Joint submission – written evidence (CE0199)

Introduction

At a time when our society feels more divided than ever, with disenfranchisement and a sense of exclusion on the rise, this inquiry is a timely and welcome step towards improving community integration for young people across the UK.

As part of this submission, a number of youth charities have come together to pool their expertise and experience across a number of issues, offering insight on how to make the UK a more inclusive society; one that is composed of prosperous communities of engaged, young citizens.

These charities are: The Scout Association, Leap Confronting Conflict, UK Youth, V Inspired, Girlguiding, NCS Trust, The Mix, Ambition, British Youth Council, Citizenship Foundation and City Year UK.

As a group, we have developed a submission that contains details of what we have learned about citizenship and civic engagement through our work with young people.

We all agree that developing a sense of citizenship and encouraging civic engagement is something that is most effective when it is done earlier in life.

The sooner young people discover a model of positive and active citizenship, the more likely they will be to emulate it and the more likely they are to feel included in their communities.

Most importantly, young people need to be empowered to define their own thoughts and be in control of how they participate in a global community. But it is important to recognise that the idea of citizenship has changed as the world has changed. How young people engage in their communities today is very different to previous generations especially as a result of technology and social media allowing individuals to connect and engage with others around the world.

We know that many teachers and schools do a fantastic job of teaching citizenship, and we firmly believe that citizenship should form part of the curriculum and be encouraged and supported.

Nevertheless, how citizenship is taught and promoted is inconsistent across the country and varies from year-to-year. That is not to say, however, that schools should shoulder the burden alone. We must work in partnership.

When it comes to building an inclusive society, we strongly believe that the third sector has a vital role to play. Many charities already do exceptional work when it comes offering young people opportunities that allow them to take part in society and learn to become active citizens. However, on matters of social exclusion and citizenship there are lessons to be learned and more that can be done in partnership with Government.

We know from our experience that programmes that offer structure for young people are successful at bringing young people together and imparting valuable knowledge and
experience. We also know that when a young person’s development is recorded and their achievements are recognised, it can improve levels of self-esteem and other important life skills. Young people who are able to access these kinds of programmes are supported in their development as active citizens.

We believe it is essential that the Government supports the youth sector in delivering its work in developing active citizens, and seeks a cross-departmental approach to these issues. We would encourage both the Committee and the Government to review closely the experience of the youth sector when making recommendations or considering future policy initiatives.

In the pages that follow, you will find further detail on our positions, which draw on a variety of evidence. We hope the Committee find this submission useful as part of your considerations and would be happy to provide further thoughts and evidence as needed.
Executive summary & recommendations

There are deep divisions in our society and we welcome the Committee’s remit to explore the issues of citizenship and civic engagement in the twenty-first century.

As a sector, we believe that citizenship is about understanding one’s role and responsibility to others in their community, as well as understanding society’s challenges and working collectively to make a difference.

We must work together to build an inclusive society and strongly believe that organisations like ours have a vital role to play. But, it will also require a long-term commitment from Government if we are to help young people to build deeper roots within their communities.

Working collectively, as part of our submission we make 10 recommendations that we would encourage the Select Committee to consider in greater depth as part of this inquiry.

Recommendations

1. Utilise money from dormant assets to support third sector organisations to drive and deliver civil society initiatives

   Following the publication of the Dormant Asset Commission’s report, the Government committed to consulting on how to best use this money. Potentially up to £2bn to support good causes. We strongly recommend that Government acts quickly to identify how a proportion of these funds can be used to support the citizenship agenda.

2. Create a legal status for full-time volunteers

   Full-time volunteers are in “legal limbo” and have no legal status other than NEET. Full-time volunteers have an important role to play and can have a significant return on funding with participants improving their employability skills. They should be legally recognised.

3. Automatically register young people onto the electoral roll at the point they also receive their national insurance number

   The Government must find ways to make the registration process easier by utilising technology and social media platforms to encourage young people to get involved in the democratic process. Automatically registering young people on the electoral roll would be one way of doing this.

4. Collaborate with existing reviews and make bold recommendations to Government
Following recent events, several reviews are now underway, including the Youth Social Action Review being chaired by Steve Holliday. We would encourage the House of Lords Citizenship & Civic Engagement Committee to work closely with this review as it presents a real opportunity for the Committee to make bold recommendations that Government should be encouraged to accept and act upon.

5. Implement The Russell Commission’s recommendations on how to support civic engagement

... Specifically, the Committee should look carefully at any proposal that helps to: i) Implement strategies to ensure volunteering within public services is an attractive proposition for young people, and ii) Involve young people at the highest level to help establish the types of roles that would appeal to them.

6. Carefully consider how a lack of representation affects the extent to which young people are willing to engage with politics and within their local communities

... Some research, combined with our experience, suggests that young people are put off by imbalance and disparity of those elected to represent them. For example, a recent IPPR report, *Power to the people? Tackling the gender imbalance in local government & combined authorities*, highlighted the barriers women faced to entering local government. If we are to succeed in encouraging young people to participate, we must find ways to remove such barriers.

7. Review and implement findings of international ‘domestic gap years’ in the UK

... We would encourage the Committee to look at international comparisons and how “domestic gap years” work. Important lessons can be learnt that should be implemented in the UK for similar voluntary schemes.

8. Encourage schools to work closer in partnership with third sector organisations and emphasise supporting young people in care

... It is essential that schools are encouraged to be more open to working in partnership with a number of organisations including ourselves. What’s more, particular effort is needed on i) Supporting young people in care ii) Young people in prison reintegrating into society and iii) helping young people from poor and deprived backgrounds. A collective approach should be supported in order to resolve our shared objectives.
9. Invest in existing role-model and mentoring initiatives

... Young people are most influenced by people they know personally – it could be a parent, a teacher of a friend. However, role-models, whoever they are (e.g. celebrities, high-profile individuals or a friend) can make a real impact on a young person’s life. For that reason, we need to invest further and show greater support for role-model and mentoring initiatives.

10. Encourage young people to think seriously about their values and how they relate to the values of others within their community

... We believe young people should be encouraged to think seriously about their values and how they relate to the values of others within their community. Providing a definition of British values is not required but much could be gained from creating space for young people to explore their own identities and how they are embedded in society.

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?

Citizenship & civic engagement

1.1 Citizenship is a critical part of an inclusive society. We believe citizenship is about understanding and acting upon one’s role and responsibility to others in their communities, as well as understanding society’s challenges and working collectively to make a difference.

1.2 We believe that young people can play an important role in their communities, and that the practice of ‘citizenship’ and ‘civic engagement’ should be nurtured from a young age.

1.3 It is important to understand and recognise that the nature of citizenship has changed: what it means for young people today is very different to what it meant to previous generations. For example, young people are much more connected on a global level and place a greater emphasis on using digital platforms to engage a wider audience.

1.4 The way in which young people connect and engage through digital channels and social media platforms has fundamentally changed the very essence and dynamic of citizenship.
1.5 More broadly, we believe civic engagement is too narrow a concept to address the issues identified by the Committee. The focus should be on helping people to understand their communities and giving them the opportunities to express themselves and make a positive contribution independently.

1.6 It is essential that young people are in control of this process and can identify among themselves what it means to be a citizen in today’s world.

1.7 Building knowledge of democracy and democratic processes and institutions will help young people to achieve this. Society as a whole needs to both enable and encourage young people to take part in the democratic process. It is important that we learn from the enthusiasm demonstrated by young people at recent elections to encourage them to stay involved – for too long youth engagement in politics at a local and national level has been poor. Parliamentarians finding opportunities to visit local youth programmes to meet their young constituents will help young people to gain an appreciation for local and national politics, whilst engaging them in key issues which affect their age group.

The problem today and why it matters

1.8 Society is becoming increasingly divided. The Brexit result revealed deep divisions across the country while the Social Mobility Commission’s report, Time for Change, warned that social and economic division will widen without radical and urgent reform.

1.9 In our experience, young people feel increasingly disconnected from their communities which has dangerous consequences. Recently, the country has witnessed an increase in recorded hate crimes, violence and extremism.

1.10 Young people are being targeted and, in many areas, feel disenfranchised. This results in wasted opportunity and untapped potential, which negatively impacts our societies as a whole.

1.11 Some young people who are disproportionately represented amongst people who have grown up in care, been excluded from school or caught up in the criminal justice system are particularly likely to feel disconnected from their communities. Programmes that promote civic engagement should make particular efforts to engage these young people.

1.12 However, we know that when individuals feel part of their community and are recognised for the impact they make, it has a huge benefit on their mental wellbeing (as this research from the #iwill campaign illustrates). Research from Ipsos Mori found that NCS improves personal resilience, leaving participants feeling better equipped to handle whatever comes their way. Research from the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow
(2016) also found that people who were Scouts or Girlguiding members in childhood have better mental health in later life. What’s more, research from the Duke of Edinburgh awards shows that two-thirds of young people feel that being engaged in their community helped to develop their self-esteem (DoE research). Even for very young children, the difference can be dramatic. A randomised control trial organised by the Cabinet Office in 2014 showed that the Citizenship Foundation’s Make a Difference Challenge for primary pupils reduced levels of anxiety amongst the pupils taking part by 22%.

1.13 Research also shows that young people understand the importance of active community engagement, but believe there are limited options for them to engage. As a part of The Scout Association’s ‘A Million Hands’ social action programme, 3,000 young people were surveyed by ComRes (2015) which found that 82% of 12-24 year olds across the UK believe it is important that young people help to solve some of the biggest social issues in this country, but only 36% believe they were given that opportunity.

1.14 There is research to support that taking part in volunteering and social action activities improves young people’s sense of community.

a. For instance, in VInspired’s Get Active for Good Cashpoint (2017) programme evaluation, both Award Holders and volunteers reported a high level of trust in others. Cashpoint is a micro-grant initiative that gives young people the funding and support they need to set up their own voluntary project to tackle community issues that matter to them. 93% of Award Holders said that either many people or some people can be trusted, whilst the equivalent for secondary volunteers was 90%.

b. Social trust is an important indicator of the strength and quality of a society and community. In terms of social capital and, specifically, the trust and shared norms participants felt they identified with their community, the findings were very positive for Award Holders. 89 per cent of Award Holders strongly agreed or agreed that they understood the organisations and people that influence their local area. As a measure of community cohesion, 81 per cent of Award Holders felt that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

c. Similarly, data taken from 2013/14 and 2014/15 evaluations of VInspired’s Talent programme found a significant positive difference in young people’s connectedness to community post intervention. The 2014/15 evaluation found that participant’s indication of feeling part of the local community increased 73% on average and participants’ willingness to get involved in local activities increased 93% on average. The 2013/14 evaluation found a positive average improvement in relation to participants’ feeling part of the community.

d. Additionally, the Behavioural Insights Team evaluation of youth social action, using RCTs, also found that involvement through taking part in youth social action had real significance for young people’s sense of community.
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?

Strengthening people’s identity as citizens

2.1 To strengthen identity, it is important that the Government takes a long-term, committed approach that has cross-party and cross-departmental support.

2.2 As part of this, society must provide year-round safe spaces for all young people to get together and explore the commonalities of their identity, engage in enriching activities, to understand the differences of those from other backgrounds or communities.

2.3 It is essential that we create opportunities for young people to voluntarily come together within their communities, supported by trusted adults and positive peer networks, helping them to feel invested in their community, define their role in society and the positive contribution they can make.

2.4 This is about much more than being considered as British or aspiring to be British. As mentioned earlier, for young people, the nature of citizenship has changed and is as much about being a global citizen as a national citizen (research by Ipsos Mori for example shows that just 20% of people would say their nationality was among the top three or four things they would tell a stranger was important about them). Some people take great pride in being British and that is fine, however particular versions of ‘Britishness’ can be misconstrued as an outmoded view of the world. That is why we take the shared view that instead there ought to be space for pride in a shared sense of place and of a shared community.
Recognising social action and positive contributions

2.5 Being too selective or focused on ceremonies or events can in fact drive further divisions through being too prescriptive. Where would the line be? Who would be included in such events?

2.6 More important to young people is recognising action and other acts of citizenship, and rewarding positive contributions. The lack of recognition today is partly to blame for the sense of disenfranchisement some feel.

2.7 Programmes that understand this contribution are more valuable and incentivise young people to do more in future.

a. The Duke of Edinburgh Award recognises the efforts of young people on the scheme by celebrating when they complete each award level. The young people work towards Bronze, Silver or Gold Awards and are invited to a special ceremony upon completion of each. Recognising achievement is an important part of the scheme and impact research they conducted with the University of Northampton in 2007 showed that:
   i. 82% noted their DofE has made them want to continue with volunteering/voluntary activities.
   ii. 62% feel that doing their DofE has helped them make a positive difference to their local community.
   iii. 74% of young people said they developed self-esteem as a result.

b. National Citizen Service (NCS) requires participants to spend 60 hours designing and delivering a social action project in their local community. Following completion of the course, young people attend a ‘celebration event’ where they officially graduate from the programme and are awarded a certificate. Independent evaluations show that following their NCS experience, young people volunteer up to seven hours more per month, on average, and indicate an increased likelihood to vote in future elections.

c. The Scout Association badges are used similarly to the Duke of Edinburgh awards to recognise achievement and motivate young people. They can be focused on a variety of different things:
   i. Activity badges allow Scouts to show their progress in existing pursuits, but also encourage them to try new things and form new interests.
   ii. Challenge awards involves accomplishing a number of more ambitious tasks within the Troop or community. There are several challenge badges across a number of themes, from physical and outdoor challenges, to dealing with the local community or issues connected with the Scouting world.
   iii. Research by ComRes for The Scout Association (2015) shows that 74% of Scouts said they “help tackle social issues”, compared to 46% of non-Scouts

d. Girlguiding has always provided girls and young women with opportunities to recognise achievements through social action – within their local communities and participation
for positive change on a larger scale. This is done through a structured programme of activity such as activity badges, interests badges, and the Queens Guide Award and Young Leadership Qualification. Through Girlguiding’s Action for Change project, girls reported a 20% increase in confidence to influence change within the UK’s democratic decision-making processes.

e. **Leap Confronting Conflict's** Lighting the Fire Awards recognise the positive contributions that young people make in supporting other young people to manage conflict better and act as inspirational role models for other young people.

f. **UK Youth’s Youth Achievement Awards (YAA)** are nationally recognised and have been developed as a framework for providing non-formal learning and recognition, to support and encourage young people on their journey from childhood to adulthood, as they progress into social action roles and leadership roles.

   i. Through the YAA young people are encouraged to actively participate in their own “Social Development Journey”, developing, acknowledging and articulating life skills and competencies which help them to become a positive force for change in their own lives, and the lives of others.

   ii. The awards provide a framework which recognises the four levels of responsibility taken by young people participating in activities that interest them.

      o **Social Engagement** through the YAA BRONZE – recognises and encourages young people to get involved

      o **Social Learning** through the YAA SILVER – recognises and encourages young people to work with others and share responsibility

      o **Social Action** through the YAA GOLD – recognises and encourages young people to take individual responsibility and play an active role in organising activities. This can be community based.

      o **Social Leadership** through the YAA PLATINUM – recognises and encourages young people to move into a leadership position.

g. **V•inspired** has a long established record in recognising the volunteering contributions of young people. Their V•Awards scheme - [https://vinspired.com/get-awards](https://vinspired.com/get-awards) - recognises these achievements based on hours of service. These Awards are formally recognised by the likes of UCAS and serve not just to recognise young people's contribution and to create a habit of service; they're valued evidence to support young people in their transition to higher education or employment.

h. **The Citizenship Foundation’s Mock Trial Competitions** help young people understand the legal justice system and how the rule of law works. The use of a competition format, as part of a wider pattern of support, helps young people gain a sense of achievement from their taking part. Amongst those taking part in the scheme, evaluation shows a 20% increase in those young people confident in defining a legal right.

2.8 As a sector we welcome new guidance from DfE, where young people on 16-19 study programmes can now include social action, such as volunteering, to be classed as a form
of work experience. Such interventions encourage young people, their parents/carers and teachers to see that social action has a ‘double-benefit’ to both the young people participating and the community they are serving. https://www.tes.com/news/further-education/breaking-news/social-action-included-study-programme

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?

4.1 Our view here is that – whatever the voting age – it is important that Government finds a way to make the registration process easier by finding new ways, utilising technology and social media platforms, to encourage young people to get involved. Perhaps there is an opportunity to enlist schools and universities to be involved in this, by automatically enrolling those of voting age on the electoral roll, as has successfully happened at institutions like Sheffield University.

4.2 Consequently, we would recommend that young people are automatically registered onto the electoral roll at the point they also receive their National Insurance number.

4.3 More broadly, it is important to recognise that this is not just a youth issue – every citizen should believe in their ability to understand, but also to influence and change the democratic process, boosting involvement.

4.4 What’s more, we would encourage the Committee to look closely at how a lack of representation affects the extent to which young people are willing to engage with politics.

4.5 For example, we noted with interest the recent Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) report, Power to the people? Tackling the gender imbalance in local government & combined authorities, which found that women are faced with a number of barriers to entering local government and progressing into leadership roles. The report revealed just 33% of councillors and 17% of council leaders in England are women - something the IPPR suggested is causing a “democratic deficit”. Equality of male and female councillors would require an increase of 3,028 women (more than 50% on number of women currently in post).
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?

Engaging people at a younger age

5.1 The evidence is clear that engaging people at an earlier age will have a positive impact and result in a stronger sense of citizenship. Research published by think tank Demos shows that the 29% of young people currently participating in social action develop self-discipline, resilience and empathy by doing so. Furthermore, evidence from the CBI (See CBI First Steps report) shows that social action helps develop optimism, determination and emotional intelligence - skills which are key to employability. The Cabinet Office’s Randomised Control Trial showed that primary pupils taking part in the Citizenship Foundation’s Make a Difference Challenge were more likely to have increased empathy levels, problem-solving skills, grit and community skills. Children who took part shared, on average, a level of empathy 6% greater than those who didn’t. These children were also adept in problem-solving, and showed a level of grit significantly above that of the children who did not participate. Similarly the level of community investment was considerably higher.

5.2 We cannot overstate the importance of a long-term approach that has cross-party consensus. It is only with consistent, and sustained engagement at a young age, that we can reap the benefits of a more confident, resilient and empathetic population.

Current approach in schools

5.3 The current situation and approach is inconsistent – some schools are excellent, some are poor. The quality of approach is different year-on-year for a number of reasons and largely depends on individual teachers and their personal preferences. We applaud the work of ‘Citizenship’ teaching in schools where it is offered, however there are no incentives for schools to maintain any focus on it as a subject. Lessons should be learnt from the ‘character’ agenda when funding, through Character Grants, was promised but quickly fell away. Indeed, a lack of interest from government or regulatory bodies such as Ofsted make it much harder for schools to give Citizenship adequate focus even where they have a desire to.

5.4 This is compounded by a lack of monitoring of what is happening across the board and only anecdotal evidence on how to make decisions and define a policy approach.

5.5 Teachers do a terrific job and we recognise that they have huge pressures on their time. That’s why we strongly believe that the third sector must work with schools so that there is provision for citizenship programmes for all young people. Collectively, we have an important role to play. Together we can make a significant impact. This is also recognised by teachers themselves. For example, Demos’ Learning by Doing report
(2015) found that 58% would welcome partnerships between their schools and Scouts to provide students with other types of learning activities, and that 60% thought that non-formal learning activities provided by organisations like Scouts should play a bigger role in the education system.

5.6 While our individual views differ slightly on the extent to which teaching good citizenship should be compulsory, collectively we believe that where citizenship remains in the curriculum it needs to be given the right support so that schools are consistent in their approach. More evidence is needed in the primary sector which should be an area of focus for Government over the next two years. This would allow sufficient time to get the necessary data on which to make decision in future, any study should examine the extent and quality of citizenship education in schools, support for schools to improve provision, and teacher training both for new citizenship teachers, and for existing teachers who want to be able to teach it effectively.

5.7 What’s more, we would encourage the Committee to consider how schools might use third sector partnerships to provide meaningful opportunities. This is particularly successful in Germany through the Schule Plus initiative (https://www.schule-plus.de/). The programme is best described as a “unique social online-network connecting schools with external partners, who offer various external offers to enrich the schooling curriculum.” It is free of charge for schools and helps them to connect with a range of organisations, including from the third sector, to “enhance the learning of students”.
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 involve a more public citizenship ceremony? Are they good value for money? What other routes exist for creating active citizens?

6.1 The sector agrees that programmes, whether year-long such as NCS, part-time or more flexible volunteering opportunities, should not be made compulsory, rather young people should be supported to engage with volunteering and social action projects in ways that support and complement their individual circumstances.

6.2 There are also many routes that support younger children to be active citizens; including non-formal education programmes run by uniformed groups such as Girlguiding and the Scout Association, as well as others including the Woodcraft Folk, that provide opportunities for children as young as aged five to participate in social action and volunteering. These programmes help to develop a sense of belonging and ownership in the local community.

6.3 By engaging with children at Primary age level the notion of being an active citizen becomes the norm, rather than being seen as something extraordinary or to be done at a certain stage in life. Recognising that volunteering, social action and community engagement activities all help create active citizens, and are currently delivered by the third sector in a range of ways, calls for a need to widen support for the citizenship agenda rather than viewing it as an age-specific opportunity, and complementary to more formal, year-long schemes.

The role of voluntary programmes - learning lessons from international comparisons and celebrating success

6.4 We would encourage the Committee to look at international comparisons and how “domestic gap years” work. Important lessons can be learnt. Section 6.5 explains this in more detail.

6.5 NCS engages a broad range of groups and individuals. 17% of NCS participants are on Free School Meals, compared to 8% of the population. 28% are from non-White communities (compared to 18% of the population), and 15% are from minority religions (compared to 10% of the population). This social cohesion has a positive effect on young people who leave the programme with increased social trust and a higher likelihood to mix with young people from different backgrounds (2015 NCS Evaluation)

6.6 Many young people might have volunteered for the first time when at school or when participating with uniformed organisations. However, for many others, NCS will be the first time they will have volunteered, which is cause for celebration. NCS is working with
sector organisations, including Scouts, Duke of Edinburgh, International Citizen Service, and others, to ensure NCS is just the start of an enduring journey for young people, and that young people are provided with further training, volunteering or employment opportunities post-NCS). However, there is more to be done in this space.

6.7 NCS currently works with “The Basics” (Bite the Ballot) and “Rock Enrol” (Cabinet Office) to deliver sessions on democratic engagement, and to register tens of thousands of young people to vote.

6.8 At the end of the NCS programme, participants celebrate their achievements from a graduate ceremony, where they are presented with a certificate. Whilst civic engagement is a key part of NCS’ mission, it is not the only part. Therefore, NCS does not currently carry out public citizenship ceremonies as part of the programme.

6.9 NCS Trust remains of the opinion that NCS should not be mandatory, in order to preserve its youth-led and voluntary ethos.

6.10 Many young people might have volunteered for the first time when at school or when participating with uniformed organisations. However, for many others, NCS will be the first time they will have volunteered, which is cause for celebration. However:

   o The main gap is around supporting young people when they join or leave these organisations. There is currently no support from schools when they join the NCS, and none when they consider career opportunities afterwards.
   o The International Citizens Service is a good model to emulate as it actively supports its young people who have completed the programme to use the experience when taking their next steps in life.
   o However, it must be borne in mind that young people will get much more from any NCS experience or equivalent if they have had good citizenship education (both formal and informal) from a young age, and if, following NCS, they are supported to carry on their citizenship activities.

6.11 A wide variety of programmes show that those that run well offer value for money. They also prove the importance of recognition – e.g. NCS graduation, Scout and Girlguiding badges etc. Again reiterating the importance of valuing positive contributions.

   a. A recent Wellbeing and Human Capital Evaluation independently commissioned by NCS Trust, and published earlier this year, reported a social benefit-to-cost ratio of between £5.93 and £8.36 for NCS. This includes the impact of NCS on university entry, which is on average 12% higher for young people taking part in NCS compared to those who don’t, with those living in the poorest areas almost 50% more likely to get into higher education if they do NCS.
b. **V•Inspired Talent** — a full-time volunteering placement which supports young people to gain an accredited Level 2/3 qualification and develop real world skills and experience for progression into employment, education or training.

c. **V•Inspired** was created as a dedicated implementation body for the findings of the [Russell Commission](#) — which stated that it should be natural for young people to volunteer and natural for organisations to either offer young people the opportunity to volunteer or support them in doing so. The Russell Commission proposed that society as a whole benefits from volunteering, as young people express themselves as active citizens.

d. **Giving Nation**: A national initiative by the Citizenship Foundation which supports young people to give. Whether it is time, energy or voice, every young person can play a part in challenging the issues that face others. The programme challenges students to turn their generosity into action by selecting the issue that matters most to their class. Young people then take action as social entrepreneurs, fundraisers, campaigners or volunteers.

6.12 There are also numerous international examples:

**France**

6.13 France also has a Government sponsored full-time social action programme. The ‘Service Civique’ initiative was launched in 2010, and has helped tens of thousands of volunteers to pour 25 hours of their time every week into good causes and public services.

a. The programme aims to strengthen national cohesion and promote social diversity among its 16 to 25 year-old participants who can engage in the programme for a period of 3 to 12 months. It can be carried out in 9 main areas: culture and leisure, international development and humanitarian action, education, environment, crisis intervention, memory and citizenship, health, solidarity and sport.

b. Such is the success of France’s ‘Service Civique’, it is to expand to 150,000 places per year by the end of 2017.

c. The programme prides itself on producing civically engaged young people;
   i. 57% of the young people who were not registered on the electoral roll before their Service Civique year had done so since or intend to do so.
   ii. 80% of the volunteers intend to vote in the next elections too.
   iii. Moreover, 89% of volunteers feel useful to others and to society, and for 93% of them the Civic Service is a good way to meet people of different backgrounds.

**USA**

6.14 In the USA, 80,000 young adults participate in full-time social action annually as part of ‘AmeriCorps’. AmeriCorps is a network of local, state, and national service programmes that connects young Americans each year in intensive service to meet community needs in education, the environment, public safety, health, and homeland security.
a. Participants serve in full or part-time positions over a 10-12 month period. Upon completion of their service, members receive an education grant known as the ‘Segal AmeriCorps Education Award’ of up to $4,725 to pay for college, graduate school, or to pay back qualified student loans.
b. Since 1994, nearly one million volunteers have contributed over 1.4 billion hours of service to local communities.
c. Research demonstrates that service through AmeriCorps creates empowered and prepared leaders who are civically engaged and committed to strengthening their communities.
d. Alumni believe that the experience improved their ability to bridge divides and solve problems, while also developing skills and expanding opportunity to advance their careers and education.
e. Key stats include:
   i. 80% of alumni feel confident they can create a plan to address a community issue and get others to care about it.
   ii. 93% of alumni said that after service, they felt comfortable interacting with others different than themselves, as compared to 72 percent before.
   iii. 94% said that national service broadened their understanding of society and different communities.
   iv. 79% of alumni are involved or plan to become actively involved in their community post-service, compared to 47 percent prior.
   v. 94% of alumni are registered to vote, well above the national average.

Germany

6.15 Germany also offers young people from this age the chance to engage in full-time social action as a transition year through three federal organisations: the BFD, Bundesfreiwilligendienst (German voluntary service); the FSJ, Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr (voluntary social year); and FÖJ, the Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr (voluntary ecological year).
   a. While all the programmes cater for young people, the FSJ and FÖJ are aimed entirely at young people from the age of 15-27. The FSJ alone allows 50,000 young German’s the opportunity to undertake full-time social action each year.
   b. These programmes allow a young person to volunteer full-time for between 6-24 months on a community project close to their hearts for public good.

UK

6.16 City Year UK has demonstrated that full-time volunteering can create active and engaged citizens in a UK context through its ‘year of service’ programme.
   a. Their volunteers are issued a survey at the beginning and the end of the year that assess their development across a number of areas.
   b. Evidence from this survey showed engagement with the programme helps to shape positive social attitudes and create engaged citizens.
c. Volunteers reported impressive attitudinal shifts over the course of our programme such as an increased likelihood to vote and take a leadership role in civil society and improved attitude towards other social groups (age, ethnicity and religion). For example:
   i. There was a 22% rise in volunteers who said they were very likely to vote in the next General Election.
   ii. Over 50% said that participation in the programme had positively affected their attitude toward those from different age groups and ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds.
   iii. There was a 40% rise in volunteers who felt people in society could be trusted. City Year volunteers are over twice as likely as their peers to cite a responsibility to their community as a motivation to volunteer.
   iv. Volunteers are 70% more likely than their peers to take on a leadership role in civic society.

6.17 While NCS is a valuable experience for thousands of young people, encouraging active citizenship in the form of social action, it is, on its own, not enough. Community based, universal and open-assessed youth services are vital in engaging young people of all ages, supporting them to value their community and feel valued by their community, take part in political discourse, and make a positive contribution.

Legal status

6.18 A significant problem with full-time and part-time volunteering is the “legal limbo” it leaves individuals in. While this poses more immediate issues and concerns for some charities involved with this joint submission, it is a broader issue that the sector as a whole is facing.

6.19 In essence, the lack of a legal status other than NEET means volunteers are not recognised in the legal structure. This is a missed opportunity.

6.20 The fact is that full-time volunteers have an important role to play and can have a significant return on funding with participants improving their employability skills.

   a. We see this in the work of City Year UK and their volunteers. Through that year of full-time volunteering, 18-25 year olds can make a real difference to the life chances of school pupils from the most disadvantaged communities, while gaining valuable leadership experience and boosting their own career prospects.

   b. Volunteering Matters also provide full-time social action opportunities in health and social care setting, while other charities such as The Scout Association and vInspired use full-time volunteers as part of their wider work.

6.21 Despite pouring in thousands of hours to better their communities, this ‘legal limbo’ actually punishes full-time volunteers in the following ways. Below are a number of ways not having a legal status makes it difficult to do full-time social action:
a. **National Insurance Credits**: Full-time volunteers are not entitled to National Insurance Credits (NICs) meaning they have their pensions eligibility cut by one year. They are not a drain on the economy, yet because they have no recognised status they are unfairly punished by not being automatically granted the NICs that would protect their pension entitlements. Contrastingly, those looking for work while on benefits, caring for children or sick relatives and doing jury service do qualify.

b. **Ill-health**: Full-time volunteers are forbidden from being paid expenses if they are ill. That makes it hard for people to sustain their commitment over several months or a year.

c. **Personal development training**: Full-time volunteers are forbidden from receiving personal development training, or help from the charity they serve with when they look for jobs at the end of their programme, even though career progression is a major motive for, and benefit of, taking part.

6.22 In order to support existing and full-time volunteers and programmes, we call on the Government to create a legal status for full-time volunteers.

**Collaborating with existing reviews**

6.23 It would be prudent to engage with existing reviews and Government initiatives that have similar aims and goals. We would encourage the Select Committee to consider the benefits of such engagement.

a. For example, in March of this year Steve Holliday, the former Chief Executive of National Grid plc, was appointed by then Civil Society Minister Rob Wilson to lead a review that examines how to increase participation in full-time social action by young people. It also examines the challenges faced by organisations working in this area.

b. When he was appointed, Holliday explained his view that “social action benefit[s] the development and character in young people, giving them employability skills while making a real difference in their communities.”

c. He further added that the review would explore how to “expand full-time volunteering as a real option for young people.”

d. Alongside Holliday, the advisory panel will include experts from relevant sectors and is expected to make recommendations to the Minister for Civil Society by October 2017. Therefore, now would be an ideal time to coordinate views collectively.

e. In addition, it is worth considering the findings of the **Casey Review** and the **Milburn Reports**.

6.24 There is a real opportunity for the Committee to make bold recommendations that Government should be encouraged to accept and act upon.

6.25 Importantly, the committee should recognise the value and importance of a diverse range of groups working to deliver shared outcomes. Many provide for a range of different age groups and offer a different perspective. There is no one size fits all approach.
6.26 On the NCS specifically, we must work together and be supported in helping broaden the programme by encompassing both pre and post support. The National Audit Office report, published in January 2017, recognised how NCS has “shown it can attract large numbers of participants and participation has a positive short-term effect on young people.” However, questions remain whether “these effects were enduring”. By working in partnership we can help to ensure they are. In addition, in March 2017, the Public Accounts Committee recommended that the NCS should do more to work with existing youth organisations in order to deliver the programme. The NCS Trust should be supported in their efforts to explore such options, and this should be balanced with support for the full array of offers for young people available.
7. How can society support civic engagement? What responsibility should central government, devolved and local governments, third sector organisations and the individual have for encouraging civic engagement? What can Government and Parliament do to support civil society initiatives to increase civic engagement?

Building a cross-departmental approach

7.1 Government and Parliament can best aide this by providing the framework, policy guidance, convening powers, and the support required to help deliver programmes.

7.2 We would encourage the Committee to look again at The Russell Commission which set out a number of recommendations for how to support civic engagement. Specifically, this included i) Government developing and implementing strategies to encourage greater levels of volunteering within public services taking account of the need for quality opportunities that are attractive to young people, and ii) Government should involve young people at the highest level to help establish the types of roles that would appeal to them. Arguably, these needs still exist.

7.3 From experience and through research we know that for young people, engaging with issues which matter to them is the most effective way to engineer and sustain interest in civic engagement. To understand this, we need to engage and involve young people in co-production from the outset.

7.4 There needs to be a discrete focus on youth policy within DCMS that identifies new streams of funding, such as utilising dormant assets and building sustainability into programmes and organisations. Essentially there must be a cross-departmental approach, and an understanding that encouraging active citizenship requires multiple central government departments, Local Authorities, and third sector organisations to work collectively to drive long-term systemic changes.

7.5 All programmes need to be accessible with a diverse communications approach so that everyone benefits. As it stands, some parts of society are being phased out or disincentivised. The accessibility for other young people is very important and a key priority for Government, e.g. young people with a barrier to employment (such as a disability). However, this again raises the point about the legal status of volunteers.

Utilise money from dormant assets to support third sector organisations to drive and deliver civil society initiatives

7.6 In March 2017, the Dormant Assets Commission published its final report to Government. The Commission estimated that there could be up to £2 billion of additional funding potentially available for the benefit of good causes.

7.7 The Charities Minister at the time, Rob Wilson, suggested that the funds could be used to “transform the charity sector”. The Government has also committed to responding in
full to the Commission’s 50 recommendations, promising a further consultation with charities on how the money should be utilised.

7.8 We welcomed both the Commission’s report and the Government’s commitment to using this additional money to support the third sector. We would strongly recommend that Government acts quickly to identify how a proportion of this money can be used to support the citizenship agenda. Examples of the usage of statutory funding to support initiatives include Girlguiding, which has previously benefited from a range of statutory funding streams e.g. **Uniformed Youth Social Action Fund (UYSAF)**

a. From 2014-2016 Girlguiding received funding from the Cabinet through the Uniformed Youth Social Action Fund (UYSAF) project. The funding supported our work to bring guiding to new communities and to encourage young people to get involved in social action and make a difference. The project was a great success and as a result we:
   i. Opened 135 new units and supported over 50 units at risk of closing
   ii. Recruited over 280 new adult volunteers
   iii. Created spaces for almost 3000 girls
   iv. Supported almost 4000 young people to take part in 460 social action activities.
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?

Values

8.1 The Casey Review published earlier this year raised serious concerns about the state of social integration in the UK. We welcome the Dame Louise Casey’s report and agree that a failure to address citizenship and social integration will mean we fail to address the reported rise in hate crime and extreme violence. All community leaders and institutions have an important role to play and must address the criticism that difficult issues had been ignored, primarily for a fear of being labelled racist.

8.2 Importantly, we strongly agree with the Casey Review’s conclusion that “resilience, integration and shared common values and behaviours – such as respect for the rule of law, democracy, equality and tolerance – are inhibitors of division, hate and extremism” and that by building on these qualities we can become “stronger, more equal, more united and able to stand together as one nation.”

8.3 One problem is the lack of a clear definition of British values and how we embed them. From our perspective, the most important thing is to encourage people to think seriously about their values and how they relate to the values of others within their community. People shouldn’t be afraid to think about this matter or shy away from it. This must be done in a respectful manner and we would recommend that the Committee considers how this might be done in consultation with young people.
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?

**Improving accessibility – especially in rural areas**

9.1 Rural communities in particular suffer because of the low population density – as a result they are harder to help. The Australian Government and Australian Third Sector offer excellent examples of positive programmes that overcome these barriers. They run a number of programmes that aim to integrate young people from rural communities into wider society and inure them to political engagement through various schemes. There are several successful examples:

a. **The Haywire Summit**: An annual youth summit in the capital (led by ABC radio, the Australian equivalent of the BBC) where kids can get an all-expenses paid trip to come meet with politicians and talk about problems in their communities.

b. **Police-Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC)**: are very popular in rural towns. The idea is to keep children and young people off the streets and prevent negative habits forming (e.g. drug abuse) by engaging them with sports and other activities and offer mentoring from rural police officers.

c. **CEP**: The Country Education Partnership is a not-for-profit organisation that supports the provision of education within rural and remote communities.

9.2 Because rural areas are more cut-off, they need a greater emphasis on different approaches to reach them and many will require a more digital approach utilising the latest technology. This was identified in the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee’s earlier report - *Overlooked and left behind*. It showed that children in rural areas will have a harder time acquiring the requisite work experience that either employers require or that facilitates the development of work place skills, e.g. self-management, resilience, team work. The same report also identified that young people that did not follow an academic route had been “forgotten” or “overlooked” by policy-makers. The stark warning was that without greater support and “clarity”, the “overlooked majority of young people are at great risk of drifting into work and being trapped in employment at the bottom end of the labour market.” This must be addressed.

9.3 Many communities also face a number of smaller-scale barriers. For example, it might be that transport networks are poor and result in people feeling “left behind” or not being able to play an active part in their community. Furthermore, it could be that the digital infrastructure is not in place – again, a particular problem in rural areas.

9.4 Areas of low social mobility (SMI) and high deprivation (IMD) are particularly excluded when it comes to engaging in citizenship and civil society programmes. Increased resource needs to be allocated to those areas, as has been done through the DfE Opportunity Areas, but importantly there is a need to provide increased access to community based services, supporting cross-sector collaboration and long-term systemic solutions.
**Working in partnership**

9.5 It is essential that schools are encouraged to be more open to working in partnership with a number of organisations including ourselves.

9.6 Greater emphasis is also required to help support prisons and those reintegrating into society; prisons should be seen as a part of a community. There is currently an untapped potential given the lack of effort to support immersion and integration back into the community.

9.7 Particular effort is needed on supporting young people in care and we all need to think seriously about how we help people from poor and deprived backgrounds – statistically life chances are significantly reduced for young people from such backgrounds. Statistically they are less likely to engage in youth social action than their more affluent peers. Society as a whole must do better at improving social mobility.

9.8 A collective impact approach should be encouraged and supported in order to develop genuine cross sector partnerships to resolve shared objectives. (http://www.youthimpact.uk/more-our-collective-impact-work)

**Supporting girls to be active citizens**

9.9 Girlguiding’s Girls’ Attitudes Survey 2015, found only 20% of girls aged 11 to 21 surveyed said they felt part of their local community – this was a decrease from 2010 when 30% felt this way. 38% said they felt the UK was a good place to grow up (a decrease from 48% in 2010); and in 2014 57% of girls aged 11 to 21 said they feel politicians don’t listen to the voices of girls and young women.

9.10 There is a well-documented lack of women participating in politics, particularly at a local level, IPPR study (Aug 2017) shows that only 33% of councillors and 17% of council leaders in England are women causing a “democratic deficit”. Better support and engagement for girls and young women means they require opportunities to develop as active citizens and develop their leadership skills. It is also important they have role models to be able to do this – in 2014 61% of girls wanted political parties to make sure there were more female MPs.

9.11 Girlguiding believes that political education must be available to all young people and that it must include feminism and cover female as well as male political figures. The curriculum should be varied and engaging and include an explicit focus on girls and women and how politics is also ‘for them’. 55% of girls support political education in schools; 54% support mandatory teaching around citizenship, democracy and human rights (Girls’ Attitude Survey 2014).

**Identifying positive role models and addressing media perceptions**

9.12 We need to encourage more role models by supporting individuals and groups to promote role models from different communities. Currently an absence
and lack of role models persists.

9.13 There needs to be investment into existing role-model and mentoring initiatives, including Brightside, Chance UK and Future First.

9.14 There are real problems with how the media portrays and reports on real-time events. The media drives unhelpful perceptions – for example, demonising Muslim communities in the wake of the various terrorist attacks in London and Manchester.

10. How do you see the relationship between citizenship and civic engagement on the one hand, and social cohesion and integration on the other? What effect does the level of diversity in schools and workplaces have on integration in society as a whole? How can diversity and integration be increased concurrently?

Broadening the definition of civic engagement
10.1 As set out at the start of this submission, this matter shouldn’t be confined by civic engagement (regularly defined or portrayed as being synonymous with taking positive action or working towards a greater good).

10.2 However, this is an issue that goes beyond such a definition and the primary focus should be on helping people to understand their communities. It is essential that we provide young people with opportunities to express themselves in order to then make a positive contribution independently.

The role of citizenship in helping address social integration and the rise of extremism and hate crimes

10.3 Citizenship and social cohesion do go hand-in-hand. Bringing together young people from a range of different backgrounds allows them to make friends and learn together, and leads them to focus on what they have in common rather than their differences (relating to gender, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic background, or otherwise). This in turn increases social trust, breaks down social barriers, and increases young peoples’ sense of belonging to a wider community, rather than a specific niche. This is a key part of what we mean by citizenship, and this is what is needed to combat the rise in hate crime and extremism.

10.4 It is therefore essential that we work together to help young people understand and mix with people from different backgrounds. Social action programmes like those offered by NCS and City Year UK where young people work together in diverse teams have shown to improve attitudes and understanding of those from different backgrounds. For example, data from City Year UK shows that over 50 per cent said that participation in the programme in 2015/16 had positively affected their attitude toward those from different age groups and ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. NCS research shows similarly positive effects of the programme on attitudes towards others from different backgrounds.

10.5 We welcome Dame Louise Casey’s review into opportunity and integration, which also concluded: “The less integrated we are as a nation, the greater the social and economic costs we face as a whole. Mistrust, anxiety and prejudice grow where communities live separately. That allows people with extremist agendas to step in and spread fear, hatred and division.” Dame Louise also found that, “Long-standing – and worsening – divisions in our society are being exploited by extremists, predators, and those seeking excuses to legitimise their hate.”

10.6 The Casey Review aimed to address integration and the life chances of some of the most disadvantaged and isolated communities, and by doing so inject some resilience against those who try to divide communities with extremism and hate. The Review found that successive Governments have focussed on, and at times achieved, progress with social and economic exclusion, worklessness, poverty and disadvantage. Historical attainment gaps for many of the most disadvantaged groups in society are narrowing; however there is still a long way to go.
10.7 For example, the Review concluded that in relation to social and economic integration in particular, there is a strong correlation of increased segregation among Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic households in more deprived areas. Combined by poorer English language and weak labour market outcomes, without a more concerted and targeted effort it is likely that such a cycle will only continue.

10.8 If we get our approach to citizenship right however, it is demonstrably clear that participation in the wider community leads to increased levels of trust and engagement. It is interesting to look at Germany as an example:

a. In April 2016, the German Government announced new legal measures requiring migrants and refugees to integrate into society in return for being allowed to live and work in the country. The mandatory integration measures include language classes or lessons in German laws or cultural basics. According to the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, the aim of Germany’s first ever integration law is to make it easier for asylum seekers to gain access to the German labour market, with the government promising 100,000 new “working opportunities”, expected to include low-paid workfare jobs. Additionally, a law requiring employers to give preference to German or EU job applicants over asylum seekers will be suspended for three years.

b. Germany uses its full-time volunteering programme to help integrate refugees into German society. In December 2015, the Bundesfreiwilligendienst (Federal Volunteer Service) started a special programme for 10,000 refugees. This programme allows refugees ages 17 and older to work for charity or state organisations for 6 to 18 months, for over 20 hours per week, while the state pays for their health insurance and a small stipend to cover their living expenses. The programme is used to help refugees receive German language support, assimilate with German culture and demonstrate work experience in a German context.

c. However, independent integration projects have also flourished in Germany. Between 2015 and 2016, some 15,000 refugee projects launched in Germany, with many of them focused on helping newcomers learn the language – these are schemes like volunteer instruction, mentoring or casual meet-ups with refugees. Those interested in learning German have good chances of finding someone to help them.

d. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), with the help of other institutions like the country’s network of adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) and workers’ welfare organizations, has created an extensive offering of integration courses across the country. The classes offer a combination of language training and civics for newcomers, with the state covering the costs for those who have been granted official refugee status.
12. Can you give examples of initiatives and role models that have helped promote a positive vision of British Citizenship within a tolerant and cohesive society?

12.1 It is important to start by recognising and acknowledging that young people are most influenced by people they know personally – it could be a parent, a teacher or a friend. Family and friends are key influencers and have an essential role to play in encouraging others to become better citizens.

12.2 However, without doubt there are good examples of celebrities and high-profile individuals that are making, or have made, a real impact and/or difference. For us, this includes:

- **The Royal Family** – in particular the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry. They exemplify the model of ‘duty’ and ‘service’. The ‘I will’ campaigns and similar initiatives strongly emphasise this.
- **Dame Kelly Holmes Trust** – the charity trains and develops world class athletes to mentor young people facing disadvantage. This empowers them to realise the attitudes and behaviours needed to lead a positive life. The programmes target those who are difficult to reach – for example, care leavers, homeless people, young offenders, women at risk of sexual exploitation and those living within isolated communities.
- **Sport England** – Works to increase the number of people getting active. Their own strategy was developed in response to the Government’s *Sporting Future* strategy, which was published in December 2015.
- **FA Foundation** - Funded by the Premier League, The Football Association and the Government, the Foundation directs £30m every year into grassroots sport. The money is used to deliver a programme of new and improved community sports facilities in towns and cities across the country.
- **Team GB** - Post London 2012 but also following recent 2017 World Championships.
- **Vloggers and YouTubers**
- Youth led engagement and citizenship schemes create peer and near-peer role models, including **UK Youth Voice**, **UK Youth Parliament** and the **British Youth Council**.
- **Points of Light scheme** - The Prime Minister's Points of Light award that recognises outstanding UK volunteers and those making a change in their community. The award was recently presented to Jack Abrey, Chair of The Scout Association’s Community Impact Group.
- **Other ambassadors** (e.g. Ellie Simmonds, Bryony Gordon)