1. What does citizenship and civic engagement mean in the 21st century? Why does it matter, and how does it relate to questions of identity?

As Osler and Starkey (1996) have usefully described, citizenship comprises status, feeling and practice. Citizenship means all people in this country becoming aware (from an early age or from being accepted as a Citizen) of their status as citizens with concomitant rights and responsibilities to their local, regional, national and global communities. They should also develop a feeling of belonging and identity within their communities at different local to global levels. They should then be aware of how to put citizenship into practice at these different levels. Civic engagement means finding different ways to engage people as citizens, from voting to online and face to face community fora. It matters because large sections of society feel alienated from the structures of the current political system, feel they do not have a voice and are likely to fall prey to those offering simplistic and extreme solutions. As implied in the definition of citizenship above, people need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance in the communities they live in and inhabit, but also a sense of agency, a belief that their views matter, that they see themselves as active citizens, capable of making changes for the better in concert with others.

2. Citizenship is partly about membership and belonging. Are there ways we could strengthen people’s identity as citizens, whether they are citizens by birth or naturalisation? Could citizenship ceremonies or events throughout the educational process play a role? Should pride in being or becoming British be encouraged?

Identity as citizens could be strengthened through the education system (see Question 5). For those who become naturalised citizens, some form of induction should take place, but beyond the simplistic citizenship test. Some understanding of the journey towards democracy in Britain should be developed and an awareness of one’s rights and responsibilities as a citizen locally to globally. A sense of pride in being part of an evolving story should be developed, but national citizenship should be balanced with a sense of the global and responsibilities to all of humanity and the planet we all share.

3. Civic engagement can be seen as both a responsibility and a right of citizenship. Beyond the existing legal framework, should citizens have additional formal rights and responsibilities? How do you see the relationship between the two? Should they have the force of law individually or be presented as reciprocal duties between citizen and state? How should they be monitored and/or enforced?

Civic engagement should be encouraged through education – all young people should have the opportunity to take part in voluntary activities in their community as part of schooling. A culture of civic engagement should be developed by experience and practical example, not by force of law. The government should investigate and implement the New Economics Foundation’s ‘21 Hours’ campaign[^1], for the normal working week to become 21 hours, so more work was available for all, with more leisure time, as well as more time to volunteer in the community.

4. Do current laws encourage active political engagement? What are your views on changes to the franchise for national or local elections, including lowering the voting age? Should changes be made to the voting process or the voting registration process?

In combination with more active and explicit Citizenship Education in the school curriculum, the voting age should be lowered to 16. The first-past-the-post system should be replaced with proportional representation to ensure a wider representation of political views and a more dialogue-based decision-making system.

5. What should be the role of education in teaching and encouraging good citizenship? At what stages, from primary school through to university, should it be (a) available, and (b) compulsory? Should there be any exemptions? Should there be more emphasis on political participation, both inside and outside classes? How effective is current teaching? Do the curriculum and the qualifications that are currently offered need amending?

Citizenship Education should be a compulsory subject at primary and secondary school, and should be available in Further, Higher and Adult education. It should encompass developing knowledge of local to global politics, but also skills for engagement and a much greater emphasis on active citizenship. Early Years and Key Stage 1 should develop skills such as dialogic learning, critical thinking and collaborative learning. From Key Stage 2 young people should have the opportunity to devise projects for active citizenship in their school and community. All schools should engage in discussion around topical issues (more should be done to promote Global Learning – see the work of the Global Learning Programme) and should put into practice voting procedures for School Councils and practice Mock Elections, as these have been shown to improve understanding and develop a culture of civic engagement. Very few schools take Citizenship Education seriously and most secondary schools are failing their statutory duty to teach it (it is often hidden in PHSE and pupils are unaware of the difference between the two subjects). The number of trained Citizenship teachers is tiny and there is no incentive to encourage them in ITE or whilst in post. The E-Bacc has led to many schools dropping Citizenship at GCSE and there are no plans to continue with 'A' level Citizenship, so the subject has lost even more status. GCSE and A level exams should include assessment of active Citizenship projects. Ofsted should produce regular reports on how well it is being taught.

6. Do voluntary citizenship programmes such as the National Citizen Service do a good job of creating active citizens? Are they the right length? Should they be compulsory, and if so, when? Should they include a greater political element? Should they lead to a more public citizenship ceremony? Are they good value for money? What other routes exist for creating active citizens?

The NCS should continue, but do more to encourage young people from all sections of society to take part, as well as encouraging more to take part in the International Citizenship Service. Better Citizenship Education and a broader culture of civic engagement (see Question 3) would lead to more active citizens.

7. How can society support civic engagement? What responsibility should central government, devolved and local governments, third sector organisations and the individual have for

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2 www.glp-e.org.uk
encouraging civic engagement? What can the Government and Parliament do to support civil society initiatives to increase civic engagement?

All organisations should encourage a culture of civic engagement and volunteering (this would be much easier if the 21 Hours campaign mentioned in Question 3 were adopted). It should be seen as part of work-life balance in all areas of employment.

8. What are the values that all of us who live in Britain should share and support? Can you identify any threats to these values, which affect the citizenship of, for instance, women or various minority groups? If so, how can their citizenship be strengthened?

The so-called ‘Fundamental British Values’ should be re-named ‘the values to which we broadly subscribe as a society, as it is erroneous and divisive to call them ‘British’. They should also include the values of justice and solidarity. More needs to be done to break down the barriers of white, male privilege which prevent the advancement of many women and people from ethnic minorities. Good Citizenship Education should develop a greater sense of agency, articulacy and community engagement amongst all sections of society.

9. Why do so many communities and groups feel “left behind”? Are there any specific factors which act as barriers to active citizenship faced by different communities or groups - white, BME, young, old, rural, urban? How might these barriers be overcome?

Many people feel removed from politics and civic engagement as they do not feel their views are represented or that the political process does little to help them. Many feel that the political system has been bought by corporate and vested interests. State funding of political parties who obtain more than 5% of the vote in elections should be brought in to create a more level playing field and restore faith in the lobbying system. Proportional representation would give more say to a greater number of views and reduce the binary nature of political arguments. More focus should be made on the work of Select Committees at national and local level, where people from different political parties and experts in the field have to work together in dialogue to find solutions. Members of the public should also be invited to take part. The promotion of PMQ-type exchanges in the media puts people off and trivialises politics. Methodologies such as Philosophy for Children and Philosophy in Communities can develop a culture of dialogue where people learn to be more open-minded and accept different perspectives and world-views. Such skills and learning are crucial for community cohesion and to begin to solve complex problems in a world facing an uncertain future.

8 September 2017