



# HOUSE OF LORDS

## SELECT COMMITTEE ON CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

### Call for Evidence:

The Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement was set up on 29 June 2017. It has to report by 31 March 2018.

British society is changing. Technological, economic and cultural issues are leading to far-reaching shifts in how individuals, families and communities live and work together. The referendums on Scottish independence and Brexit, the recent attacks in Manchester and London by people, some of them born in Britain, an apparent low level of confidence in the effectiveness of the political system, not to mention concern regarding sections of society that feel “left behind” – all of these point to the need to reflect on those values, principles and processes that might play a role in bringing people together and promoting engaged citizenship.

This is why the House of Lords has set up a committee to explore the issues of citizenship and civic engagement in the twenty-first century. The committee is keen to hear from a wide range of individuals, groups and organisations in order to understand the nature of the citizenship challenge for different parts of society; the aim being to identify new ways of building bridges within and between communities, and to support civic engagement. How to think about citizenship and civic engagement in a more vibrant, positive and integrated manner is of particular interest to the committee.

The questions set out below are intended to provide a framework for those who wish to offer their views. **You need not answer all these questions.**

Information on how to submit evidence is set out below. If you have any questions or require adjustments to enable you to respond, please contact the Committee team: details also below.

It is helpful if opinions are supported by factual evidence where appropriate. Comparisons with the law and practice of other countries are welcomed.

**The deadline is 8 September 2017.**

1. What does citizenship and civic engagement mean in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Why does it matter, and how does it relate to questions of identity?
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?
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?
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?
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?
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?
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 the Government and Parliament do to support civil society initiatives to increase civic engagement?
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?
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?

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?
11. How important are levels of English proficiency for first and second generation immigrants and what could be done to increase them, including through support for ESOL classes? Are there particular barriers faced by newcomers to Britain? Could the naturalisation process, including the citizenship test, be improved and if so, how?
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?

Written evidence should be submitted online using the written submission form available at <http://www.parliament.uk/citizenship-civic-engagement-form>.

If you do not have access to a computer, you may submit a paper copy to:

Clerk to the Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement  
Committee Office, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW  
fax 020 7219 4931.

**The deadline for written evidence is 8 September 2017.**

Short, concise submissions, of no more than six pages, are preferred. A longer submission should include a one-page summary. Paragraphs should be numbered. Submissions should be dated, with a note of the author's name, and of whether the author is acting on an individual or corporate basis. All submissions made through the written submission form will be acknowledged automatically by email.

Personal contact details supplied to the Committee will be removed from submissions before publication but will be retained by the Committee staff for specific purposes relating to the Committee's work, such as seeking additional information.

Submissions become the property of the Committee which will decide whether to accept them as evidence. Evidence may be published by the Committee at any stage. It will normally appear on the Committee's website and will be deposited in the Parliamentary Archives. Once you have received acknowledgement that your submission has been accepted as evidence, you may publicise or publish it yourself, but in doing so you must indicate that it was prepared for the Committee. If you publish your evidence separately, you should be aware that you will be legally responsible for its content.

You should be careful not to comment on individual cases currently before a court of law, or matters in respect of which court proceedings are imminent. If you anticipate such issues arising, you should discuss with the Clerk of the Committee how this might affect your submission.

Certain individuals and organisations may be invited to appear in person before the Committee to give oral evidence. Oral evidence is usually given in public at Westminster and broadcast in audio and online. Persons invited to give oral evidence will be notified separately of the procedure to be followed and the topics likely to be discussed.

Substantive communications to the Committee about the inquiry should be addressed through the Clerk, whether or not they are intended to constitute formal evidence to the Committee.

**This is a public call for evidence. Please bring it to the attention of other groups and individuals who may not have received a copy direct.**

You can follow the progress of the inquiry at <http://www.parliament.uk/citizenship-civic-engagement>.

25 July 2017