Mrs Violet Rook – written evidence (CCE0020)

The rights and responsibilities attached to citizenship
A citizen in the United Kingdom should have a voice in the community, to create fairness, equality and liberty for all for this and each generation now and in the future.
A chance to live a life which is protected by laws established in time via the legislature, common law and the judiciary.
I took part in the project in regard to a preamble for a written constitution in 2015 and this was a step towards that process of encouragement of active citizenship. Parliament needs to be open to such ideas which promote comment and to allow comment to lead to debate.
Citizens need to have the knowledge to join organisations locally and make their views known. Social Media promotes some active participation, but many people are afraid of personal involvement. This needs to be overcome if democracy is to be real for the next generation.
Local groups need to feel that their voice is heard and how to make it heard. Information via education and use of knowledge in regard to Parliamentary procedure can aid these ambitions.
Our constitution is a balance of what went before, it shows where we have been and what we have created and how we have arrived at the decisions of today, and shows the way to the future.

The state of citizenship education and the role that it plays in creating active citizens
This should begin at school and be part of the National Curriculum. It should continue throughout childhood and be part of the qualifications obtained on leaving full time education.
I studied the British Constitution O and A level GCE examinations and have also completed a MOOC course via Future Learn online. These courses were once considered unnecessary, but are vital in the 21st century if citizens are to understand the state and how it works.
Education in regard to citizenship and civic engagement should be conducted at a local, regional and national level. Events which are in progress at this time including visits to local government council meetings by school children and visits of councillors and members of parliament to schools to explain their role should be extended and be mandatory to their role.
And adults attending a least once refresher Course on government in ten years would help understanding of any changes taking place.

Topics for education
Citizenship and civic engagement education
- should become part of the National Curriculum.
- should be mandatory at GCSE O and A level
- adults have a mandatory one day refresher course every ten years.
- all politicians eg members of parliament and councillors (parish, town county councillors) have a mandatory role to visit schools at least annually to explain role to pupils. These visits to be stated on their own website and on Parliamentary register.
- Members of Parliament to inform constituencies regarding work via email, text and social media weekly.
- Residents to be able to give views to MP’s via active live feeds to Parliamentary debates.

The ways society can support civic engagement and the role of Government and Parliament.
The relationship between civic engagement and social cohesion.
Individuals can be support via being aware of their rights and the opportunities for involvement in civic engagement. I was involve with an organisation called Community Voices in Newcastle which brought together many individuals from all cultures and across generations.
This involved representation in regard to Partnership Boards in the city where representatives from the Council, business, the public services and the voluntary sector all came together to discuss and make decisions regarding health, education and civic concerns. Though these were not social groups, individuals brought together in this way made friends and learnt from each other. This lead to a social cohesion which was praise by most of those involved and give benefit to the city. Individuals learnt about other countries and different methods of government and how to adapt and co-operate. Educating society via encouragement in civic engagement seems to prove that knowledge helps to unite.

**Ways of Support**

Provide education via National Curriculum
Local, regional and national encouragement for all cultures to be included in public, voluntary organisations with resources to allow information.
Made it mandatory for Councillors and Members of Parliament and House of Lords to attend schools at least annually to allow pupils to ask questions.
Pupils to see a least one civic engagement event in school year.
Video conferencing with MP’s and local and national groups.
Video conferencing with Parliamentary Committees and local and national groups on a regular basis to allow for comment and debate.
Video conferencing at a local level with Councils and residents and schools on a regular basis - real time.
Information is power therefore all generations need to be kept in touch with the real world and how decisions are made and feel they have a voice in such decisions or at least the voice can be used and hope give it could be heard.

14 August 2017