1. **Catch22** is a social business and charity, a not for profit business with a social mission. We design and deliver services that build resilience and aspiration in people and communities.

2. Our vision is a strong society where everyone has a good place to live, a purpose and good people around them. We exist to ensure these are achievable for everyone, no matter what their background.

3. Our 1600 colleagues work at every stage of the social welfare cycle, supporting 44,000 young people and adults from cradle to career. Today we deliver youth social action, children’s social care, alternative and SEMH specialist education, apprenticeships and employability programmes, justice and rehabilitation services, emotional wellbeing and substance misuse support.

**ABOUT CATCH22 AND CITIZENSHIP**

4. For the past 200 years, Catch22 has delivered services helping young people become active citizens; engaged with their communities, engaged with education, work and those around them.

5. Today Catch22 works with thousands of young people, helping them fulfil their potential. Many of the young people that we work with sit outside of mainstream education or have experience of the care or justice system; those most in need of citizenship programmes. Without being engaged with the world around them, they are unable to realise and fulfil their potential and in turn to help others to do the same. Voluntary citizenship programmes like the National Citizen Service are an accessible conduit for people from challenging backgrounds to engage with society and be an active player in their future.

**Question 5: What should be the role of education in teaching and encouraging good citizenship?**

6. Our teachers and young people believe that teaching and learning about citizenship should be embedded throughout formal education from primary to university, as a compulsory subject.

This approach would:

- 7. Teach young people not only that politics plays a role in everything they do, but also that local and central government can be held accountable by them.

- 8. Encourage democratic participation and social action. If from a young age, young people see that they can affect real change in political processes and in their community then they are more likely to exercise that right.

- 9. Ensure that all young people, regardless of background, get a grounding in politics and volunteering. Many of the young people that we work with leave formal education before 16. By starting this education early, we would reach all young people.

- 10. Encourage teachers of all subjects to consider and highlight the political and social action elements of their subject. Currently citizenship, whether taught through PHSE or other modules, operates as a standalone subject, whereas we believe it sits at the heart of a strong society.
Taking citizenship out of the classroom

11. We also suggest that citizenship can be learnt just as effectively out of the classroom as it can be in one, and that schools must teach through practical and community based activity. Our evidence suggests that young people that learn from an early age how democracy works are more likely to engage later in life.

12. The National Citizen Service actively promotes hands-on charity and community work, during which young people learn how their actions can improve the local society around them. In 2016, 80% of our young people that took part in hands on community work stated that they felt “inspired that I can make an impact on my community now and in future.”

Practical examples of embedding citizenship education

13. The background of a student shouldn’t be a barrier to building citizenship skills. Catch22’s services embed citizenship in formal and informal settings for young people who may be harder to engage:

14. Our alternative provision schools use the VotesforSchools programme with our students, encouraging them to learn about and ‘vote’ on a subject in class each week. Our youth programmes meet in informal settings - coffee shops, for example - outside of class to discuss politics and learn to debate.

15. Our National Citizen Service delivery teaches young people how to lead change within society through Bite the Ballot sessions, visits from MPs, and social action week where students plan and deliver volunteering projects in their communities.
CASE STUDY: DELIVERING FORMAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN AN INFORMAL SETTING

Victoria Burnard, Tutor at a Catch22 Study Programme (working with young people excluded from mainstream education, who have additional social, emotional and behavioural needs)

“We ran a Democracy Café at a local Starbucks in March 2017. We had a relatively good turn-out, with a few students putting forward some interesting opinions. The main theme of the discussion was immigration, which tied in to the Functional Skills/GCSE English content from the week leading up to the session.

“I do think it was beneficial for our students. By nature, our students tend to be quite disengaged from their communities, and will often ‘turn off’ when it comes to discussing politics, but we did have a few students who made really thoughtful, considered contributions.

“Many just sat and listened, which I also think is just as important. Politics is such a huge topic, and it can be really intimidating to offer an opinion when you might not know what you think, or when you don’t understand the jargon. So, even for our quiet/shy/anxious students, and for those who just out-right say they don’t care, I still think we need to be including them in these conversations.

“It may sound silly, but I also think the process of going somewhere new, being included, being asked, and even given a free hot drink all promotes the idea that we care what they’ve got to say, and everyone is valued.”

Question 6: Do voluntary citizenship programmes such as the National Citizen Service do a good job of creating active citizens?

Engaging young people that feel ‘left behind’

- 17. No active citizenship education or training will be successful if it excludes the portions of society that feel like ‘the system’ isn’t for them. Programmes like the National Citizen Service are an essential part of this process and for bringing people together and promoting an engaged citizenship.

- 18. Not only does the National Citizen Service bring young people from different walks of life together for shared experiences, but it engages young people who often feel ‘left behind’, planting the seed of social action and citizenship. These experiences build essential skills for life and work, investing in our country’s future talent.

- 19. Our graduates are living proof that the National Citizen Service is not a holiday camp for the privileged. We work with young people in care, outside mainstream education, in the criminal justice system. They don’t come from families with strong traditions of volunteering. But the National Citizen Service changes that. It shows them a world bigger than them, inspiring them to take on an active citizenship role.
20. The positive impact the programme can also have on their families and carers, creates a wider ripple-effect across communities and society more widely.

21. The ability of the National Citizen Service to bring young people from different life experiences together for four weeks cannot be underestimated. Voluntary citizenship programmes like the National Citizen Service bring our country together by building stronger, more integrated communities and fostering understanding between young people from different backgrounds.

Young people are not all on the same starting block.

22. For any ‘active citizenship’ programme to work, we must focus on the young people that have barriers to attending or who are not yet socially, emotionally, or behaviourally ready.

23. While the four weeks of the National Citizen Service can be enough to plant the seed of active citizenship for those young people that are ready for that experience, many more need extra time to get them to that stage.

24. Young people with challenging, or complex behaviour issues, particularly those ‘at risk’ (e.g. Offending/Exclusions/Substance Misuse) face multiple barriers to participation and completion of programmes such as the National Citizen Service.

25. Catch22 supports pre-National Citizen Service interventions to support those that feel most ‘left behind’ to enable them to receive the same shared experiences as their peers. There needs to be additional action and support to ensure that young people from more challenging backgrounds are ready socially and emotionally to take part and get the most out of citizenship programmes.

Give young people the toolkit to engage

26. It is imperative that at a young age young people are given the toolkit to engage in the political process and social action and, more than that, the confidence to do so.

27. Citizenship education, if done right, sparks the initial interest in democratic participation and social action. Some young people that come to the National Citizen Service need only that but for many, they need something more to develop the interest into active participation.

28. Programmes like the National Service engage young people in social action in their communities and the democratic process. It teaches them to take pride in their area and celebrate its successes. As a result of the National Citizen Service, they know they can have a role in that success by taking on activities as small as doing a favour for a neighbour or encouraging their friends to vote.

29. On the first day of our National Citizen Service Social Action week, we give young people tasks (ie: contact your local MP/MEP/Councillor about an area of interest, thank a local hero, understand how businesses can help community organisations) that get them
into their communities, learning the part they can play in affecting positive change as well as holding governments to account.

- 30. Catch22 supports follow-on programmes that empower young people to build upon their 4-week National Citizen Service experiences and develop their new ideas and explore existing opportunities to help them towards becoming lifelong active citizens.

31. CASE STUDY: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL ACTION INITIATIVES ON YOUNG PEOPLE

After their week of social action at The Salvation Army, we asked one of our North West NCS teams to tell us about the impact it had on them. This is what we were told:

- During this week I’ve found the confidence to deal with new people. I have pushed myself to have a voice in my group and I have grown in self-assertiveness.
- Comments that I have received from both staff and members of the public have warmed my heart, made me feel like I have done something good for the community and only boosted my resolve even more.
- This week has made me feel more confident and made me feel proud of myself as I have made a positive impact upon my local community.
- Pushed me to do new things and I have really come out of my shell over the last 4 weeks. This experience has allowed me to feel much more confident in myself and it has given me a good feeling knowing that I have help others in need.

To complete this response, we surveyed young people, teachers across Catch22’s schools, front line professionals and youth workers. We would be happy to facilitate further conversations with any of these groups for the Select Committee.

8 September 2017