspection into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham. It was one of the toughest things I have ever done in my life, let alone my professional career. The public servants in Rotherham who fell by the wayside did not wake up in the morning thinking they were going to let the girls be abused. Of course none of them thought that. Yet somewhere along the line the dial is moved and people start thinking, "This is tricky". They hold back, and a girl goes from being vulnerable to being wayward. People say of her family, "We do not know a lot about them", which becomes, "They are troublemakers". Of the boyfriend, they say, "He is all right. He may be 25, but he is all right". The dial moves again. Then one day really bad things happen. That had such a searing effect upon me, as some of my colleagues know, that even if I do not get the way of talking about it right it is better to try to get people to talk about it than not to.

I am not convinced that politicians are here on this issue. I am not convinced the media are here on this issue. I think the public are. If I had this conversation in a community group, indeed with Muslim and other community groups, we would have a feisty conversation. I have done so. They are prepared to have these conversations. The consequences of not having the conversation and not getting this right are very grave. Yours is the only Committee that has asked me these types of questions in the two and a half years that I have been doing this job. This is the first time I have had such questions.

**Baroness Eaton:** What do they ask you?

**Dame Louise Casey:** They are more interested in facts and figures, and in me supporting their political position, one way or the other.

**Baroness Barker:** I am really interested, because I have done a lot of work looking at the way we change the legislation on forced marriage in this country. You are right that there was a lot of criticism from the left, which believed that communities under siege were being done down again. I want to come at it from a slightly different point of view. I am from the gay community, and I watch what different religions do and say and the consequential effects that has upon young people in my community. Given all that you have been through, to what extent do you think the religious protections in this country, such as the exemptions from the Equality Act, are harmful and should be addressed?

**Lord Blunkett:** That is a hand grenade if ever I saw one.

**Dame Louise Casey:** Yes, it is. In all honesty, I am not an expert in that legislation or that particular element of the law. This is incredibly candid, but the Church of England and possibly even the Catholic Church are on a journey. It may be a slow journey, but they are on a journey. You can see that sometimes when Justin Welby speaks. You can see that a little with Pope Francis. I said to the Cardinal, "I need to be really clear with you about the Catholic Church's position on gay marriage, so I know where I am before I go any further". I said something at an integration Select Committee and ended up on the front page of the *Catholic Herald*. Everybody wrote hate letters, which I thought was quite interesting in itself. However, I said. "I understand that certain religions do not condone same-sex relationships. The issue for me is whether you respect them, and whether you are able to teach them in an honest and decent way within your schools. If the answer to all that is yes, we are fine. If, on the other hand, you start going in the wrong direction, I have a problem and I will really criticise you in my review". As you can see, we got to the place where we did. It was not an argument. It was not something that I had to ask for. Latterly, six months after I had seen him, he went to the head teachers' conference and explained his position, among everything else.

I worry that there are certain minority religious groups that are not on that journey and are not prepared for the condoning to become a little stronger. What Ofsted has found in certain schools, including strictly Orthodox Jewish communities, other minority faiths and Islamic faith communities, is a step way beyond what should be tolerated in the United Kingdom. I did not have to work very hard to find young people in those communities who were really suffering.

Dare I say it, most of us here are of a certain age group. One thing that policymakers need to get their heads around is the statistic that I put in the report, because I liked it so much, from YouGov's massive poll of 18 to 25 year-olds, of whom 49% said they would not describe themselves as "strictly heterosexual". That made me smile, because I thought that that population would be less likely to treat people like you in an inappropriate and often horrific way.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much. We are seeing the Cardinal tomorrow, so we shall be able to cover that.

**Dame Louise Casey:** That is perfect timing. I had better ring him to tell him what the deal is.

**The Chairman:** You said that it was a sensitive issue. We have had some quite frank evidence from various people in our sessions, and it is good to have the discussion.

Q162 **Baroness Pitkeathley:** This is the last question, Dame Louise. Those of us who listened to you on the radio this morning will know that the Government have not yet responded to your review and that you are not a happy bunny about that. Can I ask you to continue with the frankness that we have been very glad to hear from you today? Do you know if the Government will take account of your report? What do you hope they will

say, and what do you think they will say?

**Dame Louise Casey:** Sometimes the things you care about the most are the things that you have to not watch over when you leave. When I left Shelter I had to let them get on with it. That was really tough. I adored that organisation 25 years ago. When I stepped down from being the rough-sleeping tsar, again, I had to let them get on with it. I have to tell you, watching the number of people sleeping out on the streets in this country go up since 2010 was a test of my silence. This has been the same. One has to respectfully allow Ministers and civil servants to put a strategy together. I know that there were personnel changes during the course of the year. They have brought in somebody excellent to head up the integration team. He did not start until July. If I am absolutely honest with you, it frustrates the living daylights out of me that we were six months into the review and at that point Downing Street said, "Where is it? Can we do an announcement? What is your biggest issue? Let us get something out now". I said, "I really want an English language announcement. I want you to start spending money on these specific groups", and they did it.

You can always do things, and not everything costs money. I am frustrated with the length of time that it has taken, but I am hopeful. I really hope in the strategy that they produce in January or February they will take time to reflect the issues that we have talked about today and that are in the body of the report. This issue seems really tough, and it seems really difficult to know what you would do about it.

At the same time, as a former delivery person—to use language from that era—there are some things that you could do. Some of the solutions to this are quite simple. They are about English language and targeting that language in specific ways. They are about being very clear on the role of schools and around integration, Prevent and counterextremism. That is not beyond our wit. They are about shaking down civic society so that people know that they have funding and that it is not just for five minutes.

You could also do work in specific areas of the country, where there are significant numbers of kids on free school meals, where there are white working-class issues, or where you have Pakistani or Bangladeshi- heritage women. You would have different strategies in different places. This is not beyond our wit, but because it is seen as such a difficult thing I sense that it gets locked in the Whitehall cupboard that says "too difficult". I would always say the things that are the most difficult to do are the ones that you should do first and be bravest about.

**Lord Rowe-Beddoe:** Can I take you back to British values? I was very interested in your references to and descriptions of the situation and status. What can be done to take the hijacking of that phrase away from the extreme right? It is not just a phrase; it is a damn sight more than that.

**Dame Louise Casey:** That is a really good question. In recent weeks, last week and the week before in particular, I have thought about that quite a lot. There are a number of things. First, having the conversation in the way

you are today is the most powerful approach. Let young people have this conversation about what Islamic extremism is, why there is a rise of the far right and what dislocation is. It lies in the hands of educationalists and young people to have those conversations. We need people to have more adequate responses than mine on the teaching of British values so that we know what we are doing about it. It is about people in your positions, left, right, centre or wherever they are, being able to have that conversation with the people in the places that they are. We should expose the things we see from these organisations that have the word “British” in them that are far from British values. In fact, they are the exactly opposite of the values that most of us would call British. You could run an exposure campaign.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** At a number of points today, and in your report, you have talked about socioeconomic divisions. When we, in a nebulous sense of “we”, talk about integration, the assumption tends to be that we are talking about ethnicity and immigration. I wonder why you think that is. Do you think that the Government are taking on board what you have been saying about socioeconomic divisions? We have heard lots of pieces of evidence that suggest that they are a barrier to people being full citizens.

**Dame Louise Casey:** I do not wish to upset any colleagues from the Conservative end of this Committee. I was one of many people who felt great hope when Theresa May talked about one nation and no divided nation. I was game on for that. This is square in that territory. The solution to some of the equality exclusion issues that we have concentrated on today is economic and social inclusion. If I had a magic wand that meant that men in the Bangladeshi community had better employment outcomes than being a taxi driver or working in a chicken shop on less than the minimum wage, that would start to change some of that divided nation.

We as a country, and you, the people in these two Houses, who have more power than I could ever dream of, have to see that Brexit is not only about a negotiation that most of us have now lost track of and barely understand. It is about what is happening domestically in our own country and what type of country we want it to be. That is the challenge for Brexit. What type of country do we want to be? The “Thought for the Day” chap, as I sat in the studio, said something immensely powerful. He said that the rhetoric on social mobility cannot crumble to dust. I thought, “You do not need me in the studio”. Everything in my review is about social justice, social mobility, poverty and all those things. It took a man in a collar to point that out to us all this morning.

**Baroness Eaton:** I want to pick up on your observation about the Bangladeshi community being largely taxi drivers. Schools have a huge role in relation to aspiration. From my experience in Bradford, people are told, “You can work in the foundry down the road or be a taxi driver”. That happened to a friend of mine, who is now professor of data medicine at a university. I have not quite worked out what happened in between, but school gave him nothing. There is a real danger in these areas where

children are underperforming, and the assumption is that they cannot do anything better. The economic things that you mention are influenced hugely by what happens to people who leave school with skills and a desire to improve their lot.

**Lord Blunkett:** The same happened in the pit villages.

**Dame Louise Casey:** You will not find it surprising that I wholly agree with you. The solution to a divided society is greater equality of opportunity for all. The solutions to the more difficult aspects of equality and diversity that we have talked about today also lie in that. It is about equality of opportunity, but you would expect me to say that.

**The Chairman:** Dame Louise, thank you very much. We have run on and you have been kind enough to give us more time. The fact it has run on is evidence of the value that we attach to your opinions. Thank you very much for sharing with us all your experience.

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis; His Eminence Vincent Nichols, Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster – oral evidence (QQ 163-171)

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis; His Eminence Vincent Nichols, Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster – oral evidence (QQ 163-171)**

Wednesday 6 December 2017

10.35 am

[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Baroness Eaton; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 19

Heard in Public

Questions 163 - 171



## Examination of witnesses

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis and His Eminence Vincent Nichols.

Q163 **The Chairman:** Your Eminence and Chief Rabbi, thank you very much indeed for coming today to give us the benefit of your very wide-ranging experience on this important topic, on which we are now drawing to the end of our evidence sessions.

A list of interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. The session is open to the public and is being televised for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and will be put on the Committee's website. A few days after the session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy, and it would be helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after this evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence or have any additional points to make, you are most welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. Could I ask you to identify yourselves, and then we will turn to the questions?

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:** I am Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis.

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** I am Vincent Nichols, Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

Q164 **The Chairman:** To begin with a general question, how would you describe the current state of civic engagement in the UK?

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:** My Lords, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to share some thoughts with you today.

Overall, on civic engagement, I believe that there are many strong points within our society today and there is also room for lots of improvement. To give some context to the current situation, we are experiencing a new development within our society, taking us somewhat away from previous divisions into a newly divided society. Previously, when you asked people to identify divisions within the political framework in our society, they would talk about east and west, left and right, conservative and liberal. Today, we are finding that there is a new fault line differentiating between drawbridge up and drawbridge down, between inclusive and exclusive, and a "them and us" mindset that is leading people to choose between particular values and universal values. This is finding its expression, for example, in attitudes towards immigration: to what degree we will allow our borders to be open to outsiders or shut our borders to them; to what degree we will engage openly in free global trade or favour local businesses; to what degree we will allow others to permeate through and influence our own culture or prefer to preserve our own unique culture. The responses that people have to these questions will inform them at a time of national elections and referenda.

This now means that there is a schism within some circles between the particular and the universal. Within the Jewish tradition, as is the case within many faith traditions, we embrace both. We believe in a very strong

particular identity and, thanks to championing that identity, we believe that we are well placed to be responsible citizens for the sake of all our society. When you have people who are championing only particular values without any interest in universalism, that serves no good to wider society. Similarly, when you have those who are only interested in universalistic values and do not respect the right of people to their own particular identity, that too is unhealthy for our society.

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** I echo the Chief Rabbi's thanks for this opportunity and very much wish you well in the work of this Select Committee. It is a very important area, as the Chief Rabbi has illustrated in those perceptive comments.

Overall, we see the best of civic involvement at times of emergencies. On Monday evening, there were citations for all those who responded to the last three tragedies in London and they showed remarkable generosity and bravery. On the other hand, as the Chief Rabbi says, there are these fault lines, and the one that strikes me most is the people who feel that they have no investment in our society, that they are incapable of making a contribution, and if that contribution is not wanted in the labour market it is very difficult for them to find the motivation to contribute as a volunteer. The level of long-term volunteering is not great. I was given the figure of 15.2 million people volunteering once a month. In a population of 60 million, that is not very many. As the Chief Rabbi said, we are getting to a situation where we lack an overarching narrative of what it means to be part of this society. I could continue for a long time, but I will stop there.

Q165 **Baroness Barker:** Good morning. Thank you very much for the thoughts and analysis that you have outlined about the creation of a universal context in which to pursue individual or particular identities.

We talked some weeks ago to the Inter Faith Network about examples of their work on building communities. Would you like to talk from your point of view about what you see as examples of faith communities working with government to build that overall context in which we have a strong society?

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** Your question was quite precise about faith communities working with government. From the Catholic point of view, there are obviously long-standing and very effective partnerships with government, particularly in education. We educate 10% of the pupils in this country in a way that from the point of view of external examination is very satisfactory and robust. I think of the long history of co-operation on overseas aid, of our regular stance of urging people to take part in elections and to be participants in the process, and of formal statements, which we have reflected here in this country, of emphasising and upholding the dignity and the importance of a political vocation.

However, there are also negatives, which perhaps I could illustrate with a story, which Baroness Morris will be familiar with. One of the best drop-in centres for homeless people in Birmingham is the Fireside Centre. It was run by very dedicated people led by a community of religious sisters. Their one principle was that they would never accept any government funding,

because it always brought with it a perception of how things should be done and an overinterfering control, they felt. On the whole, Catholic charities in this city, such as the Cardinal Hume Centre, The Passage and many others, will deliberately limit themselves to accepting never more than 45% to 50% of government funding not only to protect their sustainability when government funding goes down but to have a sense of, "Here we have an ethos that we want to protect and promote, because we believe it is humanly sound and full of recognition of the dignity of the people for whom we are working".

There are other points I could make, but the co-operation with government, except on those large, well-structured fronts, is variable. We have recently seen a number of examples where, as the Chief Rabbi has said, there is an insistence on one set of values to the detriment of others, which has also seen some of our partnership with government come to an end because there has been no space to tolerate a particular perspective. That is a bit ironic when we spend our time proclaiming that tolerance is a great British value.

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:** If you will allow me to refer to a number of events during the past months, we held a very special Sabbath, called Shabbat UK, through which we called upon all Jews in the UK to engage with the Sabbath and to observe it. It was a remarkable success, and from the Prime Minister down we had messages of support for this initiative through which we championed our own particular unique faith and values. Just two weeks later, we celebrated Mitzvah Day, and over 40,000 volunteers in the UK from the Jewish community were engaged in activities well beyond the borders of the Jewish community. I was privileged to accompany the Cardinal when we went to a centre in south Hampstead to help with the packaging of parcels of clothing for the poor in this country. I am sending, on behalf of my office, some top Jewish university students to Ghana in a few weeks' time to help with social responsibility projects there, as we did a year ago when we sent students to India, with great messages of support from government. Perhaps most significantly of all, my wife and I visited a centre in Bradford that has been created by World Jewish Relief, utilising funds raised within our community, where we witnessed the help that is being given to Syrian refugees in this country. That centre relies very heavily on a significant grant given by the Home Office. Here we have a Jewish initiative to help Syrian immigrants from abroad with government funding to enable us to be responsible citizens and to care about the universal values that are so central to us.

I will go one step further, because the question related to what government are doing. It is important to concentrate on the messages coming from government as to the tone that is being set within the country. Sometimes, I believe it is right, but sometimes I sense all too often that religion is perceived to be part of a problem within our society rather than being appreciated as something of enormous value to our society. Those who are religious have roots, something of pride and something to live with and to live for, and in utilising religion responsibly they are well-placed to be outstanding citizens. I often wish that there would be a more healthy tone

being set from government down within our society and, rather than trying to banish religion from the public square, instead, appreciating its central role within our society.

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** I think you can tell that the Chief Rabbi and I understand each other well. I was privileged to be at his installation in which he said that one of the main principles of his term of office would be to help Jewish charities to turn outwards and to serve the wider community, which he achieves steadily step by step. I quoted 15 million volunteering. In the Roman Catholic diocese of Westminster there are about half a million Catholics. We put in our report to the Charity Commission two years ago that they contributed four million hours of voluntary work, and in this year's report we give an account of 840 different outreach projects being put forward through the Catholic community, often in co-operation with others, to try to reach out to the needs of society. To back up the Chief Rabbi's point, religious faith, with the stability and the vision that it gives, is an immense resource, not a problem.

Q166 **Baroness Pitkeathley:** I am sure we have all been very interested in those examples you have given us about how people of faith engage, but what barriers do people of faith face in engaging in their communities and how could these barriers be removed?

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:** Going back to my initial thoughts about the divide within our society, the strongest barrier is when people perceive their religious belief to encourage them to build walls around their own particular entity. Therefore, it is hugely important that faith leaders today encourage the members of our communities to look outwards and to guarantee that the principles, elements and beliefs of our faith exist to enable us to be responsible citizens within society.

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** Without wanting to repeat what the Chief Rabbi has said, we also suffer from ignorance. Maybe that is partly self-inflicted, but there is no doubt that the level of religious illiteracy is considerable. It means that people cannot even read their landscape. In Dollis Hill in north London, 15 years ago on a Sunday morning, there were a lot of cars parked and some people walked along, obviously a long time living in this country. They looked and said, "What's going on up there? Is it a car boot sale?" Somehow, we are failing to help people understand the culture and the world in which they live. The privatisation of religious belief, which the Chief Rabbi has spoken of, the lack of clear messaging about what is and what is not important and in our stance towards religion are very important.

In contrast, for example, Her Majesty's Christmas message every year is a very important moment, because she, in that wonderful way, spells out what gives her stability and what can offer stability very widely in society, which she symbolises. There are many things, but the one I would put at the top of the list would be a lack of religious literacy.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** This is a very interesting discussion about your views on working with government. I was reflecting on the Cardinal's

answer and I can see that the box-ticking, the top-down, the overzealous attitude sometimes of government and their officials can get in the way, but you hear that from anybody who takes government money. They always find that to be a burden, and I understand that very often it is true, it happens. Can we explore that a little more so far as faith is concerned? I thought of examples of projects that the Roman Catholic Church has done, and I am sure the same is true of the Jewish faith, which run counter to the prevailing political views or values, and I can see the point you were making, but were you talking more widely? For example, in Birmingham, it was the Catholic Church working with poor people in my former constituency where there would be no difference of values, and were they overbearing even then, for example, in the rules that might pertain to adoption agencies, which you might have been doing, as opposed to the work you might be doing with poor people in any constituency?

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** Sometimes it is prudence and sometimes it is instinctive. Sometimes caution in accepting too much funding from a government source is prudent, and with recent cuts a lot of Catholic charities have survived whereas others have not. Sometimes it is an instinctive lack of trust. People are very uneasy about becoming arms of the State. I will give you two examples.

We recently opened a house for women rescued from trafficking. It is a house that we support entirely from raising funds and it costs us £350,000 a year. We have not become part of the national referral mechanism because it has conditions and consequences to it and we wanted to offer an unconditional welcome and hospitality to women who have been rescued from trafficking. I know that Kevin Hyland is working hard to have that national referral mechanism adjusted to make it more open. That would be one example.

Another example would be The Passage behind Westminster Cathedral where there was, at one point, the beginnings of an intrusion that wanted The Passage to act as a point of control of undocumented, illegal immigrants, which it was not willing to do. Those are two examples of a hard edge where co-operation with central government can bring its consequences which would run counter to the instinct that we want to offer a very unconditional, protective and creative environment.

**The Chairman:** Chief Rabbi, do you want to add anything to that on the interface between government and voluntary groups?

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:** I am not sure that it is relevant to us. I hear what the Cardinal has said.

Q167 **Baroness Barker:** The Cardinal spoke about fault lines, and it is our job to explore some of those. There are tensions between the practice and beliefs of some faith groups and some sections of society, such as women and the gay community. Do you support the Government's actions to date against faith schools which have failed to uphold "fundamental British values"? You will see in our questions that we question the term

“fundamental British values”, but for these purposes we take it to mean a broad-based understanding of what it is to be a British citizen.

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** It is a very interesting area. What strikes me is that the British values that are listed and commonly spoken about, if I understand it correctly, have their origin with Ofsted and that is the perspective that first presented these values. You know better than me that the search for a list of British values goes back a very long time. It is interesting that in the Ofsted presentation of these things they belong in a section of education that is to do with spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, so there is the clear indication that British values, as stated, have a spiritual foundation, that they can best be presented in the context of a spiritual, moral, social and cultural perspective.

That is where the discussion gets very interesting, because what strikes me about the British values, as stated, is that they are—I do not want to be too crude—a bit rootless. They may be rooted in social custom, but what is the root of tolerance? I always think of tolerance as a fruit and it grows out of something. I have a stance towards another person that enables me, because I understand something, to be tolerant of them because I recognise their dignity and the importance of difference. If we keep picking the fruits of tolerance and not attending to the roots of the tree, it disappears, which is what we see: tolerance becomes cynicism, cynicism becomes indifference, indifference hardens and we end up going down the road that leads to hate incidents and hate crimes. Even Ofsted, in its documentation, says, “These values need their spiritual root”, which is what we are not attending to enough, and that is where faith schools, which have a clear understanding of the roots of these values, have a very important contribution to make.

Thinking of some of the schools in Birmingham that got classed under the “Trojan horse” headline, they were not faith schools but local authority schools. That would not have happened in a faith school because it knows what it is based on and where it is going. There is something very important about being ready to explore what lies behind the fairly arbitrary selection of British values, that they need roots.

We had a fascinating seminar in Oxford a couple of years ago, which tried to explore the link between human rights and human dignity. Whereas human rights find legal expression, which is proper and right, human dignity is much more difficult to codify, yet it asks the question, “Where do these human rights come from? What is it about the human person that gives them an innate dignity and, from that dignity, a flow of rights?” Rights are not given by a state, they are recognised by a state, but a state is never the source of a person’s rights. It is innate in the person, and unless we are ready to explore what that innate dignity of the human person is it becomes very individualised and subject to precisely the analysis that the Chief Rabbi gave at the beginning between the individual and the universal.

**Lord Blunkett:** I do not want to preclude the Chief Rabbi from commenting on this, but this is fascinating stuff. Given the Catholic Church’s stance on particular moral issues, how do we avoid the toleration

of the intolerable, recognising that tolerance inevitably springs from benign acceptance of something that you do not actually agree with because, if you agree with it, you do not have to tolerate it? This goes back to my old tutor many years ago who used to argue this to the point where, in the end, I had lost him, but it is important in terms of faith. If you are teaching tolerance of things that fundamentally you do not necessarily agree with, that allows that debate to take place, but at what point, given that you have used the analogy of not tolerating something because it was unacceptable, do you fall over into toleration of what you would consider to be intolerable?

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** I would go back, if I may, to the Chief Rabbi's point that the very drama of living a religious faith is that you embrace fundamental values and principles, which you try to uphold, and then you live with all the divergences that human life throws up. If I may go back, for example, to the same-sex marriage debate, at no point did the Catholic Church object to same-sex marriage, and it did not speak against it; we spoke in favour of our understanding of marriage as between a man and a woman. You are smiling and you think it is a point of sophistry, but it is not.

**Lord Blunkett:** No, but it is a good way out of it. The Catholic Church has always been a better politician than politicians.

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** It is to see the positive. If I may take the example of the adoption agencies, the very effective, compassionate Catholic adoption agencies were put out of business because, if I put it positively, we held to our understanding of the paramountcy principle, the prime importance of the child. Therefore, we held to the view that a child, unless there is some remarkable circumstance, is best served in nurture as they were created in nature, by a mother and a father. It was that positive principle that we were not allowed to uphold. It was not that we were intolerant of others but we wanted to maintain a principle, which we still would believe strongly to be the human good.

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:** The concept of tolerance, which has correctly been asked about, does not imply acceptance. The Hebrew word for "tolerance" is "sovlanut", from the root "sevel", which means discomfort. We are not at ease with this, but we allow it to take place out of respect for others to have their space and the opportunity to express themselves how they wish. The best analogy I can think of is the symphony orchestra in which we have separate instruments, each one making its own unique sound and, under the baton of the conductor, blending together to produce perfect harmony. Surely this is what we should strive towards achieving within our society. We have different faith groups and those who do not consider themselves to be religious at all, people from different backgrounds and different cultural values. We need to respect people for who they are and where they come from and, under the baton of human co-operation, we need to blend together to produce that harmonious society, not through uniformity but unity, which means respecting differences and enabling us to thrive in that way.

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** Spoken like a true rabbi.

**Baroness Barker:** As a member of one of these communities, to be tolerated is to be treated differently in our society rather than to be understood or appreciated. I would like to counter some of the impression that the Cardinal has given. As members of this Committee have heard me say before, I am an ambassador for the Albert Kennedy Trust, the gay youth homelessness trust, and 25% of young people who are on the streets are often from the LGBT community with a higher incidence of homelessness than in the rest of the population. In many of the cases they see not one religion but religion as a factor. While religious and faith communities certainly have a great contribution to make towards integration and stability in society, they are also, for some of us, a source of unease and hardship. I come back to the point about schools and the importance of doing what you suggest, which is to enable schools to emphasise the universal as a very basic part of their teaching and then the specific.

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** I would not want to give the impression for one minute that we do not have our problems; every community does, because there are the same streams and currents that run through any community. Yes, I am happy to admit to mea culpa, but the foundations are right. A Catholic is taught every day that to give is better than to receive and there is an innate training, if you like, towards generosity, compassion and forgiveness, but we get it wrong quite often.

Q168 **Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** We are all familiar, particularly you, if I might say so, with the idea of a faith journey—baptism, bar mitzvah, marriage and so on—but what do you think of the idea of a civic journey, and if that is possible what do you think the Government might do to make this a reality?

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:** First, I do not understand why a personal faith journey needs to be detached from a civic journey; one can be integrated into the other. To give you an example, the most significant point within the life of a young Jewish boy or girl is bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah, when a boy is 13 and a girl is 12. In the vast majority of our communities, we have the concept of twinning where the boy or girl will twin their happy occasion with an unfortunate person somewhere in the world who is not able to do so or with a charity or a good cause. Each individual marks his or her significant personal milestone with our society and utilises it as a springboard from which to engage constructively and responsibly with society. If the Government choose to have some civic milestones as well, anything that can encourage people all the more to engage better and more responsibly with society, is fine. I would hope that, if that were to ever happen, it would not clash with our faith milestones where one would have to choose between one and the other.

I believe that we are missing a trick and that there is something missing in Britain that could be a British equivalent of America's Thanksgiving. Yes, we have the Royal Family, which is the closest we come to it with the Queen's message at Christmas, as the Cardinal mentioned, and significant



Royal Family moments—thankfully, there is another one to look forward to. Beyond that, we are missing an opportunity to celebrate our Britishness as British people. We need a day in the year on which we can express that with pride and can concentrate on our British values.

I am also aware of the fact that the vast majority of people are not familiar with what British values are. If you were to stop somebody in the street and say, “What are the four key elements of British values?” I am sure they would not even know there were four and would have no clue. We need a day and I would highly recommend the introduction of such a day, which would significantly enhance our opportunity to celebrate our British values.

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** Echoing, in a way, what the Chief Rabbi has said, moments in a journey need a sense of journey and destiny, that we know where we are trying to go and these are the moments of our progress. It is that underlying sense of purpose and narrative that has to be more than personal achievement and has to have communal dimensions to it and a communal vision of what we want to be. We would use a phrase, such as “the kingdom of God”. What are we trying to do here and what are the resources? How do we spell out our vision? In a way, the Empire did, but with the negative consequences that we live with today. If there are to be stages of citizenship, it needs a narrative and something that encapsulates our sense of purpose as a nation, which is not easy.

Q169 **Lord Verjee:** Do you think that the Government’s fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs represents a good list? Your Eminence and Chief Rabbi, you have talked about that, and the consensus is that perhaps the list, which originally came from Ofsted, needs to be expanded. How would we go about expanding that list and what would your ideas be on getting to a consensus of how to come up with a new list, a new definition?

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** I met the historian, Mr Starkey, a couple of years ago and he said, “No, no, it’s a wicked sense of humour and a willingness to queue that are the key British values”, but he was being very mischievous. I am not sure about extending it because then the list has almost as many things as there are contributors. If I were to make a contribution, I would like to see a greater emphasis on religious freedom, not just tolerance of religion but freedom for religious expression. The challenge is to deepen those values and find their roots and foundations, which I have spoken on already.

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:** I agree with what the Cardinal has said. For me, what we have is all right, because you could debate this endlessly, and wherever you go on this you will never come up with something, such as the Ten Commandments, which were given from God, so that is it; they are authoritative and we have them. We will not come up with that with regard to British values. A lot of thought has gone into it. These are solid values and certainly they tally with the essence of the Jewish faith. It is good to have a small number of headline values because, otherwise, it is

too much for people to comprehend and cope with. As the Cardinal said, with each one, we can drill down, we can debate, thrash out the issues and come to a deeper and better understanding. Let us now do the work of improving our values rather than debating what they are.

**Q170 Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Perhaps I could take a step back from that. A number of people who have given evidence to us have questioned why we are calling them “fundamental British values”. It goes back to your interesting opening remarks, Chief Rabbi, about the universal and the particular. They would argue that these are not values that are particular to Britain and could arguably be perhaps not totally universal but universal for democratic citizenship. Do you think it is helpful to describe them as “fundamental British values”, or would there be better ways of talking about them as, say, the values of Britain citizenship, which has been suggested to us, or the values that we share in Britain?

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:** I am absolutely okay with “British values” while we are outward-looking and we embrace all humanity. We are British and are proud of our Britishness and it is important for us to highlight the elements of our way of life, which perhaps distinguish us, in some respects, from others due to our history and the functioning within our society while highlighting, of course, that we are all members of civilisation.

With regard to the term “fundamental”, I am okay with it, with one reservation. In some instances, fundamental values can lead towards fundamentalism, which would be in the event that they prompt people to adopt an extremist approach whereby those who are championing fundamental values have no tolerance for the particular values of a particular entity within our society. In the event that such values are used dogmatically as a stick with which to beat faith groups or other particular interest groups would be a huge pity and would go against the spirit of what the values are about. Apart from that, I am okay with the terminology.

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** Very interesting. I suppose that in the word “British” we are packing in all the complex issues about identity. Of course, everybody lives with various facets to their identity. I am sure there would be people who would say, “Don’t foreclose that too easily. The values are of this country and this country is Great Britain”, so there is a certain logic to it, but, as the Chief Rabbi has indicated, even that very stance can be abused and become something quite objectionable.

With “fundamental”, I would have a little reservation, because I do not think they are fundamental. There are foundations beneath these values and, therefore, it is a misnomer to call them “fundamental”. I like the suggestion that the Chief Rabbi has just made of some work in linking these particular values to our history. It would become very important, for example, with the issue of democracy and the issue of tolerance, and in that sense to relate them more clearly to this country’s historical experience would validate more strongly the use of the word “British”. They are British because of our history and not so much because of their nature. Because of their nature, they are human values.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Something your Eminence referred to earlier, that the empire was not always a very happy history, raised the question of how our history as an empire is reflected in these particular values.

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** It is complicated.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** I would like to focus on a slightly controversial area with the Chief Rabbi. There are some wonderful Jewish schools in London and Manchester that are very much part of the mainstream and are much sought-after, but as we know from television programmes, what we read in the press and what has been done by Ofsted, there are some other independent, free-standing Jewish schools that do not come under your jurisdiction. Do you have any words of wisdom or advice about how the Government might approach this? There is a fundamental clash between what people would regard as fundamental British values about the equality of the sexes, for example, and what seems to be being taught in certain schools.

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:** Work is under way, through conversations between the Department for Education and representatives of various schools, to discuss this very issue. It is not as if nothing is happening on what we can come up with to suggest in this regard, but it is an issue that is being treated and looked at. From the point of view of the Jewish schools you have mentioned, there is a very keen desire to champion British values within the schools while being true to the religious principles which they follow. I am very hopeful that we can achieve a situation in which everything should be all right in respect of what the objectives are.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** You do not think that there are occasions when there is a fundamental clash where we have to face the fact and have to choose? Would you agree that not everything can be negotiated?

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:** I do not think any of us would agree to a one-size-fits-all statute whereby everybody has to hold identical views, identical policies and an identical way of life. We need to provide room for people to behave according to their own traditions and in the spirit of their faith while being an asset to and enhancing our society, in the spirit of what I was speaking about earlier. Where there can be some elements of a clash is the reason why people need to talk to determine a way forward which is acceptable to government, is true to British values and in a way which does not compromise our Jewish tradition.

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** This is slightly a divergent point that I would like to contribute. Yesterday, I was at St Mary's University where we announced and launched a new course, a certificate in education for teaching Islam. It is the fruit of a long discussion with Islamic leaders and its aim is to enable anybody who wants to teach Islam, whether they are Islamic or not, to be trained in a way that has all the critical disciplines of a modern educational system that we would agree.

**Lord Blunkett:** Is this the one that is linked to a new app?

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** No, this is different. It is a fairly traditional course in St Mary's University that will meet the highest standards of educational practice and enable those who wish to be teachers of Islam to have that qualification and the disciplines that we would recognise as necessary for the coherent contemporary teaching of religious faith. That kind of step is important, because it is the first step in enabling our society to understand far more deeply what the Islamic faith is rather than some of its caricatures and disruptions that we are faced with often.

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:** To add another point that is pertinent in the context of Jewish faith schools, I am exceptionally proud of our faith schools and the extent to which our faith schools are always close to the top of the leagues with regard to secular excellence and the extent to which our pupils are encouraged to become outstanding, responsible citizens.

I want to mention another event which took place last month. I was privileged to be in Glasgow for the opening of the Calderwood Lodge and St Clare's primary schools. This is a world first. The school was officially opened by me and the local Catholic bishop. Calderwood Lodge has been a Jewish primary school in an area in Glasgow which the Jewish community moved out of, and similarly St Clare's needed a new campus, so the local authority invested £17 million in building a brand-new, state-of-the-art campus that incorporates a Jewish school and a Catholic school. They share common facilities in a central area while maintaining their own faith traditions and education and the pupils play in the playground together and have a number of shared assemblies. This is an outstanding model of co-existence, which we should roll out for people to appreciate, of engaging with others successfully and in a healthy way while being proud of our own traditions.

Q171 **Lord Blunkett:** Throughout the discussion this morning, which I have found very enlightening, we have touched on the interesting issue of the personal giving, personal commitment, volunteering and the outreach versus the political engagement. Your Eminence, you will be able to identify better than I can the Latin-American bishop who said, "When I give to the poor, I'm a saint. When I try to avoid them being poor, I'm a communist". I would like both of you to comment on the engagement with the political, with a small "p", arena in terms of change. I mentioned earlier that I met with the Catholic bishops, and it was true of the Anglican Church and the Jewish fraternity, when I was Education Secretary and they were the best negotiators I have ever come across.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I would second that.

**Lord Blunkett:** How do we translate the personal into the broader community that we have mentioned?

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:** It is such a great question, Lord Blunkett. On Yom Kippur, our Day of Atonement, the holiest day of our year, part of our liturgy is to repeat the prayer of the High Priest in the temple. On that day, he prayed to God that God should not listen to the prayers of travellers. It is the only instance in which we have a prayer asking God not

to listen to prayers. Why do we ask God not to listen to the prayers of travellers? Because travellers, or tourists, always pray for good weather.

**Lord Blunkett:** This is a truly Jewish story.

**Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis:** They put their own personal interests before the interests of wider society. Therefore, we pray to God to turn a deaf ear to the pleas of those who are not mindful of the overall interests of our society. We accept that, as individuals, we have a responsibility through our individuality to general society.

The second point is the teaching of Maimonides, who identified for us eight levels of charity. I will not take you through all eight, but I recommend them highly to you, and the very highest level of charity is when you teach somebody to be able to assist himself or herself not to be dependent on charity. As Confucius said, "If I give somebody some fish, that person will eat on one day. If I teach them how to fish, they will eat for the rest of their lives", which is certainly something that our Government should be investing in.

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols:** I do not know if I can add much to that. I have to admit that it is more and more difficult for a voice to be heard, particularly in a rather sharpened political arena these days, unless it has an evidential base. To me, that is the logic of encouraging people to be strongly committed to the hands-on work of contributing to the well-being of society and, out of that base, to be able to make an argument. We heard in the House of Commons yesterday the descriptions of levels of poverty. For me to be able to add to that, I have to be able to say, "And this is what we are doing". I cannot look to any religious status that I have as giving a political edge to what I say, but I have to look for an evidential edge to give some weight to what I want to contribute.

**The Chairman:** Thank you both very much. We inevitably get involved in the detail, but it is very important that, from time to time, we get the narrative, the big picture and the roots. On behalf of the Committee, thank you for coming along to make sure that we lift up our eyes to the hills.

Dr Maria Sobolewska, University of Manchester; Dr Leah Bassel, University of Leicester; Matthew Ryder, Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement, Greater London Authority – oral evidence (QQ 172-177)

**Dr Maria Sobolewska, University of Manchester; Dr Leah Bassel, University of Leicester; Matthew Ryder, Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement, Greater London Authority – oral evidence (QQ 172-177)**

Wednesday 6 December 2017

11.35 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Baroness Eaton; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 20

Heard in Public

Questions 172 - 177

## Examination of witnesses

Dr Maria Sobolewska, Dr Leah Bassel and Matthew Ryder.

**Q172 The Chairman:** Good morning. Thank you all very much for coming to give evidence to us this morning. We are reaching the end of our evidence sessions and are looking forward very much to what you have to tell us.

A list of interests of Members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. The session is open to the public and is being televised by BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and put on the Committee's website. A few days after this session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy, and it would be helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after the evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence, or have additional points you would like to make, you are most welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. Could I ask you to introduce yourselves and we will go to the questions?

**Dr Leah Bassel:** My name is Leah Bassel. I am an associate professor in sociology at the University of Leicester.

**Dr Maria Sobolewska:** I am Maria Sobolewska and I am a senior lecturer in politics at Manchester University.

**Matthew Ryder:** I am Matthew Ryder. I am London's Deputy Mayor for social integration, social mobility and community engagement.

**The Chairman:** Could I begin by asking you to describe the current state of integration and civic engagement in the UK?

**Dr Leah Bassel:** Thank you for the invitation to speak with you today. In reading your question and thinking about the current state of integration and civic engagement in the UK, I was pushed to reflect on the kinds of parallel issues in conversations under way around integration more generally and civic integration specifically. The important points to highlight here are the parallel conversations around what we refer to as "integration" alongside the effects of austerity and measures on border control. These are connections I would like to make throughout my intervention, to the best of my ability.

Thinking about what are often perceived to be important sites of integration and motors of integration, such as schools, which feature prominently in studies I have conducted, they are sites, as we know, where very important forms of regulation are now taking place, not least around issues pertaining to the school census and sharing of school data. It is very important to reflect on these kinds of connections in how people operate and experience these spaces, how they are shaping their lives and what message they receive from these institutions.

My second example concerns the issue of migrants learning English, which I know will feature prominently in our discussion today. Again, I would like

to make those connections to these parallel conversations on the effects of austerity and, specifically, cuts to ESOL, which has featured very prominently in my research and which people to whom I have fed back this research have underscored repeatedly. Particularly referring, for instance, to civic integration and participation in public life of groups of women—Muslim women—the effects of the cuts to ESOL cannot be neglected in this conversation, specifically the kinds of tools which deprive people of access to participate in public life. In describing the current state of integration, it is about connecting those dots and making the connections across these very important simultaneous processes.

**Dr Maria Sobolewska:** In the kind of work that I do—quantitative political science—we use three indicators of political integration. The first is the rates of naturalisation; the second is the levels of participation, particularly in electoral politics; and the third is representation in the highest echelons of power. In Britain nowadays, we have to say a few things about all those things.

The first is naturalisation because that seems to be, for many people working on political integration, the final step. In the kind of policy set-up that we have today, it is often treated as a reward for having integrated beautifully, as certified by all the testing, and having the money to pay the extortionate fee. However, when you look at the data of who naturalises and the group take-up of the opportunity to naturalise, it is very clear to me that our perspective on citizenship and the take-up of citizenship departs from this operation of naturalisation. It is very practical and mostly related to the country of origin of the immigrant and the legal status that they may expect. What you see is an almost perfect correlation for groups that come from countries in which the legal status in the UK without citizenship could be undermined, which have the highest take-up of citizenship, and the groups, such as EU citizens, until recently, which had the lowest take-up of citizenship because, until now, they have not seen the practical arguments for taking it up. There is a huge departure and gap between what we think citizenship does and should do for integration and what it does in real life.

In terms of electoral participation, I must warn you that the data is very scarce, mostly due to the fact that it is almost impossible in this country to conduct reliable surveys of immigrant populations. The best information we have is on the ethnic minority immigrant-origin populations, and the best available data was gathered in 2010; it is rather old. The important point to make is that, when we look at electorally registered people eligible to vote among those communities, we do not have the participation gap that we would expect, given that these people are, on average, younger and often come from backgrounds which vote less in general. An ethnic minority registered elector is not any less likely to vote than a comparable white British native person. However, we found in 2010 that there was an enormous gap in electoral registration and, to this date, there has been no funding, even though the new electoral registration system has been highlighted by the Government as potentially endangering further the



registration gap among minority communities. There has not been any special funding given to the Electoral Commission or anyone else that I am aware of to study the impact of those reforms on immigrant-origin minorities in this country.

The third one, which is the happiest story, is the political representation. Britain is an international leader in the representation of immigrant-origin communities in Parliament. With colleagues, I have conducted a comparative study of eight European democracies which have experienced a similar level of immigration to Great Britain and, apart from the Netherlands, Britain is the leader in the field of representation. It is due to the fact that, in the last 20 years, we have seen at almost every election a near-doubling of the number of immigrant-origin Members of Parliament. However, it varies. The white immigrant groups are overrepresented compared with some of the minority groups, particularly of Caribbean origin. But this is a happy story and the major reason behind it is that Britain has a very generous system of access to vote and right to vote for immigrants.

**Matthew Ryder:** Obviously, my focus is London but it will have relevance to the UK as a whole, I hope. I have interpreted that question as going beyond political integration and touching on the issues that concern me and the mayor, which are social integration more generally and civic engagement, which go beyond direct political engagement. You will have heard the mayor say, because it is very important to him, that, while London is a very diverse city, it is not a particularly well-integrated city. That distinction between diversity and integration also filters down into the measurements and data that we have. We have good data on the diversity of London and the UK, but we do not have great data on the level of integration. I have been in post for about a year and part of the challenge is to try to grapple with how we cope with social integration and community engagement in the context of our data being limited. I know that in Select Committees people hear every day, "We wish we had better data and it is important that we get better data", and that has been one of our most important targets and goals in this work. It is important to work out how we define social integration and how we gather the data on it.

We know some things. First, it is important to bear in mind that foreign nationals make up around 22.5% of London's population, which includes a large number of people from the EEA. It is important to realise that, when we talk about social integration, we must not turn it into a euphemism for racial or ethnic integration; it goes far beyond that into social class, age and other forms of diversity. By way of example, some 18% of pensioners live in poverty, but, and we think this is an important issue, older Londoners are the fastest-growing population group, the numbers are forecast to double in the next 30 or so years, and almost a quarter report that they are always or often lonely. That is a form of social isolation which we think is indicative of a lack of social integration. We are trying to measure the current state of social integration, but we are not confident

that we are in a situation where the diversity in London is translating into good social integration.

How do we do that? I can give you five short things that we have come up with, which I am happy to expand on this morning, as and when it is appropriate. How we define and measure social integration is very important. We have to work out what we are doing to promote good relationships, how we promote participation and active citizenship and how we deal with issues of inequality and discrimination. We think those three things are the foundation of social integration, building on the work that has been done before.

I would also say: look at your policies. Do we have policies that target everyone, that reach the hard-to-reach groups? Finally, is social integration mainstream? Those are the challenges that we have because at the moment we are concerned that we have some understanding, but not a good understanding, of how we target our interventions into improving social integration.

**The Chairman:** We have travelled around the country and seen other communities. Do you think there are things that London could learn from the rest of the country and that London could teach the rest of the country? Are we getting enough of a holistic approach? London can be seen as a separate country.

**Matthew Ryder:** Dame Louise Casey's report was interesting in that some of the areas, particularly in the northern parts of the country, where there is a stark division between ethnic communities, which many people will be familiar with, are not replicated in the same way in London. There is a churn of people in London that is much faster and a movement of people between areas and neighbourhoods which does not create those divisions.

Also, our history, in London in particular, of embracing people who come from other countries and having a mixture of social and private housing across London ensure that you have a diversity of social class as well as different ethnicities. Preserving that sense of people having access to every area and every neighbourhood and not entrenching people too hard in different neighbourhoods is an important aspect of London life, where London has an advantage over the rest of the country.

In terms of what the rest of the country can teach London, London must be very sensitive to the fact that our experience is not the same as in the rest of the country. In doing that, we must appreciate that some of the issues that affect us about the economy and how the economy bears down on different communities and how people may feel alienated or that they are being left behind will not be the same experience in a large, wealthy city as in parts of the country where they feel that they do not have the same access to economic success. As a result, London has to be sensitive to the fact that what may be good for London may not always be the same interests for the rest of the country, and London has to be part of that

conversation, championing its own position, but being sensitive to other positions, which in this area, in particular, is important.

Q173 **Baroness Pitkeathley:** You have all alluded to some of the barriers that stop people feeling integrated. I would like to ask you for some concrete suggestions and practical examples about how these barriers could be overcome. We realise, Mr Ryder, your examples will be from London, which is equally useful to us.

**Dr Maria Sobolewska:** This is an excellent question, but one that begs us to come back to this issue of definition. We have started talking about social integration in a way recently that encompasses, from my point of view, too many things for it to be solved in one clean sweep, and I will pick out a few things. When we talk about social integration as a way of people belonging to their communities and feeling that they have integrated and are accepted as integrated, we are talking about social cohesion. This has gone out of fashion as a term, but there are so many resemblances to that term of people getting along where they live as a community. Why does it matter? It matters because we know quite a lot about social cohesion from the evidence—what fosters social cohesion and what makes it harder to achieve. One of the most dominant answers offered by political science and sociology is that economic deprivation correlates very highly with a lack of social cohesion. To tackle this area of people feeling that they belong, that they have a stake and they are integrated—not just the minorities but everybody—the social deprivation has to be tackled first.

However, if you are talking about political integration, civic integration and participation, I agree with my colleague that English language provision is a huge issue for immigrants; there is also the issue, which I have related before, of voter registration. Considering a system of automatic voter registration at the point of contact with any state agency would help hugely in this area.

**Dr Leah Bassel:** Particularly on the issue of access to language, it is imperative to review ESOL provision, which I am sure you have heard from other people who have spoken to you. With the kinds of cuts that have taken place to colleges—in my own research in Leicester, for instance, cuts of £1.5 million—and the lack of access of different groups to ESOL provision because of, for example, the lack of availability of crèche facilities or free ESOL or ESOL provided by colleges, for which there are long waiting lists, these are the first steps in enabling people to participate economically and to participate in public life.

My particular expertise and focus in some of the work I have been doing recently has been on minority BME racialised women's experiences, where we see this need most acutely because of the forms of social isolation that many women experience. They experience racism in their everyday lives, sometimes from state institutions, and not speaking English acts as a barrier even to learning about other opportunities and other ways to participate in public life, with cuts to childcare curtailing the ability to leave the house, to circulate, to be mobile and to be actively part of society.

Despite all this, we see tremendous resilience and opportunities that women create for themselves, but it all begins with these very basic building blocks which, in the past, were embedded in the naturalisation process which, since October 2013, is no longer available. The ESOL with citizenship route to becoming a citizen is no longer available and you have to take a computer-based test and prove your language proficiency through other means. That was a mighty vehicle for these kinds of processes not just of language learning but of social contact, overcoming isolation and making connections across different communities, but that avenue is no longer there. I am very happy to say more about it, but these are the spaces.

**Matthew Ryder:** I am glad you asked that question because I have a list, which I will try to go through quite quickly. First, ensuring that we deal with fundamental issues, such as housing and poverty, is important and those big-picture issues are vital to ensuring that you have adequate social integration. Entrenching people in poverty is a real problem and cuts very strongly against a positive socially integrated society.

More specifically on ESOL, it is probably an easy one because everybody agrees that the provision of ESOL is very important and that learning English is an important and vital way to integrate. We have done some work on mapping ESOL provision across London to try to find the most effective way to do it. We want to use ESOL as a two-way process of social integration. There is a project in Ireland where older people who are English-speakers teach English to new arrivals as a way of both of them benefiting from that process. We think it is a very useful idea. Similarly, there are some initiatives on attaching digital learning to learning English, ensuring that people become more digitally literate while they are learning English, which is a useful intervention.

The second is doing something to redress legal barriers for people. We are launching a project to reduce the process for young people in London to get naturalisation. Some of them are born in London or some of them may have been living in London for a very long time, but there are legal obstacles to them getting citizenship, so we are smoothing out that process for people who should very quickly be naturalised and have the right documentation.

It is important that you use other tools in your toolbox as a public authority. Within my remit, the mayor has given me oversight of sports and volunteering as part of my social integration agenda, which means I get to look at major sports but also community sports all across London. We have a comprehensive, globally thought-through community sports initiative that we are launching soon because we think, from the feedback we have been getting, that is a vital way of improving social integration through those soft aspects of sport and volunteering. Volunteering is critical in ensuring that people benefit through becoming volunteers and from participating and receiving the help of volunteers and is a fundamental way you can engage people in the social integration process.

I will just run quickly through some other things, such as digital access—improving the ways that people are connected, including older people, in particular. We have a scheme, Mi Wifi, where we give iPads, as if they were library books, to older people with instructions and teaching on how to use them so that people can start to become more digitally literate. We are co-producing more clearly with local organisations so that it is not simply the public authority dictating how you do something but a better engagement with civil society. We may come on to citizenship ceremonies: we are improving those and have a project on those as we think it is important. Then there needs to be strong advocacy that comes from the top because we think that social integration must have leadership and advocacy at the highest level if it is going to trickle down. It is no good having great programmes while there is a message from the top that undermines them. On hard-to-reach communities, there are some communities which are not moving in terms of how they progress in social integration and you need focused programmes on them. Finally, you have to mainstream social integration across all the departments.

Q174 **Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** How do you understand the relationship between building local identity and national identity? Does building local identity help or hinder the building of national identity, and are there some special lessons to be learned from London? Recently, the mayor has announced that he wants Londoners to feel a sense of belonging to London as Londoners. Are there lessons to be learned here?

**Matthew Ryder:** We have commissioned work on what a London identity is to try to better understand it, not just for the sake of an academic exercise but to harness the power of what a London identity is. We do not think a local identity cuts across a national identity; in fact, we think it contributes to it. What some have described as “superordinate identities”—local identities or identities that cut across ethnicity or religion—are important unifying identities because feeling that you are a Londoner can cut across your race, your religion and even social class. A sense of belonging to London, feeling ownership of London and being part of a collective, which we know is very diverse, can be very powerful. We do not think that it is antithetical or goes against a national identity because those distinct local identities help people feel part of, and celebrate, the broadness and flexibility of a national identity. If you try to homogenise the national identity, in a sense, people pull away from it into their local identities. To make sure that you pull everybody together, they have to feel confident about their local identity within that national identity.

We sometimes have this discussion in the context of concerns about the phrase “multiculturalism” and talk about the fact that, if you have a fisherman in Cornwall, a factory worker in the Midlands and a City trader in central London, they are all British, they all feel a sense of belonging to Britain but also have a pride in their local identity as well as their very distinct British identity. We do not think of that as multiculturalism but as different ways of being British, and those people are all confident about who they are in a sense of being part of this country, yet they have a

distinct identity. That sense of feeling who you are in your locality or feeling part of a bigger collective is the key to being able to engage people and not pull them apart without them feeling that they have to change themselves or homogenise to be part of the larger whole.

**Dr Leah Bassel:** I agree that the focus on local identity is extremely important, but I would encourage that to be supplemented by the focus on local capacity. Arising from research projects on the third sector and on migrants' experiences of naturalisation that I have been conducting, I have been struck by the lack of capacity of local councils and the kinds of cuts that actors at the local level experience. They do the heavy lifting of integration and are supporting the shared spaces in which we all live our daily lives—so identity, absolutely, and funds and capacity at the local level so that the front-line service workers and the third sector organisations to which much of that work has been put out to tender and, in turn, the volunteers, who do a lot of the immediate work of welcoming people and helping them in their daily lives, are equipped to do that job alongside and in a compatible way with a pride in locality, an attachment, for example, to diversity and the identity of a place.

**The Chairman:** Our next two questions are on the citizenship test and citizenship ceremonies. With an eye on the clock, it might be helpful if we took those together.

Q175 **Lord Blunkett:** It is pretty stark that the original *Life in the UK* booklet, which was supposed to be a learning tool with a test to indicate that people had grasped what it was about to be a functioning citizen of the UK, has somehow turned into a memory test. What direction should we be recommending on that fairly basic, practical issue? Given the charge for the test, would it be sensible to have a family charge rather than an individual one on the grounds that it might encourage the family as a whole—including women, more fundamentally—to move towards that final commitment?

**Baroness Redfern:** If I can add to that, how do you think citizenship ceremonies could be improved? Matthew, you said you had one or two projects in the pipeline with regard to that.

**Matthew Ryder:** We have a programme called the Citizenship and Integration initiative, run by Trust for London. It is an interesting way of having a pooled fund from outside groups. We second people into the GLA for a short time from those other groups to understand what they think meets the needs of London's communities. One issue that has been thrown up is citizenship ceremonies and how we can improve them. We have not done it yet, so I am afraid I cannot give you the results, but please watch this space because we have commissioned that work and we will be working on what we think can be improved on citizenship ceremonies.

There are a couple of things I would say. We know the take-up of ceremonies has fallen since 2004 and we know that there is a real concern about the charge.

**Baroness Redfern:** Is that in London or in the rest of the UK?

**Matthew Ryder:** The UK. On the charge, it is important to work out whether we want more people to become citizens or to make a profit out of the process. We have to work out which is preferable. If we want more people to become citizens we have to reflect on whether the profit we are making, which is almost 50% of the charge at the moment, is appropriate. If there is a way of covering the costs without discouraging people, we need to think that through.

**Baroness Redfern:** What do you think we achieve through those ceremonies?

**Matthew Ryder:** I think ceremonies are a good idea. It is important to recognise with some gravity and some ceremony that moment of becoming a citizen. I support the idea that we have citizenship ceremonies. Here are a few of the things that we have been thinking through: first, should they allow every locality, even across London in different boroughs, to devise its own form of the ceremony? My inclination, speaking personally, awaiting the research I have commissioned, is that while you should allow localities to develop their own aspects of the ceremony there should be a common thread. There should be a sense that if you are getting citizenship in one part of the country or the city there is a similar theme right the way through, so you feel a sense of unity with other people in that experience.

Secondly, we have looked at whether there should be really large ceremonies of 1,000 people in one go, for example. We are not in favour of that, necessarily. We think there is something to be said for the intimacy of a ceremony that ensures that people feel it is an experience they can relate to yet, at the same time, is not them merely going into an administrative building. We think the actual procedure of the ceremony is important.

On Lord Blunkett's point, the content is important. There needs to be a careful analysis, which we are trying to do, of the essential aspects that need to be included as you work up towards your citizenship. Is it becoming just a memory test? Are the questions becoming too formulaic? Are they questions that those of us who are citizens born in this country would be able to answer? Sometimes not at all. If we cannot we need to question whether we are asking the right questions. This is a priority so I have commissioned work to examine that.

**Baroness Redfern:** Do you have examples of large ceremonies?

**Matthew Ryder:** No. We looked at other places in the world where they have larger ceremonies. There are some boroughs that were interested in having larger ceremonies than the ones they had at the moment.

**Baroness Redfern:** Was that in London?

**Matthew Ryder:** In London. The team working on it has put before me what those options might be. My inclination, subject to the research that I get back, is that I am not in favour of massive citizenship ceremonies. I do not think that is helpful or creates a sense of community, necessarily. The more personal it is, while it still feels quite formal, is a positive thing.

**Dr Maria Sobolewska:** I will comment very briefly. Coming back to what I said to this Committee before the call for evidence was issued, citizenship is perceived by the native British population as a very important indicator that immigrants are integrated. We, therefore, have to think very hard about what this test is testing and what kind of hoop it becomes. In my research, I found that the effort of applying for citizenship mattered from the point of view of the native British population—that the immigrant going through the process of applying for citizenship was enough. Treating that process more as a tool to help people to integrate than as a test, a barrier, or an obstacle and a huge cost, would be a lot more helpful.

**Dr Leah Bassel:** I would very much like to add to this as I have just concluded a four-year study with colleagues at Leicester University, where we interviewed 158 people of different nationalities who are at different stages of the naturalisation process. Building on what my colleagues have said, on ceremonies, in response to your question, in terms of how people have experienced this, there is a sense of relief and celebration, which is understandable given the multiple obstacles people have overcome, which I will say more about in a moment. There is that celebratory gloss of suddenly feeling that you belong, as some people put it. However, by others this was still experienced as yet another test—as a very anxious moment in the middle of a very anxious process; even by some people as a further form of scrutiny on the part of the state, through officials at the ceremonies, the registrars. This is a reflection of the experience people have had throughout and where this has not necessarily been experienced as a means of integration, but instead as a form of control, not necessarily enabling participation in public life.

There are opportunities to seize on at citizenship ceremonies, not least voter registration, which occurs at some ceremonies but not all. This is an opportunity to seize the two-way learning you were speaking about in ESOL. Citizenship ceremonies could be an important, symbolic moment when we do not talk to people just about what they are “integrating” into, but we recognise what they have been doing all along. We should use that as a moment of recognition, not in a deficit approach—“Now you should volunteer”; “Now you should be active in public life”. Many people naturalising have been doing these things all along. That is who they are and how they live in whatever society they find themselves. Those are opportunities, I think, that can be seized.

**Lord Blunkett:** We need to move on, but perhaps one of you would like to comment on this. It strikes me that we moved from encouraging people to become British citizens to a point where UKIP was at its zenith, when there was undoubtedly a feeling that people were being discouraged,



including by the cost, from becoming citizens. I think we have moved away from that again, thank goodness. Can you map that? Have you seen it happen that there was a sudden hike in the cost and the timespan before you could apply to be a citizen?

**Matthew Ryder:** If that happened, it was before I came into post. It is important for us to look back.

**Lord Blunkett:** You did live before then.

**Matthew Ryder:** Of course. It does not feel like it, but, yes, I did. It is a really important question. Within the commissioned work we are doing, we will want to look at the process of using citizenship ceremonies as a celebratory moment rather than part of a hostile environment, which is what you seem to be talking about, Lord Blunkett; in other words, saying that citizenship ceremonies were made part of a hostile process in which it was harder and harder to join in with it—that aspect of it is counterproductive. I feel very strongly that if we are looking to ways to improve social integration, the content of the citizenship ceremony and the availability and encouragement of it, as you were talking about, are very important.

I agree very strongly with Dr Bassel that we need to look at this as an opportunity. There might be a slight difference of opinion here, but one of the things we are interested in is saying to people not that they are required to volunteer or required to participate but we offer encouragement for them to do so in that environment. We see citizenship, as with other moments in people's lives, as a key moment where people are most open to engaging with their community. That is when we should be giving them the most positive messages about what they can do to contribute.

**Baroness Redfern:** If I could ask a quick question of Dr Bassel, you mentioned the 158 people in your research and you mentioned control. Was that a thread going through the 158?

**Dr Leah Bassel:** Interestingly, it was an opinion and a thread that was very strongly expressed by people from nationalities where they felt more secure and able to talk about that issue; for instance, North Americans in the sample. Some people from certain Latin American countries who were more highly educated, again, would express these views more clearly. I firmly believe that that issue characterises many people's experience of the process as not a tool of integration but as a tool of border control through which people are not able to embody the republican legacy that was there at the inception of this policy tool; where this was a way to foster participation in public life and a way to help people participate; where English language training was a way to help people with their lives here, and not a tool to keep them out. There is a lot more I could say about this and I am very happy to do so, but I am aware of the time.

**Baroness Redfern:** You said 158 people. Was that from across the country?

**Dr Leah Bassel:** It was in Leicester and London.

**Baroness Redfern:** Was it consistent, was it some and what proportion? It is easy to be general, but you have only 158 people. Am I clear that everybody indicated that, or was it half a dozen or the majority? How do you quantify within that 158?

**Dr Leah Bassel:** In the 158, there were ways in which people were perceiving control strongly across the sample. It would be expressed in different ways; for instance, in the sense of, "I have to show that I deserve citizenship. I have to show this to other people". These ideas around "deserving" this were in, probably, at least 94 interviews, where people were saying, "This is something my group does or I do that other people do not do". This becomes a very divisive mechanism, whereby it is not so much about integrating into a collective; it is more about making distinctions between who deserves citizenship and who does not.

On border control, there was a very strongly represented opinion among, again, our North American respondents. Probably 10 or 15 people strongly expressed that view, with other people alluding to that issue. It is a methodological problem because it is difficult for people to talk about border control in this context, in terms of the trust and rapport one can build in the interview context. But that opinion is very strongly expressed by the organisations that we work with supporting migrants in the process, which feel quite strongly that there are issues around the way in which this process is designed and the ways in which, perhaps, people are naturalising a lot out of fear.

A phenomenon referred to in the literature is "defensive naturalisation". That is a problem and we should be worried about the kind of citizenship that results if people are naturalising out of fear around changing immigration rules or fear of the consequences that might otherwise affect them and their families. There are other bases for citizenship and other ways in which we can change cost, we can change content and we can enable people's participation in an engaged fashion rather than this perception of an endless series of hurdles and barriers. The perception of barriers and of a constant need to prove yourself is consistent across the sample. With the ceremonies that becomes a challenge because for most people that is a moment of relief and happiness but focusing exclusively on ceremonies can mask that succession of barriers that people need to overcome to get to that point.

**Baroness Eaton:** Surely, if someone is coming into a country, it is not unreasonable for there to be an expectation that they go over certain hurdles. It is not an open door for anybody.

**Dr Leah Bassel:** I appreciate that position. I understand that these are policy tools designed because we have requirements of people when they integrate into our societies. Obviously, there is a range of opinions on their desirability. If we accept the need for this kind of tool and the need for

people to overcome hurdles, there are other ways we can design these processes. We can revive the republican spirit that was there at the beginning, where language training and ESOL with citizenship classes were available as a means to access citizenship. We could also follow models from other countries; for example, in Canada the test comes much later in the process, distinguishing it from the immigration side of the equation, with the test being a more symbolic process at the end after other checks have been conducted and other hurdles have been overcome—validating the knowledge that people have.

**Baroness Redfern:** You said that in Canada it comes much later. Can someone go for a citizenship ceremony as and when they want or is there a mandatory period?

**Dr Leah Bassel:** The relevant difference is when the test can be taken. The test is taken after other checks, such as good character and residency and other requirements, are completed. In the British system, that is a front-end loaded process where all these things are happening. Of course, residency has to be met but the test is more of a selecting device as opposed to a process that you undertake at the end when everything else has been met. As a result, we see a strong difference, with much higher pass rates, for instance.

**The Chairman:** We must move on.

**Dr Maria Sobolewska:** I have not answered Lord Blunkett's original question on the timeline, if I may do so very briefly. Research shows that this tendency to tighten and make it harder to become a citizen is not only in the UK but many European countries have done it at the same time. It follows the securitisation of integration. It follows from 11 September 2001 when the impression overall was that integration of immigrants, especially Muslim immigrants, would prevent domestic terrorism from happening. There has been no empirical evidence since that these two processes are linked at all, but that is the origin of this process, as I see it.

**The Chairman:** Dr Bassel, you will be glad to know we have had the chance to meet the Canadian Minister of Democratic Institutions. We had a cup of tea at the Canadian High Commission and got the Canadians' take on this and understood how they organised it.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** The next question has been covered because it is about costs. I want to ask a supplementary, if I may. In terms of the trend to apply for citizenship, is it different in different parts of the country? You talked about the background of the person and what their motivation might be, but are people who are new to London more likely to apply, for example, than people who are new to Leeds?

**Matthew Ryder:** I will check that. I do not have the figure in front of me, but I will make sure we provide that. I have a vague recollection that London has not had the drop-off in citizenship applications that other places have.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** That is what you might imagine.

**Matthew Ryder:** I remember having a discussion about it but I do not want to say that if it is wrong. Can I come back to you and provide that extra data to the Committee?

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** If you could, that would be lovely. Thank you.

Q176 **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Matthew, you spoke earlier about the particular position of children and young people. It is in your evidence as well. It was also raised in evidence by the No Recourse to Public Funds Network. It recommended that the fee should be waived for looked-after children in the care of local authorities. I know there is a problem where children do not get the right legal advice to claim citizenship and they are left high and dry. Would you agree that one way of dealing with some of the problem is that those in the care of local authorities should have the fee waived? What other steps can be taken to ensure that children who have the right to claim citizenship are able to do so?

**Matthew Ryder:** There are two things we are trying to do in London on that. I do not want to pre-empt anything the mayor is going to say but fairly shortly the mayor is going to set out his position on children in relation to fees; in particular, about whether the profit aspect of the fee should be waived. Very shortly the mayor will be indicating London's position on the waiver of the profit part of the fee. Looking more directly at the position of children, I have made a priority, in one of the pieces of work I am doing, as you have seen in our submission, of the work of organisations such as Let Us Learn. They specifically focus on children who find themselves on the wrong side of the rules and should be able to get citizenship quickly if the system ran smoothly but, because of delays in the system, end up having their life put in suspension. They need immediate assistance on that. We think that a combination of better access to legal advice—including for people who are looked after—and an analysis of whether you should be waiving fees for children in that position or for children in care, merits very serious consideration. Any waiver of a fee is going to have impacts on other areas and, therefore, they have to be considered in the round, but our starting point is that we should look very carefully at why we cannot waive fees for children in that situation.

**Baroness Barker:** My question has been answered. I think we should spend the time available on the next question.

Q177 **Baroness Eaton:** The Government are due to release their integration strategy in the near future, we hope. What would you like to see in it?

**Dr Maria Sobolewska:** Can I start with what I would like not to see in it? I am hoping against hope that there will no longer be a link between integration success and extremism. As I said before and will say again, I do not think there is an empirical link to prove that a well-integrated society no longer experiences any threat from extremism and terrorism. We have

been putting way too many things in that big bag called “social integration”—it is very fashionable and popular—and extremism is definitely the first one to take out. My hope, of course, is that money for more language provision will feature prominently because both the recent reports on integration encouraged this as a good policy intervention and it has, from my public opinion research, a huge following in British public opinion. That would be a win-win policy for everybody, I feel.

However, although I support some policies in principle, I worry about them featuring in policy on integration. This is policy on inequalities and equality, more generally. We do not appreciate very often that equality is a universal principle that has a lot of public support when framed in universalistic terms. When we start talking about equality in connection with immigration, in particular, public support for all equality interventions falls significantly. There is a lot of research on that. If you want to look to the endpoint, you need only to look to the United States, where there is a very racialised equality policy. Support for otherwise popular policies, such as Obamacare—universal healthcare—are severely limited by people’s opinions about racial equality, levels of immigration and the rights and wrongs of the immigration policy. I am a great supporter of this Government’s drive to talk about equality and implement policies to achieve equality, but I worry that we are tainting that very popular policy by almost putting it in the same policy package as anything to do with immigrant integration. That is a huge worry going forward.

**Dr Leah Bassel:** I share many of those views. As I said at the beginning, I would like to see a policy that connects the dots across the issues surrounding austerity and migration control and, also, civic engagement and integration. Specifically in respect of the policy instrument we have been discussing, and many of you have had questions about, I would hope to see a call for a fundamental review of all aspects and stages of the citizenship test process, not only the valuable work you are doing on ceremonies but everything that leads up to it, in which we see many inequalities being exacerbated or created or new challenges being erected, which people are overcoming but which need to be addressed.

In the process there is a real opportunity for that two-way communication we were talking about: two-way learning, telling a different story about migration not as something new to Britain but something that has always been part of British life—a country that had an empire built also on colonialism, on different migratory flows. This is an opportunity for that kind of learning and, I hope, also to counter that naturalisation by fear—those kinds of defensive naturalisations. We need to be worried about the kinds of citizens that result when people are naturalising out of fear. Perhaps we can think back to the early days of that citizenship process and hope for an integration policy that wants to revive the republican spirit, when this was a tool to help people participate not only to do good works but to be critical, engaged and reflective citizens. We need to think about how we are resourcing the spaces where that can take place, whether that is in schools, third-sector organisations or through volunteering

opportunities that could be encouraged at citizenship ceremonies but which are happening all the way along.

In the short term, around cost, I would argue very strongly for reducing or eliminating the cost, having means-tested costing, interest-free loans or waiving costs. We need to think as much as possible about the costs we can reduce, and review requirements such as good character, which are very problematic and challenging and around which there is a lot of confusion, anxiety and fear. This is what I would like to see in terms of that specific instrument, coming back to its early days and its early promise.

**Matthew Ryder:** From my point of view, we need to move the debate away from being about just migrants and citizenship. This is a social integration strategy and we have to articulate that in a way that is relevant to everybody in this country so that they feel connected to it, and which makes them understand that this is a mainstream issue and not simply about minorities or a section of the community. It is about how we integrate older people, LGBT+ people and women into public life in a more meaningful way. It is relevant to everybody. One of the big missing issues in this debate, often, from our point of view, is social class. We have to understand that social class is part of social integration. We are trying to find ways within our intelligence unit, which is the data unit within the GLA, to find a meaningful way to measure social class, so that we can at least conceptualise it in a workable way. It will not be the same as other types of measurements but we need to find some way of improving the position in relation to social class.

Specifically, in the policy, I want to see a good definition of social integration and a clear way of how it is going to be measured; if not, at least proposals for the work that will be done on measurement. We are happy to help with that. We have been doing that for a year, so we are happy to provide our work on that. We need to make sure that a social integration strategy understands that it is not just about contact, which is what has gone on before and how it has been measured previously, because that contact has to be meaningful. It is about equality and discrimination but it is also, more positively, about active citizenship. It is about being involved in communities. We would like to see ways in which the strategy will try to incorporate specific other types of initiatives, such as volunteering, sports and cultural aspects, into a social integration agenda.

Lastly, on volunteering, for example, in the 2015 Conservative manifesto there was a commitment to three days' a year volunteering for people who worked in major companies. I do not think that is being pursued any more, which is disappointing, but we think everybody should be trying to find ways to improve mainstream volunteering so that people feel it can be part of their lives. That should be part of a social integration agenda, not seen as a separate thing.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** I have a question of clarification for

Maria, which follows on from what you have been saying, Matthew. You said, "Do not include equality and inequality". A number of witnesses have made the same point that integration is also about social class and deprivation.

**Dr Maria Sobolewska:** I understand the difficulty. As I see it, it is a problem of social perceptions. The move to call everything "social integration" is relatively recent. About three years ago, nobody was calling what we are now discussing "social integration". "Integration" was a word that was universally understood to mean immigrant integration. My worry is that we, as elite actors, so to speak, have moved on with those definitions, but the British public have not. Because the word "integration" will bring to mind things such as immigrants, ethnic diversity and those value differences that have been politicised and made so salient by the media narratives, we are tainting what is a perfectly good and very welcome policy with this terminology. As much as I appreciate and believe in all the aims and goals of the social integration policy, I worry that the terminology we are using is wrong. When you think about trying to get public support for policy, if you are already starting from the point of the public thinking differently from how you are thinking, this is a nightmare for policy-making, from my perspective.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Are you saying you think that when the Government publish this strategy they should not call it an integration strategy, because it is broader than just immigrants? Are you saying it is a mistake to call it an integration strategy?

**Dr Maria Sobolewska:** I think it is a risk. Things have probably gone so far it is very hard to reel back on it. I have conducted studies in which the word "integration" was used in this context and people understood it immediately as immigrant-oriented. We need more public opinion research on this. Perhaps it has trickled down, but I would be very surprised if that has already happened with public opinion.

**The Chairman:** We have overrun our time, but I thank all three of you very much for coming along to give us the benefit of your advice this morning.

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Wednesday 13 December 2017

10.35 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Baroness Eaton; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Pitkeathley; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beard; Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 21

Heard in Public

Questions 178 - 192



Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government; Tracey Crouch MP, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, Minister of

## Examination of witnesses

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Tracey Crouch MP, Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP and Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP.

Q178 **The Chairman:** Thank you all very much for coming along today to our last evidence session on citizenship and civic engagement. I have to read out the formal words that apply in all these cases: that a list of interests of members relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. The session is open to the public and is being televised for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and will be put on the Committee's website. A few days after this session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check it for accuracy; it will be helpful if you can advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after this evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence or have any additional points to make, you are most welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us.

I will ask you, for the record, to introduce yourselves briefly, and then we will proceed with the questions. We are having some problems with the audio equipment here. The Committee told me the Chairman was inaudible. We have now it turned up as high as we can, but the acoustics in this room are not very good, so if I could ask you to all speak up it would be very helpful.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** I am Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government.

**Tracey Crouch:** I am Tracey Crouch, the Minister for Sport and Civil Society at DCMS.

**Nick Gibb:** I am Nick Gibb, Minister of State for School Standards.

**Brandon Lewis:** I am Brandon Lewis, Minister of State for Immigration at the Home Office.

Q179 **The Chairman:** Thank you very much indeed. If I could begin with the first question, one of the issues that we come across a lot is the stop-start nature of government initiatives. We now see there are going to be three strategies: a democratic engagement strategy, an integration strategy and a civil society strategy. How are these going to be co-ordinated? Who is going to be responsible for them? How are we going to make sure we do not plough the same field over and over again? How do we make sure they feed one into the other?

**Tracey Crouch:** I am really proud that we have now said that we are going to have a civil society strategy. It is something that many people in the sector have been calling for, to provide a bit of a focus for the sector but also for Whitehall. It is quite clear that almost every single department engages with civil society and they should be very proud of how they use the sector to deliver some of their own outcomes. We are working very closely with DCLG and other departments to pull together a civil society

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strategy, which will be formally launched in January. There will be a discussion programme before we then deliver a fundamental document, we hope, before the Summer Recess, which will set out recommendations for how we take that forward. Certainly when I was appointed as the Minister for Civil Society back in June and I was having early conversations with stakeholders, it was clear that they would welcome a form of strategic direction and that is what inspired me to do this, having already done it for the sport sector by delivering a sport strategy. We have worked together very closely with other government departments already and this is a way of pulling it all together.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** It is important that, on these three programmes you have mentioned, government departments do work together. There is always the danger of silo thinking and silo action, so we are very conscious of that and, clearly, Ministers discuss these things and so do officials very much.

In relation to civil society and the volunteering side of that, it has a great impact on what we are seeking to do as a department in terms of improving cohesion. It has a definitive role in relation to integration and the Casey Review, which we are taking forward, so very much the volunteering comes into faith aspects of the Department for Communities and Local Government's work. As I go around, I become increasingly aware of how important the faith element is, with the volunteering element that comes forward from that, and community groups. There is a very close linkage there and we are aware of that, so they do need to dovetail in.

The integration strategy we are taking forward and the government response to Casey we can expect early in the new year; that is what we are looking at, and that is very much pulling together some of the elements of the volunteering strategy. Obviously, the democratic engagement plan from the Cabinet Office is also relevant, though perhaps not quite as central to what my department is seeking to do.

**Nick Gibb:** I would add that things like volunteering were included in the citizenship national curriculum, which we consulted on back in 2013, so it is not really a stop-start; it is part of an overall theme and approach to civic life that runs through this Government's policy right across departments. Between us, we are all speaking for the Cabinet Office Minister as well, because it is already quite a squeeze here with four of us. We are going to be publishing a democratic engagement plan on 19 December, setting out the Government's approach to creating an inclusive democracy, building on the record registrations that we saw leading up to the 2017 general election.

**The Chairman:** A democratic engagement plan in December, did you say?

**Nick Gibb:** On 19 December, we are going to be publishing a democratic engagement plan, one of the three things you mentioned.

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**Brandon Lewis:** It is probably worth picking up on Lord Bourne's point. Going to the core of your question around how we ensure that these things interlink in a positive way rather than duplicating and allowing gaps between them, Lord Bourne's point is absolutely right: we do work across departments in some areas. In terms of the integration strategy, quite recently Lord Bourne and I met other Ministers in our department, such as Baroness Williams, who leads on counterextremism, Prevent and things like that, that liaise with other departments.

Ultimately, there is also that role that we have across government that the Cabinet Office and the First Secretary of State will lead. With all of these things, the Cabinet Office will always ensure they are linking together properly and some of the inter-ministerial groups and the Cabinet sub-committee will look at these things in the round to make sure that they do complement each other, work together and deliver a whole between them. Each of them obviously has its own particular focus. It is right that they are produced and presented separately, but they are part of an overarching vision that the Cabinet Office will oversee.

**The Chairman:** Is there a formal co-ordinating body, or is this what I call coffee point co-ordination?

**Brandon Lewis:** I would say it is somewhere between the two, in the sense that the First Secretary of State and the Social Reform Committee, when it goes around across government, will have an eye on making sure that all of these things are complementary and work together. That is something the First Secretary of State will do, but there is also—taking the second part of your question—the fact that we, as departments, do work together on these things to make sure that they interlink properly.

Q180 **Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I am just not clear on the timing of this. Could you say a bit more about that? It is the inquiry into the civil society strategy that is confusing me, because it looks as though it should underpin the other strategies, but the timing of it is that it is not even going to start on its discussion paper until after all of the other strategies have been published. From the sector's point of view, they think they have something before Christmas that they have waited a long time for and then they are immediately launched into another strategy, so would you say a bit more about how you see it fitting together? Also, you only mentioned volunteering; is that the only area you are covering with civil society?

**Lord Blunkett:** Just to follow that up, the idea of launching a democratic engagement strategy within six days of Christmas might raise eyebrows. I would like the thinking on that.

**Tracey Crouch:** I can answer on the civil society strategy. We were able to say at the last DCMS Oral Questions that we were going to do it. It had not been formally announced before then that we were doing it; we were just having some private conversations with the sector. Its formal launch will happen in January.

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Following on from what Nick was saying, the fact is that we see civil society as a golden thread that runs through all of Whitehall and all departments, and what we are trying to do is bring that all together and provide a co-ordinated focus. The sector is so wide and varied, and there are lots of little things happening within the sector, so we want to be able to pull it all together. It certainly, definitely does not only focus on volunteering.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Does it have any connection to the other reports or not?

**Tracey Crouch:** DCMS is leading on that particular report with DCLG, but we have been working with DCLG on the integration strategy, so this is very different. This is going to be a much wider look at civil society and the strategic direction for the future, focusing on a variety of issues, not just integration.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Give us some examples.

**Tracey Crouch:** For example, there is a lot going on at the moment within youth and we want to make sure that youth are a key part of the civil society and we will build on the insights gained from earlier engagement programmes. Volunteering is a key part of it, as is the inclusive economy, so how we look at the alternative ways of financing charities and how we support small charities in the future, whether grant-based funding is the best way or whether we look at alternative funding mechanisms, and how we use lottery funding, knowing, as we do, that lottery receipts are declining.

There are lots of challenges out there for civil society and we want to make sure that we provide a focus through proper, strategic direction, which has not happened for well over a decade. I am really proud: this is now my baby and I want to make sure that what I am doing is something that is really fundamental for the sector. I feel enormously privileged to be representing a sector that I have had a lot to do with, personally, in the past and so we need to make sure it has the right strategic direction.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I do not disagree with that. What I was trying to get at is whether it has any relationship to the other reports. Let me just take youth; that is the only thing I heard you say, other than charities and voluntary work, really. I suspect that the democratic engagement strategy has something about engaging young people, so you publish that and then you launch a consultation that is about youth. It is that disconnection between them. If you were to say that your inquiry into civil society has nothing to do with other reports, I can see why it is, and you have said it is the golden thread, but it is picking up the bits after they have—

**Tracey Crouch:** I am not saying that at all. We have been involved with the democratic engagement plan and, within my portfolio, I have responsibility for Make Your Mark, the Youth Parliament and youth policy in some parts of that. The engagement aspect is very important, so of

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course we have been involved in that, in the same way that we are involved in the integration strategy. However, the integration strategy and the democratic engagement strategy have some very specific remits and what I am setting out in the civil society strategy is a much wider strategic direction for the sector, which is incredibly diverse and varied.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** It is important to know that the civil society dimension is very much taken account of in the integration strategy, partly through volunteering, community enterprise and so on. They are very relevant and obviously we have been discussing this very much with Tracey and with officials, so it is not as if it is ignored. I appreciate what you are saying about the sequence, but if we were to alter the sequence so it was in any order, I have no doubt you would say, "Why have you done it that way rather than another way?" The sequence is close together and they have all informed each other in the development, so it is not as if they have been done in isolation.

**Lord Blunkett:** When I was in Government, when you did not want to discuss something publicly, you published things within the week leading up to Christmas, when you knew that minds would be elsewhere. What about democratic engagement? How many minds are going to be turned to political engagement in the days leading up to Christmas, do you think?

**Nick Gibb:** Lord Blunkett, you will also know that when you are a busy government with a lot of announcements, measures and activity happening, both domestically and internationally, you find the slot that you can get. That is not the high-profile part of the process. The high-profile aspect of this is around International Democracy Day and the Minister for the Constitution has already announced that there will be a National Democracy Week that will take place between 2 July and 8 July—nice and warm then, and also not leading up to Christmas. That is the high-profile part of this strategy.

Q181 **Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** The Committee would very much value your reflections on fundamental British values. As you know, they were introduced into the school curriculum very closely connected, at least in time, with the counterextremism policy, and this has aroused a fair amount of disquiet. Do you think, in light of that, it was counterproductive to do that? There is then the content of fundamental British values. Some of them are, indeed, fundamental values of British citizenship, like democracy, law, freedom under the law and equality before the law, but the values that we have, including things like tolerance and respect for faith, are fundamental values but they are not so closely connected with the idea of British citizenship. Also, they are rather limited; what about the need for lack of discrimination on the grounds of sexuality, gender and the other characteristics? Thirdly, and very briefly, are the Government thinking of doing more on these fundamental shared values in, say, sports centres and leisure centres rather than just concentrating on schools?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** It has been a useful debate. As you will recall, there was a debate in the House of Lords almost a year ago, initiated

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by the Archbishop of Canterbury, on British values, as he called it. We established that some of the British values are international values, some of those you have mentioned, but that does not stop them being British, of course. All of the things that you have outlined could be taken to be British values, and that was another thing that that excellent debate threw up. There was massive participation in that debate and I think we all found it useful. There is the analogy of the Habsburg face; that you can recognise it but not everybody would mention the same feature, the nose or the forehead or whatever, but it is important.

Speak to people from the ethnic minority communities about the citizenship ceremony. I was initially very wary about it; I was not against it but I was not convinced it was a good thing, but now I have seen people who have experienced the citizenship ceremony and, for them, it was an enormous rite of passage. They were really appreciative of that and so I have changed my mind on that and have seen how good that can be. The same is probably true of signing up to British values. A lot of people who we may feel are against this are, in fact, very much for this, because they see it as an inclusive action to make them part of British society in the way that they are.

We could debate about what goes in and what is left out and, as you rightly say, it is very difficult to talk in terms of British values in any legislative sense or in any statement of values to articulate the tolerance and sense of humour, fair play and so on as part of it—and I am sure they are part of it—but the things that do underline our approach to values should certainly include respect for the rule of law, to ensure that there is equality in relation to matters of race, religion, sexuality and so on. We have not been precious about saying what is not there. We have been having a debate, since the Casey Review came out, about what really does belong in British values, and any contribution on that is still very much welcome and is still part of a wider debate. When we issue the integration strategy, it will not be definitive and say, “This is what people are signing up to”. We do need a wider debate about what it is, but nevertheless I am convinced that it is important.

**Nick Gibb:** Lord Harries, you raised a number of issues. The definition of “fundamental British values” is “democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance and understanding of different faiths and beliefs”. That came out of the Prevent strategy, which said that vocal and active opposition to fundamental British values is a definition of extremism and that was then inverted to become a positive value.

You mentioned other values beyond those we have listed and, of course, you are right, but the fundamental British values are not intended to be a list of all the values that the Government believe are important. Schools, for example, have a public sector equality duty to protect equality and the characteristics that are protected in the Equality Act. For independent schools, we changed the regulations, the independent school standards, to require schools to encourage respect for other people and to pay particular regard to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.

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The term “fundamental British values” does not imply that these values are unique to Britain. Indeed, they are commonplace amongst not all nations but a whole raft of nations, but they are values that are valued in Britain and that is why the term provides a very useful shorthand for that, and they underpin our political and social order.

You also asked about the link with extremism. Fundamental British values are widely held and they are widely shared values that are held by people of all races and faiths, which only a tiny minority do not share. I do not believe actively promoting these values will alienate any specific groups or be in conflict with anybody’s beliefs.

Finally, you asked about sports centres and the role of sport and it is important. Life skills, such as resilience, confidence, team-working and leadership skills are strongly associated with success in school, the labour market and life generally, and we want to encourage participation in sport and other extracurricular activities, which can play a part in promoting those life skills, which are important in developing resilience to the kind of extremist pressures that some young people are subject to.

**Tracey Crouch:** We recognise that the role of sport in promoting active citizenship and community development is extremely important. I really, genuinely, believe that sport has a unique power to bind people together in the UK. We quite often use sport as a means of encouraging community cohesion. In addition, we actively seek to improve participation in sport through recognition of people’s different faiths, because we know, for example, that there are certain faiths where there is lower participation in sport than others. There are challenges there that we have to overcome and the sport strategy, which sets the strategic direction for Sport England and its funding mechanisms, has certainly put that front and centre within that. There are a number of sports, such as football, rugby and cricket, to name but three, that really do work with key partners in order to encourage sport as a means of binding citizens together.

If I may, there is one other aspect of DCMS work that helps with the issue around fundamental British values and that is that we support the promotion of democracy to young people through our funding of the British Youth Council. I am sure Peers are aware that we run its Youth Voice programme, which is part of the process of the Make Your Mark ballot. Last year, almost 1 million young people across the country cast their votes about the topics they wished to discuss when they came here and had the annual House of Commons sitting back in November. The Youth Parliament chose issues such as “A curriculum to prepare us for life” and “Votes at 16” as the two campaign issues they wanted to focus on. This is a process that encourages young people to engage in campaign issues and it teaches them about democracy, and that is something that happens beyond the education system.

**Brandon Lewis:** I will pick up on a couple of points colleagues have made, starting with Lord Bourne’s point, which is absolutely right. We should not underestimate the importance and the value that people put on their desire

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and aspiration to understand British values, particularly if they are looking to move towards British citizenship. Lord Bourne is absolutely right that that sense of achievement and people's desire to feel part of something, to understand what goes behind that is quite intangible and invaluable to them. In fact, when you talk to people who are aspiring to that, let alone people who have achieved that, it is quite humbling to talk to them about why that matters to them. It is almost that intangible sense of not just belonging but understanding something that they want to drive towards.

It links in to the point that both Nick and Tracey were just making and one of the things I see, particularly when I go to centres for asylum seekers. When they first come to the country, there is nothing that brings people together better and quicker than sport. It transcends language, origin and faith, and it just brings people together in a way that, it seems to me, when I have been out and about visiting these centres, nothing else does. It is a huge credit to the Government, and DCMS, in particular, is driving this forward with support from DfE to make sure that we continue that. If we are looking to continue to build societies and communities and see integration as we go forward, there is very little that can match sport for its ability to bind people together in a positive way.

**Baroness Redfern:** I want to ask about Brandon's comments regarding bringing people together in sport. Do you think that it really helps and interests young people in wanting to volunteer as well, leading to better aspirations, because I think sport plays a really important part in bringing those communities together?

**Brandon Lewis:** If you do not mind, I will let Tracey pick up on this, but this is my experience from what I have seen when visiting centres, as I was last week; I was in Wales and went to a centre that supports and works with refugees, and it summed up what I was just saying. When I went into that centre—as I have done with other places but, as I say, the most recent was on Thursday—I met this fabulous team who are working with people in an entirely voluntary way. When you go into the main room, although they have language lessons and people queuing up who want to progress and develop their language—and the key to integration is getting access to the English language—what was bringing people together in the main part of that centre was people playing basketball. The room had a basketball court and foosball and pool tables, and it was various sports that were bringing people together from a huge variety of backgrounds, some of whom had been in the country for months and had a good grasp of English, some who had been in the country for just a few weeks and had no English at all, but were able to interact with each other and the team through the sport they were playing. It absolutely drove home to me that ability to bring people together. I am struggling to think of a way that people can do that that surpasses what sport can do.

**Tracey Crouch:** It is really interesting. When I was first given the role of civil society as well as still being the Minister for Sport, eyebrows were raised as to whether or not a Minister could do both things, but there is such a crossover. If you take away the elite level of sport, the vast majority



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of grassroots sport is delivered by volunteers. I know that because I was one. I spent 10 years coaching a girls' football team entirely as a volunteer and if you took away the volunteers from sport, you would have no grassroots sport. When you put the two together, you have examples like Brandon has just demonstrated, which is that you have volunteers within charities who recognise that sport is a means of helping them deliver the outcomes they are trying to achieve in terms of bringing people together and supporting people. There is a positive crossover between volunteering and participation, but also the health and well-being of the nation.

**Q182 Lord Rowe-Beddoe:** During our Committee hearings, we have heard some suggestions that there are negative effects in linking the question of fundamental British values with counterextremism. Do you think it is counterproductive? It was a view that was expressed quite often.

**Brandon Lewis:** No, I do not agree with some of that evidence. We have to remember that, as a country, over a very long period of time, we have managed to develop something that is multiracial and multifaith, with people from a wide variety of backgrounds; that is going back for many generations, particularly as a Member of Parliament representing East Anglia, which has obviously been visited by everybody from the Romans to the Normans, Saxons and Vikings.

We also need to understand that it is what makes our community stronger and the success we have seen in developing, over generations, the ability to deliver a stronger community is underpinned by what we class as that slightly intangible thing, as one of my colleagues said earlier, but it is about British values. That includes, as has been said, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, tolerance of other faiths and beliefs—picking up on the earlier question.

We should make no apology at all or accept that there is anything offensive about being very proud of the values that unite us. Yes, we refer to them, as Lord Bourne said, in the shorthand of "British values", but promoting those core values is absolutely essential in the work we are doing to defeat extremism, and we should be quite unapologetic about that. If we are not focused on defeating the evil ideology of extremism in all its forms, we will miss out on dealing with one of the biggest challenges of our time. It is not easy, it is complicated, but we have to stay focused on it and not allow ourselves to be taken off piste by people having a problem talking about British values. We need to be very clear about that and we have to make sure that our narrative about that tolerance and belief in the rule of law is something that we drive through, as I say, very unapologetically and be quite forward-stepping about it.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** I agree with what Brandon has said. What we have to do, at the same time, is ensure that we get across very clearly the message that this is not only about tackling Islamic radicals. A significant part of the work is also about tackling racist groups, Britain First and so on—these people who are proscribed. That perhaps is something that is a message that all of us need to get across. However, there certainly

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is a strong linkage between countering extremism and those people who do not support British democratic values, and the work that we do on the counter-extremism programme. We have just launched pilot schemes through leadership in Leeds and Luton. Baroness Williams and I were at the launch of this and it shows that we are working across the aisle, as it were, because both authorities are very powerfully led by Labour, but we are very much singing from the same hymn sheet, as we do nationally. There is nothing precious about this being just a Conservative agenda. This is an agenda for Britain and, as I say, we have to work across all communities to tackle extremism wherever it is.

**Brandon Lewis:** Just to reinforce that point, I have done a few meetings now where people have raised the issue you have just raised around linking these two things together and whether that is right. They tend to come from the point of view that this is focused on a particular area and we need to remember that, in the context of something like 7,500 referrals last year, from the last set of figures, 25% of those were from far-right groups, and we will be publishing some new figures soon and that has gone up. In terms of extremism in any format that starts to look towards eroding things, whether it is women's rights or general intolerance and bigotry, we should be absolutely fearless in challenging and making it very clear that that kind of behaviour, whatever angle it comes from, will be contested and we will meet it face on.

Q183 **Baroness Eaton:** I find that very interesting, and no one could object to what you say, but there is an elephant in the room that everybody walks around and does not raise. You talked about refugees and asylum seekers and how well they work together and I can fully understand that, but you seem to forget we have communities that are deeply entrenched in views that do not sit with British values. You touched on women's rights and women's equality; it is fine talking about it, but what is there that can be done to change minds, attitudes and lifestyles, which do discriminate hugely against women, in particular, and people who might be deemed different? How is what the Government are doing going to address those issues?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** I will lead off on that, because you and I were both together, a bit over a year ago, doing visits in Bradford in relation to Communities First activity. I am not sure whether you were there when I went to the English language provision or we met later perhaps, but anyway, for the benefit of everybody, I went to an English language course and most of the people there were young Muslim women and they were finding it transformational. We do have a problem there, which we are seeking to address by increasing the provision of English language courses in key communities. We lead on that, in DCLG, through Near Neighbours and other work, and that will certainly form a part of the integration strategy. I am sure that we are not going to alter the nature overnight of some of the communities you refer to, but one of the ways we can do that is to do with, as Brandon mentioned, the all-important nature of the English language. It is difficult for us to think of this, because you go anywhere in the world pretty much and they speak English, but for

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people who do not speak English living in a community where English is the dominant language, they will not come out of the house. It is not just that they will not get a job; they do not feel they can get on a bus; they feel they are going to be challenged as strangers. This is a key to success in driving forward our integration strategy; Margaret is absolutely right about that. It is not going to alter overnight certainly, but it is central to what we are trying to do.

**Baroness Eaton:** As an aside to that, one of the big issues is transcontinental marriage in the situation you describe, where every generation is a first generation. That is not going to change attitudes quickly and it will not anyway. You say it is a slow process, but this surely exacerbates what is a continuing problem.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** We are broadening this. The Ministry of Justice leads on this, as you know, and it is looking at the marriage issue. That is perhaps something that is being looked at over a longer, slow-burn period. That said, some of that is taken care of by English language courses; some of that is taken care of by visa controls. However, you cannot contest that what we are seeking to do on English language is going to be vital to ensuring that we have better integration in our communities. That is very much what is driving our Casey response.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** I am really glad that you emphasise the importance of English language courses. We had two sessions last week where our witnesses, including Dame Louise Casey, emphasised their importance, but did not have such a rosy picture of what is happening as you have just given us. The picture they gave us is that there have been serious cutbacks in English language courses, with the exception of resettled Syrians; it has been very welcome that there has been extra help there. However, this is a real concern among a number of agencies, in terms of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** I contest that, because the numbers being taught have gone up, which is the relevant criterion here, I would say. Nevertheless, I am not contesting that there is not a challenge there in ensuring that we get more people on to English language programmes. I have seen some excellent ones in Whitechapel, in Bradford and elsewhere in London, and it has convinced me, and I think the Government are convinced, that this is very much central to the integration strategy that we will be publishing. I do not contest the fact that there is a big challenge there.

**Brandon Lewis:** Can I just come back to the core point? I agree with the points that have been made around the English language. Something that is very clear when you talk to people who have come to settle in this country, whether as refugees or accepted asylum seekers, is about that ability to have a good understanding of the English language, not just through the formal test process that ESOL does, which is absolutely required, but that informal ability to be able to communicate and, therefore, properly be part of a community and communicate with that

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community, which can help get into work and things like that when the time comes. That is hugely important and there is a real piece of work to do there for local government.

One of the things that has been interesting going around the country and seeing these areas is there is some phenomenal good practice out there. Baroness Eaton, you will know this as you have more experience than I have, but one of the things we all have to try to be better at is how we get local government to share best practice. There is this classic challenge, which we see across areas, where some local areas do fantastic work and either are shy about sharing their great work or other areas are shy about listening to what can be done. There is a really important piece of work for the Local Government Association to do about how we spread that even better.

Coming back to the initial point you made around, in a practical sense, what can central Government do, there are a couple of things. One is working with local government, as DCLG and the Home Office do, in generally trying to share that best practice and talking about what we see when we see best practice. We should not underestimate the benefit and importance of that, but there are also the very hard facts of what we are doing. If you think about the Prevent programme, as I said earlier, referrals from that were 25%, and increasing, of far-right groups, but within that some 850,000 frontline staff across schools, the public sector more generally and health, have had training to be able to recognise and deal with these issues. There are some 42,000 individuals in 142 different projects around the country who have been funded in the last period and that is still growing. There is a huge amount of very practical work being done and supported by central government as well.

**Lord Blunkett:** I do not want to prolong this unnecessarily. I have a non-registerable interest in this area. Nobody could fault Lord Bourne's connectivity. Everywhere I go, I find that Lord Bourne has been there, so it is unanswerable that there is a connectivity. The difficulty I see is that there are programmes that are extremely good, but the generality of funding for adult learning and the corollary with further education then reduces, so that with one hand the Lord is giving and with the other, if Richard will forgive me, the Lord is taking away. Could we get this joined up a little?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** Thank you very much for the compliment, David. It is undeniably the case that there is an issue about ensuring that, post the English language course, there is connectivity with further education and we are discussing within the department how we deal with that within the integration strategy. As I say, there is a challenge there. As Brandon has said, there is massive good practice out there already, sometimes led by a local authority, as in the case of Manchester, sometimes led by a particular provider of first-class English language education, as I have seen in London. It is making sure we join all that up in future programmes to do with the English language, but certainly we can say—we are probably all agreed on this—that central to any effective

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integration strategy has to be teaching in England, with respect to David, the English language. In Wales, it may be English and Welsh, but certainly the English language is the key to unlocking and countering isolation of lots and lots of people.

**Q184 Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Moving on to citizenship education now, we have had a lot of evidence about it. We have had a number of witness sessions and it is fair to say that they have painted a dismal picture. One witness, for example, said it is "withering on the vine" and that summed up what a lot of them were saying. I will just point to two areas, but there were others. One is the absolute lack of specialist teachers and the numbers being trained appear to be a fraction of what is needed. The other is that it seems to have lost sight of the original focus or emphasis placed on developing young people as active, democratic, political citizens. How has this happened? Why has it happened? How do you see the role of citizenship education, particularly in view of your democratic engagement plan, which is now anticipated very shortly? Surely citizenship education should be at the centre of any democratic engagement plan and, at present, it simply is not, from all the evidence we have received.

**Nick Gibb:** I disagree with some of those opinions. Citizenship is a very important part of the national curriculum. When we reviewed the national curriculum in 2011, we took a very active decision to keep citizenship as part of the national curriculum. It is one of only six subjects that are compulsory at key stage 4. The six are PE, science, maths, English, computing and, of course, citizenship. That was a very deliberate decision, because we understand the importance of citizenship. We reformed the curriculum so that it is more knowledge based, because our understanding was that young people did not understand the structure of our political system. If you look at the national curriculum for citizenship at key stage 3 and 4, it covers things like: how laws are made; how the political system works; how local government works; the distinction between metropolitan and county local authorities and district and borough local authorities, parish councils and so on; how our legal system works; the difference between county courts, High Courts, Crown Courts and the Supreme Court. All these issues are now incorporated into the knowledge-based curriculum of citizenship, which we think is very important.

In terms of how it is taught, there is no cap on initial teacher training in terms of numbers that education faculties want to recruit or, indeed, school-centred initial teacher training want to recruit of citizenship teachers. Also, citizenship is taught well by people who are applying to be teachers of politics, for example; it is one of the most common academic backgrounds for teachers of citizenship. Therefore, I would not despair by looking at the citizenship figures; I would also look at the numbers coming through who are equipped to teach politics.

We take citizenship very seriously, and the promotion of fundamental British values has turbocharged the importance of citizenship in the curriculum, because that is a very effective way of teaching some of those elements of fundamental British values. Do not also forget things like

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spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, which is a requirement of all schools to teach, and it is also inspected very actively by Ofsted. It is a statutory requirement of Ofsted inspectors to inspect and monitor the effectiveness of that element of the curriculum.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** The evidence we have received is very consistent and from a number of different sources that spiritual, cultural and personal values, whatever they are, plus so-called—I always say so-called—fundamental British values, seem to have displaced political citizenship education. I take the point that it is important that children and young people have the knowledge, although even that has been questioned, but also a lot of emphasis is put on the doing of it, of schools as democratic communities, and that just seems to be lost in a lot of cases. I am not saying there are not still excellent teachers trying to do this, but it seems like they are trying to work against the tide.

**Nick Gibb:** We promote pupil engagement in terms of school councils and pupils being involved in the running of their schools and having a voice to express about how their school is run. In our advice to schools about the citizenship curriculum, we encourage them to have visits to law courts, to the public galleries of chambers, whether locally or, indeed, this building. It is important that young people have the knowledge to be able to navigate through our political system, and that was the deficit that we felt needed to be filled more importantly than anything else. The way to become active in politics is, first, to know your way around the structures of our political system and many young people did not know that; second, some of the fundamental changes we are making to our education system to ensure that young people leave our education system well educated, knowledgeable, equipped for life in modern Britain, is a thing we have been working on since 2010. We want young people to understand our history. If I was to give advice to any young person who wanted to go into politics about the best preparation for life in either this Building up here or the House of Commons, it would be to make sure that you are well versed in British, European and world history. Things like the English Baccalaureate are very important in encouraging an increase in uptake in subjects like history, which was in decline until we introduced the EBacc.

**Lord Blunkett:** Chairman, we know all the evidence points to the fact that this is the only curriculum subject that does not equate to bursaries for teacher training. We know that the numbers have dropped to minuscule proportions. We know that there is no clarity yet as to how many schools are teaching citizenship or how many people in those schools are equipped to teach it. We do not disagree at all with the issue about a body of knowledge, but if people do not know, themselves, as teachers, about the structures and the body of knowledge that we seek to impart, how on earth are we going to manage to do it with pupils?

**Nick Gibb:** David, it is compulsory at both key stage 3 and key stage 4. There is a slimmed down curriculum. We slimmed down the curriculum right across the subjects at key stage 3 and key stage 4 because the direction of travel for the Government is a school-led system. We are trying

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to raise the status of the teaching profession, but it is very clear the knowledge that does need to be taught at key stage 3 and 4, and I have every confidence in our teaching profession that they are able to teach a knowledge-based curriculum. As I said earlier, it is not only citizenship-qualified teachers who can teach this curriculum; those qualified to teach politics are well-equipped to be able to pass on the knowledge of how our political systems work.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** Just to give a quick example backing that up—and I agree with Ruth that the doing is important—we had some schools here last week in relation to countering genocide day. They produced a booklet on countering genocide, which I am speaking to Nick about as to how we could perhaps disseminate this information to other schools, because it was a brilliant booklet they produced. The schools also brought here genocide survivors from not just the Holocaust, but also Darfur, Cambodia and so on. It was a really useful session, so there is some really good stuff happening out there.

Q185 **Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Nick, I think there is a problem here, because whatever you say—and I am not doubting; I know it is slimmed down, I know it is in the national curriculum, and I know it is one of a small number of subjects that need to be taught—that is not what people in schools think is the case. Either there is a misunderstanding between you and most of the schools that we have met and talked to during this inquiry, and that I have met and talked to outside of this inquiry, or you are wrong. What worries me most is you are not giving and saying, “Look, whatever you think, I do understand that it does not seem that way to schools; therefore something needs to be done”.

I know how passionate you are about maths teaching and phonics. I know that because of everything you do. I know because you spend money on it, because you launch initiatives, because you train teachers, because you send teachers abroad, because you say it is important for children. I do not know that that is how you care about citizenship education, because you do not do those things as far as citizenship education is concerned. I use “you” to talk about your ministerial team. If you think what has also happened, where the outside world has seen your ministerial team putting their efforts, it is on character education. Whether or not you intended it to be the case, the reality is that many teachers think you are favouring character education over citizenship education and, as you know, there is a real difference between the two. Whatever ticks the boxes, whatever the file says, whatever the documents say, that is not what is being thought in schools and you need to hear what they are saying and try to give some indication that you are going to do something about it.

**Nick Gibb:** The last report by Ofsted was in 2013 and they did say that citizenship—

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** That is a long time ago, before character education, before—

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**Nick Gibb:** It is, I accept that, but they did say it was stronger in 2013 than it was in 2010. My view is that the best way to equip young people to participate and to become active citizens and to contribute to society, which is our objective in all our education reforms, is, first, to make sure they know how the system works, and that is why we changed the content of the curriculum so that it is more knowledge based, because previously it was not; you could have gone through the citizenship curriculum and not understood how our political systems work, and knowing how they work is absolutely key to inspiring confidence—

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I do not disagree with you on that. I am not arguing about that.

**Nick Gibb:** —that you are able to access the political system. Second, young people need to be well educated. We need to ensure that young people have the confidence to participate in our democratic system in a confident way, not in a superficial way. The way to be confident of engaging in political life is to be well educated, and that is why it is important to focus on children's ability to read, and it is important that young people are versed in science, so that they are able to knowledgeably challenge assertions made about science in the political discourse that we have. It is important that people understand the geography of the world, so they can understand some of the international aspects of political debate. It is important that they know about the history of this country, of Europe and of the major world countries that have influenced this country, so that they can engage in discourse and debate on an equal par with those other people who are engaged in debate who are well educated. That has been one of the fundamental building blocks of the education reform that we have been doing.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I just think there is a huge link between giving them those facts and enabling them to be active citizens in terms of citizenship and civil education and you are not letting that happen.

**The Chairman:** Baroness Morris, we have to move on.

Q186 **Baroness Barker:** In our very first session, the officials from all of your departments relied almost exclusively on evidence from Ofsted when they talked to us about citizenship. We understand from other witnesses that that report, in 2013, is the last of its kind and we are not clear how we are going to get any evidence from Ofsted about citizenship in future.

**Nick Gibb:** Ofsted is no longer doing those themed reports, not just for citizenship but right across the board. They are having to focus their resources on raising academic standards in our schools. Nonetheless, in the 2015 Ofsted framework, they are required to look at how well fundamental British values are delivered in our schools and, of course, that is best delivered, in many ways, through the citizenship curriculum. Second, they are required by law, under the Education Act 2011, to inspect spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in our schools and aspects of that are covered in citizenship. We will get continued feedback through Ofsted reports about the quality of this kind of education in our schools,



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notwithstanding that they have stopped doing those themed reports right across the curriculum.

**Q187 Baroness Pitkeathley:** My questions are about civil society, so initially for you, Tracey. Several members of this Committee were also on the committee that I chaired on charities, which reported in March this year and in which we very much called for a strategic approach with the charitable and civil society organisations. Sadly, we still have not had your official response, but I am very glad to know that you are committed to developing those strategies. I want to ask you specifically about areas with a very low level of social capital. What are you doing to encourage those? We have heard, for example, evidence that areas with large numbers of white, working class people have very low levels of civic engagement. Are you particularly targeting such communities? If we think also about volunteering, what are you doing to encourage people who perhaps have a low level of volunteering—older or disabled people or people who are newly retired and so on? Are you targeting those specifically and do you plan to do that with your new strategy?

**Tracey Crouch:** The first thing to say is I am so sorry that you have not yet had our response to the report, which is an excellent report. We have obviously had an initial conversation about it. I can tell you I have done my bit, but we do hope to get it to you before we rise for Christmas next week, so I only apologise on that.

With regard to the other issues, about low levels of social capital, as you know, the Community Life Survey tracks trends and is held annually to do this. We know from the recent survey that levels of community cohesion have remained consistent. However, we recognise that there are still challenges to that and particularly the relatively low levels of volunteering. Twenty-two percent said that they had taken part in formal volunteering at least once a month, although when you look at it on an annual basis, nearly 63% have done it at least once a year. We are looking, through the Community Organisers programme, at how we can work to kick-start a grassroots movement to see how we can get volunteering firmly embedded in some of our most deprived communities and neighbourhoods across the country. There are 20 Social Action Hubs that are responsible for delivering the programme and they are working within the defined Index of Multiple Deprivation areas, so they are really looking at the areas of most need.

With regard to other initiatives around social capital, you will be aware of the Life Chances Fund, which is an £80 million fund that provides support for locally developed social impact bonds. The Government have already committed over £16 million to 10 new social impact bonds through the Life Chances Fund. These are funds that look specifically at very particular issues, such as, for example, drug and alcohol dependency and support for children in care, so they are getting right at the heart in terms of some very early intervention.

With reference to the question around older people and disabled people, I have a particular passion for this; I have worked on older people initiatives

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and issues for many years. We all understand the value of volunteering to the community, but of course it also brings a real sense of value to the individual as well. Getting older people and people with disabilities to do volunteering has some personal benefit to them—it reduces isolation—but also brings a whole wealth of experience that you do not get from other members of the community. We are putting some money into initiatives such as the 50-plus volunteering. I am told by everybody involved in volunteering that anyone over 50 who offers their services is the “golden ticket”, and so we are definitely trying to make sure that we create a network of older volunteers who can help in a variety of initiatives, including things like careers advice and other opportunities. There is so much skill and experience with older people that you want to really maximise the capital from that, so we are putting some money into that through a variety of funds. The 50-plus initiative is one of those, but we also have the Second Half Fund, the Give More Get More Fund, the Connected Communities Innovation Fund. There is a lot of work going on into that. Finally, I should not forget, because I will be told off otherwise, that we are working with the Centre for Ageing Better on a review to get the evidence about how to better understand how we can help those aged 50 and above to share their skills.

**Baroness Pitkeathley:** Is that looking at the barriers that stop them?

**Tracey Crouch:** It is very much doing that. It is looking at issues around how we can establish whether schemes work and at other issues, as you say, such as barriers. Time is clearly one of those issues. Accessibility, I should imagine, will come up, but also knowledge and awareness. Whenever I am in my own constituency, I hold a pensioners’ fair and whenever I talk to pensioners about the opportunities for volunteering, they are up for it but just did not know it existed, so that is something we want to work on.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** This is perhaps an example of where there is overlap between the civil society and democratic engagement strategies, because we heard also about barriers to active citizenship and civic engagement that are created by socioeconomic deprivation. It is partly time, so people are doing lots of different jobs to get by, but simply people are having to put so much effort into getting by, because of poverty, it is very difficult for them to engage either in volunteering or civic engagement. What are the Government doing specifically to address these very material barriers?

**Tracey Crouch:** Affordability is key to many issues. Making sure that people are aware of initiatives that are happening right on their doorstep and with which they can engage is important. People do not necessarily understand what volunteering is, sometimes. I am sorry to harp back to the sports side of my brief, but at no point as a football coach did I think of myself as a volunteer. It is about getting people engaged, whether it is reading books through initiatives like Bookstart to young children in their local schools, right on their doorstep, which does not provide any expense to them; it is matching them. In many respects, we need almost like an

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internet-dating service for volunteers, so that they can match their skills with the opportunities that are local to them.

We see very acute problems within areas of multiple deprivation, and that is not specific to any particular age or gender. We have to be able to ensure that there is almost a mentoring programme as well. People from an older generation can certainly help support those from a younger generation to cope with many of the challenges that they have collectively faced. We are working on a lot of that. There is money behind this initiative as well, just to reassure the Committee.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** Mr Gibb, will the democratic engagement strategy be addressing these kinds of very severe material barriers that some people face?

**Nick Gibb:** Yes, it is precisely designed to deal with that, trying to break down those barriers to participation. The plan will make the case for fostering a democratic society, facilitated by government in collaboration with different partner organisations and electors themselves. That is really what the whole strategy is about: breaking down those barriers.

Q188 **Lord Verjee:** These questions are about minority communities. Could the panel talk a little bit about the Government's strategy for minority communities, and, in particular, programmes to reach the hardest-to-reach communities? That seems to me a huge opportunity for civic engagement from parts of the population who just would not normally participate. Within that question, what are the Government doing to ensure that all the attention does not go to the extreme voices and the loudest voices, and that attention should go to the majority minority community? What sorts of programmes are the Government doing to achieve that, in particular, women's groups, and we have talked about sports? In some of the programmes the loudest voices seem to be divisive rather than promote civic engagement.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** First of all, I take very much the point that we do need to engage beyond the usual suspects. I suppose we are all usual suspects. Some usual suspects are very useful but we do need to go beyond that and we do need to be very careful about ensuring that we are listening to mainstream opinion, as it were. I am very conscious of that. In the role that I have, going round and speaking to groups in different communities, one can see the dangers, and I generally try to take advice before going there. A lot of government activity through DCLG is funded through Near Neighbours, which Baroness Eaton knows very much about as a very effective chair of that organisation. The money to local groups is generally channelled through that in relation to projects that we have in helping to tackle minority deprivation and so on.

Beyond that, however, I accept it is important that we do speak to people beyond the usual suspects and, from day one, I very much tried to do that. In my first week, I made a point of—within London, admittedly, so it was London-centric, as it had to be, because I was here in the House—ensuring that, on one day, I went round and visited religious institutions of every

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variety, not just mosques and temples but also a Jain temple and the Baha'i community and so on. Sometimes, we also have to realise that there are some minority communities that get overlooked, and I also visited Zoroastrians. It is important. You establish links through that, some with the usual suspects, which are absolutely essential to ensuring, because they are the community leaders, that we do get our messages across through the mosque and through the temple and so on. That is important too.

The Near Neighbours funding has really been highly successful, I would say, in reaching beyond the religious leaders into the communities. For example, I went to Leicester recently and had a meal with a Muslim family and also members of the Armed Forces, which is part of what they were trying to do in Inter Faith Week. I have been to churches, not necessarily the ones recommended by people. I have picked some churches, more or less at random, to find out what they are doing on interfaith work. It is important that we do speak beyond the religious leaders.

I agree that women's groups are very much important. I remember, very early on, going to a gurdwara, where the lead person was female. She took the discussion very much forward, and that has also been surprising, if I could say that. Certainly a surprise to me is that, in some mosques, counter to what I thought—and this shows that perhaps sometimes we are out-of-date in our thinking—the women are very instrumental in what is happening in the mosque, even to the extent that there are female imams, apparently. This is important too.

This is not to say that we are getting it right all the while—we are not—and there is a problem with some religions, as we know. It is not just the Muslim one—a challenge perhaps, more than a problem, that the women are kept a little, historically, to some extent, in the background. That would be true of other religions as well, and maybe even the Christian religion, to be honest, so we do have to make a particular effort to make sure that we are hearing opinions not just from the usual suspects—people like us, perhaps—and that we do go beyond that. That is very much central to what I have been trying to do, and we will see that playing out in the integration strategy when we publish it in the new year.

**Tracey Crouch:** I was going to say we talked about sports in general and how they can help encourage better community cohesion. There are some very specific projects that we are doing in sport that are targeted at BME communities, but also women as well. The This Girl Can campaign is a very strong campaign, not just about physical and mental wellbeing but also about empowerment, which is another aspect. There are other initiatives that we, as a department, are engaged with. I am responsible for the Tampon Tax Fund and we have just launched the latest round of the Tampon Tax Fund, of which there are some very specific aspects that have been set out—for example, violence against women and girls but also mental health.

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Of course, I know we are going to get into more detail about NCS, but NCS does rather well in reaching key groups that are classified as harder-to-reach, such as those eligible for free school meals, those from BME backgrounds and those registered as having special educational needs and from minority-faith backgrounds. The NCS also supports the Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade to run an interfaith version of the programme for those of all faiths and none.

There are initiatives that are happening within my portfolio that we are looking at but, of course, the department is wide and I can say from previous portfolios, holding both heritage and being involved in issues around the digital agenda, that we are trying to make sure that it is as inclusive as possible.

**Lord Verjee:** I still do not have the answer to the core issue that I think we have. Minority communities seem to be tarred with the extremist brush. What can the Government do to take off that tar? It seems a core issue we have in our society is that all minority groups or all Muslims are tarred as extremist Muslims. What can we do to prevent that happening or to stop that happening?

**Brandon Lewis:** Lord Bourne might want to come in on this, but it is important that one of the ways we deal with that is what we are saying in a place like this. I would challenge the premise of the question. If you think about some of the comments we were making earlier on this morning, and if we look at what Prevent does, there have been about 7,600 referrals. 25%—and, in fact, in the new figures, it has been closer to 30%—of those are far-right-wing groups. That is why we need to challenge people. Some of the people in the communities that are involved—and it is a community-led programme—are very determined to make it clear that this programme works. It is part of a community. It has to be delivered by and with the community for it to succeed.

There is a frustration with some people involved in this that people, in some quarters, decide to jump on a bandwagon to criticise something that is delivering and to misrepresent it. I know Lord Carlile himself was particularly strong on this. We need to be very clear about these programmes that are working in that way. As I say, when you recognise 25% growing to 30% of those referrals are far-right-wing, it is about making sure that we are able, in society, to deal with some of the challenges that are there. It links back to a point I made earlier on: we have to be fearless in dealing with some of those challenges. If they are from extremism in any quarter, we have to be clear about the fact that we will take that on and not be afraid of facing up to that.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** Brandon is right on that. We all have a role here in relation to ensuring the message gets across that the Muslim religion and other religions are very much part of the fabric of British society. It is not my political party but having a Muslim mayor in London has been instrumental in helping in that regard. The response to the dreadful terrorist attacks that we have had this year has shown that

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underlying the difficulties and the challenges that there may be is an example of the cohesion of British society.

We saw that very clearly in Manchester. I remember going to the mosque at Finsbury Park after the awful terrorist attack there that evening and finding out not just that the Charedi community leaders were there from nearby Stamford Hill but that they were the earliest people there, other than the worshippers, and that also they were very close friends of the people running the mosque. Messages like that going out really have helped demonstrate the cohesion that there can be. The Government are very clear that the extremists are a minority, whether they are from racist right-wing groups like Britain First or whether they are Islamist in fanatical terms. They are very much a small minority, and that is a message that we all need to get across.

I have seen powerful leadership, wherever I have gone, in relation to ensuring that leadership is provided by members of the Muslim community. We talked about women's empowerment and the Women's Empowerment Fund, and we have put a lot of money into that to help counter domestic abuse. Very often, you would expect the leadership there to be women, which it is. I am very conscious that, when I was with Margaret in Bradford, we met somebody from the south Asian community leading on domestic abuse, and leading on domestic abuse against men. That is, again, something that may be surprising and, probably, from that community, takes a great deal of courage. It demonstrates what is happening in our country and, clearly, the Government, local authorities and organisations have a role in that, as do all of us, in ensuring that that message gets very clearly across that there is much more that unites us than ever divides us.

**Brandon Lewis:** Just to add to that, in a very practical sense, we are seeing some benefits in those communities in terms of how some of the campaigns work. Prevent, as I said, works with civil society groups to make sure we are countering those kinds of extremist ideologies. We also recognise that we can play a very direct role in helping them to have the toolkit in their bag to be able to reject some of those narratives. For example, at the Home Office, our research, information and communications unit is working with some of those civil society groups to give them some advice and support, down to the details about how you produce these things and have public relations expertise and social media training, so that they can not only understand how to challenge it but also have the skill set with which to challenge some of those issues around extremism from any quarter.

**Baroness Eaton:** I totally understand and accept and am very supportive of the idea that we all have a responsibility. However, when we talk at this level, we forget some of the very "minor" things that make that difficult. I am thinking of things that perhaps local authorities do, with the best of intentions, such as serving halal meat to all children without letting parents know. That can be as offensive to a Hindu or to some people as it is offensive to people not to. It is those small things that do create the tensions that then people feel they have no right to express. What you say

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is absolutely right but we also have a responsibility in the terms of other policies from local government and the Government that create these kinds of unnecessary tensions. We forget that when we are talking about what you have just said, which is terribly important but not the whole story.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** That is fair. Can I just add one additional point? Sometimes, we think that government programmes can do more than they can do. They are clearly important but I often think that Nadiya Hussain and—and Tracey would have a view on this—Mo Farah have done more for race relations in this country and cohesion than anything that governments do. That is important because Mo Farah is a hero not just to people from his ethnic community but to all British kids.

**Tracey Crouch:** May I just say something really briefly? We are born without prejudice and it is something that we learn. We all have a responsibility to try to ensure that we raise awareness of prejudice and how unacceptable it is, whatever that prejudice might be, whether it is faith, sexuality or other aspects. We are all collectively working together and we should all collectively work together to try to make sure that parents of the next generation are aware, as much as we are, that there is no role in society for any level of prejudice or bigotry.

Q189 **Lord Blunkett:** I want to make a very quick, practical point. As Ministers now responsible in the Home Office for the introduction of the English and citizenship tests and ceremonies, we had a bad patch a year or two ago, with the very substantial rise of UKIP, where it looked as though the British Government were seeking to discourage people who were putting roots down in Britain from becoming naturalised citizens. First, are we over that patch and are we now keen that such individuals and families should join?

Secondly, given that and the fact that the Government have to cover the costs that are incurred, is the cost now too prohibitive, given the fact that we were given evidence that, if you took the route from the beginning all the way through indefinitely to naturalisation, it could cost as much as £9,500? That means that, very often, the male in the family becomes a citizen and, very often, other members do not, with all the inequality and division that that creates.

Thirdly—and I was responsible originally for this as well—the “Life in the UK” booklet appears to have taken on a life of its own. You are all plain-speaking Ministers. Could we take a review of this? Many of us, including me, could not answer some of the questions in the paper, which is not only confusing but confuses a body of knowledge from a nerds’ guide to the British nation, which is not what we were about.

Finally, would it not be a good idea if British citizens, when they reach adulthood, had a bit of a test of their own?

**Brandon Lewis:** I will try to cover off those points, and I am sure you will remind me if I have managed to avoid any part of it. Dealing with the last part first, that starts to cover part of what Nick was talking about earlier on in terms of the test. I often think that, having spent many years in local government myself, having everybody in local government understand

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how the tier system works, which, in some areas, can be some tiers long and deep, is a challenge for all of us, not least of all some of us as councillors when we were in it.

In terms of the test itself, I will probably deal with the points in reverse order, as it were, having taken that last point first. In terms of the point, David, around the "Life in the UK" book, there were a couple of points you made within that. First, the last edition was revised in 2013. We are looking at updating it because things do move on. For example, there are no longer tax discs, which are mentioned in there. Andy Murray's success has increased since the book was last done, which is good for all of us—another British hero.

However, what the book does—and going back to its inception back in your time, David—is it does try to outline. We need to differentiate sometimes between some of the ways it is portrayed, because what we are looking for and what the book is looking to give people and the test is looking to check is a basic understanding of the British way of life: people having an understanding of the things that they are going to encounter as a British citizen and as an integrated part of British society, which is not just about language but about understanding how the culture works. That does involve sport and it does involve some of the history of our literature and cultural world—and yes, I say that genuinely as a Thomas Hardy fan—as well as understanding how local government works, how the rule of law works, that there are four parts to the United Kingdom, and how all of that comes together.

That is quite a sensible thing to do, because taking British citizenship, which comes to the second part of your question, David, is a choice that people make, which can be for a number of reasons. Somebody can get indefinite leave to remain without necessarily going to the next step of taking British citizenship. It touches on a point that Nick Bourne made right at the beginning of this morning's session, which is that people who decide to go for British citizenship will do it for a range of reasons.

However, at the core of it—and I am sure people have different logical reasons for doing it—is a very strong emotive desire to make a commitment to the community that they now feel they are part of and want to be part of, and see British citizenship as a real aspiration and something to gain. For us, in terms of the way it is priced, there is a process that people go through that has different prices at different stages. Indefinite leave to remain is where people stay.

If they choose to go on and take British citizenship, we do charge for that and we have always been very clear, from the Immigration Act 2014 most recently, that it is in line with those powers, and the charges we put forward are charges that cover the costs of running the system itself, which includes border security as well as the administration of our British citizenship test. People choose to do that and their emotive reason for doing that is one that should be admired. As I say, what the book tries to



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do is give them a feel for what British culture, as well as, as we touched on earlier, the values, are about.

I cannot remember if I have covered, within doing all that, the first part of your question, David.

**Lord Blunkett:** So you do now want to encourage people where it is appropriate.

**Brandon Lewis:** That is the one part I would certainly challenge you on, because I do not recognise that. As I say, working in the Home Office over the last couple of years, and certainly in this role since the summer, I do not recognise what you have outlined in terms of the way the Home Office works.

**Lord Blunkett:** To be fair, it was before his time.

**Brandon Lewis:** Yes, but even looking back, I do not recognise that as a situation. There are ebbs and flows. When you look at the tracking of the number of people who look for British citizenship, there is a definite ebb and flow. It literally goes up and down. There is not a clear trajectory. For many years, it us up one year and down the next. It does ebb and flow. That will be about the number of applications. From the Home Office point of view, I do not think there has been any particular view about seeing less, but what we are very clear about is that, if somebody is coming into this country, I make no apology for the fact that we are doing what we can to make sure that people who come into this country are coming for all of the right reasons and are able to integrate and be part of that community whilst keeping our communities safe. Having your previous roles, David, you will know about that from the point of view of national security and immigration more widely, and the border security part of that is part of my brief.

**Lord Blunkett:** Chair, just to be mischievous, I thought Minister Gibb was just warming to the idea of my last point about British citizens knowing a lot at the age of 18.

**The Chairman:** Did I hear you answer the question about cost and the fact that it tended to be only the leader of the household, and whether the Government make a profit out of this?

**Brandon Lewis:** The fees for visa and naturalisation do exceed the administrative costs of those services. We have been very clear about that but we have set the fees to make sure that they are able to contribute towards the resources for the wider border security, immigration and nationality system, as outlined in the 2014 Immigration Act.

**Lord Blunkett:** We may want to come back to this with recommendations. You may want to consider a family fee rather than just an individual one, but that is another matter.

Q190 **Lord Rowe-Beddoe:** Democratic engagement is the next section. Ease

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and accuracy of registration: in recent years, after each general election, concerns have been expressed concerning voter registration and the difficulties that parts of our community encounter in trying to register. Has the Government considered allowing members of the public to register to vote without a national insurance number on the basis of other recognised government ID? Secondly, what work has the Government done to improve the efficiency of voter registration by harnessing existing datasets? The last part of that is: has automatic voter registration been considered for people coming through the age of 16?

**Brandon Lewis:** I can certainly deal with the first part of your question. Both from a department point of view and more widely as well, the Cabinet Office have been doing a piece of work on this. Chris Skidmore is the lead around voter registration. I do think it is right that the Government do take this seriously and with some caution, and I say this as a Member of Parliament who represents an area where I have seen opponents being found guilty of electoral fraud. I have seen first-hand what people will do and what people can do in terms of that. It is right that we use national insurance numbers for identification, because it is important that we are able to verify that somebody is exactly who they say they are. In the case that I saw in my own constituency, people were able to put in nominations for somebody to be a councillor without that person signing the form, and ended up in a case about that.

We also sometimes forget that, because that is the standard procedure—and it is right to be certain about identity—we also need to bear in mind that, for people who cannot—and, yes, I do accept this—provide a national insurance number, they can still register. There is another process for exceptional circumstances, where they will go through other processes to prove their identity and they can use other forms of documentary evidence to show that they are who they say they are, the most common and obvious being a passport, which is one of the most secure documents. There are other processes but it is right that we make sure that people really are who they say they are.

**Nick Gibb:** If I can just add one comment to that, we are also concerned that any kind of automatic registration would undermine the principle of individual electoral registration: namely, that the individual responsibility and ownership over registering to vote—the sense of personal responsibility—would be undermined by the concept, as well as all the issues about verification.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I see that point and I agree with you on that, but would you accept that perhaps in that join from young person to adulthood and getting the right to vote, something could be done in sixth form to encourage people to register to vote, as individuals—not against the law—and for sixth-form teachers to take that responsibility on and some facility in the school to enable them to register themselves individually?

**Nick Gibb:** Again, it would undermine that principle but—

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**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** No, they would still register individually.

**Nick Gibb:** No, it undermines the principle that you, yourself, are responsible for registering. What we need to do is to do more. It is incumbent on all of us to promote democratic engagement.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Including schools.

**Nick Gibb:** Yes, to explain the importance of registering but not necessarily to do it for students.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** No, not do it for them but to do it there.

**Lord Rowe-Beard:** I talked previously about the ease of registration, but there is somebody in the room called fraud. That is the biggest threat that you have. How do you assess fraudulent registration? How do you assess fraudulent votes today? Do you have any idea other than what the popular press tells us?

**Nick Gibb:** On the ease of registration, it is very easy. People can register on the "register to vote" website at any time and it can be done in as little as three minutes, so it has never been easier to register than now.

Q191 **Baroness Barker:** On the National Citizen Service, an ongoing theme throughout all our debate has been the parallel definitions of citizenship. On the one hand, there is individual, personal responsibility, and then, on the other hand, there is collective engagement in the democratic process. We have heard from you in your submission to us and also the statement from the Ministers that the National Citizen Service is not about citizenship per se but about social action. I wonder if you could expand on the reasons why that should be, given the paucity of other citizenship education and schemes.

The second thing is, as you well know from the passage of the Bill during the House, there is a question that arises from the original design of the National Citizen Service, which is its attachment and its overall inclusion in wider citizenship involvement. Can you answer the question that is repeatedly put about the NCS: four weeks' engagement, then what?

**Tracey Crouch:** The first thing to say is that it was not set up as a citizenship scheme, so absolutely, categorically, that was not its purpose, whereas it was set up with three core purposes, which we highlighted in the evidence to you as well, around social mobility, social cohesion and social engagement. That said, it does encourage active citizenship. It encourages a broader personal development and social mixing, but quite clearly we want to make sure that the NCS is involved in all the aspects of democratic engagement.

The NCS Trust have worked closely with schools in order to embed NCS into the citizenship and PSHE curriculums. They work with the Association for Citizenship Teaching. They also have various activities while the youngsters are on the programme to engage their youngsters with citizenship and democratic engagement. They work with Bite the Ballot and

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Rock Enrol!. They help tens of thousands of people to register to vote and they connect young people with local politicians and community leaders. We as MPs get invited to our local citizenship schemes and programmes, where we can talk about what we do. Clearly, they do participate in citizenship education; they are just not set up as a citizenship scheme, and it is really important that we recognise that.

In terms of the skills that they learn on the programme, it is around things like social mixing, social engagement and social action. The scheme is designed to fill a gap that was not necessarily happening within communities themselves. What we find from the feedback that we get after each and every programme is that they really value the scheme. Many youngsters absolutely love it and they have certainly gone on a personal journey as part of the citizenship scheme.

You do make an important point, however: what next? It is really important that the skills that they learn as part of the programme are things that they take with them for life. We are certainly looking at ways we can connect graduates from the NCS scheme with other community-hub initiatives, so that they can continue to take their learnings from the programme into life in general. We recognise that we are at early stages of that part of the programme. I certainly recognise some of the criticism that was outlined by the PAC and the NAO on those issues and we are working with the NCS Trust to develop that going forward.

We are trying to connect the graduates from the NCS scheme with other opportunities. NCS is working with the Scouts in order to try to encourage those who have been through the programme to become scout leaders. They are working as part of the #iwill campaign, which is all about volunteering. There are lots of different initiatives that are happening, although we do recognise that we have a little way to go.

**Baroness Barker:** The NCS is only unique in one aspect, and that is that it will have automatic contact with every 16 and 17 year-old. Do you not think that, given that advantage that it has, it ought to be doing more towards promoting citizenship and engagement as well as all the other activities that are done by other groups?

**Tracey Crouch:** It does but it is done in a subtle way. It is done in a way that connects youngsters in citizenship and encourages them to get a better understanding, but without the parameters of being in a classroom. It is not sitting there necessarily teaching them about the difference between a tier-one and a tier-two local authority, but it is teaching them about the importance of getting out to vote and teaching them about other social issues, such as social inclusion and social mobility. That is enormously important. Citizenship is not just about encouraging people to vote; it is also about getting a better understanding of the society that they live in, and that is one of the advantages of the NCS.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** It is a very expensive programme, and doubts have been expressed about whether it is good value for money. I

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wonder what comparisons have been done with comparable schemes like the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, for example, in terms of good value for money, effectiveness and reaching all communities.

**Tracey Crouch:** I know that the NAO and the PAC report on the NCS highlighted the importance of improving value for money, and we would recognise and agree with that. We are working very closely with NCS to try to enhance that. Annoyingly, the 2016 evaluation of value for money comes out next week, so we will write to the Committee to update you on that. The 2015 statistics, however, showed that, for every pound spent on the summer programme—and, of course, there are three seasonal programmes—£1.50 of benefits were realised. We recognise that there is definitely improvement in the value for money of that. Next year, when the NCS looks at all its local contracts, we would expect a reduction in some of the unit costs, which is a horrible way of putting it, going forward. We recognise the criticism and we are working on those issues.

**Lord Blunkett:** Chair, I have a number of numerated interests. Could I bowl the Sports Minister a very quick googly? Do you, Tracey, have a timeline yet on when the new chair might be appointed?

**Tracey Crouch:** It is imminent, one hopes. My bit is done.

Q192 **The Chairman:** Thank you very much. You have been very good with your time. Perhaps we could finish off with a more general question. You will have gathered the concerns of the Committee. They include the values—whether they are called shared or British—and the red lines associated with them, in terms of the points beyond which people should not go; the position of citizenship education; the challenges of areas of low social capital, of introverted and isolationist communities and of how we encourage democratic engagement. As I said at the beginning, one of the things we have been told is that it is going to require sustained, persistent effort to tackle these and other areas. You have these three strategies coming forward. How are you going to judge whether you have been successful and how far do you think you are going to be able to tackle some of the points that the Committee has raised with you this morning? Lord Bourne, would you like to start?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** Not really (smiling, laughing). First of all, I do not think we will be able to tell overnight whether we have been successful. It is something that you would need to look at over a period. You are absolutely right to highlight the danger of silo thinking and warn us about the dangers of that, but these programmes do dovetail citizen and democratic engagement and integration, and it would be wrong to think of each of these being produced in isolation and saying different things. They are designed to dovetail together. Your summary of the challenges of social capital and isolation are all well stated.

Just listening to the last question and Tracey's response, I agree with all that but it also does perhaps highlight the fact that we are not just faced with the issue of the increasingly diverse nature of British society in terms of citizen engagement and so on; there is also the issue that we are fighting

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against there in citizenship and engagement about the computer in the bedroom and so on, and getting people engaged not because they do not want to engage with people of other faiths or religions but simply the isolation that comes from that. That is another interesting challenge that perhaps we need to explore more.

There are many ways of looking at this. We have seen serious challenges. We have seen hate crime go up in the last year at the same time we have seen better reporting. Better reporting is good. Some of the hate-crime statistics represent better reporting. How do we find out which that is? How do we judge whether this is successful? We will all be able to see and recognise it but there are so many different strands to it and so many different sets of statistics that it is going to need a deep dive to make sure that we are being successful.

We have not touched on something else that is very relevant, and that is the *Race Disparity Audit*, where the Government have been absolutely right, and the Prime Minister in particular has really been leading on this in terms of how we use those statistics to inform policy across a whole range of issues, some of which we have been discussing today. I have no easy answer to how we will know whether we have been successful, Robin, but I suspect that, over four or five years, we will have a rough guide of what the challenges are.

**Tracey Crouch:** The Committee's work is incredibly welcome on this, but the fact that there could have been five, if not six, Ministers here shows that there is not one single problem. There is not one single department. There is not one single solution to the issues that you raise. We are all working together to try to ensure that we do improve better democratic engagement and citizenship across the board. We all have a responsibility, both as Members of Parliament and Peers, to ensure that we encourage an understanding within our own communities of what it means.

**Nick Gibb:** Education lies at the root of both democratic engagement and social capital; we might call it social mobility. Standards are rising in our primary schools and in our secondary schools, and already the gap between those from disadvantaged backgrounds and their more affluent peers has closed by 9.3% in the primary sector and by 7% in the secondary sector. Last week, the international reading and literacy survey showed England rising from joint 10th to joint eighth place in the 50 OECD jurisdictions. We are seeing an eight-percentage-point increase in attainment in the new, much higher standard of key stage 2 SATS happening. Right across the board, we are seeing higher standards in our schools. There are 1.9 million more pupils in good and outstanding schools today than in 2010. That is absolutely key. More knowledgeable, better-educated people leaving our school system is the way to enhance voter engagement and democratic engagement.

**Brandon Lewis:** Building on the points that colleagues have made, we face a huge challenge as we move forward in all of these areas, because of the way that our lifestyles are changing, particularly, as Nick Bourne

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government; Tracey Crouch MP, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, Minister of

touched on, in terms of this issue around how we integrate and how we link with the internet at all different levels; it is not just integration but the impact that that has generally on society and how people interact with each other. People can interact now without seeing each other, which does make it harder to integrate, whatever your background and wherever you come from. Therefore, we have to be even more ferocious in our desire and our determination to make sure that we do work together as communities, that we do recognise that, as a country, we are a great country because we have had this kind of integration—multifaith, multi-background—for generations. It is what makes this country so special and such a great place, as we see regularly now. People want to come to it and want to be part of it, and we should be proud of that. We should not be afraid, particularly where political correctness can get in the way, of dealing with extremism wherever it comes from.

Ultimately, coming to your point, Lord Chairman, around how we assess that, we have to be very careful that we do not try to set arbitrary targets of what success looks like and feels like, because it will change as the challenges change. We have to make sure that we move with that. The Prime Minister has been very clear about the overarching desire to deal with that, which is absolutely right. Fortunately, there will be an august committee such as your good selves who will no doubt challenge us on that and test us on that in due course.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much indeed for your time and for the information you have given us. We look forward to discussing the results of our report with you in due course.