

## **Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement: call for evidence**

### **Summary**

The Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement was formed on 29 June 2017 in response to the changing shifts and recent events which have negatively impacted British society and citizenship. This has led to a divisive British society and this select committee wants to explore how and why citizenship and civic engagement has changed and what can be done to improve it across the country. The link to the consultation paper can be found here:

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/Citizenship-civic-engagement/Citizenship-civic-engagement-call-for-evidence.pdf>

### **Context**

Technological, economic and cultural issues are leading to reaching shifts in how communities live and work together. Other factors such as the Scottish independence referendum, Brexit, the recent terror attacks in Manchester and London, and an apparent low level of confidence in the current political system have also contributed to the divisive atmosphere in British society at the moment.

The House of Lords has set up this committee to explore the issues of citizenship and civic engagement that are affecting British society at the moment. The committee wants 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 with the aim to identify new ways of building bridges between communities and support civic engagement.

### **Inquiry questions**

1. 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?
2. 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?

3. 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?
4. 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?
5. 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?

## Provisional position of NALC

Our sector is well placed to respond to this call for evidence and inquiry questions given parish and town councils: are the closest tier of government to the community, engage with and involve the community in local decision making, contribute positively to community cohesion, promote a sense of civic pride and give local people a sense of belonging and are increasingly providing a wider range of services to improve community well-being.

## Your views

Please e-mail your responses to this consultation to [ben.murray@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:ben.murray@nalc.gov.uk) by **17.00 on Friday 1 September 2017**.

Recommended Circulation:	County Associations
	All Member Councils

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