Sunny Dhadley, on behalf of Wolverhampton SUIT (Service User Involvement Team) – written evidence (CCE0008)

More than ever, it is vitally important in the 21st Century that the views, opinions and thoughts of civic society are considered and listened to. Citizenship and civic engagement should take place in various forms and guises (especially with digital advances). Each citizen has a right to feel involved and appreciated within Britain, but due to varying reasons there is a feeling of discord and disconnection amongst society and I feel that it is the role of Government to address this situation directly. For example, with the cultural diversity that exists amongst our communities there is a need to increase the levels of diversity within public sector services, in order to mirror the cultural diversity within society as this would clearly demonstrate the commitment towards embracing diversity.

Foreign nationals will bring with them cultural ideologies and practices that may seem disconnected from the rest of society, but surely within modern Britain we can find ways for all citizens to feel that they are respected and their views are welcome in achieving a more harmonious society.

Now more than ever, we need to embrace online technology in order to allow communities to feed in to decision making processes, whilst also offering tangible opportunities for all pockets of society to have their voices heard (by utilising community connections).

I feel that certain reassurances are required and messages should be consistently disseminated. Recent challenges, such as Brexit, I believe were built on a lack of understanding and awareness of things such as immigration. This led to the voting community feeling almost obliged to vote to leave the European Union, without fully appreciating the gruelling processes that our Government are going through and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. By contextualising things such as immigration and equipping the society with key information and knowledge on Global issues, such as displacement from conflict, then this will encourage active participation.

Education is absolutely crucial in creating social change measures, but there is inequality that impacts upon the ability of education to create the desires changes. Strong, credible leadership is required within all aspects of public service and life as this instils confidence within society.

I manage a charity and have been classed as a Social Leader. Part of my role within public life consists of providing care, support and opportunities for those that are vulnerable within society (addiction, homelessness, mental health, illiteracy, unemployed etc.) and having suffered from addiction in the past, I am able to empathise in such a way as to connect, reframe and shape the lives of many.

Another aspect of my role is to feed in the views and experiences of those suffering from addiction, in to arenas to bring about change. Quite often, I feed in to systems that work directly in the subject area and concentrate efforts in that work particular stream, rather than working systematically across a range of areas public life (rather than concentrating efforts solely in one area).
Interestingly, the service that I manage (www.suiteam.com) attracts people from all parts of society (LGBT, migrants, various ethnicities, professionals, those with disabilities, family members and carers etc.) as they feel that their views, opinions and issues will be listened to in a non-judgemental way and practical solutions offered.

We need to get back to the understanding that we are human first and this is a connection that should be honoured and appreciated. Of course there will be differing points of view, but we should make a concerted effort to re-harmonise our existence and face challenges together. This must be done in conjunction with civic society.

3 August 2017