Dr Eddy Hogg, University of Kent Centre for Philanthropy – written evidence (CCE0006)

Overview
The Centre for Philanthropy at the University of Kent has conducted a number of research projects since our founding in 2008 that contribute to the study of active citizenship and civic engagement. There are four areas of the Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement’s focus in which our research and teaching can make a contribution, and we consider these in turn.

3. Freedom of philanthropic action – time and money – is an essential part of its nature and should never be enforced. In a report we contributed to, Motivations of Sports Volunteers in England: A Review for Sport England (2016), co-authored by Dr Eddy Hogg, we found that the best way to encourage long-term commitment to civic participation is to adopt an approach which seeks to develop ‘volunteer capital’ through ongoing flexible support and encouragement for those who wish to engage. Rather than seeing civic engagement as a transaction where service is provided in the expectation of some immediate reward, we argue in this report that engagement should be seen as a process where life circumstances mean that taking part is more straightforward at some times during the life-course than others. We argue that good volunteer management, provided by paid staff or other volunteers, can support people to maintain their involvement even in times when engagement is less easy.

This argument – that we need to see civic engagement as a process and not something which can be seen as immediately transactional and must certainly never be enforced – is supported by evidence presented in the article Constant, serial and trigger volunteers: volunteering across the lifecourse and into older age (2016) by Dr Eddy Hogg. In this paper it is argued that lifelong commitment to civic engagement can be fostered through supportive organisations that have flexible ways of engaging and allow people to maintain a relationship with the organisation even when life circumstances prohibit them from volunteering much time.

Evidence:
Constant, serial and trigger volunteers: volunteering across the lifecourse and into older age was published in Voluntary Sector Review in 2016 (vol 7, no 2, pp 169-190). Copy available on request to e.hogg@kent.ac.uk

5. Previous research suggests that encouraging, but not forcing, active citizenship is the best approach. We do that through our teaching on two undergraduate modules: Kent Student Certificate in Volunteering Platinum Award – this module, delivered at our Canterbury campus by Dr Eddy Hogg in partnership with Kent Union, supports students in undertaking 100 hours of volunteering across three different placements. One of these must be off-campus in the wider community and another must involve some form of leadership. Supported by a short series of lectures exploring the nature of volunteering and active citizenship, students are encouraged to critically reflect on their experiences of volunteering and the impact it has had on themselves as individuals, the organisations they have helped and on wider society. Social Justice Practice – this module, delivered at our Medway Campus by Dr Eddy Hogg, supports students in undertaking 100 hours of volunteering in charities of their choosing in the Medway area. In addition students attend a series of weekly lectures over the academic year in which they learn theoretical and practical knowledge, and explore debates about volunteering, active
citizenship and the third sector. Through academic essays and reflective diaries, students assess the impact that their volunteering has had on themselves as individuals and use their academic learning to explore the issues addressed and impact made by the charities with whom their volunteer.

We also believe that a charity workforce that understands the importance of active citizenship and is skilled in supporting active citizens is essential. This is why we launched the United Kingdom’s first Masters Degree in Philanthropic Studies in 2016. This degree programme, delivered online and aimed at existing charity sector professionals, meets a gap in social science teaching provision for those working in, or seeking careers in, the sector. We are clear that the best way to support active citizenship and civic engagement is to have a highly skilled and professional workforce able to support the endeavours of those keen to donate their time and money. Our MA seeks to deliver on this goal and to help to develop an even more skilled and knowledgeable charity sector workforce for the future.

Evidence:
Module handbooks and other documents relating to all of this teaching is available on request to philanthropy@kent.ac.uk

6. Our research shows that engagement in active citizenship by young people is a key way of ensuring civic engagement in adulthood. It teaches young people the value of civic engagement and the ways in which it can be done, but perhaps more importantly it gives them the confidence that they can and will make a difference by getting involved. This is evidenced in our report Side by Side: A case study report of the experiences of young people supported by West Kent Extra (2015), by Dr Alison Body and Dr Eddy Hogg. In this report, we explain how the relationships between young people and the professional staff and adult volunteers who support civic engagement are crucial. Through these positive relationships, young people are able to experience – often for the first time – having a voice and feeling that they can influence decision making processes which affect them. We found that youth service provision which focuses on giving young people a voice has clear lasting impacts for creating strong communities. Our findings suggest that young people engaged in youth social action programmes are more likely to volunteer, have a strong desire to ‘give back’, are more likely to engage in community participation and advocacy, and have an increased sense of social responsibility and supporting others.

This report makes three key recommendations, each of which are relevant when planning active citizenship programmes for young people:

1. There is a clear case for the continuation of open access provision built on lasting relationships, which has a proven impact in reaching marginalised and disadvantaged young people.
2. Voluntary sector organisations and in particular the paid staff and volunteers who are their public face have a real strength in their ability to form long term relationships with beneficiaries. It is important that such organisations and schemes have a plan to harness or move forwards those young people who wish to ‘give back’ and develop sustainable models of volunteering and social responsibility.
3. There are many examples of youth participation good practice; however youth focused organisations need to focus on how young people can continue and increasingly set the participation agenda.

Evidence:
9. Barriers to engagement in civic engagement do not just exist for traditionally marginalised groups, as our report *Philanthropic Journeys: new insights into the triggers and barriers for long-term giving and volunteering* (2014) by Dr Beth Breeze finds. Looking at the civic engagement of London-based senior professionals, we found they faced five main barriers when seeking to get involved in civic engagement:

1. A lack of confidence that skills and experiences gained in the private sector would be useful to charities
2. A lack of belief that engaging with charities would benefit them in their personal and professional lives
3. Lack of time due to commitments at home and at work
4. Lack of awareness of appropriate opportunities to get involved
5. Concerns that charities would be badly managed

We found that with good management and with the right opportunities made available, these barriers can be overcome. In particular, policymakers need to understand that active citizenship is better conceived as a lifelong journey than as a series of unrelated acts. This is more likely to achieve the overall goal of a stronger civil society.

Evidence: *Philanthropic Journeys: new insights into the triggers and barriers for long-term giving and volunteering* is available online at [http://tinyurl.com/y8srzhvu](http://tinyurl.com/y8srzhvu)

Final Comments

Three things are clear from our research:

1. Civic engagement needs to be understood as a lifelong process, not as a moment in time or a series of unrelated acts. Joining up different types of engagement at different life stages means people can be supported to give their time and talents in the long term.
2. There is a clear need for well-trained and knowledgeable professionals to manage civic engagement and to ensure that those who want to volunteer their time can do so, and be properly supported in their efforts. Management and support are especially important for those who have not been socialised into civic engagement or considered it as being the kind of thing people like them do.
3. The support needed to enable good citizenship and civic engagement to take place has a cost. Professionals need to be trained and resourced, and volunteers need to be facilitated and supported. The target of increased civic engagement is clearly reliant on a properly resourced infrastructure, from both government and the third sector.

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