

The background of the page is a green chalkboard with faint, illegible mathematical equations and numbers. In the foreground, there is a close-up, low-angle shot of a lush green grass field, which is slightly out of focus. The overall color palette is dominated by various shades of green.

Integration and Citizenship in the Classroom and on the Sports field: Policies and Practices for a more Respectful, Collaborative society

A report on how teaching content and approaches in relation to the citizenship education curriculum, and sports clubs supporting refugees and asylum seekers, can promote and operate as spaces of respect, inclusivity, and co-operation

Integration and Citizenship in the Classroom and on the Sports field: Policies and Practices for a more Respectful, Collaborative society

Executive Summary

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This study considers how education and sport can enable a more critical-thinking, collaborative, and participatory sense of British citizenship, and a more cohesive, multi-directional, multi-dimensional integration experience. It is driven by attempting to combat the toxicity, tribalism, and exclusivity in contemporary political debate, particularly in relation to refugee and asylum seeker policy. Through conclusions that emphasise collaborative practices, and the creation and support of respectful, welcoming environments, it argues for a stronger, nationally accessible ‘stake in the nation,’ for participants, where societal values and relations are made cohesive through discursive agreement, not imposition.

Chapter one contextualises the study, engaging with the opinion, theory, and policy of immigration, integration, and citizenship. It tracks the progression of British multi-culturalism theories that thrived in the early 2000s, and acknowledges national identity to be fluid and contested. It considers multi-culturalist principles and permeable boundaries to citizenship as tenable and inevitable, aligning with the view that integration cannot viably be assimilatory.

Whilst Government policy has regularly acknowledged research and reports that emphasise the necessity of facilitating integration, as the nation has broadly become more open-minded and inclusivist, it has fallen short in demonstrating the thoroughness and ambition in policy implementation for initiatives to be deeply impactful. Fundamental flaws in the current *Life in the UK* test exemplifies a superficial approach in places that requires rejuvenation. Similarly, an underdeveloped and underambitious citizenship education programme, and a lack of investment and guidance despite acknowledgement around sport’s diverse integratory potential, means that these are underutilised avenues for cultivating respect, belonging, and co-operation.

Education, and the Citizenship Curriculum

The research’s education strand draws on surveys and classroom activities with Year 7, 11, and 12 students at a high-performing state school. This approach looked to understand student perception and attitudes towards immigration and citizenship education, and gave them a participatory role when brainstorming questions for the *Life in the UK* test, and pedagogical approaches to citizenship education. Results found that:

- Students express uncertainty towards, though place importance on, immigration. Whilst broadly well-informed, some crucial knowledge gaps could be addressed to provide them with capacity to formulate accurate imaginations, and holistically-informed opinions.

- Students maintain the importance of content linked to citizenship education- human rights, law, and social values were all seen as crucial to learn about. However, particularly amongst older students, there is a feeling that this is neglected, and requires stronger formal installation throughout. They believe in a diverse and collaborative citizenship curriculum, grounded in real-life examples and skillsets.
- Students reject the current *life in the UK test*, and are sceptical of the concept. Their question suggestions emphasise more legal and civic content, with cultural and historical content that is accessible to the public, and adaptive to modern sources of Britishness. They also suggest structural changes that could inform a more interactive, and community-applicable test.

These results, and wider academia, inform calls for a new citizenship education framework, guided by its practitioners, and allowing schools room for agency in their interpretation. Approaches must prioritise student empowerment in practices, and respectful deliberation in learning content. Key enabling policy recommendations include:

- A new curriculum informed by sustained dialogue with schools, as opposed to the heavy-handed and obsolete notion of "Fundamental British Values," which require scrapping, or collaborative reframing.
- Finding ways of ensuring thorough implementation by rethinking fundamental motivators behind education, and universalising the opportunity to gain skills of critical thinking, impactful democratic participation, and respectful dialogue to all students.
- Continuing to make citizenship education compulsory, and taught in ways preferred by schools, but with clearer teacher support, training, and available curriculum content.
- Replacing the optional citizenship GCSE with a required 'student project,' emphasising individual expression, and community impact.

Sport, and the Value of Refugee and Asylum Seeker Programmes

Through interviews, questionnaires, and observations from collaboration with three sports programmes aimed at supporting refugees and asylum seekers, this study found them to have diverse and deep positive integratory impacts on participants, facilitated by programme and coaching good practices.

- Programmes fostered emotional wellbeing, belonging, and personal development for their participants. Emphasising both enjoyment and improvement enabled participants to feel both relaxed and empowered.
- This helped to build the practical and personal skillsets of participants, giving them a stronger sense of communal identity, self-confidence and the capacity to smooth integration processes more widely.
- Though these projects are importantly specifically supporting refugees and asylum seekers, they can also be more widely accessible community assets, thus ensuring they are viewed as collaborators, not competitors.

- Coaches and project managers have crucial facilitatory roles when shaping welcoming environments to emphasise principles of trust, equality, and respect, whilst also adapting to the needs and aspirations of their participants.
- This informs policy recommendations that support investment in refugee and asylum seeker tailored sports programmes, ensuring accessibility through subsidies, and safety and high-quality delivery through adequate facilities.
- Whilst allowing for flexibility, programmes should be structured to ensure the safety and optimal experience of participants through well-trained coaches, and administrative roles for participants. Community ties and wider opportunity are also important, as is maintaining standards of respect and inclusion across mainstream clubs, and during competition.

General Conclusions and Recommendations

Across education and sport, two themes consistently emerge as non-negotiables for effective integration and citizenship-building:

Respect – as a principle and practice for inclusive, humane interaction and discussion.

Empowerment – enabling participants to shape relevant environments, policies, and conceptions of Britishness.

Motivated by upholding these principles, further recommendations include:

- Creating more national spaces where British identity can be discussed and contested. This includes , through public contribution to redesigning the *Life in the UK* test, and the creation of a ‘UK day.’
- Integration policy that prioritises spaces and methods that help to realise a two-way process of adaptation.
- Ensuring political culture and government messaging is demonstrative of the respectful, deliberative, and inclusive nation they should aspire to build and maintain.

Integration and citizenship cannot be perfected or made frictionless. Yet, fostering respectful, participatory, and empowering environments in schools and sports clubs provides a foundation for inclusive dialogue, shared belonging, and evolving identities. By investing in these spaces, Britain can move toward a model of citizenship that values diversity, cultivates trust, and strengthens social fabric.

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Finally, I would like to thank all the participants who engaged enthusiastically with the questions and activities asked of them. This consists of students and teachers at Dame Alice Owens school, who accommodated my visit and requests into their timetable, and the three sports programmes I worked with, Hurdles2Hoops, Bloomsbury Football, and Changing Lives FC, who made me feel at home when welcoming me to their sessions.

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The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this report.



A selection of questionnaire quotes from participants in the refugee and asylum seeker sports programmes collaborated with. These quotes are in response to questions about how sport or the programmes makes the participant feel:

“Football makes me forget my problems and feel strong. When I play, I am not worried about anything. I feel the same as everyone else on the pitch.”

“Football makes me feel free and happy. It helps me make friends and forget the bad times from before. When I play, I feel like I can do anything.”

“Football helps me deal with stress in a good way and connect with people who understand my journey. It shows me that even after difficult times, we can still win and be happy.”

“Basketball makes me feel happy, doing the best I can for something I love is the greatest joy there is”

“Sport makes me feel actually great. I get to see people better than me, play against people better than me, you know, be a better me myself while also making friends along the way.”

“Football makes me feel great and sports are like a therapy to me”

“This club makes me feel hopeful about tomorrow. Every match shows that refugees can do good things for local people. I am proud to be part of this team and this community.”

“This club makes me believe I can succeed in the UK. It gives me purpose and shows that my hard work matters. Now I have the confidence to try new things and believe in myself.”

“This club makes me feel important and gives me hope for my future. Every time I come here, I know my teammates care about me. It helps me feel at home in England.”

“Playing at this club makes me feel happy and safe. I have good friends here and we help each other. When I first came to the UK, I was alone but now I have my football family.”

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Introduction

Following the 2001 race riots in Oldham and Bradford, the UK Government diagnosed their cause to be a lack of social cohesion and integration between ethnic groups within British society. In attempting to heal these perceived divisions, they kickstarted a reconceptualisation of multiculturalism tied to a vision of active, inclusive citizenship. This was enacted in ways such as a compulsory inclusion of citizenship in the curriculum, and the *Life in the UK test* supposedly intended to smoothen the integration processes of immigrants into the UK. However, similar rioting in response to the Southport attack in 2024, and continual mainstreaming of violent discontent towards asylum seekers and refugees, forces acknowledgement of the shortcomings of this agenda, and ways in which active citizenship and integration could be better developed.

Although there is compelling evidence suggesting that socio-economic deprivation is a more prominent cause of these displays of hostility and community breakdown than immigration and multi-culturalism itself,¹ one cannot deny a worrying prominence of toxicity within recent political discussion around immigration. Though Governments have engaged with ambitious and vital thinking regarding reimaginings of citizenship and multiculturalism, a continual absence of respect and humanisation in immigration debates, two values seen as cornerstones of visions for a thriving multicultural Britain,² ensures that this rhetoric rings hollow. Integration and citizenship have remained a topic of emphasis within various academic fields, and have inspired multiple Government inquiries and select committee reports, often with well-directed recommendations. Nevertheless, a sustained lack of thoroughness or prioritisation in implementation has hindered their development.

The fields of education and sport, the twin areas of focus for this report, are crucial examples where substantial potential for enhancing active citizenship and two-way integration has commonly been identified. Yet, limited support and insufficient consideration of how to utilise these vessels has inhibited their effectiveness. The Government has shown intent when introducing citizenship education, but a lack of

¹Neli Demireva and Anthony Heath, 'Diversity and the Civic Spirit in British Neighbourhoods: An Investigation with MCDS and EMBES 2010 Data', *Sociology*, 48.4 (2014), 643–62; Shamit Sagar, Will Somerville, Rob Ford, and Monika Sobolewska, *The Impacts of Migration on Social Cohesion and Integration: Final Report to the Migration Advisory Committee* (London: Migration Advisory Committee, 2012); *Immigration, Diversity and Social Cohesion*, Migration Observatory Briefing, University of Oxford, 13 December 2019, available at <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/immigration-diversity-and-social-cohesion/>.

² This study uses the terms "Britain" and "UK" somewhat interchangeably, reflecting common public discourse. In general, legal and civic references are more likely to refer to the UK, whereas Britain is more commonly invoked in relation to historical, cultural, or national identity discussions. This is not intended to discount Northern Ireland from its claim to 'Britishness,' or legal status in union with Wales, Scotland and England, although 'Britain,' is often subconsciously used to also acknowledge historical and cultural difference in national trajectories. Ultimately, questions around the various devolved nation's separate identities and distinctions would require another project to examine, and go largely unexplored in this report. However, it is demonstrative of the fluid and contested definitions of 'British' nationality that this distinction is regularly blurred.

support, dialogue, or teacher and student agency in contributing to the topic's construction means that the potential to improve critical thinking, democratic participation, and value-driven pedagogy is left untapped. The introduction and sustainment of fixed, imposed and non-negotiable "Fundamental British Values" fails to co-operatively develop an ever-changing notion of citizenship, and instill appropriate values needed to sustain a multi-ethnic, socially-cohesive Britain. In the case of sporting potential, cautious support has meant that the multiple benefits of well-functioning, inclusive sports clubs, particularly those focusing on supporting refugees and asylum seekers, are not experienced by as many as they could be.

This report re-emphasises the importance and integrative potential of sport and education, with a particular focus on the content taught and environment formed within classrooms and refugee sports clubs. Part one is an overview of the evolution of theory and practice regarding immigration attitudes, citizenship, and social integration, providing a broader background for where the impact of education and refugee and asylum seeker sport may be felt. It then displays and discusses separate, participant-centered research gathered on each sub-topic, surmising part two (education) and three (sport), before drawing overall conclusions and policy recommendations from the information gathered (part four).³ For insight into citizenship and educational curriculum, the study uses a secondary school student voice to explore perceptions and aspirations regarding immigration policy and their citizenship curriculum, before displaying and assessing their policy recommendations regarding the concept and contents of the *Life in the UK test*. When looking at the effects of refugee sports clubs on integration, the study uses observations, interviews, and questionnaires from collaboration with three programmes of this nature, considering their impacts and effective teaching practices.

Ultimately, the integratory and citizenship-building impacts within each field appear diverse, with consideration of differing circumstances essential, as opposed to a one-size fits all approach. This essay argues that the recurrence of two key themes, respect, and empowerment of participants, should be seen as fundamental to constructions of citizenship models and integration frameworks. Only when ensuring that these two essentials are explicitly upheld can we expect not only a valuable dialogue around British identity, but also encourage immigration conversations based on critical thinking and humane foundations, thus enabling a two-way integratory process. Furthermore, encouraging active participation in determining their own environment and taught content for students and refugees alike allows for prospective citizens to have a greater sense of belonging and stake in their local and national community, combined with the opportunity to mould their own conceptions of a malleable British identity. Though one cannot expect to make immigration a non-contentious issue; integration a seamless process; or active citizenship a perfected practice, cultivating respectful and impactful environments capable of bringing together diverse opinions, experiences and identities is crucial to progressing an inclusive, discursive, and evolving sense of Britishness vital to the health of our society.

³ Policies and conclusions relating specifically to education and sports clubs are included within their respective sections.

PART ONE- THE WIDER CONTEXT

This section outlines the progression of academia, policy, and society regarding attitudes to immigration, integration, and conceptions of citizenship, before outlining the methodology used in research informing the rest of the report. This is important to justify dual investigations into mainstream education and refugee sports clubs, and provide background context that enhances the clarity and applicability of the later research.

1.1- Immigration attitudes in the UK.

Historically, Britain has been a country characterised by contested popular narratives around immigration, aiming to pair notions of a liberal egalitarian Empire with racially hierarchical realities. These competing visions were internalised throughout the 20th century- increased diversification due to migration from commonwealth countries paralleled immigration policy that was increasingly restrictive and racialised, culminating with the 1981 British nationality act.⁴ Whilst this century has generally seen a decrease in public immigration hostility, recent resurgences remind us this is not an inevitable trend, and that competing visions regarding the exclusivity of Britishness remain of significant importance.

Studies by the Migration Observatory and the National Centre for Social Research provide valuable resources for assessing public attitudes towards immigration. They note a recent increase in the salience of immigration since its post-Brexit decline,⁵ over which time more positive attitudes to immigration since 2014 have experienced a slight reversal since 2021 across all social categories.⁶ There is also still a racial hierarchy to immigration preference,⁷ with particular hostility reserved for asylum seekers, and low skilled workers.⁸ However, question specifics remain important in generating differing results: in 2023, 37% thought that immigration should be reduced a lot, but yet only 17% considered immigration to be a very bad thing.⁹ In comparison with mainland Europe, we are still relatively positive about immigration,¹⁰ but the UK

⁴ There is an abundance of study exploring this history. Some key work includes: Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Spencer, Ian R. G., *British Immigration Policy Since 1939: The Making of Multi-Racial Britain* (London: Routledge, 1997); Wendy Webster, *Englishness and Empire, 1939–1965* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁵ L. Richards, M. Fernández-Reino, and S. Blinder, *UK Public Opinion toward Immigration: Overall Attitudes and Level of Concern* (Migration Observatory Briefing, University of Oxford, 24 January 2025). fig.3

⁶ Ibid, fig.2; Alun Humphrey, Helena Wilson, and Robert Ford, 'Immigration', in *British Social Attitudes 41*, ed. by Clery, Curtice and Jessop (London: National Centre for Social Research, June 2024), pp. 1–72.

⁷ Richards et.al, *UK Public Opinion Towards Immigration*, fig.5; Robert Ford, Acceptable and unacceptable immigrants: How opposition to immigration in Britain is affected by migrants' region of origin. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration studies*, 37.7 (2011)_pp.1017-1037.

⁸ Richards et. al, *UK Public Opinion Towards Immigration*, figs. 6 and 7

⁹ Ibid. fig.1

¹⁰ Ibid. fig.4

is clearly still significantly divided on its merit, and is no exception to a broader Western rise in hostility.

Breaking down national responses into demographics allows us to see what influences may affect people's immigration attitudes. Younger people and those with higher educational attainment are both more likely to hold more positive views on immigration.¹¹ Conceptions of nationality and direct experience of diversity also affects whether someone may believe in an inclusive Britain generally more accommodating to immigrants, or a more exclusivist vision. Unsurprisingly, those holding ethnocentric views of British nationalism are more restrictive than those who subscribe to a civic sense of nationalism.¹² Within social groups typically more tolerant to immigration and diversity, there is an increased likelihood of members less strongly identifying as British, having more diverse friendship groups, and more regular intergroup contact experiences.¹³ 39% of people with no contact with ethnic minorities could be considered 'concerned ethnocentrists,' a large proportional increase relative to the wider population.¹⁴

Whilst these figures are useful, they obscure some complexities and intricacies that could lead to readers assuming that opinions are concrete. Heath and Tilley's work finding assimilatory preference over multiculturalism outlines how many respondents lacked a clear view on the issue.¹⁵ Furthermore, Scott Blinder's crucial research focusing on public *perception* of immigration¹⁶ argues that often the public are considering an "imagined immigration" more in line with press focus on asylum seekers and permanent migrants, often portrayed in a negative light.¹⁷ Therefore, his findings, as he puts it:

"suggest that public attitudes might be responsive to further information or education about immigration, framed neither as persuasion nor as simple numerical facts, but rather as varied and accurate depictions of what sorts of people actually make up the category 'immigrants'."¹⁸

¹¹ Ibid, fig.8; Alun Humphrey, Helena Wilson, and Robert Ford, 'Immigration', in *British Social Attitudes 41*, tables 6 and 7

¹² Robert Ford, *Acceptable and unacceptable immigrants...*, (2011)

¹³ Gianfranci Addario, Joseph Crowley, Curtis Jessop, and Ekaterina Khriakova, *Public Attitudes towards Immigration and Minority Ethnic Groups* (London: National Centre for Social Research, February 2024), figs. 24,28,29.

¹⁴ Ibid. fig 28

¹⁵ A. F. Heath and J. R. Tilley, 'British National Identity and Attitudes towards Immigration', *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 7.2 (2005), 119–32. p.129.

¹⁶ S. Blinder, 'Imagined Immigration: The Impact of Different Meanings of "Immigrants" in Public Opinion and Policy Debates in Britain', *Political Studies*, 63.1 (2015), 80–100.

¹⁷ Gabriela Jacomella, *Media and Migrations: Press Narrative and Country Politics in Three European Countries* (Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper, University of Oxford, 2010); Anna Islentyeva, 'The undesirable migrant in the British press: Creating bias through language', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 119.2 (2018), 419–42; C. Gabrielatos and P. Baker, 'Fleeing, Sneaking, Flooding', *Journal of English Linguistics*, 36.1 (2008), 5–38.

¹⁸ S. Blinder, 'Imagined Immigration: The Impact of Different Meanings of "Immigrants"; supported by a recent yougov poll- Matthew Smith, 'Is There Public Support for Large-Scale Removals of Migrants?', *YouGov*, August 5, 2025.

<https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/52704-is-there-public-support-for-large-scale-removals-of-migrants>

This overview of UK immigration attitudes does not intend to draw substantial conclusions from the available data, nor advocate for undemocratically enforcing citizens to have a pro-immigration stance. It does seem logical to strive for a public that is sufficiently informed on matters of immigration, from which they can form their own opinions. This is of particular importance when thinking about the role of citizenship education discussed later.

Yet, determining integratory theories based on host attitudes alone would be one-dimensional and oversimplistic way to approach summarising literature, policy, and attitudes relating to immigrant integration and conceptions around the nature and boundaries of citizenship, which each require their own independent review to provide sufficient context for the research studied.

1.2- Integration

Defining integration is not a straightforward exercise. Existing literature is not unanimous in its own attribution of meaning; some studies imply that integration is about ‘fitting in’ to an existing society,¹⁹ suggesting more adaptive, assimilatory priorities, whereas others would suggest it to entail learning how to ‘live with’ neighbours whilst maintaining difference for effective social cohesion.²⁰ Such debate emerges when considering the utility of supporting immigrant or refugee-specific ingroups as an enabler for integration, which is a topic revisited later when considering its sporting-specific implications. Either way, a key emphasis of recent scholarly contributions to integration has been on the need for ‘two-way,’ accommodation, asking both immigrant and host country to adapt and engage in order to facilitate “mutual accommodation.”²¹ Yet, there is some distance between this and reality: Thom Brooks recent parliamentary written submission referred to the current experience as a “one way street,”²² with multiple other studies advocating for approaches to integration that better accommodate the needs and identities of immigrants, and support their increased personal presence in national political

¹⁹Although literature advocating for this is less common in current work, this is still the popular conception invoked by many politicians, and as understood by much of the public. This causes some theorists to maintain this understanding, and thus consider whether an alternative language needs to be created that abandons the term, ‘integration.’

²⁰ Dina Kiwan, ‘Active Citizenship: Multiculturalism and Mutual Understanding’, in *Active Citizenship: What Could It Achieve and How?*, ed. by Bernard Crick and Andrew Lockyer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010) pp. 100-111 p.109

²¹ Mutual accommodation is a phrase coined by Alastair Ager and Alison Strang, ‘Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework’, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21.2 (2008), 166–91. Other academic studies seeing integration as a two-way process include Karen Charsley and Sarah Spencer, *Understanding Integration Processes: Informing Policy and Practice*, Policy Bristol, Policy Report 44 (January 2019).; Jenny Phillimore, ‘Implementing Integration in the UK: Lessons for Integration, Theory, Policy and Practice’, *Policy and Politics*, 40.4 (2012), 525–45; and Denis Kierans, *Integration in the UK: Understanding the Data* (Migration Observatory Report, University of Oxford, 23 March 2021).

²²Thom Brooks, *Written evidence from Professor Thom Brooks, Durham University [CC10006]*, submission to the UK Parliament’s Committee on Community Cohesion, (January 2025)

debate, and self-determined community engagement environments.²³ Such two or multiple-way frameworks are supported because they offer more consideration of the internal diversity of immigrants, and encourage mutual trust-building and co-operation necessary for good social relations.

Beyond defining integration, theorists consider what can be done to actually achieve more harmonious social mixing. At its most basic, this discussion revolves around enablers and effects of social interaction, stemming from Gordon Allport's 1954 intergroup contact hypothesis. For Allport, given the correct conditions, (equal status of the groups in the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and the support of authorities, law or custom), contact made between different social and ethnic groups will reduce prejudices.²⁴ Thomas Pettigrew is the most prominent modern champion of Allport's theory, which has not been fundamentally disproved.²⁵ However, most studies tend to move away from any assumption that intergroup contact inherently produces positive attitude change, instead focusing on additional conditions necessary to apply to interactions, such as the environment, quality, quantity, and meaningfulness of contact experiences.²⁶ Hence, encouraging diverse social contact and connection remains an objective and measure of successful integration,²⁷ but more attention should be paid as to how these interactions may occur.

Integration is also considered as a more diverse, intricate process than simply connecting people together, as academics have shown through creation of models to explain and assess integration. In particular, Ager and Strang's tiered model on indicators of integration, and Spencer and Charsley's model demonstrating the multiple spaces and influences associated with the immigration process.

Ager and Strang's indicators require a foundational necessity of rights and responsibilities informed by explicit discussion. Once this is secured, facilitators of empowerment (language, culture, digital skills, safety and stability) help enable social connectors to further markers and means (health and social care, employment,

²³ Heaven Crawley, Simon McMahon, and Katharine Jones, *Victims and Villains: Migrant Voices in the British Media* (Coventry: Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, 2016); Devyani Prabhat (ed.), *Citizenship in Times of Turmoil? Theory, Practice and Policy* (Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019).p.xvi; Gillian Blake et al., *Community Engagement and Community Cohesion* (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2008).

²⁴ Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1954).

²⁵ Thomas F. Pettigrew, Linda R. Tropp, Ulrich Wagner, and Oliver Christ, 'Recent Advances in Intergroup Contact Theory', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35.3 (2011), 271–80; T. Pettigrew, 'Intergroup Contact Theory', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49 (1998), 65–85.

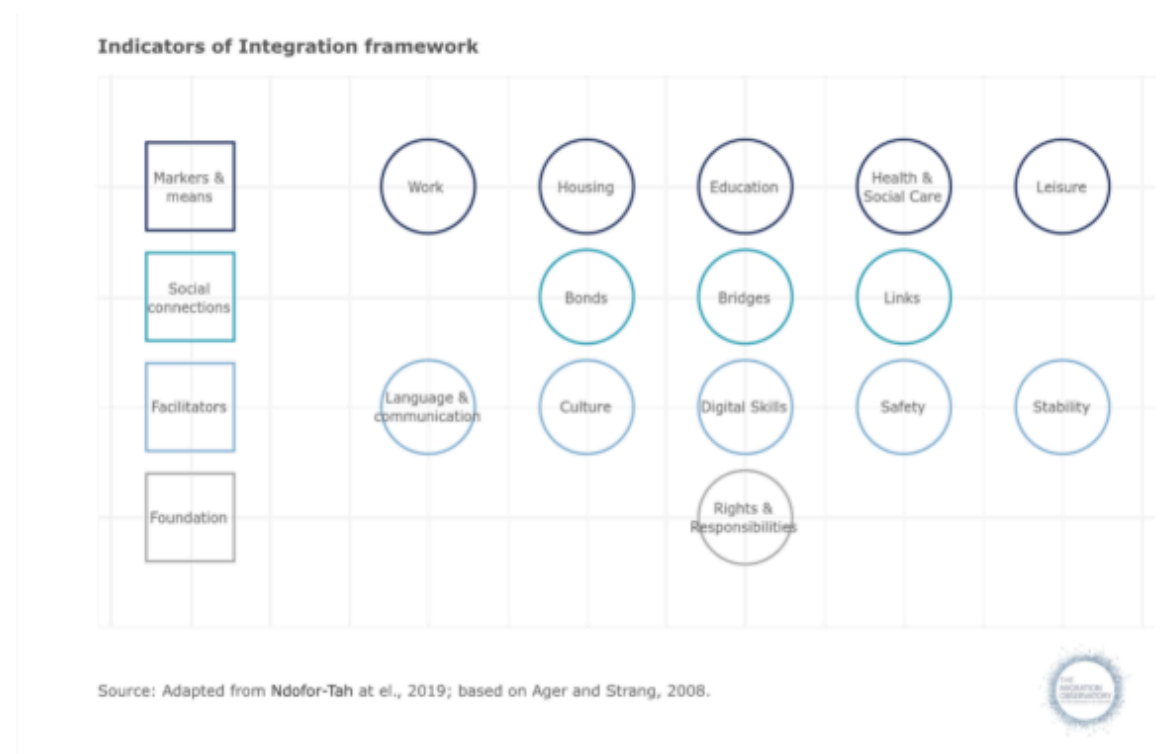
²⁶ Ash Amin, 'Ethnicity and the Multicultural City: Living with Diversity', *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 34.6 (2002), 959–80; Jacqueline Broadhead, Denis Kierans, and Louise Mort, *Connecting Communities: Inclusive Cities COVID-19 Research and Policy Briefings, Issue 3* (Oxford: Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, COMPAS, University of Oxford, 5 November 2020) p.14; James Laurence et al., 'Ethnic Diversity, Inter-Group Attitudes and Countervailing Pathways of Positive and Negative Inter-Group Contact: An Analysis across Workplaces and Neighbourhoods', *Social Indicators Research*, 136.2 (2018), 719–49.

²⁷ *Migrants' Social Relationships, Identity and Civic Participation in the UK*, Migration Observatory Briefing, University of Oxford, 17 March 2020, available at <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migrants-social-relationships-identity-and-civic-participation-in-the-uk/>; Dina Kiwan, 'Active Citizenship: Multiculturalism and Mutual Understanding', in *Active Citizenship: What Could It Achieve and How?* p.109

education, housing, and leisure.)²⁸ Their call for active discussion around difference at the heart of integration is shared by Ted Cante and Ash Amin.²⁹ Jayshree Majevalia's study shows that this is currently a challenge, with only half of participants feeling comfortable discussing race with somebody different to them in social class or ethnicity.³⁰ As for Charsley and Spencer, their model emphasises the diverse communities (familial, local and national) and fields (civic and political, cultural, structural, social and identity) where integration is applicable. It also stresses the range of co-actors affecting an individual's social integration, including their neighbours, institutions, and policies, reaffirming multiple responsibilities required to enable fruitful integration.³¹

To conclude, integration remains an actively contested term that should encompass consideration of how to orchestrate moments scaling from small, individual interactions, to large institutional frameworks and policies, in ways that enable cohesive belonging. Well established principles of a multi-directional process, and a necessity to “tackle the fear of difference by exploring that difference”³² can be seen as essential to conversations and policies approaching the subject.

Models/ indicators to assess integration.



²⁸Alastair Ager and Alison Strang, 'Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21.2 (2008), 166–91.

²⁹ Ted Cante, *Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).p.100; Amin, 'Ethnicity and the Multicultural City: Living with Diversity,' p.978

³⁰ Jayshree Majevalia, *British Integration Study 2019: The Challenge* (2019). p.34

³¹ Sarah Spencer and Karen Charsley, 'Reframing "Integration": Acknowledging and Addressing Five Core Critiques', *CMS: Comparative Migration Studies*, 9.18 (2021).

³²Ted Cante, *Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity* p.122

Figure 1: Indicators of integration framework: Taken from Denis Kierans, *Integration in the UK: Understanding the Data* (Migration Observatory Report, University of Oxford, 23 March 2021), available at <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/reports/integration-in-the-uk-understanding-the-data/>. Figure 1.

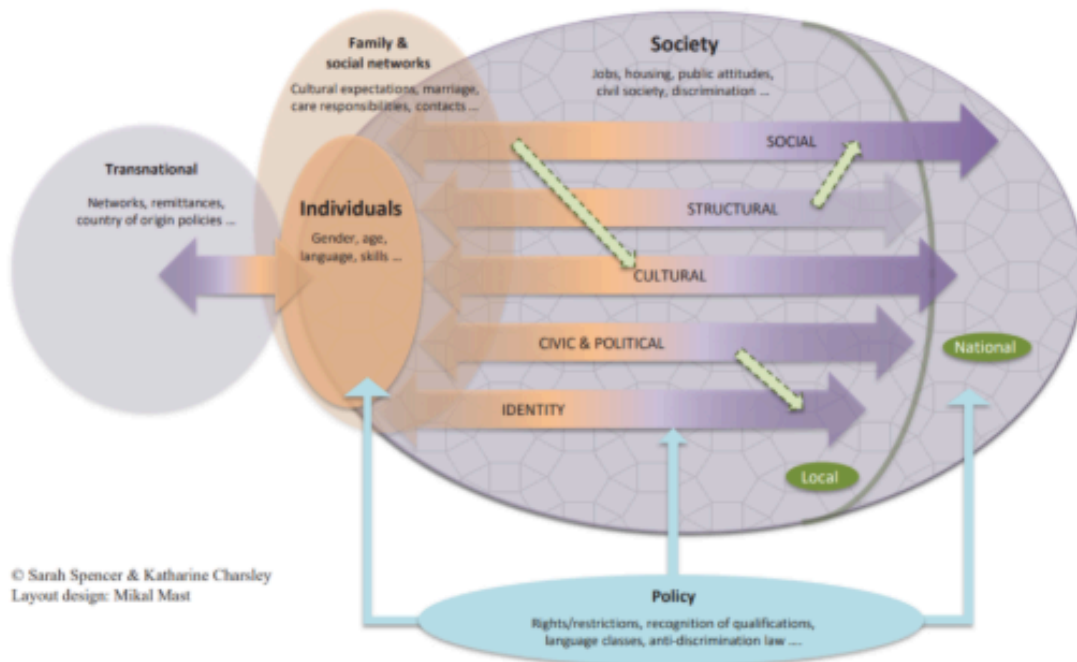


Figure 2: Heuristic model of integration processes and effectors, taken from Sarah Spencer and Karen Charsley, 'Reframing "Integration": Acknowledging and Addressing Five Core Critiques', *CMS: Comparative Migration Studies*, 9.18 (2021). Fig.5

1.3- Citizenship

Academic conversations around how integration can be managed in a society are linked to considerations of what that society is or represents, hence the common pairing of questions of citizenship and national identity with work regarding integration, and debate around immigration.³³ Recent work on national identity still draws on Benedict Anderson's depiction of "imagined communities" of connection artificially forged to create a communal sense of belonging.³⁴ Subsequent theorists have noted that rather than being fixed, homogenous entities, a sense of nation is seen by some like Michael Kenny as an "empty signifier" for political and cultural utilisation and interpretation.³⁵ Thus, concepts of citizenship, although made real through legal expectations that define a social contract between citizen and state, undergo similar contestation and reinvention that ensures it is a continually unfinished and evolving notion.³⁶

³³Bridget Anderson, Matthew J. Gibney, and Emanuela Paoletti, 'Citizenship, Deportation and the Boundaries of Belonging', *Citizenship Studies*, 15.5 (2011), 547–63. p.557

³⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

³⁵ Michael Kenny, *The Politics of English Nationhood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). p.6

³⁶ John Clarke, Kate Coll, Evelina Dagnino, et al., *Disputing Citizenship* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2014).

Two prominent discussion points in current conceptions of citizenship are the viability of multiculturalism as an approach to citizenship, and the political nature and impacts of the existing enactment of citizenship. These are themes important to citizenship education programmes and the tenability of multi-cultural citizenship for those within a nation, but also affects multicultural inclusion and attitudes to integration that extend to non-citizens and new arrivals also.³⁷ Pierre Monforte is one of many who define our current citizenship model as neo-liberal, based on individual relations with the state in an otherwise internally competitive nation, as opposed to an alternatively communal or co-operative emphasis.³⁸ Furthermore, increasing diversity and the rise in percentage of the population born outside of the UK forces discussion around whether citizenship can and should be accommodating for all.³⁹ David Goodhart sees this increase in diversity as an unmanageable threat to maintaining sustainable immigrant-native relations,⁴⁰ and his scepticism is shared by David Miller's emphasis on assimilation, and the increasing numbers of politicians and citizens declaring the failure of multiculturalism.⁴¹

Conversely, contesting voices point out that multi-culturalism and immigration are both unavoidable features of modern society; and there is plentiful possibility to build a sense of citizenship that incorporates this diversity. For the cultural theorist Stuart Hall, who emphasizes the fluidity and constant evolution of identities and 'Britishness,' society has to dispel false notions of cultural and historical hegemony and determinism to be truthfully representative and accessible.⁴² Bhikhu Parekh further argues that culture deeply shapes a plurality of identities, and suggests that combining positive attributes of different cultures into a non-culturally aligned sense of citizenship based on mutual values of freedom and respect allows us to benefit from exchanging knowledge and ideas.⁴³ Will Kymlicka's view offers a softer but similar liberal multiculturalism that considers minority groups (including immigrants)'s

³⁷ Teo T-A, 'Multiculturalism beyond Citizenship: The Inclusion of Non-Citizens', *Ethnicities*, 21.1 (2021), 165–91; Matthew Gibney, 'Denationalisation and Discrimination', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46.12 (2020), 2551–68; though François Boucher, Sophie Guérard de Latour and Esma Baycan-Herzog, 'Rethinking Liberal Multiculturalism: Foundations, Practices and Methodologies', *Ethnicities*, 23.4 (2023), 527–546, notes that there is disagreement as to whether multicultural citizenship studies should be linked to theories of immigration also.

³⁸ Leah Bassel, Pierre Monforte and Kamran Khan, 'Becoming an Active Citizen: The UK Citizenship Test', *Ethnicities*, 21.2 (2021), 311–332 p.315

³⁹ *Immigration, Diversity and Social Cohesion*, Migration Observatory Briefing, University of Oxford, 13 December 2019, available at <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/immigration-diversity-and-social-cohesion/>.

⁴⁰ David Goodhart, 'Too Diverse?', *Prospect*, February 2004; also to an extent M. Wright, 'Diversity and the Imagined Community: Immigrant Diversity and Conceptions of National Identity', *Political Psychology*, 32.5 (2011), 837–62.

⁴¹ David Miller, *Strangers in Our Midst: The Political Philosophy of Immigration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016). Suella Braverman's speech on multi-culturalism comes to mind, though she is echoing some words of David Cameron, amongst others.

⁴² Stuart Hall, 'New Ethnicities', in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. by David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 441–49; Stuart Hall, 'Questions of Cultural Identity', in *Negotiating Cultural Identity: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by Paul Du Gay et al. (London: Sage, 1996), pp. 51–62; Stuart Hall, 'The Multicultural Question' (2000), in *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*, ed. by Paul Gilroy and Ruth Wilson Gilmore (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021)

⁴³ Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002)

demands for protective rights compatible with liberal social principles, therefore prioritises the need to find methods of unifying citizens.⁴⁴

Indeed, if we accept the merits or inevitability of a multi-cultural nation with a citizenship based on shared principles and values of bondage, this requires further scrutiny of what these principles are and how they are decided upon. For Amartya Sen, citizenship and national progress should not be an attempt at homogenisation, but instead must consider inclusion and social freedoms acknowledging difference to be paramount to development.⁴⁵ Somewhat progressing towards this, the UK has become more self-critical and shifted from ethno-centric to civic conceptualisations of citizenship over recent decades, thus creating a common bond based on institutional and legal pride potentially accessible to all, as opposed to racialized unifiers.⁴⁶ Some consider this as a weak form of national allegiance, or that it risks becoming exclusive to outsiders if imagined as a product of historical national consensus.⁴⁷ To overcome this, multi-culturalists are often comfortable with creating a citizenship emphasising culture and history, as long as they are inclusive in acknowledging diverse and external contributions throughout.⁴⁸

Furthermore, many scholars emphasize the need for an “active” or “constructivist” citizenship that entails a public that not only participates in institutions and practices where citizenship is consolidated (for example, democratic engagement through voting and joining social groups), but also challenges existing ideas and values by forwarding their own visions.⁴⁹ Therefore, it is ensured that values of connection and identity accepted between groups are not tokenistic place-holders imposed through authority, but instead carry genuine relevance having been agreed upon through popular dialogue.⁵⁰ Devyani Prabhat states that “change is the only constant in the world of immigration and citizenship,”⁵¹ therefore the continual active involvement of citizens in imagining citizenship provides a strong pathway to maintaining the relevance and thus legitimacy of agreed upon unifying ideals, as these continue to evolve in reflection of ever-changing social-configurations and imaginations of the

⁴⁴Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁴⁵Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁴⁶Sir John Curtice and Alex Scholes, *British Social Attitudes 41: National Identity* (London: National Centre for Social Research, 2024), available at <https://natcen.ac.uk/publications/british-social-attitudes-41-national-identity>.

⁴⁷Yael Tamir, ‘Not So Civic: Is There a Difference between Ethnic and Civic Nationalism?’, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 22 (2019), 419–34; Evelien Tonkens and Jan Willem Duyvendak, ‘Introduction: The Culturalization of Citizenship’, in *The Culturalization of Citizenship*, ed. by Jan Willem Duyvendak, Peter Geschiere and Evelien Tonkens (London: Springer, 2016), pp. 1–20.

⁴⁸ Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*; Stuart Hall, ‘The Multicultural Question’ (2000), in *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*, p.430

⁴⁹ Menno Hurenkamp, Evelien Tonkens, and Jan Willem Duyvendak, ‘The Construction of Citizenship in Public Debate’, in *Crafting Citizenship: Negotiating Tensions in Modern Society* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 19–41.; Bernard Crick and Andrew Lockyer (eds), *Active Citizenship: What Could It Achieve and How?* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

⁵⁰ Parekh

⁵¹ Devyani Prabhat (ed.), *Citizenship in Times of Turmoil? Theory, Practice and Policy* (Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019). p.xi

nation.⁵² When applied to questions of immigration and integration, this would mean that new arrivals are given an active voice in discussions of national identity, driving inter-cultural conversation with a meaningful shared purpose. However, current limitations to this can be seen in outdated, impractical, and conformist practices of both citizenship and integration policy, evident in the flaws of the citizenship test and insufficient implementation of many well-intentioned recommendations and promises, as this background chapter will continue to address.

1.4- The Citizenship Test

The mandatory *Life in the UK test* for immigrants wishing to become naturalized citizens is an example where tensions around principles of integration and citizenship can be perceived. But also, the continual critiques on the test since its 2005 introduction exemplify the need for new approaches. In effect, the test operates as an assessment of whether an applicant can be fully “invited into the imagined community.”⁵³ Thus, its content and purpose both have important roles in defining the nation, therefore could provide an appropriate vehicle for dialogue around what this nation is..

Conceptually, there is debate around whether having a citizenship test can be seen as compatible with either liberal or multi-cultural nationalist rhetoric. This is largely due to the issue of defining a nation based on a majority image, therefore encouraging assimilation to this ‘norm.’ Additionally, the fact that it is an activity exclusively for immigrants, and with content often known only by applicants, effectively alienates further.⁵⁴ For Sara Karim, this represents a symbolic violence commonly forced upon immigrants looking to navigate boundaries of belonging,⁵⁵ with further studies showing that the tests create subordinate citizens, not active ones.⁵⁶ Bridget Byrne also noted the political weaponisation of the test: it is typically modified at times of high immigration concern, but predominantly to adhere to the exclusivist demands of the discontented.⁵⁷ However, the majority of these theorists have quarrels with the current state of the citizenship test as opposed to the principle

⁵²Leah Bassel, Pierre Monforte and Kamran Khan, ‘Becoming an Active Citizen: The UK Citizenship Test,’ p.324; John Clarke, Kate Coll, Evelina Dagnino, et al., *Disputing Citizenship*; Michael Kenny, *The Politics of English Nationhood*, conclusion.

⁵³Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, p.288

⁵⁴ Debra Gray and Christine Griffin, ‘A Journey to Citizenship: Constructions of Citizenship and Identity in the British Citizenship Test’, *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 53.2 (2014), 299–314.

p.310; Melanie Cooke, ‘Barrier or Entitlement? The Language and Citizenship Agenda in the United Kingdom’, *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 6.1 (2009), 71–77; David Bartram, ‘The UK Citizenship Process: Political Integration or Marginalization?’, *Sociology*, 53.4 (2019), 671–88.

⁵⁵Sara A. Karim, ‘The Symbolic Violence of Citizenship Tests: Low-Schooled Refugees Narrate Their Experience’, *Citizenship Studies*, 28.7 (2024), 728–744; also see Bridget Anderson, Matthew J. Gibney, and Emanuela Paoletti, ‘Citizenship, Deportation and the Boundaries of Belonging.’

⁵⁶Wijnand A. P. van Tilburg, Amina Saadi, and Nikhila Mahadevan, ‘Citizen Vain? Exposure to the UK Citizenship Test Predicts Milder Demands from Immigrants across the Political Spectrum’, *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 60.3 (2021), 888–901.

⁵⁷ Bridget Byrne, ‘Testing Times: The Place of the Citizenship Test in the UK Immigration Regime and New Citizens’ Responses to It’, *Sociology*, 51.2 (2017), 323–338.

itself, which is usually deemed as potentially compatible.⁵⁸ Similarly, Sabine Hunger has shown that the variable contexts of citizenship acquisition in different country's systems affects its utility for immigrants in the naturalisation process.⁵⁹ Therefore, though some call for the total scrapping of a test incompatible with democratic principles, for most radical reform is sufficient to make the test a justifiable policy.

A brief inspection of the sample tests available demonstrates a selection of questions blatantly incompatible with that of the general public- research suggests that two thirds of British citizens failed when tested.⁶⁰ Recent test editions have substituted civic for historical and cultural content, much of which appears irrelevant or in cases even factually incorrect.

For example, the test claims Britain became permanently separated from mainland Europe "about 10,000 years ago," whereas the actual time was approximately 8150 years ago, due to the Storegga Tsunami (whether this is popular or relevant knowledge is a different question altogether.)⁶¹ Thom Brooks' characterisation of the test resembling a "bad pub quiz" void of integratory purpose or consistency is rarely contested, though significant alterations seem routinely de-prioritized.⁶² This failing state of the current test, and its symbolism as an entity where Britishness is intended to be defined, is the motivation for getting students to consider their own priorities and preferred questions for the test. Perhaps, given the importance stressed by academics around critical conversations about Britishness and difference seen to support integration and citizenship-building, thorough consultation In relation to the citizenship test is a positive place to start. This would be a departure from a trend in policies that are often progressive and well-motivated, but lack the thrust that could genuinely make them transformative.

1.5 Government Policy.

The synthesis of issues of integration and citizenship in government reports and policy, usually stressing the importance of both sport and education in these

⁵⁸Ricky van Oers, *Deserving Citizenship: Citizenship Tests in Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom* (Leiden and Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2014).

⁵⁹Sabine Hunger, 'No Naturalization, No Participation? The Influence of Citizenship Regimes and Naturalization on Immigrants' Political Participation', *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, 12.1 (2018), 279–296; Christian Gathmann and Nathan Keller, 'Access to Citizenship and the Economic Assimilation of Immigrants', *The Economic Journal*, 128.616 (2018), 3141–81.

⁶⁰Wijnand Van Tilburg, Nikhila Mahadevan, and Amina Saadi, *Most Britons Would Fail the UK Citizenship Test, Research Reveals* (University of Essex, 2021) <https://www.essex.ac.uk/news/2021/01/06/uk-citizenship-test-needs-to-change> [accessed 8 September 2025].

⁶¹ *Life in the United Kingdom: A Guide for New Residents*, 3rd edn (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 2025) p.39/ section 3.7 is the location of the error; David Walker, Fraser Sturt, Vince Gaffney, Simon Fitch, and Nicholas Ashton, 'A Great Wave: The Storegga Tsunami and the End of Doggerland?', *Antiquity*, 94.378 (2020), 1404–1417 is one of many studies that confirms the actual date.

⁶²Thom Brooks, *Reforming the UK's Citizenship Test: Building Bridges, Not Barriers* (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2022). See the bibliography for other publications by Brooks, who has written extensively on this topic.

endeavours, justifies the content covered in this report. Yet, a waning prioritisation, and lack of nuance in implementation leads many to assess their impact to be underwhelming. While some examples below are in reference to consolidating pre-existing diversity as opposed to new arrivals, similar lessons are often intended or can be applied in this field also.

Driven by response to riots, but also a predisposition to a “third way” agenda that placed active citizenship and social cohesion at the top of their agenda, New Labour’s early years of governance drove innovative thought around these topics.⁶³ Their thinking was informed by key figures at the heart of reports commissioned— notably Bernard Crick’s *In Defence of Politics*, Ted Cante’s 2001 *Community Cohesion* report, and Bhikhu Parekh’s leading role in *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* report in 2000.⁶⁴ Each of these contained ambitious and socially radical aims for the time, highlighting key areas where difference can be explored to promote cohesion. Cante’s report, for instance, pays particular attention to engaging with young people already enthusiastic about breaking down barriers, through joint sports development, and crucially universal citizenship education for young people, driven by community contact.⁶⁵

In their “Strength in Diversity” 2004 publication, the Government demonstrated engagement with this line of thinking through the acknowledgement of integration as a two-way process that should occur within the framework of rights and responsibilities.⁶⁶ However, policies like the *Life in the UK* test and general messaging suggested a reality of uneven adaptation, putting more onus on new arrivals to adapt. They also introduced mandatory citizenship education into the curriculum, and launched an optional GCSE. Furthermore, each of these thinkers have since displayed frustration with failures to implement their ideas. Cante in 2005 acknowledged that citizenship was struggling due to competing with academic burdens,⁶⁷ with Crick suggesting that schools needed to be more ambitious in promoting more widespread and meaningful democratic opportunities.⁶⁸ Parekh also expressed frustration at the media’s misframing of his report as anti-British.⁶⁹

Despite these drawbacks, similar ambition around adaptive but value-based integration and cohesion goals continued to feature in Government discussion, although with increasing monopolisation over principles of rights and democracy as exclusively British. Promises and some progress of reviewing and diversifying the

⁶³Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), though he would dispute that this was properly implemented.

⁶⁴ Bernard Crick, *In Defence of Politics* (London: Fontana Press, 1992); Ted Cante, *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team* (London: GPO, 2001).; Bhikhu Parekh, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: The Parekh Report* (London: Profile Books / Runnymede Trust, 2000).

⁶⁵ Cante, *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team*- 5.7.1 and 5.7.4

⁶⁶Home Office, *Strength in Diversity: Towards a Community Cohesion and Race Equality Strategy* (London: Home Office, 2004). 5.8

⁶⁷Ted Cante, *Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). p.166

⁶⁸ Bernard Crick and Andrew Lockyer (eds), *Active Citizenship: What Could It Achieve and How?* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

⁶⁹ Bhikhu Parekh, ‘The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: Reporting on a Report’, *The Round Table*, 90.362 (2001), 691–700. p.698

history curriculum has been discussed, although substantial change has been postponed to form part of a wider curriculum review. Citizenship education was also reframed as exclusively British, and as having additional anti-terror responsibilities, by promoting "fundamental British values" in 2013. This was supported by the recommendations of Louise Casey in her 2016 report on social cohesion.⁷⁰ The report also goes on to emphasise the importance of social mixing with meaningful contact, alongside education and reforming the citizenship process.⁷¹ Furthermore, thorough analysis and recommendations from the All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Cohesion In 2017, and the 2018 "Ties that Bind" House of Lords report re-emphasise the importance of public debate in a way that "fundamentally reframes conversion" around immigration, that has become of a "poisonous nature."⁷² The APPG group suggests enrichment of a sense of citizenship for immigrants via reforming the citizenship process to treat applicants as "Britains in waiting,"⁷³ while the HoL team also endorsed a revision, as well as suggesting a reframing of British values and citizenship in the curriculum, and targeted investment into sports and art programmes designed to aid local integration.⁷⁴

Government response to fresh study followed a similar pattern- principle acceptance, some successful initiatives, but overall stagnation in engaging with more ambitious elements of programmes. A 2018 paper endorsed sport and education as potential integration enablers, but with little supporting policy, and claimed it would review the *Life in the UK test*, but only offered edited reprints of 2013 content.⁷⁵ The Home Office's 2019 release of 'integration indicators,' demonstrates an understanding of integration as multi-directional, and the importance of which social quantifiers to measure success with,⁷⁶ and yet the same year saw Casey declare that she believed the Government had abandoned her recommendations for community cohesion.⁷⁷

With the current Government, there seems to be a slight reluctance to fully engage with the social cohesion theories of their predecessors, with only a small section on integration in their 2025 immigration white paper, stating that immigrants must be the ones to "integrate," and presenting stricter boundaries to those expected to do so, with an increase in English language restrictions, and doubling amount of time needed before application for naturalised citizenship can take place.⁷⁸ On the other

⁷⁰Louise Casey, *The Casey Review: A Review into Opportunity and Integration* (London: Department for Communities and Local Government, 2016). p. 6, 4.31.

⁷¹Ibid. 4.3, 4.31

⁷²All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration, *Integration Not Demonisation: The Final Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration's Inquiry into the Integration of Immigrants* (2017).p.4; same ideas are expressed in House of Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement, *The Ties That Bind: Citizenship and Civic Engagement in the 21st Century* (London: House of Lords, 2018), HL Paper 118 p.58

⁷³Ibid (APPG) p.3, 33-34

⁷⁴House of Lords, *Ties that Bind*, ps.472 and 473 for life in UK test, 39-46 on FBV changes, 123, 132, 133, 148 and 161 on curriculum, and 61, 356, 361 and 381 for sport.

⁷⁵Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), *Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper: Building Stronger, More United Communities* (London, 2018).

⁷⁶Chrysoula Ndofor-Tah et al., *Home Office Indicators of Integration Framework 2019*, 3rd edn (London: Home Office, 2019). section 5.

⁷⁷Mark Townsend, 'Social Integration Has Been Abandoned, Says Former Government Tsar', *The Guardian*, 2 November 2019.

⁷⁸Home Office, *Restoring Control over the Immigration System: White Paper* (London: HMSO, May 2025),

hand, consultation and representation for their new national youth strategy proposals, as well as the ongoing curriculum review, are indicative of a Government willing to be an enabler of empowering conversation around citizenship and opportunity, though show reluctance to link such initiatives to immigration policies.⁷⁹

In summary, this chapter focusing on the extended background context of the study's subject notes a combination of progressions and frustrations around citizenship and integration. Efforts to promote and identify the need for a more active, democratically engaged populace; an integration programme enabling better social cohesion; and importance placed on unifying values of respect and freedom are frequent. This includes acknowledgment of the potential inherent in both education and sport to advance each field. Yet, shortcomings occur when ideas are filtered to become mild alternatives to their original ambitions, or when insufficient attention is paid to how to create respectful environments for genuine representative debate and participation in questions of identity. These are crucial to wider engagement with the ideas for integration and citizenship proposed by governments and academics and could combat the commonality of hate-fuelled approaches. This requires promotion of understanding and respect for others, stemming from meaningful positive social interactions and more thorough citizenship education.

It is within this wider context that this study operates, considering the specific impacts regarding teaching practices and policies attached to classroom environments encompassing all, and sports clubs intending to tailor their support to new arrivals, specifically refugees and asylum seekers. It will now present the methodology informing each study, before exploring each sub-topic and its results, in depth.

1.6-Study Methodology

This report contains two separate inquiries into education and refugee sports clubs, with conclusions and policy suggestions that may support each other. Therefore, their methodologies will be outlined separately here.

The education-focused study looked to identify trends in the opinions and knowledge of students in relation to both citizenship and immigration, in addition to wanting to amplify student voice in curriculum policy formulation. The study uses individual student questionnaire responses about immigration and citizenship education, and group activities brainstorming citizenship test content and values to be prioritised in learning. These results were obtained within the context of a taught lesson exploring immigration, citizenship, and 'Britishness,' questionnaires done before relevant learning, to prevent any influence on student responses. The students involved comprised two smaller classes of year eleven and twelve students (totalling 22), and one larger class of year sevens (29). The study took place at Dame Alice Owens School in Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, an extremely high-performing partially-selective state school. In a recent outstanding Ofsted report, they identify the school as a "wonderful place to learn" and emphasise the high-quality of their personal and social

⁷⁹Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), 'Government partners with young people to help develop new national youth strategy', GOV.UK, 5 March 2025.

student development.⁸⁰ Therefore, we might expect students to be particularly conscious of social issues and citizenship participation relative to a wider sample of the national student population, and display ambitious and creative policy ideas. The school, like most, primarily embeds citizenship into other subjects, assemblies, and extra-curricular activities. Having pupils attending from across North London and Hertfordshire, we can expect students to have a relatively first-hand experience of diverse interactions.

It was hoped that the study could incorporate other schools with different contexts to student backgrounds in order to make comparative judgements, but unfortunately this was not possible, but would be recommended in further studies. Engagement with two different year groups at either end of secondary school does offer the opportunity to consider how students' knowledge and opinions may have evolved. The sample size is relatively typical of similar studies,⁸¹ though future researchers would be encouraged to engage with a larger number of students to ensure more representative results. In relation to understanding student opinion and attitudes, a mixture of open and closed answer questionnaires were preferred, as this could ensure an element of controlled response, whilst also catering for individual expression. Questions were selected so as to obtain an understanding of student perception, attitudes, and policy preferences relating to immigration. In asking questions about the population percentage of immigrants in the UK, or all the potential reasons for immigrating, one cannot expect students to demonstrate expert knowledge, but instead the questions intend to draw out how students 'imagine' immigration, and whether they have a basic enough understanding to provide rational, informed opinions. When creating policy ideas to inform the citizenship test and citizenship curriculum values and approaches, group responses were preferred, as this allowed for the utilisation of constructive discussions around Britishness, ensuring ideas were debated and contested before being suggested. This activity attempts to understand what young people consider to be important attributes of Britishness and citizenship that would ensure the notions invoked by the *Life in the UK* tests and curriculum content are genuinely reflective of evolving conceptions. Ultimately, whilst this study would encourage the need for replication and expansion to ensure its findings are more nationally representative, it does provide a valuable insight into the opinions and perceptions of broadly well-educated secondary school students on immigration and citizenship education, as well as allowing students an active contributory role in citizenship-building and definitions through displaying their policy recommendations.

In studying the integratory impacts of sports clubs for refugee and asylums seekers, this study used methods of interviewing coaches and administrators alongside general observation of sessions, as was considered typical of similar studies by Ramón Spaaij. It also attempted to heed calls for a more active role for participants

⁸⁰Ofsted, *Inspection of Dame Alice Owen's School*, 5–6 December 2023, https://damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2024/01/10255029-Dame-Alice-Owens-School-136554-final.pdf [accessed 8 September 2025].

⁸¹ The work done by Pupils2Parliament, for example, usually engages with similar numbers of pupils, often slightly higher numbers for small-scale polling exercises, and slightly smaller class sizes for more discursive activities and policy suggestions.

in studies by including questionnaires asking about how the club and sport more widely made them feel; what they considered most important about the club; and what they thought coaches wanted them to learn.⁸² The study combines results obtained from three different clubs, drawing from a total of seven interviews, and twenty questionnaire responses. Whilst each club's structure and membership were varied, this allowed for consideration of teaching principles and practices that could be impactful across different contexts, but also demonstrates the variation of impact such clubs may have based on differing participant needs, and organisation intent and capacity.

Specifically, this study collaborated with two programmes providing weekly sessions supporting child refugees and asylum seekers based in London, Hurdles2Hoops and Bloomsbury Football, and one programme operating in Harlow, Changing Lives FC, set up as an adult refugee and asylum seeker football team of accessible and increasingly competitive orientation. Though each programme's primary purpose was to support asylum seekers and refugees, they were all open to inclusion of others in the community in their sessions, to varied extents. Each programme was a part of a wider organisation of differing scale and intention- Bloomsbury's asylum seeker and refugee football session was part of a larger football club spanning across London; the basketball session at Hurdles2Hoops is one of numerous activities offered at a small-scale to the local community; and Changing Lives is associated with other socially impactful initiatives also. In observation, I looked to identify practices used by coaches, and the responses of players, including the atmosphere created on and off the pitch or court. The interviews took place with four coaches, two project managers, and one participant. Coach and administrator questions focused on what social benefits and integratory impacts the programmes offered; the values and teaching emphasised to maximise these; and the further support needed to enhance their programmes. The participant interview focused on similar themes to the questionnaire, but also included questions about making friends, sporting ambition, and how the club and sport had helped with other aspects of life. Similarly, this study would endorse further research to consider how impacts vary in different sports, environments or social contexts.

⁸² Ramón Spaaij et al., 'Sport, refugees, and forced migration: a critical review of the literature', *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 1 (2019).p.9

Part 2- Education

This section is driven by the active voice of student participants, who help support conclusions that advocate for a transformation of citizenship education, towards a more collaborative, fluid, and deeply impactful model.

2.1- Citizenship in Education Policy and Theory.

A recent Channel 4 report on 'Gen Z' characterized young people as a stratified generation, with overall limited political engagement, and considerable scepticism displayed towards truth and democracy.⁸³ Similarly, the IEA's⁸⁴ 2022 study on civic education, focusing on younger secondary school pupils, saw global reductions in civic knowledge since 2016. Although there was strong support for equal rights that extended to immigrants, consistently low levels of political interest remained.⁸⁵ Both also note a growing gender divergence in attitudes also.⁸⁶ This decline goes against a backdrop of general global and national improvement in education standards and attainment,⁸⁷ supporting theorists who stress that education is not inherently democratic, but that the makeup of content within teaching and textbooks may have an effect on students' ideologies.⁸⁸ Other studies do suggest correlation between education in current Western systems, and positive immigration attitudes and decreased inter-racial prejudice,⁸⁹ suggesting that a rise in human rights rhetoric has helped drive social justice prioritisation and more inclusive sentiment in the longer run.⁹⁰ Given that education can also certainly be an enabler of national identity, and how its boundaries of belonging are conceived,⁹¹ there is evidence to support its transformational capabilities for citizenship engagement and integration, although this relies on the extent and effectiveness of how this is practiced in schools.⁹² Many academics stress the importance of deeper and further engagement with citizenship programmes in democratic processes that involve students. Furthermore, theorists also stress the importance of developing personal values, and an environment where

⁸³Channel 4, *Gen Z: Trends, Truth and Trust* (UK, 2025), <https://www.channel4.com/corporate/about-4/gen-z-trends-truth-and-trust> [accessed 8 September 2025].

⁸⁴ International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

⁸⁵ Wolfram Schulz, John Ainley, Julian Fraillon, Bruno Losito, Gabriella Agrusti, Valeria Damiani, and Tim Friedman, *Education for Citizenship in Times of Global Challenge: IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2022 International Report* (Cham: Springer, 2025), p.234

⁸⁶ Channel 4, *Gen Z: Trends, Truth and Trust*

⁸⁷ OECD. *OECD Learning Compass 2030 Concepts*, 2018.

⁸⁸ B. Lee, 'Educational Content, Exclusive National Identity, and Anti-Immigrant Attitudes', *Journal of Politics*, 85.4 (October 2023); Davide Cantoni, Yuyu Chen, David Y. Yang, Noam Yuchtman, and Y. Jane Zhang, 'Curriculum and Ideology', *Journal of Political Economy*, 125.2 (2017), 338–92; Agustina S. Paglayan, 'The Non-democratic Roots of Mass Education: Evidence from 200 Years', *American Political Science Review*, 115.1 (2021), 179–98.

⁸⁹Jens Hainmueller and Michael J. Hiscox, 'Educated Preferences: Explaining Attitudes toward Immigration in Europe', *International Organization*, 61.2 (2007), 399–442; P. J. Henry and Jaime L. Napier, 'Education Is Related to Greater Ideological Prejudice', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 81.4 (2017), 930–42.

⁹⁰ John W. Meyer, Patricia Bromley, and Francisco O. Ramirez, 'Human Rights in Social Science Textbooks: Cross-National Analyses, 1970–2008', *Sociology of Education*, 83.2 (2010), 111–34; Susan Garnett Russell and Dijana Tiplic, 'Rights-Based Education: A Study of Rights Discourse in Textbooks', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 44.4 (2014)

⁹¹Fazilah Idris, Zaharah Hassan, Azizah Ya'acob, Saran Kaur Gill, and Noor Aziah Mohd Awal, 'The Role of Education in Shaping Youth's National Identity', *Procedia—Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 59 (2012), 443–50.

⁹² B. Lee, 'Educational Content, Exclusive National Identity, and Anti-Immigrant Attitudes'

dialogue around citizenship education is inclusive, meaningful, collaborative, and respectful.⁹³ As Mark Olssen states, this

“is not a case of ‘brainwashing’ or ‘socialisation’ but of teaching skills and establishing models of civic conduct based on tolerance, deliberation, conflict resolution, give and take, and trust.”⁹⁴

Theories on how to reconstruct curriculums in order to boost these skills have been a popular research topic in recent years. Whilst key emphasis of studies range, many educators' conclusions support increasing student involvement through co-operative pedagogical approaches, and increasing opportunity for inter-cultural dialogues. An important difference in starting point to consider when engaging with theorists is whether they are focusing on Global Citizenship Education (GCE) or content more attached to national contexts. Though there is still ample opportunity, arguably even imperative necessity, to ensure these agendas align, some tensions between the two arise when national frameworks are overly conformist, and imposed from the top down. For example, the heavy-handed imposition of ideas like fundamental British Values (FBV) can cause problems of promoting a critical-thinking, democratically-engaged, and a respectful, humanitarian-orientated student body, outputs considered crucial to assessing effective citizenship education.

GCE theorists advocate for international, universal principles that are a necessity for understanding and advancing global equalities, collaboration and “el buen vivir” (common good).⁹⁵ Though Ali Abdi raises some concerns about where GCE can be colonialist if assuming a western origin and hegemony,⁹⁶ another cornerstone of GCE is acknowledgement of difference. This comes out particularly clearly in Emiliano Bossio’s theory of a value-pluralistic ethical GCE,⁹⁷ as well as OECD’s *Learning Compass 2030*’ continual emphasis on how national and local context requires variation in practice.⁹⁸ GCE is also characterised by rejection of a global neo-liberal dominance around citizenship and education, replacing it with a multi-cultural core underpinned by values of human rights, altruism, and social justice.⁹⁹ To this extent, it encourages students to engage with democratic practices and institutions on a national level, but also value diversity, and gain a wider understanding of a global

⁹³ Solange Valdez-Symonds, ‘Children’s Rights to British Citizenship’, in *Citizenship in Times of Turmoil? Theory, Practice and Policy*, ed. by Devyani Prabhat (Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019), pp. 79–92.

⁹⁴ Mark Olssen, ‘Globalisation, the Third Way and Education Post 9/11: Building Democratic Citizenship’, in *A Normative Foucauldian: Selected Papers of Mark Olssen*, ed. by Michael A. Peters and Alan Britton (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 261–282. p.279

⁹⁵ This is drawn from the work of Carlos Torres, a leading figure in GCE. See, for instance, Massimiliano Tarozzi and Carlos Torres, *Global Citizenship Education and the Crises of Multiculturalism: Comparative Perspectives* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

⁹⁶ Ali A. Abdi, Lynette Shultz, and Thashika Pillay (eds.), *Decolonizing Global Citizenship Education* (Rotterdam: SensePublishers, 2015)

⁹⁷ Emiliano T. Bosio, *Ethical Global Citizenship Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024), 7.4

⁹⁸ OECD. *OECD Learning Compass 2030 Concepts*, 2018.

⁹⁹ *ibid*, p.7; Torres and Tarozzi, *Global Citizenship Education and the Crises of Multiculturalism*; Bossio, *Ethical Global Citizenship Education*; Mark Olssen, John A. Codd, and Anne-Marie O’Neill, *Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship and Democracy* (London: SAGE, 2004).

context that could help to inform political thinking, including in relation to immigration.¹⁰⁰

Though GCE theorists stress a need to be compatible with nationalist agendas,¹⁰¹ the way FBVs are implemented strains this possibility.¹⁰² Some suggest that adherence to FBV policy is often treated as an act of patriotism, with the result a lack of engagement with liberal values or inequalities, and an inaccessible, white dominated rhetoric that “flattens and homogenises British identity.”¹⁰³ There is no sense of discussion and voice from students or teachers that helps to determine the values agreed upon, with many practices that attempt to address the stated values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance enacted on a surface level.¹⁰⁴ As Carol Vincent notes,

“without a critical engagement with notions of identity, belonging and citizenship, the risk remains that promoting FBV will in fact promote a ‘myopic and exclusivist approach to citizenship.’”¹⁰⁵

Though the values of FBV are well-aligned with those of GCE initiatives, the framing of them as exclusively British risks undermining their universality,¹⁰⁶ and thus their ability to promote integration and social cohesion, creating a harmful and non-existent juxtaposition to ‘foreign’ values, particularly problematic in the Northern Irish context.¹⁰⁷ Vincent’s research also found that some schools attempted to avoid these problematic framings by “repackaging” values as rooted in schools, not nation.¹⁰⁸ Though this is not to say Britain should distance itself from the principles of FBV, studies suggest the need for a reframing of these values as both British and applicable to wider humanity, as suggested by House of Lords *Ties that Bind*

¹⁰⁰ Abdeljalil Akkari and Kathrine Maleq (eds.), *Global Citizenship Education: Critical and International Perspectives* (Cham: Springer, 2020) p.206; Eva Aboagye and S. Nombuso Dlamini (eds.), *Global Citizenship Education: Challenges and Successes* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021). p.333

¹⁰¹ Elizabeth Buckner and Susan Garnett Russell, ‘Portraying the Global: Cross-National Trends in Textbooks’ Portrayal of Globalization and Global Citizenship’, *International Studies Quarterly*, 57.4 (2013), pp.738–50. p.742

¹⁰² Hugh Starkey, ‘Fundamental British Values and Citizenship Education: Tensions between National and Global Perspectives’, *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*, 100.2 (2018), 149–62; Philip Bamber, Andrea Bullivant, Alison Clark, and David Lundie, ‘Educating Global Britain: Perils and Possibilities Promoting “National” Values through Critical Global Citizenship Education’, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 66.4 (2018), 433–53.

¹⁰³ Cameron Henshall, Howard Prosser, and Fida Sanjakdar, ‘Empty Britain? Hegemony and Ambiguity in British Education Policy’, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 44.6 (2023), pp.996–1017. p.1011; see also work done by Lynn Revell; Christine Winter; Marlon and Audrey Moncrieffe; and Christina Easton attached in the bibliography for further argument and overviews of this line..

¹⁰⁴ Edda Sant and Chris Hanley, ‘Political Assumptions Underlying Pedagogies of National Education: The Case of Student Teachers Teaching ‘British Values’ in England’, *British Educational Research Journal*, 44.2 (2018), 319–37; Carol Vincent, *Tea and the Queen?: Fundamental British Values, Schools and Citizenship* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2019) p.147

¹⁰⁵ Ibid (Vincent) p.29

¹⁰⁶ Michael Rosen, ‘Dear Mr Gove: What’s So “British” About Your “British Values”?’ , *The Guardian*, 1 July 2014

¹⁰⁷ Alan McCully and Linda Clarke, ‘A Place for Fundamental (British) Values in Teacher Education in Northern Ireland?’ , *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 42.3 (2016), 354–68 ; Vincent, *Tea and the Queen*, p.137

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p.139

report,¹⁰⁹ and Norway's approach that considers their 'core values' to be based on heritage, *and* "expressed in different religions and worldviews and are rooted in human rights."¹¹⁰ Furthermore, the current citizenship agenda attached to FBV requires an increasing prioritisation of uncomfortable conversation to collaborative ends, and explicit allowance for adaptation to local settings.¹¹¹

Critique of current systems has been complimented by an abundance of new theory concerned with improving both active citizenship, and social cohesion. Michael Fullan sees this as part of a need to radically re-imagine the 'drivers' of education, replacing....

1. Academics Obsession (selfish) 2. Machine Intelligence (careless) 3. Austerity (ruthless), and 4. Fragmentation (inertia) with....

1. Wellbeing and Learning (essence) 2. Social Intelligence (limitless) 3. Equality Investments (dignity), and 4. Systemness (wholeness).¹¹²

With studies specifically concerned with citizenship education, three key themes continue to emerge as priorities: active participation and impact in school running and local society; inter or multi-cultural exposure and dialogue; and critical thinking enabled by diverse understanding.

Advocates of active pupil participation cite Durkheimian theories of society and Michel Foucault's theory of self-creation in arguing for the need for meaningful practice and pupil consultation in school and community action.¹¹³ This provides students with much needed agency and self-confidence by allowing them to leave their own imprint on society's construction, and ensure that common values are "agreements not impositions."¹¹⁴ Furthermore, ensuring that students and teachers work collaboratively can enhance commitment to learning, and provide more meaningful outputs.¹¹⁵ This also provides a space for dialogue where pupils are able to express and consider multiple perspectives inherent in a world of identity hybridity,

¹⁰⁹House of Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement, *The Ties That Bind: Citizenship and Civic Engagement in the 21st Century* (London: House of Lords, 2018), HL Paper 118.

¹¹⁰Ministry of Education and Research, *Core Curriculum – Values and Principles for Primary and Secondary Education* (Oslo: Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019).

¹¹¹Robin Richardson, 'British Values and British Identity: Muddles, Mixtures, and Ways Ahead', *London Review of Education*, 13.2 (2015); Francis Farrell, 'Walking on Egg Shells': Brexit, British Values and Educational Space', *Education & Training* (London), 62.9 (2020), 981–97

¹¹² Michael Fullan, *The Right Drivers for Whole System Success* (Ontario: Centre for Strategic Education, 2021).

¹¹³ Wiel Veugelers, *Moral and Political Dimensions of Critical-Democratic Citizenship Education: Enhancing Social Justice, a Global Orientation, and Equity in Schools and Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2023). p.224 ; and Sébastien Urbanski and Lucy Bell, *Global Citizenship Education: Modern Individualism under the Test of Cosmopolitanism* (New York: Routledge, 2024) pp.207-10 draw on Durkheimian thinking on theories of society 224; as does; Olssen, *Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship and Democracy*, uses Foucault's work on self-creation.

¹¹⁴Wiel Veugelers, *Moral and Political Dimensions of Critical-Democratic Citizenship Education*; agency is also emphasised in work done (included in bibliography) by Sonia niето; Patricia Kubow; Eveline Meylemans; and Pamela Munn.

¹¹⁵ Pamela Munn, 'What Can Active Citizenship Achieve for Schools and through Schools?', in *Active Citizenship: What Could It Achieve and How?*, ed. by Bernard Crick and Andrew Lockyer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010). fig 6.1 ; Sébastien Urbanski and Lucy Bell, *Global Citizenship Education: Modern Individualism under the Test of Cosmopolitanism*, pp.207-10

as argued by Patricia Kubow, therefore links to facilitating inter or multi-cultural dialogues and awareness.¹¹⁶ Theorists here emphasise the need for a discussion culture comfortable in dealing with sensitive topics,¹¹⁷ as well as constructing a sense of local, national and global inclusivity.¹¹⁸ This can be built, for example, through a history curriculum acknowledging diverse and complex contributors to shared national and international histories,¹¹⁹ and, for Patricia Bromley in particular, combining a multicultural national identity with human rights in order to facilitate integration.¹²⁰ Tied to both threads is a further argument to encourage critical thinking approaches, making students aware of current motivations of education, and encouraging them to challenge their environment to provide their own answers to problems.¹²¹

Through these combined drivers, educators feel that education can both revive trust and legitimacy in democratic institutions, and multi-cultural principles. This means building a citizenship curriculum where national constructions of identity are both representative and contested.¹²²

This report's participatory research is informed by the above principles around citizenship education- it seeks to understand the opinions and attitudes of students towards content relating to citizenship education, whilst enabling active participation in defining national identity.

¹¹⁶ Patricia K. Kubow, Nicole Webster, Krystal Strong, and Daniel Miranda (eds.), *Contestations of Citizenship, Education, and Democracy in an Era of Global Change: Children and Youth in Diverse International Contexts* (London: Routledge, 2023). especially p.255

¹¹⁷ Emma Carey Brummer, Noel Clycq, and Jan Vanhoof, 'Challenges of Teaching Affective Citizenship Education: Spatial, Relational, and Affective Dimensions of Citizenship Education and Their Connections with Discomfort', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 156 (2025), Article 104907; Joseph Zajda, Holger Daun, and Lawrence J. Saha (eds.), *Nation-Building, Identity and Citizenship Education: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009) p.9; Brigid Golden, *Critical Thinking for Global Citizenship Education: A Conceptual Framework* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2025) p.147.

¹¹⁸ James A. Banks, 'Citizenship Education and Diversity: Implications for Teacher Education', in *Global Citizenship Education: Philosophy, Theory and Pedagogy*, ed. by Alan Britton, Harry Blee, and Michael A. Peters (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2008), pp. 317–331; Bruce Fuller, 'Educational Policy Under Cultural Pluralism', *Educational Researcher*, 32.9 (2003), 15–24.

¹¹⁹ Tsaliki, Evanthia, 'Educational Models for Managing Diversity: What's Next?', in *Multiculturalism and Interculturalism: Managing Diversity in Cross-Cultural Environment*, ed. by Muhammad Mohiuddin, Md. Tareque Aziz and Sreenivasan Jayashree (London: IntechOpen, 2023); Geoffrey Short and Bruce Carrington, 'Children's Constructions of Their National Identity: Implications for Critical Multiculturalism', in *Critical Multiculturalism: Rethinking Multicultural and Antiracist Education*, ed. by Stephen May (London: Falmer Press, 1999), pp. 218–239.

¹²⁰ Patricia Bromley, 'Multiculturalism and Human Rights in Civic Education: The Case of British Columbia, Canada', *Educational Research*, 53.2 (2011), 151–64. ps.154, 161

¹²¹ Emery J. Hyslop-Margison and Alan M. Sears, 'Challenging the Dominant Neo-Liberal Discourse: From Human Capital Learning to Education for Civic Engagement', in *Global Citizenship Education: Philosophy, Theory and Pedagogy*, ed. by Alan Britton, Harry Blee, and Michael A. Peters (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2008), pp. 299–315.; Ralph Leighton, 'Radical Citizenship Education', *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 18.2 (2023), 246–60.

¹²² Brigid Golden, *Critical Thinking for Global Citizenship Education: A Conceptual Framework* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2025) p.99

2.2 Student Perception

In surveying the student participants at Dame Alice Owens, one aim of the study was to get a sense of student understanding and perception of immigration and the importance of citizenship content. It achieves this through a mixture of questionnaire responses. This allows for assessments to be made about *these* student’s overall opinions, and comparison between the Year 7s involved, and the Year 11s and 12s that took part.

In relation to immigration, student knowledge appears impressive, and perceptions relatively representative, but with certain knowledge gaps or dominant images that could indicate a need to give students a more holistic understanding. A strong majority of students feel uncertain about how immigration works, and a partial ability to define the terms asylum seeker, refugee, and immigrant. Year 11/12s show notably less confidence than their year 7 counterparts. This could be due to an increased awareness without understanding amongst older students, but also is potentially indicative of the topic being more commonly discussed in early key stage 3 ,or late key stage 2. Certainly, it does not demonstrate a progression in understanding as students go through school, and does indicate that more education on immigration could be integrated into the curriculum to increase confidence around the topic.

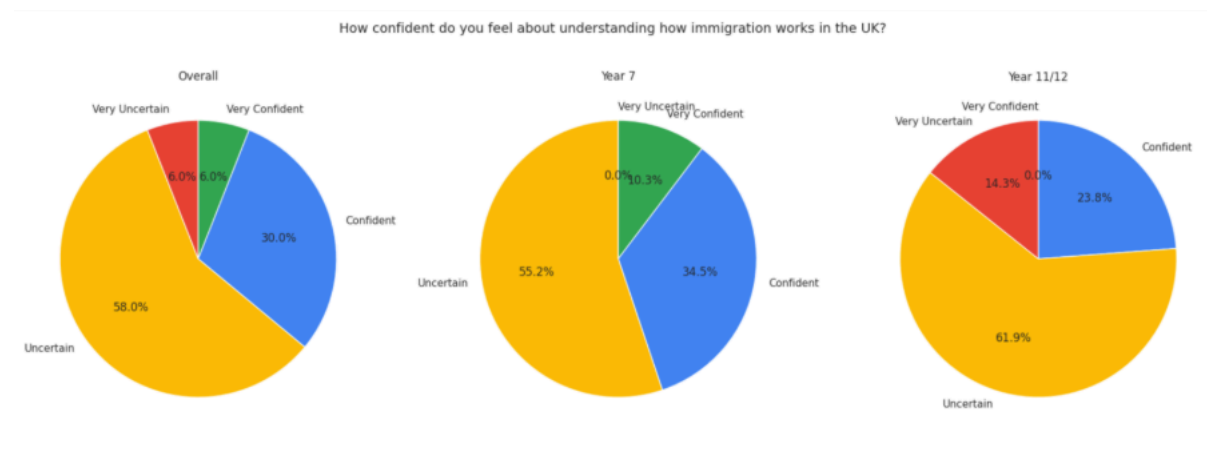


Figure 3: student understanding about how immigration works

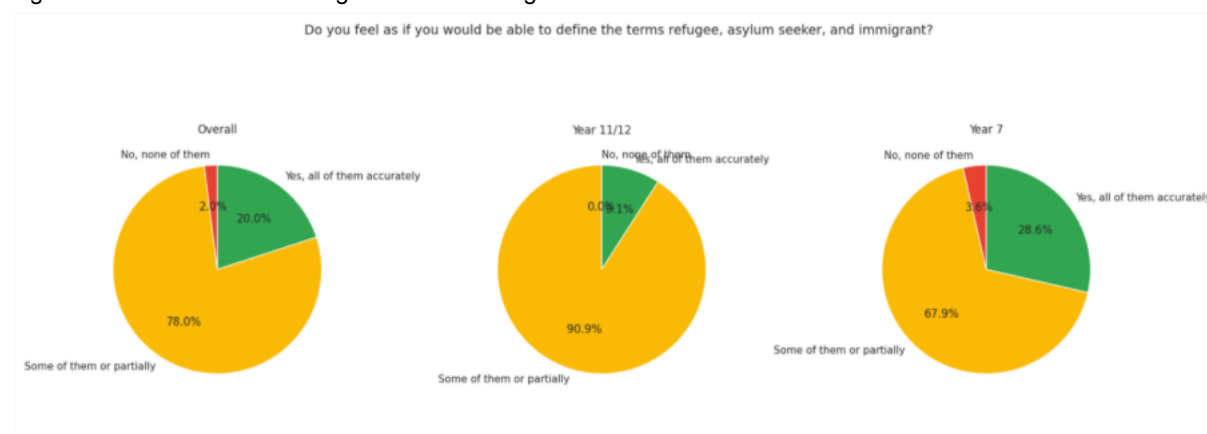


Figure 4: student confidence in defining terms of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants.

When asked what the possible reasons why people immigrate to the UK might be, students were given an open space to list multiple reasons, as most responses did, or in some cases just included one answer, thus sometimes being more indicative of typicality than overall knowledge. Answers were placed into wider appropriate categories where necessary. Results demonstrated that between them, students could identify most reasons for coming to the UK. Motivations of safety and refuge are commonly referenced, with economic and ‘better life’ motivations also regularly cited. This means, relative to the actual composition of immigrants, students over-represent, or are more aware of, refugees and asylum seekers, with less awareness of study motivations, the most prominent actual statistical driver. When asking how asylum seekers arrived in the UK, small boats were most commonly cited, with very little awareness or acknowledgment of the existence of legal pathways. This supports Blinder’s theory that the public, and students seemingly, deal with an “imagined immigration” when forming opinions that over-represents asylum seekers and under-represents students, therefore indicating that further education around these issues could lead to different or more nuanced policy preference.¹²³ Blinder’s study does not include the question on methods of travel of asylum seekers, but this study suggests that, considering people arriving on small boats only made up 32% of asylum applicants in 2024, this is an additional “imagination” that could be clarified in education, providing students with some factual clarity through which to make more well-rounded judgements on asylum-seeker policy. This information is particularly necessary given the prominence and predominantly hostile media coverage around small-boat arrivals; making it clear to students that regulated, legal-route arrivals also exist as an option for policy makers and some refugees. Furthermore, education of the actual principles of asylum law can challenge popular conception that travelling by any available means makes an asylum seeker’s claim for refuge ‘illegal,’- most asylum seekers that arrived in the UK on small boats having their applications accepted.¹²⁴

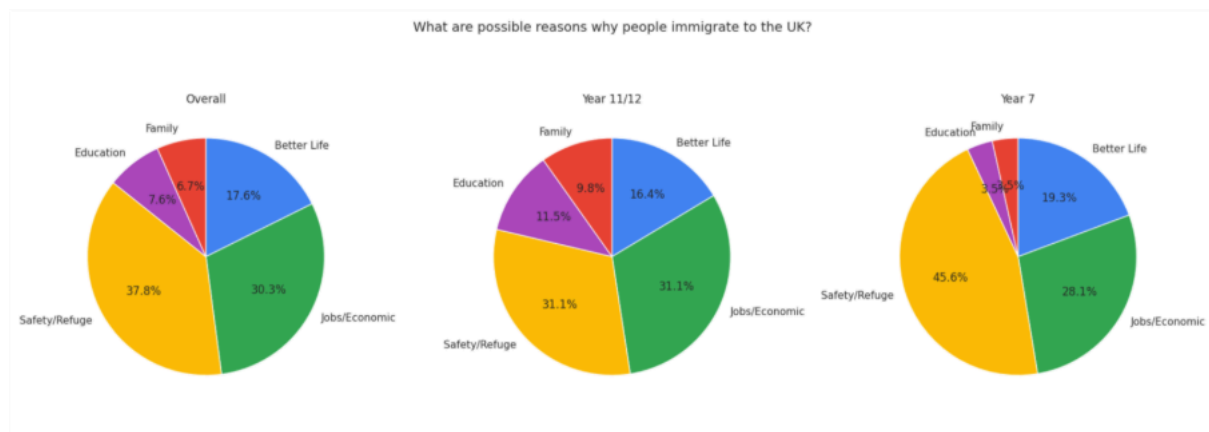


Figure 5: student perception of why people immigrate to the UK

¹²³S.Blinder, ‘Imagined Immigration: The Impact of Different Meanings of “Immigrants” in Public Opinion and Policy Debates in Britain’, *Political Studies*, 63.1 (2015), 80–100.

¹²⁴Migration Observatory, *People crossing the English Channel in small boats*, The Migration Observatory (University of Oxford, 18 July 2025), <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/people-crossing-the-english-channel-in-small-boats/> [accessed 8 September 2025].

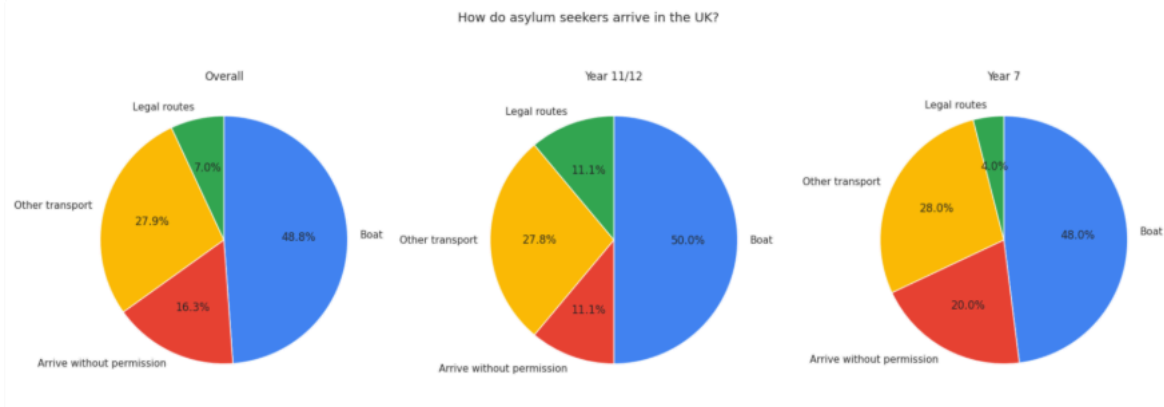
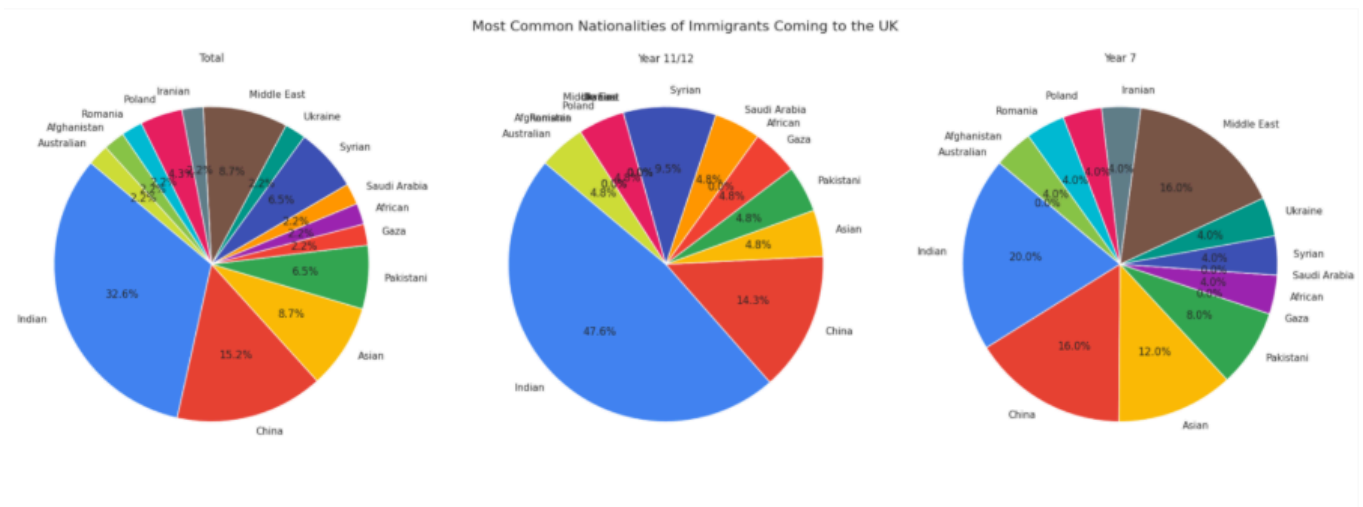


Figure 6: student perception of how asylum seekers arrive in the UK

When asked to identify the most common country of origin for migrants and asylum seekers, students produce generally accurate, reasonable guesses, albeit with some confusion over what constitutes ‘nationality.’ There is an increased accuracy in the Year 11/12’s responses than there are Year 7 ones. With a considerable number of anomalies, and a lack of more participants, averages of student estimations of the number of asylum seekers last year, and the percentage of the UK population that are immigrants cannot claim to be particularly practical guides. Regardless, it is still notable that the inter-quartile mean (19,896), and overall median (39,730) for the number of asylum seekers are both reasonable figures. Students are more notable in their overly-representative perception of immigrants as a percentage of population (Mean ≈ 33.53%, Median = 35%, reality ≈ 17%)¹²⁵, though this may be informed by a local context where this percentage is higher. Overall, there is reasonable perception of the scale of immigration and asylum applicants amongst students, as well as the common countries of origin of most immigrants and asylum seekers, suggesting that these would not be teaching priorities for education around immigration in this particular context. This is certainly an area of the report that could require further study to provide more definite results.

What is the most common nationality of immigrants coming to the UK?



¹²⁵ Migration Policy Institute, ‘Top 25 Destinations of International Migrants’, Migration Data Hub, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/top-25-destinations-international-migrants>

Figure 7: student selection of the most common nationality of immigrants to the UK.

What is the most common nationality of asylum seekers coming to the UK?

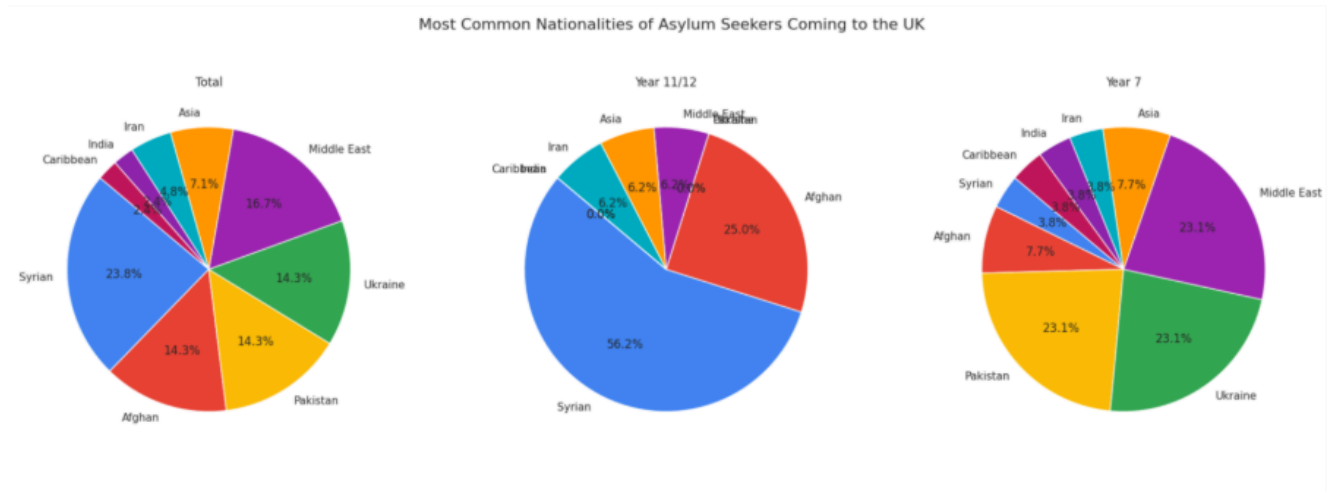


Figure 8: student selection of the most common nationality of asylum seekers to the UK.

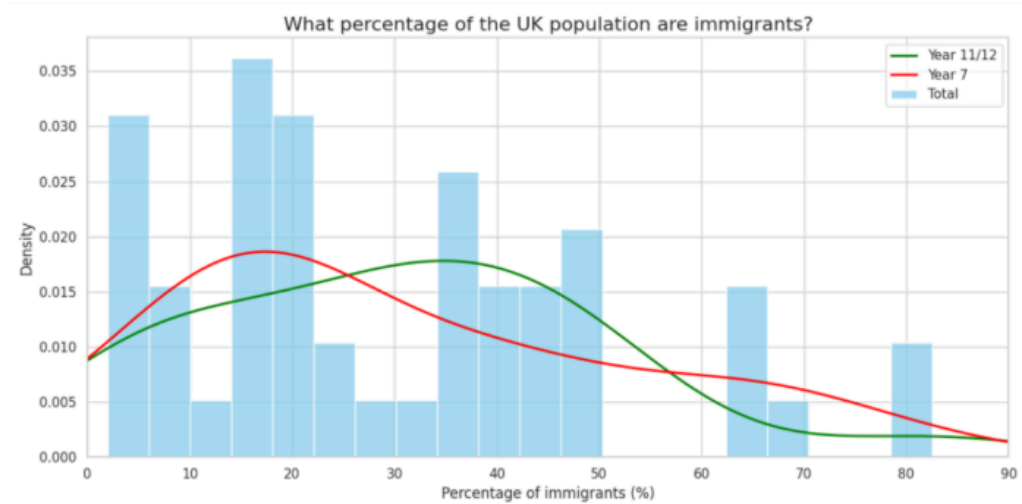


Figure 9: distribution of answers from students regarding the percentage of the UK population that are immigrants.

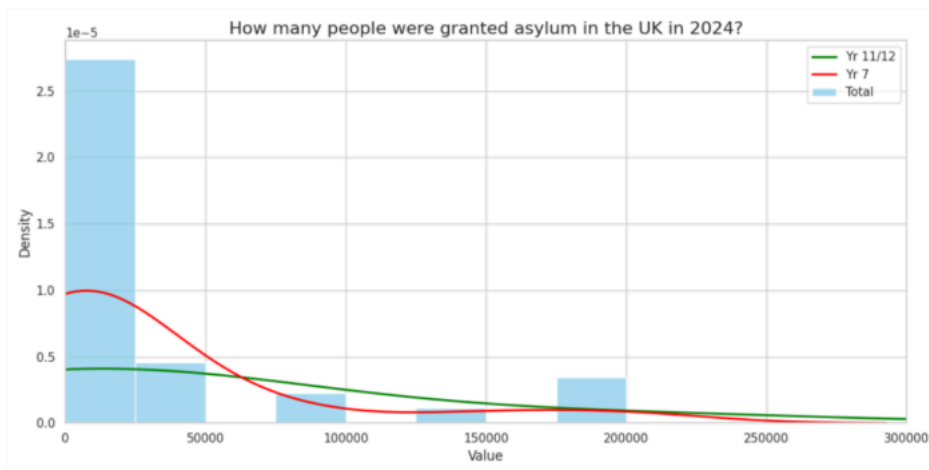


Figure 10: distribution of answers from students regarding the number of people granted asylum in 2024

When asked to estimate the UK's share of migrant and refugee intake by global ranking, taking away outliers shows that students responses place the UK in an accurate position in relation to general migrant intake (IQM= 4.55, actual rank =5th)¹²⁶, but overestimates their contribution to taking in refugees (IQM=4.29, actual rank = 18th, no figures included elsewhere.)¹²⁷ This is likely due to a lack of awareness about the amount of refugees hosted by countries in the global south neighbouring conflict zones or other places where persecution is more prevalent. Therefore, education around the global context of taking in refugees may also impact attitudes towards immigrants and policies, if students are more aware of the extent to which the UK or the wider western world does not carry an exceptional burden of hosting.

Overall then, immigration perception and knowledge appears relatively common to what might be expected from the wider population. More importantly though, there are some identifiable areas where education could better contextualise migration and asylum seeking in particular, as well as fill in some knowledge gaps around the diverse motivations to immigrate, and legal processes. Such education could not expect to provide students with an expert knowledge on the subject, but ensuring that their "imagined" perception of immigration is aligned with realities would enable students to think critically and rationally when forming opinions, crucial to legitimate democratic dialogue.

When asked to consider the importance of learning about human rights, social values, and how the law works in secondary school,¹²⁸ students unanimously consider these three key elements of citizenship education to be either important, or very important. In all three areas, Year 11/12 students are stronger advocates, more likely to consider these very important issues. Furthermore, there is a clear hierarchy of importance that sees human rights most likely to be considered very important, followed by how the law works, and then closely by social values. This indicates that students consider topics that would be covered by an effective citizenship curriculum as essentials to their learning, specifically in a secondary school context. This is despite the fact that , with this school not having an option for a GCSE or A-level in citizenship, this content would not be directly relevant to any qualification that students would wish to obtain, showing a rejection of an entirely neo-liberal view of their secondary education as purely competitive and career-orientated. These beliefs are even stronger with older students closer to both more career and citizenship responsibilities. Specific prioritisation of human rights runs contrary to current Government prioritisation of framing ideas of equality and rights as 'fundamentally British.'

¹²⁶ Migration Policy Institute, 'Top 25 Destinations of International Migrants', Migration Data Hub, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/top-25-destinations-international-migrants>

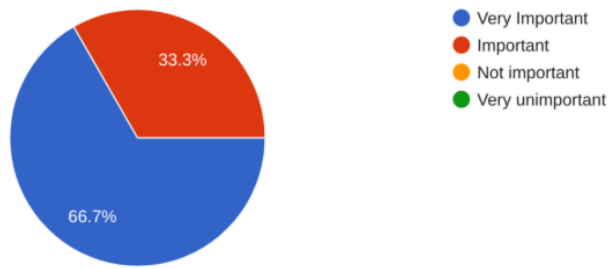
¹²⁷ Statista, 'Major Refugee-Hosting Countries Worldwide', Statista, 2025,

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/263423/major-refugee-hosting-countries-worldwide/>

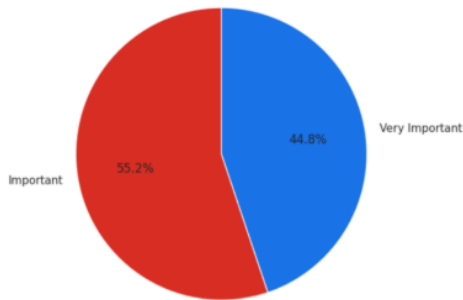
¹²⁸This study acknowledges that Year 12 students, being sixth form students, would not be technically classed as secondary school students, but likely would have included their learning at both their current year and previous secondary school experience when responding. It should also be added that some year 12 students may have come from different secondary schools to join Dame Alice Owens in sixth form, which could affect their experience with citizenship education also.

How important is it to learn about human rights in secondary schools

51 responses



Year 7: Importance of Learning Human Rights



Year 11/12: Importance of Learning Human Rights

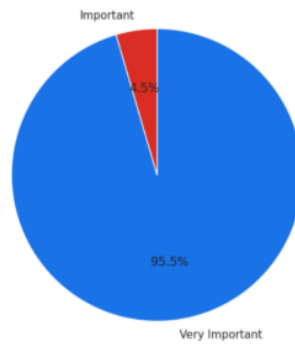
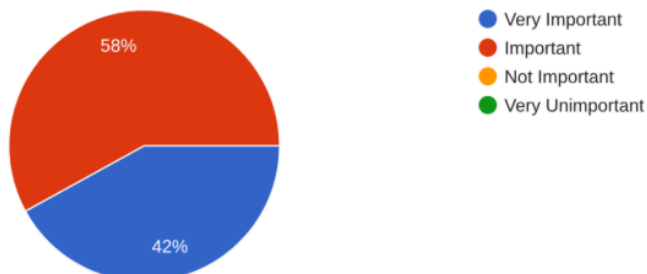


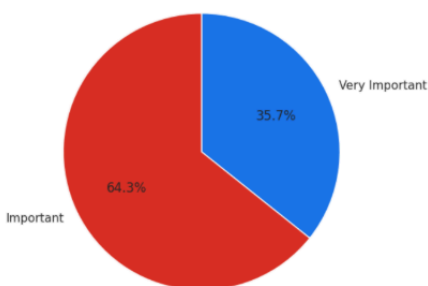
Figure 11(above): student importance placed on human rights

How important is it to learn about social values in secondary school?

50 responses



Year 7: Importance of Learning Social Values



Year 11/12: Importance of Learning Social Values

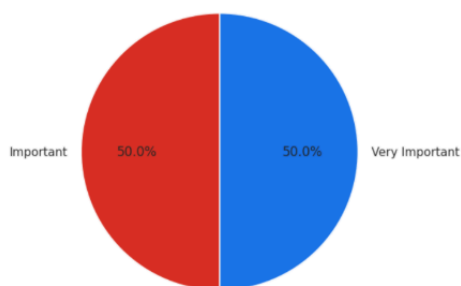
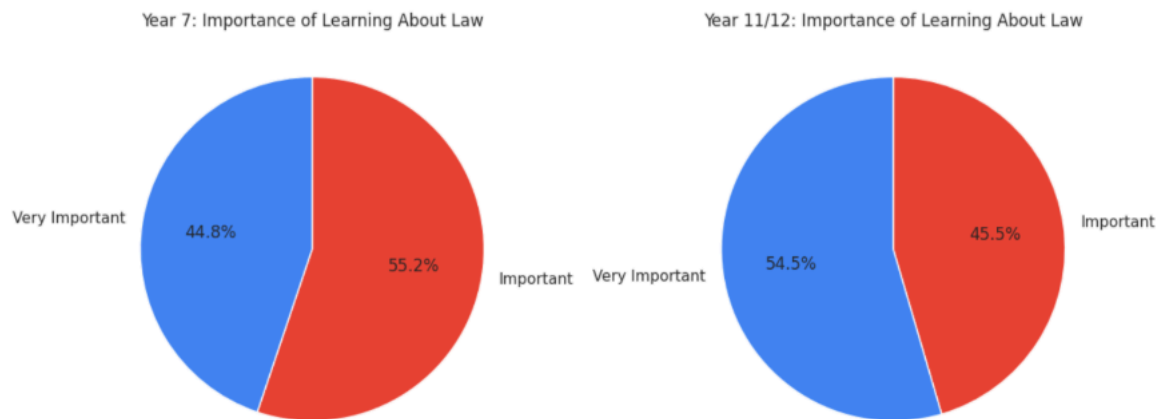


Figure 12(above): student importance of social values



How important do you think it is to learn about how the law works at secondary school?

51 responses

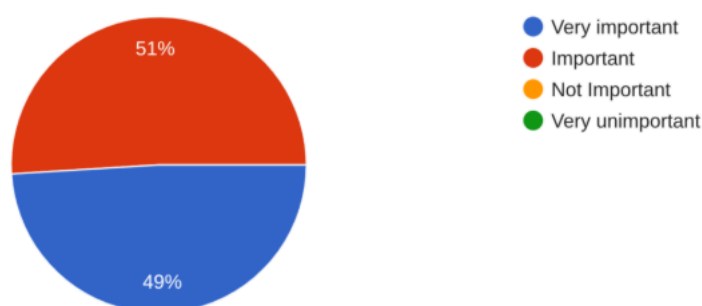


Figure 13: student importance on learning the law

When asked whether the amount of time on learning about social values and human rights was sufficient, typically year 11/12 students feel that not enough time is spent on human rights at school, whereas year 7s are more content. This could reflect both year 11/12 student prioritisation of the subject, and the lack of room for it to be studied in a condensed curriculum more orientated towards exam performance. Whilst year 7 reflections only consider content taught within a year's schooling, year 11/12s are in a position to review the full extent of human rights and social values learning done across their secondary school journey. It should be emphasised that this does not constitute an attack on the school's own provisions, deemed outstanding, but potentially a wider systematic lack of prioritisation of the topic. In regards to social values, there is some consensus that the right amount of time is spent, particularly amongst Year 7s. This is likely to be due to a combination of lower prioritisation, but also that social values can be more effectively integrated into the "hidden curriculum" of school ethos and practice.¹²⁹ Students also did not want a

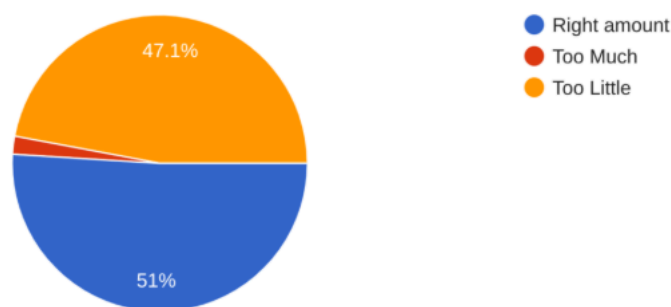
¹²⁹ D. Gordon, 'The Concept of the Hidden Curriculum', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 16.2 (1982), 187–98.

citizenship education dominated by global narratives- most thought learning equal amounts about British and International law was ideal, with others more likely to prefer mainly British law over mainly International. This suggests that, as GCE theorists support, citizenship programmes should encompass consideration of multiple levels of institutional participation and community to meet the wants of students, reflecting the real existence of global ties and interconnectivity, but without rejection of the still prominent nation state.

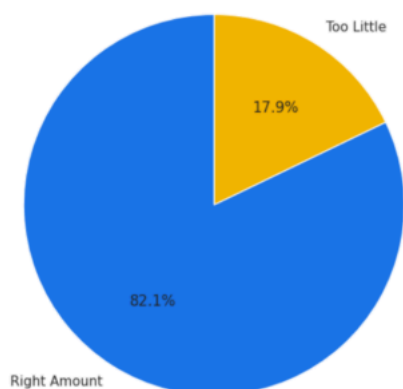
Considering overall student perception of the necessity and extent of learning about human rights, social values, and how the law works, these results, if student orientation is considered, support a citizenship curriculum that is more prominent, and includes each element, with particular attention paid to human rights. In its current state, it appears to become diluted through secondary school, at the time where it becomes an increasingly necessary tool for students to make sense of the wider world.

Do you think you learn the right amount/ too much/ too little about human rights at secondary school?

51 responses



Year 7: Amount Learned About Human Rights



Year 11/12: Amount Learned About Human Rights

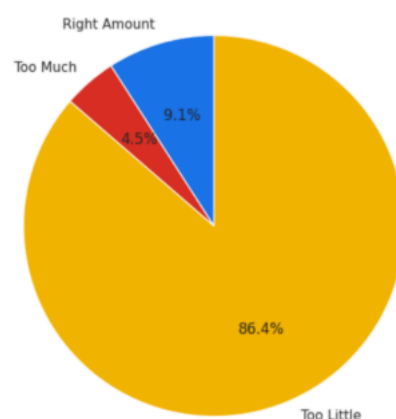


Figure 14: student perception of learned human rights

Do you think you learn the right amount/ too much/ too little about social values at secondary school?

50 responses

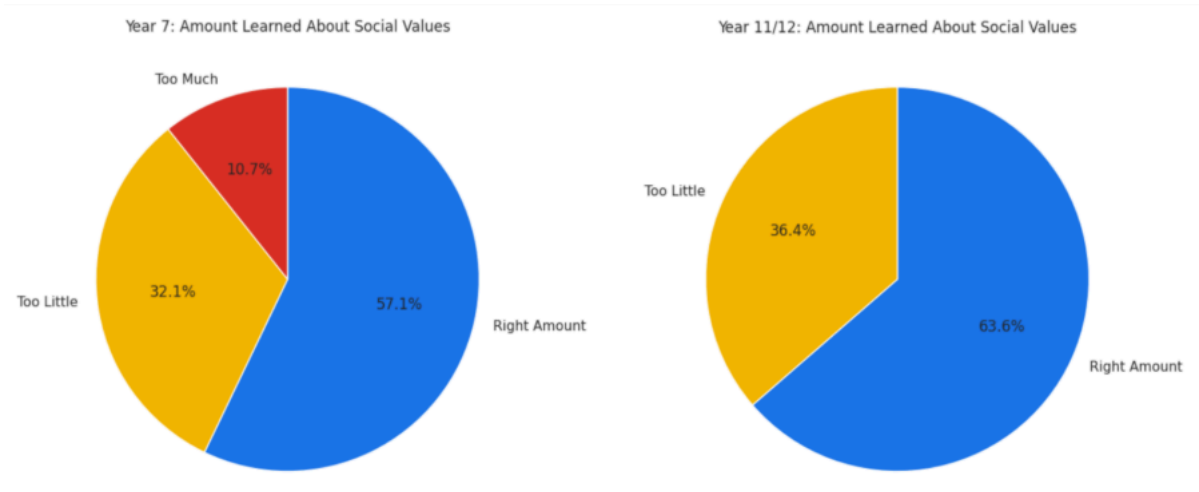
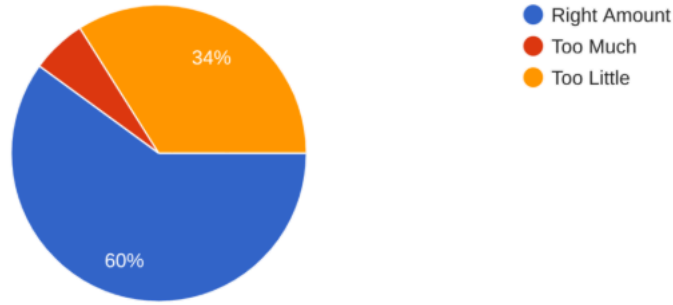


Figure 15(above): student perception of learned social values

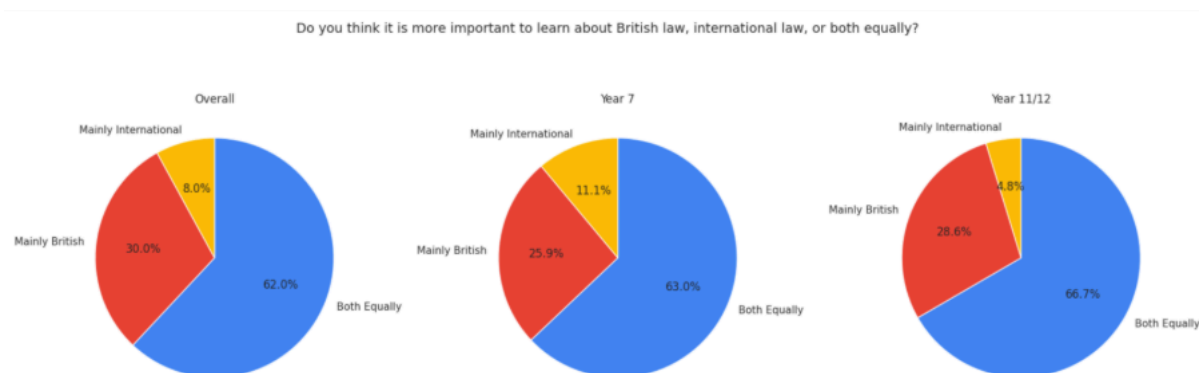


Figure 16 (above): student proportion on proportion of law

2.3 Student Aspiration

Questions asked to students also intended to reveal attitudes held towards immigration and asylum seeker policy, and particular values of importance to them. These questions were predominantly open ended, with responses subsequently being grouped into appropriate recurring themes in order to provide more clarity in displaying results. Therefore, it should be acknowledged that student answers were more nuanced and diverse than it may appear in results, speaking to the need to be aware of how ranged individual viewpoints are, but without denying that key themes coherently emerge that could be taken into account by policy and curriculum makers more substantively.

In their attitudes towards how they would like the government to approach policy on immigration and asylum seekers, students are relatively united in emphasising a need to be welcoming and considerate, but also have views prioritising fairness, efficiency, and strict policy. In relation to asylum seekers, a focus on compassion, humanisation (yr 11/12 mainly) and welcoming (mainly yr7) become even more prominent. When asked for words or adjectives to describe their preferred approach to immigration, key themes in answers (listed in order of prevalence) appeared as:

Welcoming and empathetic- this encompassed views that emphasised the need for kindness to be shown. 31% of total respondents answered with reference to this quality, with this position being more common amongst Yr 11/12 students¹³⁰

Fair- (22%) this included responses such as 'decent,' or that wanted the system to function meritocratically, and without being discriminatory. This response was particularly common amongst Yr 7 students, where it was the most popular option.

Respectful and considerate- (17.1%) this encompassed answers that spoke of a need for understanding, and open-mindedness in policy, showing a preference for measures where the state was adaptive to migrant needs. Similar priority was given to this by both age groups.

Strict- 17.1%- this included responses that policy makers should be 'careful,' and ranged from articulation as firm but fair border control to more definitely hardened boundary preferences. This is the site of dramatic divergence between yr 11s and Yr7s, with the younger students much more likely to prioritise strictness.

Efficient- 12.2%- perhaps encompassing the year 11/12 students who preferred this approach to outright strictness, respondents here prioritised effectiveness, and were mainly drawn from older age groups.

¹³⁰ The chart's labels have an error in that it only year 7 and 11 response. In reality, the label for Yr11s also includes Yr 12 response, therefore should read as Yr 11/12 as elsewhere

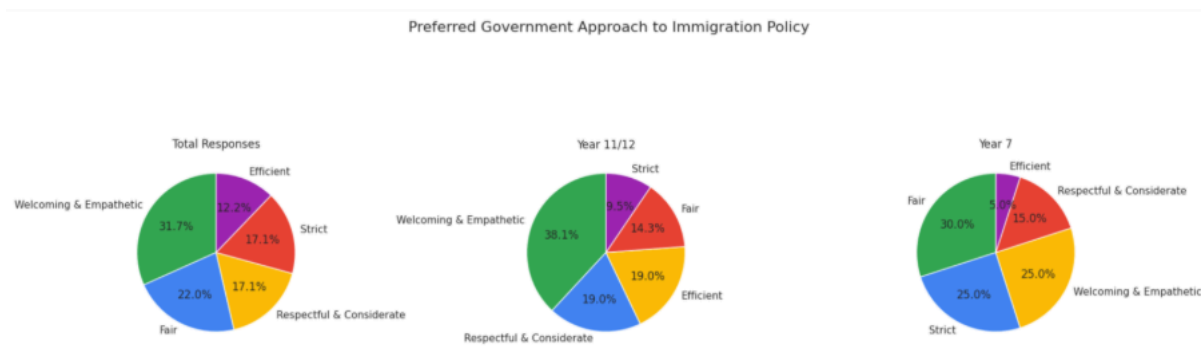
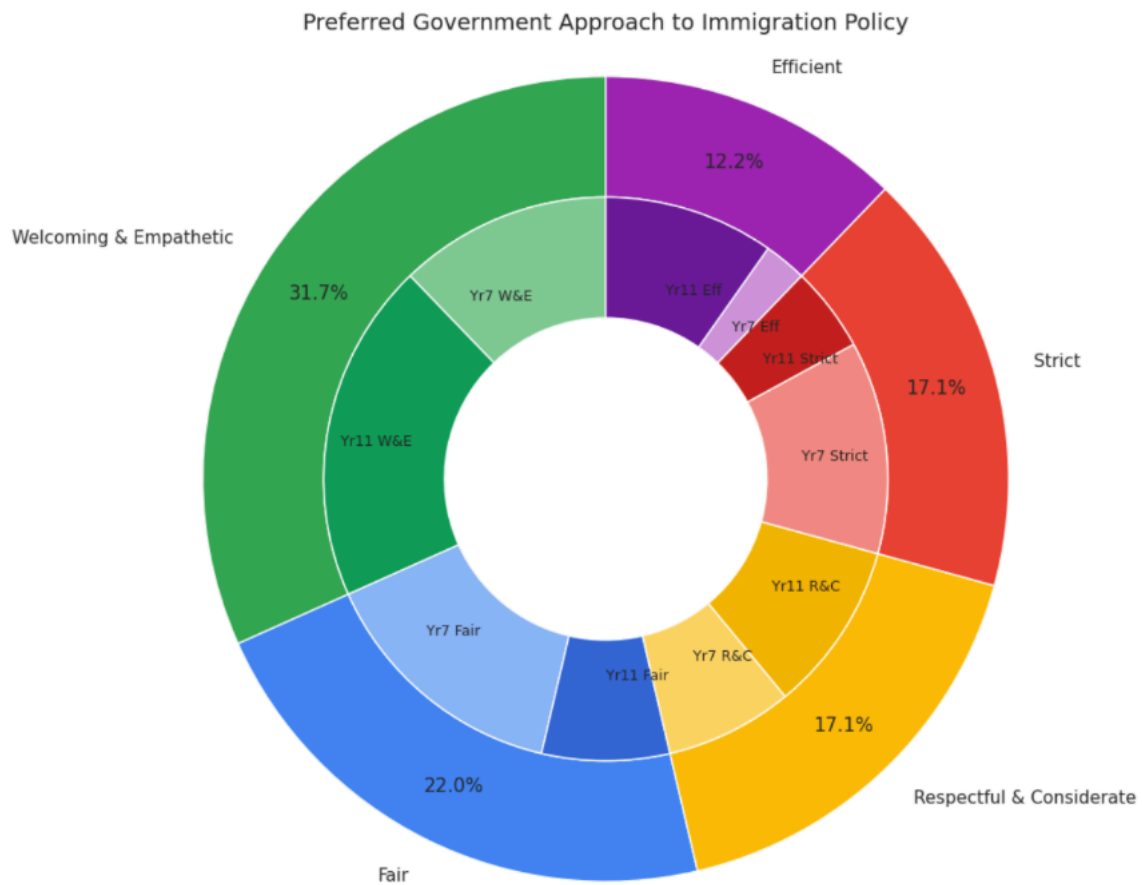


Figure 17: student adjectives to describe preferred immigration policy

When asked to consider policy towards asylum seekers and refugees specifically, similar inclinations existed, but slightly different categories have been chosen to best represent the five most common answer themes. They appear (again in order of prevalence) as follows:

Compassion and Humanisation- 37.1%- this is more specific in only including responses specifically invoking kindness, or the above two notions. Though this was a popular option in both age groups (more so in Yr 11/12 though), Yr 7 responses

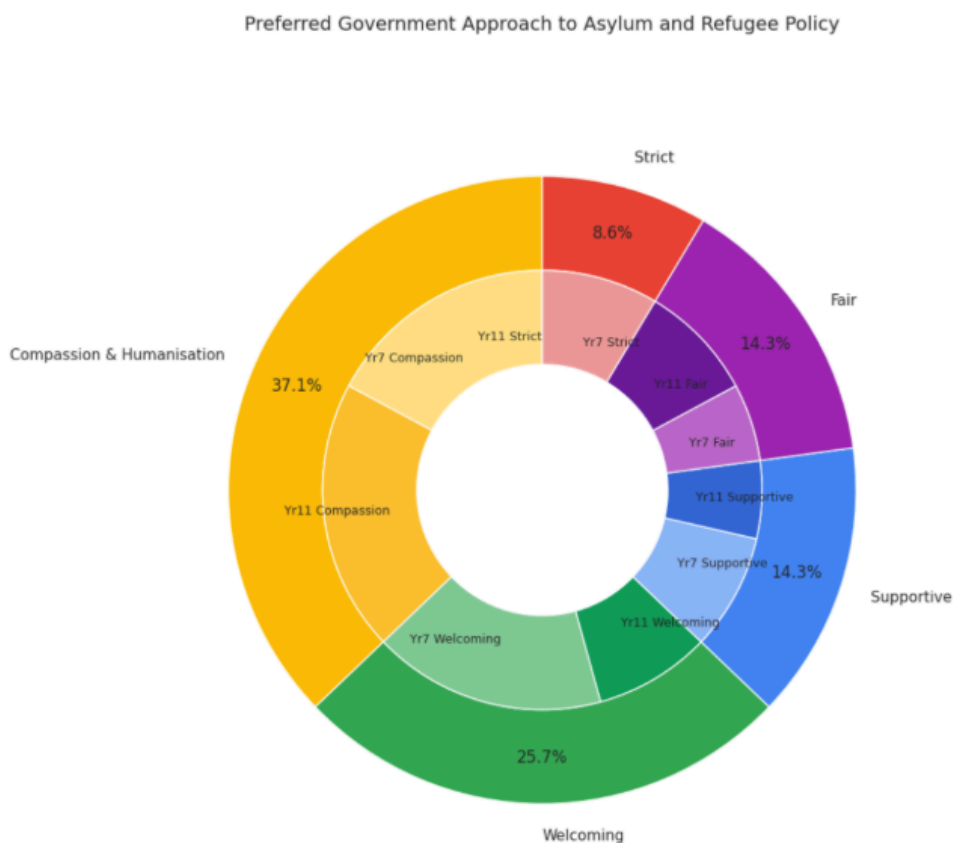
were more likely to mention kindness, as opposed to older students who saw the need to humanise refugees, and support them on humanitarian grounds.

Welcoming- 25.7%- clearly still popular, but saw a slightly decreased percentage share given the different category boundaries. Younger students were the main share of respondents in this category.

Supportive- 14.3% these responses focused on ways in which Government could give to asylum seekers and refugees, appearing

Fair- 14.3%- this was invoked in a similar sense to the prior study, but with some new emphasis on 'doing our fair share' within a wider global context. Year 11/12s were doubly as likely to respond with this in mind than their Yr7 counterparts.

Strict- 8.6%- this was a view *only* held by Year 7 students in relation to asylum seekers and migrants.



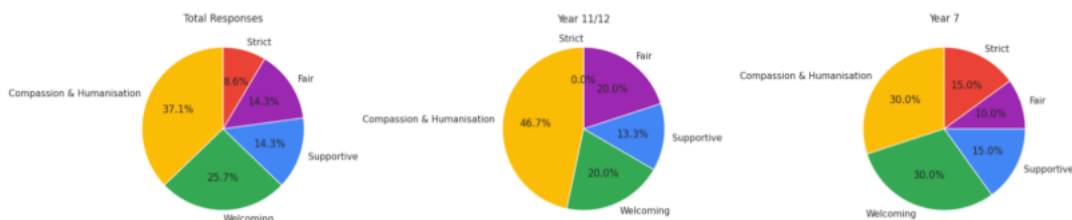


Figure 18: student adjectives to describe preferred asylum seeker and refugee policy

As a general point, It should also be noted that vague or inapplicable responses that misinterpreted the question had to be removed, and were not numerous enough to affect the overall composition of results.

Analysis of responses suggests a general preference of positive attitudes to be shown by the Government towards immigrants, with an even more positive preference shown to asylum seekers and refugees. Yr 11/12 students here are less likely to support restrictive measures, and certainly approach policy with more emphasis on principles of social justice than their younger counterparts, who are more emotionally-driven in their responses. The socio-geographic backgrounds of the school students made this result particularly likely, alongside more general favourable views held by young people towards immigration. The sample size was small enough to ask for open responses subsequently grouped into themes that more accurately depict individual feelings towards the subject than closed question polling would enable, also encouraging deeper thinking on the matter. Subsequent results can both prove optimistic for supporters of enabling immigrant integration through youth initiatives given their generally considerate, fair, and respectful policy wants. They should also be considered by educators and curriculum writers in that they adapt to student orientation and ensure that diverse opinions and feelings towards immigration and refugee policy are examined and articulated in the classroom and curriculum. Furthermore, when asked about the political importance of immigration, responses from students unanimously considered the topic to be important, or very important. This should offer a lesson to immigration policy makers that assume an increase in immigration's political salience represents universally negative sentiment, thus requiring a response promoting restrictive policy. Students here have shown that the need for immigration and refugee policy to be welcoming, kind, and fair is a political priority for many.

How politically important do you think immigration is?

49 responses

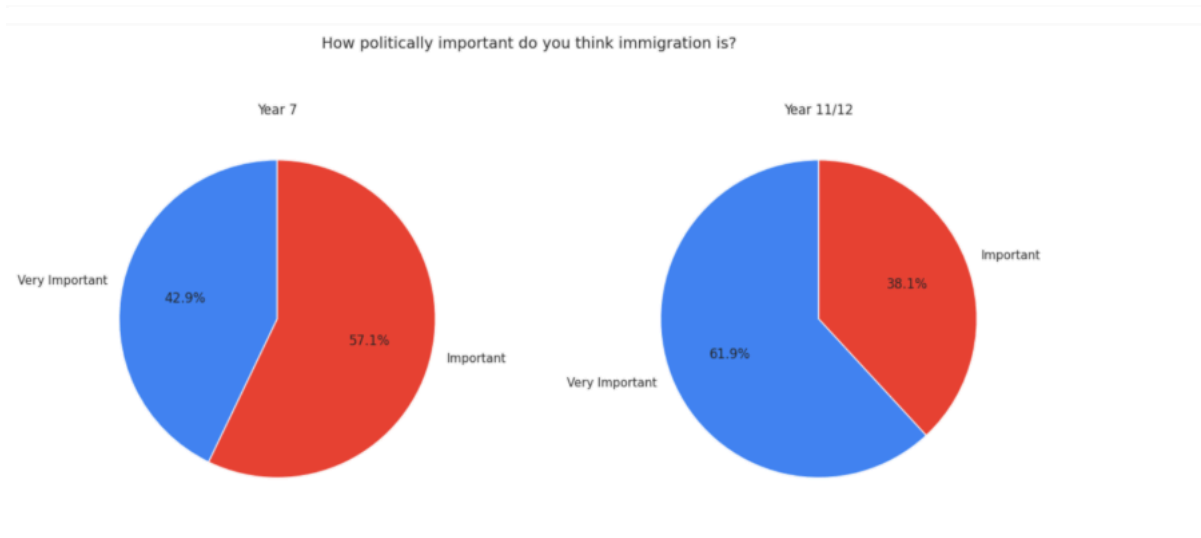
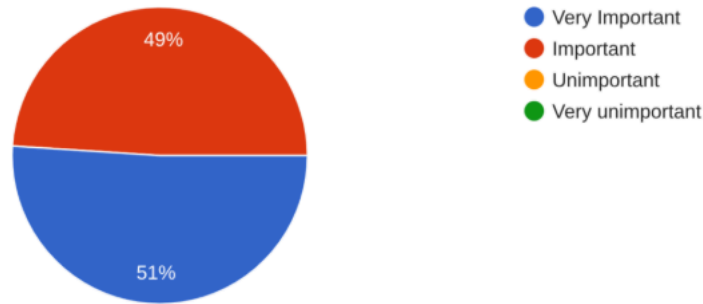


Figure 19- student perceived importance of immigration

In terms of the forms of values/ human rights considered important to learn about by students, there is a considerable range of priorities. Year 7s place value on basic needs and freedoms, whereas respect (appearing 7 times itself) is a clear priority for Yr 11/12s. Though thematic grouping would suggest similar importance placed on compassion and morality and legal rights by each year group, there is clear evolution as to how these are considered. Yr 7s emphasize learning about kindness where Yr 11/12s push for learning about morality, and a Yr 7 emphasis on UNCRC¹³¹ evolves into Yr 11/12 prioritization of human rights and the rule of law generally.

¹³¹ United Nations Convention on Rights of a Child.

Important Values/Human Rights to Learn About at School Overall and by Year Group

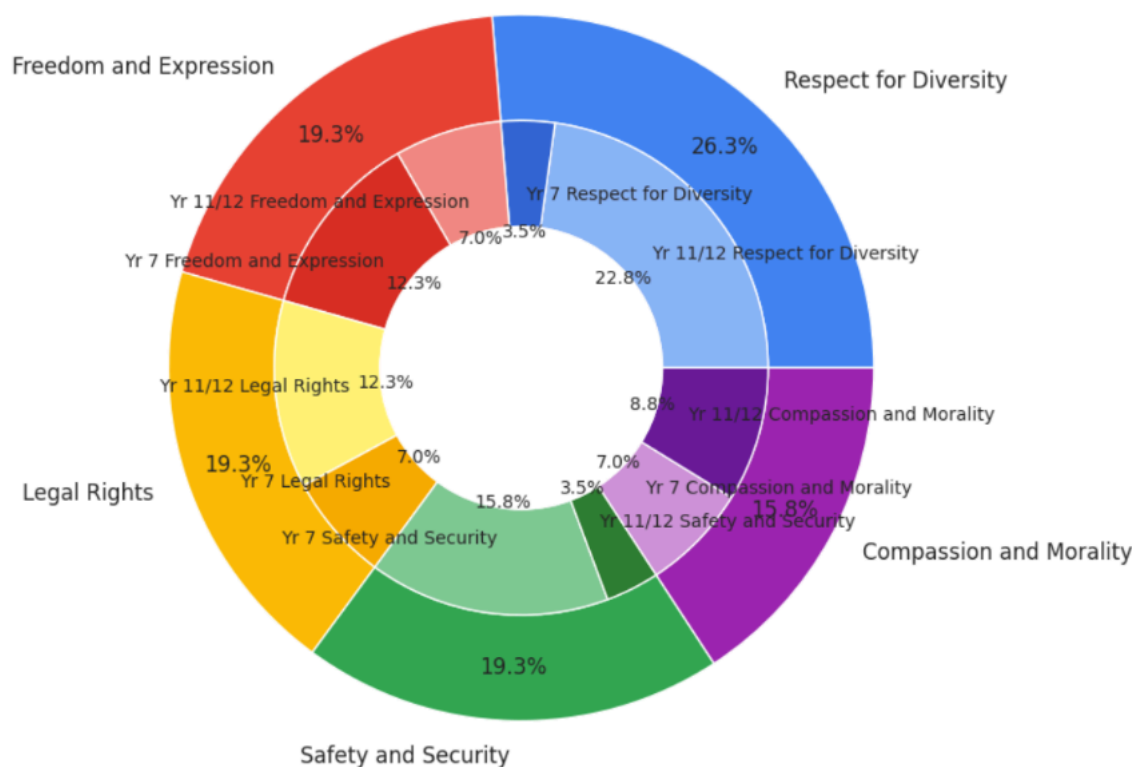


Figure 20: student values by preference

Analysis of these responses would stress the diverse priorities for students. They also appear somewhat reflective of already taught areas particularly amongst year 7s- the UNCRC and conversations of safety and security are popular topics for KS2 and early KS3 study. Furthermore, amongst older students there is a more definitive focus on respect and diversity, thus showing enthusiasm for creating respectful environments to explore differences that is a shared priority for many academics. This demonstrates that a citizenship curriculum may have some influence over the human rights and social values considered most important by students. Furthermore, it should be formed in collaborative processes with students, and attempt to reflect their priorities, given the reasonable nature of suggestions. Therefore, in utilising and listening to student voice, this study would support a curriculum that is value-pluralistic, with particular focus paid to creating respectful environments for discussion around diversity.

When asked how much time they would choose to allocate to citizenship-based teaching, students most commonly suggest an hour a week, with 48.2minutes/week being the mean time suggested. Though this was not asked directly to students, responses seemed split on whether they would like to see this as a formal lesson, or potentially fitting more into being studied within form-time, assemblies or in less frequent, more comprehensive workshops. Year 11/12 students' responses had a mean of 50.75 min/ week, with 75% of respondents answering in a way that would indicate a need for a formal lesson structure. This is despite the fact that it is not conceived as being tied to a qualification, perhaps indicating that students feel it necessary to ringfence citizenship based teaching as competition with other subjects intensifies.

2.4- Student contribution

Subsequent to questionnaire activities, and some teaching explaining immigration and the citizenship test initially,¹³² as well as the current state of citizenship education, students worked together to form their own contributions and sample questions for the citizenship test, and to consider how they would teach a self-chosen value. Each exercise attempts to maximise students' contribution firstly to definitions of Britishness, and subsequently to pedagogy that informs their own learning. Many concerned with citizenship tests and education policy have placed recent emphasis on the need for national discussion, therefore should take seriously the ideas held by students regarding these topics, especially older students with a direct, holistic experience with the current curriculum, and more developed social awareness.¹³³

For year 11/12 students, cultural and civic questions were most popular in suggestions, as well as a general scepticism as to whether a citizenship test was a good idea. Half of the groups rejected the notion of a test altogether, preferring a personal approach that considered what an individual applicant would contribute towards wider society.¹³⁴ This implied a belief that it was inappropriate to formally define "Britishness," and opened the door to more collaborative, two-way integrative processes than the purely assimilationist intentions of the *Life in the UK test*. When forming questions, which they did regardless of this initial judgement, student responses indicated a combination of forming questions representative of Britishness that they themselves identified with, but were also valued by society at large.

There is clear support for both practical questions related to civic participation and an engagement with everyday life, and cultural and some historical questions that emphasise using symbols of Britishness that are still relevant.

¹³² As part of this, the class took a sample test beforehand. pupil reaction demonstrated a rejection of this test as overly difficult and irrelevant, so it is unlikely that students were attempting to replicate examples shown. Instead, this practice test may have informed the question structure students used, but is unlikely to direct the question content.

¹³³ This should not however, be a necessary prerequisite to involvement in policy making.

¹³⁴ Specifics of what this contribution entailed were ranged when talking with groups- no suggestion motivations were always tied to neo-liberal conceptions, communal value was also discussed.

In terms of civic-related questions, ideas most commonly emphasised questions that checked for legal understanding. A recurring question format asked applicants “which one of the following is/ is not illegal?” Common specific laws for inclusion were legal driving, drinking, and sexual consent ages. Beyond legal understanding, civic question suggestions also included political understanding about how to vote (“which one of these counts as a spoilt ballot?”) and knowledge of current key political figures and parties, such as who operates different cabinet positions. Practical questions about when GCSEs were taken or what age groups attended different schools were also suggested, as well as one question that asked applicants about the average costs of daily essentials, an interesting idea given that it is often considered a political litmus test to determine whether a politician is ‘in touch’ with the people. One group also explored how questions could be more reflective of local geography and community, suggesting questions on local bus routes as one marker of this. Therefore, some questions fit nicely into existing question structures and test administration, but demand more focus on legal and civic topics in general, and suggest questions more relevant than many existing ones. While incorporating local community or some daily life questions would require adjustment in how the test is created, these are reasonable suggestions that would represent the multiple layers at which integration occurs, and could be explored further.

Students did still include cultural and historical questions in their drafts of test questions, with a view to considering what is typical knowledge associated with ‘being British,’ that was felt by themselves and their perspectives of the wider nation. There were considerably less questions suggested about history than would be representative of the makeup of the current test- this is possibly because historical questions asked in a sample test taken collectively beforehand were seen as particularly irrelevant by students. When they did suggest questions about history, these were intended to be knowledge held by the general population, and often reflected historical content taught at a younger age. For example, one question asked “what period did Henry VIII rule in?,” whilst a few asked for information about the Great fire of London- a common area for local history study amongst London-adjacent primary schools. Questions about religion were even less common, but answers did indicate an acceptance of a multi-cultural Britain: one question asked what the most popular religion/sect was nationally, where another asked what building Muslims worshipped in.

Cultural questions were much more common, to a similar extent as civic ones. Some invoked knowledge of typical British icons such as: James Bond’s agent number; naming a book by Roald Dahl; information about England’s 1966 World Cup triumph; and questions about royal lineage. Others emphasised more modern figures of national status- Top Gear, David Attenborough, Gemma Collins, and Colin the Caterpillar cakes were amongst specific figures referenced. These examples might seem ‘trivial,’ but arguably this is the point: a citizenship test should not be indicative of elite, complex and niche symbols of Britishness, but should prioritise inclusion of more popular symbols commonly conceived. Furthermore, some cultural questions are more tied to changing preference (the most popular sports, for instance), or allow for applicants to name their own sources of Britishness to an extent. This is done by

a question that asks an applicant to “name three British children TV shows,” without specific requirement of what these shows are.

Thus, a test could be enhanced and better representative of these year 11/12 student views of Britishness if it focused on historical essentials, and maybe some local context, whilst prioritising cultural elements of identity that are “living and breathing.” Continual consultation with public, or school children could ensure that the sources of identity drawn upon remain relevant.

A brief summary of year 7s ideas about citizenship test questions suggests a general attempt to adhere to things they considered “stereotypically British,” as opposed to ensuring their own attachment or effect of these ideas.¹³⁵ Within this, questions about fish and chips and tea were often suggested. However, this was not the only approach taken by students, who were still involved in genuine discussion about Britishness throughout. Some questions looking to understand the character and purpose of applicants (“are you going to work for the NHS?”; “are you going to destroy the UK?”) mirror the older students who suggest a more personal approach. Other suggested questions of “naming three laws,” asking what side of the road we drive on, and the exchange rate between Pounds and Euros shows a preference for questions that test an ability to competently live in the UK. Therefore, while suggestions are usually less well-developed or critically considered than their older counterparts, year 7s have similar priorities in wanting a test to ensure that citizen applicants are able to negotiate everyday life, civic participation, and have decent intentions.

Only year 11/12s were asked to select a key value to study in citizenship education, and to plan out how this might be done. Working on this collaboratively mostly led to productive and engaging inter-group dialogues about how their chosen value could be adapted and demonstrated to meet the needs of different year groups. Unsurprisingly, values selected were representative of those that the age group considered to be most important when polled, with respect being the most common value chosen, and international and British law, understanding the global context of forced migration, and ethics also explored. One group wanted teaching to focus on Christian principles, whereas all others showed no attachment of citizenship to a specific faith. In discussing how to teach respect in secondary schools, students were worried that teenagers were likely to be quickly dismissive of discussing the value, viewing it as tokenistic. They also noted that this was an additional reason *why* such education was necessary to engage students in co-ownership of such values. Another group grappled with internal difference over the messaging citizenship education should be promoting: whilst some members were passionate about the need for active local community participation, another student saw this as potentially an additional pressure on students, therefore was concerned with suggesting that schools and curriculum should have a realistic expectation for student activity, not holding them to standards of perfection.

¹³⁵ This observation is not only derived from the actual answers written down by groups, but also the general tone on conversations observed across the lesson.

In terms of other priorities, and ideas around pedagogical approaches, students clearly felt the need for the subject to be grounded in realities. Many spoke of a desire to learn more about the law or ‘adult problems’ in general in the UK, with some specific areas identified being mortgages, taxes, and asylum seeker rights. Motivations for learning this were not just driven by a want to have a better individual understanding of how to manage challenges, but also stated that they wished to create a better educated society more aware of their role as a citizen within a state, and an ability to understand key areas of policy debate from a more informed perspective. For those designing a curriculum for ‘respect,’ or other abstract values such as ‘empathy and understanding,’ case studies or real life examples formed a common part of older student content, believing that this would help students to buy into the topics. They also discussed a need to demonstrate how different individuals or cultures may differ in their definitions and approaches to different values, thus the need for teaching content to “translate” into various contexts, and be contested.

The rational and thought-provoking quality of student suggestions supports the idea that citizenship education and Britishness definitions more widely are meaningful subjects to them, within which they are capable of contributing a valuable and necessary voice. This section's overall conclusions and policy recommendations will attempt to draw on student attitudes and recommendations alongside wider study in order to suggest how we might better achieve active citizenship through giving citizens and students a stronger stake in their education and country.

2.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Given that results, and conclusions have been discussed at length within the main body of this chapter, findings and policy recommendations here will be presented in bullet point form for clarity and concision. It should first be made clear though that the fifty or so students participating in this study are not a sufficient enough sample size to be representative of wider student perception and attitudes relating to immigration and citizenship education- more research would be required in a range of locations for results collected here to be considered a comprehensive overview fully representative of student understanding and opinion. This does not negate the usefulness of the study in providing evidence of student priorities and knowledge gaps in this context, combined with wider literature, strengthens the case for rethinking the current citizenship curriculum, and actively consulting and amplifying a student voice when doing so.

Furthermore, student participation in thinking of questions for the *Life in the UK test*, and planning citizenship education, aimed to take into consideration ideas that function on a national level, rather than just their own individual interests. The quality of suggestions and innovative thinking, and engaging teaching content demonstrated in this regard is worthy of significant policy attention in itself. The actual activity of

forming questions for a citizenship test, and ways of approaching citizenship education, could be a valuable lesson material for enhancing student stake in education and Britishness more widely. If the Government demonstrates they are willing to listen to the bright ideas forwarded by students, activities such as this will no longer operate as an artificial facade for active citizenship, but could help to strengthen commitment to democratic values, trust, and detoxify conversations around Britishness, or frustrations with education's purpose.

Conclusions drawn from results of this study's research, indicative of the perception, opinion, and ideas of the student involved-

On immigration:

Student knowledge and perception around immigration is impressive. However, addressing gaps in understanding/ perception, and increasing confidence around negotiating the subject could be enabled by teaching on the subject, possibly within a more substantial form of citizenship education. This would provide students with a factual understanding that would allow them to make well-informed decisions about policy in relation to immigration. The political importance that students place on immigration, and varied yet predominantly positive attitudes favouring welcoming, and compassionate immigration and especially asylum seeker approaches suggest that this would be a valuable topic to explore within citizenship education, including how these attitudes might be realised in practice.

- Most students feel uncertain around how immigration works, believing they have a moderate understanding, with this belief most prominent in the yr11/12 group.
- Student's perception of immigration overrepresents asylum seekers in relation to their share of immigration, and under-represent students. This was the case at all ages, but most prevalent with younger students.
- Students are mostly unaware of the possibility of regulated legal routes to the UK that asylum seekers could take, but are much more aware of those arriving on small boats.
- Students mostly display good knowledge in relation to the scale of immigration and asylum seeker arrivals, and accurately depict the leading nationalities of each group. They do overestimate the % of the UK population that are immigrants.
- Students accurately estimate the UK's share of migrant intake globally, but overestimate their role in taking in refugees relative to other countries.
- All students consider immigration to be important or very important politically.

- In their attitudes towards government policy, students are relatively united in emphasising a need to be welcoming and considerate, but also have views prioritising fairness, efficiency, and strict policy. In relation to asylum seekers, a focus on compassion, humanisation (yr 11/12 mainly) and welcoming (mainly yr7) become even more prominent.

On student suggestions and conceptions of Britishness in relation to content for the *Life in the UK* test:

The fact that students expressed frustration towards inaccessible and unrepresentative current content, and sometimes formatting, of the *Life in the UK test*, combined with question suggestions and topic priorities that did not align with current content, implies that the test is in need of reconfiguration, and modernisation. They favour a test with cultural and historical content better aligned to public knowledge and conceptions of Britishness, though also think legal and civic understanding is important to test. Their ideas for appropriate questions and structure appear much more reasonable than the tests current configuration, highlighting the benefits of continual public consultation and contribution to ensure that the test, if continued, accurately represents popular and changing sources of civic, cultural and historical British identity. Other ideas about tweaking the structure of tests in order to provide more locally-based content, or give applicants more freedom in their answer, are also interesting ideas that should be considered in the making of a new test. Thus, action on the test needs to be more ambitious than current periodical review, but should instead look to combat its blatant flaws by taking on many of the recommendations posed by students, and more generally make an effort to align content with the knowledge and preferences of its population. Possible modifications are further outlined in general policy recommendations in Chapter Four.

- Students are sceptical of the principle of any quiz-style test as a useful way of determining who is worthy of British citizenship. They are definitive in their rejection of current content, most fundamentally in opposition to the difficulty of the test.
- If a test was maintained, students advocated for including civic content, mainly to test an understanding of British laws, but also for political knowledge that would demonstrate capacity for democratic engagement.
- Students also regularly included cultural questions about Britishness, emphasising a need for this content to be popular knowledge, and adaptive to changing times, conceptions, and sources of identity.
- Though less likely to recommend questions in relation to British history, when doing so students prioritise questions about recognisable figures or events, often aligned with school curriculum.

- Students also provided suggestions requiring innovation to the test's question structures. This included ways to include more locally relevant content, visual questions, and ways in which applicants had more room to select their own symbols of Britishness, and outline their motivations for citizenship.

On citizenship pedagogy, and content:

When considering teaching approaches, pupils demonstrate sufficient imagination and capabilities to suggest that utilising their input in regard to pedagogy and curriculum content would be a valuable exercise. Furthermore, student preference here endorses a rejuvenation of citizenship education, where time should be spent dealing with topics and enacting practices that could better help students become active citizens. Student response emphasises the importance of learning about human rights and respect amongst other preferences, and suggested that delivery needed to be adaptive, and based in reality if it was to be engaging for students. Crucially, the strongest advocates for citizenship education were the oldest students, suggesting a need for increasing delivery as students become more independent, socially-conscious, active citizens themselves. Furthermore, the popularity of human rights suggests a need to undo the current national monopolisation of citizenship education in viewing everything through the prism of 'Fundamental British Values.' Instead, acknowledging and engaging with local, national and global identities and communities appears more representative of student wishes, and the diverse spheres of identity where citizenship education can be enacted. The importance placed on citizenship education by students, and preferred content and delivery methods, support calls by academics to rethink the place of citizenship education, and encourage more thorough consideration of the fundamental drivers and purposes of education itself.

- All students consider content associated with citizenship teaching, values, and human rights, as very important to their education. Responses to how much time should be spent on the topic suggest that there is a drive for more formal installation of the subject into the curriculum, including finding ways to maintain and enhance this at later years.
- Students see learning about human rights, the law, and social values as a priority, with the importance placed on human rights and law gaining importance for year 11/12 students.
- Year 11/12 students feel that not enough time is spent on human rights at school, whereas yr 7s are more content. There is some consensus that the right amount of time is spent on social values. This could lead us to conclude that citizenship education becomes more diverted through secondary school, as examination pressures take priority.

- Different students at different ages vary in which human rights and values they consider most important. Year 7s place value on basic needs and freedoms, whereas respect is a clear priority for Year 11/12s. Compassion and morality, and learning about the law were also popular priorities for both age groups, with an evolution of specific sub-topics considered most important apparent from Year 7 to Year 11/12.
- There is consensus around learning equally about British and international law, with some others feeling that British law should be more prominent.
- When considering how to teach citizenship education, students (only yr11/12 in this case) have similar priorities to the values and human rights they consider important. There is also a clear emphasis for content to be contextually adaptive, and strongly tied to real-life examples, particularly for older students, in order to appear more practical and relatable.

Policy recommendations for Citizenship Education, drawn from results, and wider literature

Overall, the direction of research, current social context, current administrative failures, and evidence of student preference in this study all point towards a need to radically revive citizenship education from its current crippled form. Content, values and practices cannot be state impositions that go unchallenged or unpracticed. Instead, the curriculum needs to be informed by national conversation involving theorists, teachers, and students in a more collaborative manner, and should provide sufficient room for schools to adapt content to their own ethos, context, and values, which in turn should be constructed in collaboration with students. Projects and practices relating to citizenship education need to include the full student body, and have a meaningful impact internally, locally, and even nationally and even globally when enacted on a combined scale. This ensures that the subject is empowering for students to have a stake in the nation and their school, as opposed to merely tokenistic involvement. This certainly does not mean that the curriculum should be void of actual content and guidance, but does compel that content to be contestable, refreshable and accessible.

Citizenship education should also look to create environments of respect and inclusion where students can engage with contentious topics in the classroom, and are provided with factual information that empowers them with an understanding that enables them to engage with topics of interest on a wider scale. Given the prominence of mis-information particularly in relation to immigration and asylum seeker political debate, and popular re-emergence of ethno-centric nationalism, it is imperative to give students an ability to think critically when processing media, and where possible, provide them with accurate contexts to areas of political debate. This includes content in citizenship and other subjects, particularly humanities, that outlines multi-cultural realities, the deep history of immigration in Britain and the wider world, and global awareness. Britishness should be framed as what it is: an

ever-changing concept contested and claimed to represent a certain meaning in diverse ways and by diverse actors throughout history. This should also include the emphasis that due to its malleable nature, students have the right and power to write their own definitions of what Britishness is to them.

Recommendations for the administration and structure of citizenship education

- The Government needs to find ways to make sure that citizenship curriculum content and values are informed by a ‘national conversation’ enacted as a sustained dialogue between students, teachers, and the DfE. Recent efforts to engage in conversation with young people shows good intent, but requires genuine collaboration in listening to student ideas, and ways of structuring relations so that this dialogue can occur continuously, and include all students equally.
- Schools need to be given sufficient space to adapt citizenship content to fit their own school ethos, context, and values, which should in turn be informed by student input. However, some fundamental required content should remain.
- The Government should scrap the current language of ‘fundamental British Values,’ used as a guidance for the citizenship curriculum. Value-based learning should still be considered of optimal importance though, and a key purpose of education. Instead, core values need to be framed in a more accessible and more contestable light. They must be informed by genuine and continual consultation, open to review, and as values that are not exclusively British, but practiced worldwide also. The suggestions put forward by the House of Lords’ 2018 “ties that bind report” to instead use the term “shared values of British citizenship,” would be a welcome improvement.
- The Government needs to offer better guidance, and provide training to teachers on how to teach citizenship education effectively.
- Though citizenship is theoretically already compulsory, and has an optional GCSE available, clearly the subject has fallen into a state of near disuse, or certainly de-prioritisation, in secondary schools. Solutions to this acquire an approach that protects and enforces the need for this to regain prominence, but must also be conscious of not further cramping the school timetable, or applying increased academic performance pressures on schools, given that these were reasons for its widespread neglect. This may require fundamental re-conception of the purpose of schools, and how their output is measured, including and an emphasis on reducing excessive pressure on academic results.
- Citizenship should remain a compulsory subject, and some flexibility should be maintained in how schools choose to deliver content, though there should be

some evidence of formal lessons in the subject, as opposed to always being embedded within other mediums of delivery.

- An optional GCSE in citizenship runs contrary to the universal purpose of citizenship education. It should therefore be made totally compulsory for all, or scrapped in this format, with the latter appearing the better option, given that an exam-based assessment of citizenship would be limiting, and inappropriate, forcing students to conform to a mark scheme, rather than express their own opinions.
- In the final stages of secondary school education, following a more comprehensive experience with citizenship education through secondary school, a compulsory qualification, in the form of an **individual student project**, should be created as a formal acknowledgement of the subject. Given the expense of DofE awards, the scrapping of NCS, and that the majority of coursework or project related work such as an EPQ is reserved for 16+ age groups, there is a need for a universal yet individual piece of work tied to citizenship education, social values, and community engagement, that can fill this emerging gap.
- The project should offer optimal student agency, allowing them to choose a topic of interest, and potentially even the format of their work. It should have some relation to citizenship education, and social action, and involve students interacting with the local community or wider world in a way they deem appropriate. An emphasis on creativity and opportunity should be apparent, with projects potentially linked to career experience also, though with more emphasis on student output, so as not to resemble work experience.
- If established, this could help build links between schools, students, and the wider community, whilst giving students the platform to have a meaningful impact and expression felt beyond the classroom. Perhaps even the creation of a 'national week' could facilitate this interaction, where the wider engagement part of the project could take place for everybody, and the wider nation could prepare to accommodate collaborating with students on projects.
- Admittedly, the teaching logistics of supporting students with such a project appear complex. Some lesson time should be made available for students to work on the project, which could be scheduled away from the exam period. Tutor support and facilitating wider network links would also be required to an extent, but the energy and process of the project should be largely student-led.
- Specifics over whether to assess this project, and how to do so, are beyond the capacities of this study. The main output and purpose though, is to produce a piece of work that is of meaning to the individual, and of a sufficient substance and nature that constitutes a culmination of the student's citizenship education within school to that point.

Recommendations for the content of citizenship education

- Prior and complimentary to the project, there should be a comprehensive citizenship curriculum, informed by other leading global examples, academic research, and national discussion. This should ensure that citizenship education involves both taught content, and enacted practices.
- Practices of active citizenship should be about active involvement of *all* students in school decision making and environment-shaping. Though common existing practices such as student councils or senior prefects need not be abandoned, selective, representative democratic practices do not sufficiently fully engage the whole student body in active citizenship
- Schools should be given agency to figure out what these creative practices might look like for them, so long as they attempt to involve all pupil voices, and a more collaborative learning and schooling approach. An example of one way this might occur, drawn from an extremely successful real example, is the idea of a '**whole school meeting**,' where for a period a term or a year,¹³⁶ the whole school goes off timetable, and in random inter-year group classes or tables, discusses and reviews questions around school practices, and brainstorms ideas for new initiatives. Another idea might be to create a rota where each student has an attempt to provide feedback to a teacher on a particular lesson, or even be taught how to teach a lesson themselves, which they could enact.
- In relation to key content that is taught to students, there is an abundance of important material that should be included in a secondary school student's citizenship education. When certain topics are taught, how they are taught, and some role in more general selection could be determined by schools, and potentially in consultation with students. Key topics should be subject to scrutiny and adaptation or replacement. Topic areas that appear particularly necessary to now, and seen as important by students consulted, include:

Human rights

Understanding immigration

Media literacy

Democratic participation in the UK

Learning about the law- British and international.

Learning about diverse cultures/ histories, in national and global contexts.

Discussing British identity, what people think this means to them, and what they would like it to look like.

Education policy and thinking. - learning why and how we learn.

Racism and discrimination

¹³⁶ This study is assured by the practitioner this is not in any way the logistical nightmare it might sound to be.

Social justice

UNSDG

Tackling inequalities

Ways to challenge power.

Positive online citizenship.

Learning how institutions function

Fiscal education

- Content should be tied to relevant real-life examples where possible, especially with older students. Questioning, discussion and healthy debate, and policy planning should be major parts of the subject's delivery.

Recommendations for teaching approaches to citizenship education

- Teaching environments and content here has to be discussion driven, and comfortable with dealing with uncomfortable topics. As expressed earlier, additional guidance and training needs to be provided by the Government to support this, as well as clear public messaging about the purpose and nature of citizenship education. Having citizenship leads amongst teaching bodies, or even ideally leads in specific sub-topics, would offer another extra layer of support.
- At the same time, teachers should be given the opportunity to be creative and ambitious in how they wish to teach key content, and what examples they might draw upon.
- Teachers should offer more explicit explanations of pedagogy for children-revealing the curtain on "this is how and why we do/ teach things," thus encouraging more collaborative learning.
- Given the prioritisation of discussion and learning co-operatively, teachers should normalise student feedback, and questioning around their choice of material or delivery, so long as interactions are respectful.
- Respect is also the most important aspect required to be maintained in the classroom environment for this style of teaching to function. Students need to feel as if they will be listened to, and not judged when sharing their opinions, to optimise inclusion during lessons. Though this may appear challenging, providing students with a stronger stake in and understanding of their education creates an additional incentive for engagement with the lesson and its contents.

Part 3: Integration Through Sports Clubs

This chapter draws on interviews, observations and questionnaires from collaboration with three sports programmes supporting refugees and asylum seekers, to assess their impact, identify effective teaching practices, and consider the challenges they faced. Ultimately, it endorses such sports programmes as, when good practice is applied, having multi-dimensional capabilities to aid integration, and offer numerous social benefits to refugees and asylum seekers.

3.1: Previous Study on Refugee and Asylum Seeker Sports Programmes

Literature addressing the social impacts of refugee sports programmes engages with the integratory ideas of intergroup contact theory briefly discussed above. It has followed the trend in wider literature of conditionalising interactions to ensure a positive outcome. However, it also highlights other potential emotional and identity impacts that can offer benefits for participants and the community that could further enable integration.

As previously discussed, though assumptions that contact between different social groups inevitably results in cohesion have been challenged, revisionists still usually retain the possible benefits of intergroup contact, if the right conditions are met. This is used to dismiss work that claimed diversity negatively affects social cohesion,¹³⁷ and inspires DCMS¹³⁸ and Sport England policy that sees sports as a potential enabler of integration.¹³⁹ James Laurence in particular demonstrates how perceived social cohesion issues are resultant of segregation rather than the incompatibility of difference,¹⁴⁰ and emphasises the importance of both positive and high-quality contact to ensure a positive effect.¹⁴¹ Like others, he identifies particular cohesion potential in youth group interactions, thus advocating for national participation schemes.¹⁴² In studies specifically addressing sport's social impact, academics are generally sceptical of sensationalist, transformative claims around its potential to heal societal wounds.¹⁴³ Yet, there is still widespread positivity around sport being an appropriate vehicle for integration and social cohesion, if contact is positive, on an "equal playing field", meaningful, and community led.¹⁴⁴ Particularly comprehensive

¹³⁷ Robert D. Putnam, 'E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century', *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 30.2 (2007), 137–74.

¹³⁸ Department of Culture, Media, and Sport.

¹³⁹ DCMS sporting future 75; Sport England Towards and Active nation notes a need to invest in charities that promote inclusion.

¹⁴⁰ James Laurence, 'Wider-Community Segregation and the Effect of Neighbourhood Ethnic Diversity on Social Capital: An Investigation into Intra-Neighbourhood Trust in Great Britain and London', *Sociology*, 51.5 (2017), 1011–33.

¹⁴¹ James Laurence et al., 'Ethnic Diversity, Inter-Group Attitudes and Countervailing Pathways of Positive and Negative Inter-Group Contact: An Analysis across Workplaces and Neighbourhoods', *Social Indicators Research*, 136.2 (2018), 719–49.

¹⁴² James Laurence, 'Cohesion through Participation? Youth Engagement, Interethnic Attitudes, and Pathways of Positive and Negative Intergroup Contact among Adolescents: A Quasi-Experimental Field Study', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46.13 (2019).

¹⁴³ Jay Coakley, 'Youth sports: what counts as "positive development"?', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 35.3 (2011), 306–24; Karl Spracklen, Jonathan Long and Kevin Hylton, 'Leisure opportunities and new migrant communities: challenging the contribution of sport', *Leisure Studies*, 34.1 (2015), 114–29.

¹⁴⁴ Sally Nathan, et.al, "'We wouldn't of made friends if we didn't come to Football United": the impacts of a football program on young people's peer, prosocial, and cross-cultural relationships', *BMC Public Health*, 13 (2013), 399–415; Josh Denington, *Jumpers for Goalposts: A Study of Refugee Integration in the UK Through Sport* (University of Manchester, 2017); Laura Mayblin, Gill Valentine and Anna Winiarska, 'Migration and diversity in a post-socialist context: creating integrative encounters in Poland', *Environment and Planning A*, 48.5 (2016), 960–78; Thierry R. F. Middleton, Robert J.

work has been done relating specifically to immigrants or refugees and asylum seeker integration, especially by Sine Agergaard and Ramón Spaaij. Agergaard argues for the creation of spaces for intercultural dialogue that reject assimilation, but “socially obliging the groups to relate to each other and to pursue the common good,”¹⁴⁵ and determines that deeper structural inequalities must also be addressed to create this space.¹⁴⁶ Slightly contrastingly, Spaaij’s 2018 study suggests that spaces of hyper-diversity and a strong sense of group solidarity create a space where “power relations between agents are fluid and dynamic,”¹⁴⁷ therefore somewhat overcoming normal inequalities to create feelings of communal inclusion.¹⁴⁸

As one would expect, work that emphasises integration as primarily enabled by conditioned intergroup contact prefers involving refugees and asylum seekers in wider community initiatives, as opposed to having their own spaces.¹⁴⁹ However, alternative literature usually engaging with refugee and asylum seeker-specific clubs does not consider their existence to be counter-productive to integratory aims, instead arguing that emotional and social belonging benefits for participants offer alternative pathways to greater social cohesion.

Sports has been seen to play a crucial role in combating social isolation and loneliness for refugees and asylum seekers.¹⁵⁰ Through participating in sports with other refugees and asylum seekers, participants can build new social bridges, personal skills such as English language proficiency; and character development including increased self-confidence that could give them further capacities to engage with their community.¹⁵¹ The refugee and asylum seeker population itself is a space of significant heterogeneity in identities, so building familial-like connections to others with similar experiences through a shared passion and belief that football can unite offers a good starting point of boosting social, poly-cultural capital.¹⁵² Furthermore, though competition for some can allow for important development and stronger

Schinke, Deborah Lefebvre, Bahaa Habra, Diana Coholic, and Cole Giffin, ‘Critically Examining a Community-Based Participatory Action Research Project with Forced Migrant Youth’, *Sport in Society*, 25.3 (2022), 418–33 each respectively emphasise the listed conditions, and positive outcomes.

¹⁴⁵ Sine Agergaard, *Rethinking Sports and Integration: Developing a Transnational Perspective on Migrants and Descendants in Sports* (London: Routledge, 2018) p.106

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p.104

¹⁴⁷ Brent McDonald, Ramón Spaaij and Darko Dukic, ‘Moments of social inclusion: asylum seekers, football and solidarity’, *Sport in Society*, 21.9 (2018), 1388–1404.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Agergaard, *Rethinking Sports and Integration*.

¹⁵⁰ Nadina Banulescu-Bogdan, *Beyond Work: Reducing Social Isolation for Refugee Women and Other Marginalized Newcomers* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2020).; Sarah Salway et al., ‘Reducing Loneliness among Migrant and Ethnic Minority People: A Participatory Evidence Synthesis’, *Public Health Research* (Southampton, England), 8.10 (2020), 1–246.

¹⁵¹ Ibid (Salway); Angela Doherty and Tony Taylor, ‘Sport and physical recreation in the settlement of immigrant youth’, *Leisure/Loisir*, 31.1 (2007), 27–55.; Clemens Ley, Frank Karus, Lisa Wiesbauer, Marta R. Barrio, and Ramón Spaaij, ‘Health, Integration and Agency: Sport Participation Experiences of Asylum Seekers’, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 2020; Chris Stone, ‘Utopian community football? Sport, hope and belongingness in the lives of refugees and asylum seekers’, *Leisure Studies*, 37.2 (2018), 171–83.p.176.

¹⁵² Ibid (Stone) p.176; Brent McDonald, Ramón Spaaij and Darko Dukic, ‘Moments of social inclusion: asylum seekers, football and solidarity; Salway et al., ‘Reducing Loneliness among Migrant and Ethnic Minority People’, p.121; Mayblin, ‘Migration and diversity in a post-socialist context: creating integrative encounters in Poland’ p.970.

intergroup solidarity,¹⁵³ treating sports as play provides a space for participants to have fun, creating an escape from everyday challenges.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, participation in a sport enables an escape from being labelled as an ‘other,’ meaning that dehumanising and distancing narratives are replaced with spaces where belonging can be fostered, in relation to club, community, and potentially the wider nation.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, though identifying diverse integratory benefits does not oppose supporting refugees and asylum seekers in mainstream clubs, the fact that integratory impact is not solely reliant on intergroup contact, and that some of these alternative benefits may be better realised in refugee and asylum seeker specific clubs, suggests that both models offer important integratory potential.

Considering the multi-dimensional integratory benefits that studies demonstrate refugee sport involvement to be capable of enabling,¹⁵⁶ academics subsequently seek to identify practices and environments that best facilitate these. Recommendations made to achieve best practice are widespread in nature, although rarely incompatible.

Within the session, coaches are seen to have a crucial role in actively shaping and upholding a welcoming environment, and adapting to the various needs of participants.¹⁵⁷ This takes the form of ensuring that sessions are designed to support trauma sufferers,¹⁵⁸ adapt to whether a participant wants to focus on development or

¹⁵³Brent McDonald, Ramón Spaaij and Darko Dukic, ‘Moments of social inclusion: asylum seekers, football and solidarity; Leah Rosenzweig and Yang-Yang Zhou, ‘Team and Nation: Sports, Nationalism, and Attitudes toward Refugees’, *Comparative Political Studies*, 54.12 (2021), 2123–54. speaks of similar potential for inclusive nationalism through competition with outsiders when there are international competitions, if the right emphasis is applied.

¹⁵⁴Berber Koopmans and Mark Doidge, “‘They play together, they laugh together’: Sport, play and fun in refugee sport projects,” *Sport in Society*, 25.3 (2022): 537–50; Chris Webster, ‘The (In)Significance of Footballing Pleasures in the Lives of Forced Migrant Men’, *Sport in Society*, 25.3 (2022), 523–36; Froukje Smits and Annelies Knoppers, ‘Leaders Building Relationships with Young Refugees during a Sport Project’, *Sport in Society*, 25.3 (2022), 654–70; Kristin Walseth, ‘Sport and belonging’, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 41.4–5 (2006), 447–64.

¹⁵⁵ Stone, ‘Utopian Community Football?’; M. Barnes, L. Cousens and D. MacLean, ‘Trust and collaborative ties in a community sport network’, *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 22.4 (2017), 310–24.; Nasim Khan, ‘From refugees to the world stage: sport, civilisation and modernity in *Out of the Ashes* and the UK Afghan diaspora’, *South Asian Popular Culture*, 11.3 (2013), 271–85; Caitlin Nunn, Ramón Spaaij and Carla Luguetti, ‘Beyond integration: football as a mobile, transnational sphere of belonging for refugee-background young people’, *Leisure Studies*, 40.6 (2021), 809–22. p.52; Donna Woodhouse and Dominic Conricode, ‘In-ger-land, In-ger-land, In-ger-land! Exploring the impact of soccer on the sense of belonging of those seeking asylum in the UK’, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 52.8 (2017), 940–54; Sine Agergaard, Jeppe Klarskov Hansen, Jesper Seemann Serritzlew, Jonas Thorøe Olesen, and Verena Lenneis, ‘Escaping the Position as “Other”: A Postcolonial Perspective on Refugees’ Trajectories into Volunteering in Danish Sports Clubs’, *Sport in Society*, 25.3 (2022), 619–35.

¹⁵⁶Caitlin Nunn, Ramón Spaaij and Carla Luguetti, ‘Beyond integration: football as a mobile, transnational sphere of belonging for refugee-background young people’, p.51.

¹⁵⁷Angela Doherty and Tony Taylor, ‘Sport and physical recreation in the settlement of immigrant youth’, *Leisure/Loisir*, 31.1 (2007), 27–55.; Mark Doidge, Marc Keech and Elisa Sandri, ‘Active integration’: sport clubs taking an active role in the integration of refugees, *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 12.2 (2020), 305–19.

¹⁵⁸Laura Bergholz, *Playing to Heal: Designing a Trauma-Sensitive Sport Programme* (Boston: Edgework Consulting, 2013).; and Laura Bergholz, Laura Stafford and William D’Andrea, ‘Creating trauma-informed sports programming for traumatized youth: core principles for an adjunctive therapeutic approach’, *Journal of Infant, Child, and Adolescent Psychotherapy*, 15.3 (2016), 244–53. Demonstrates how this can be done and why it is important.

enjoyment;¹⁵⁹ and combatting assimilationist ideas by giving spaces for participants to demonstrate their own cultural and identity expressions.¹⁶⁰ Mark Doidge is a particularly prominent voice in stressing the importance of enjoyment being fundamental to sessions, and the active role needed from coaches to develop preferable values and player relationships.¹⁶¹ Another comprehensive source of guidance for trauma-sensitive programmes is SportandDev’s “playing to heal” paper, which provides a framework below that demonstrates connection between key programme practices, and wider programme design principles, in order to best support participants.

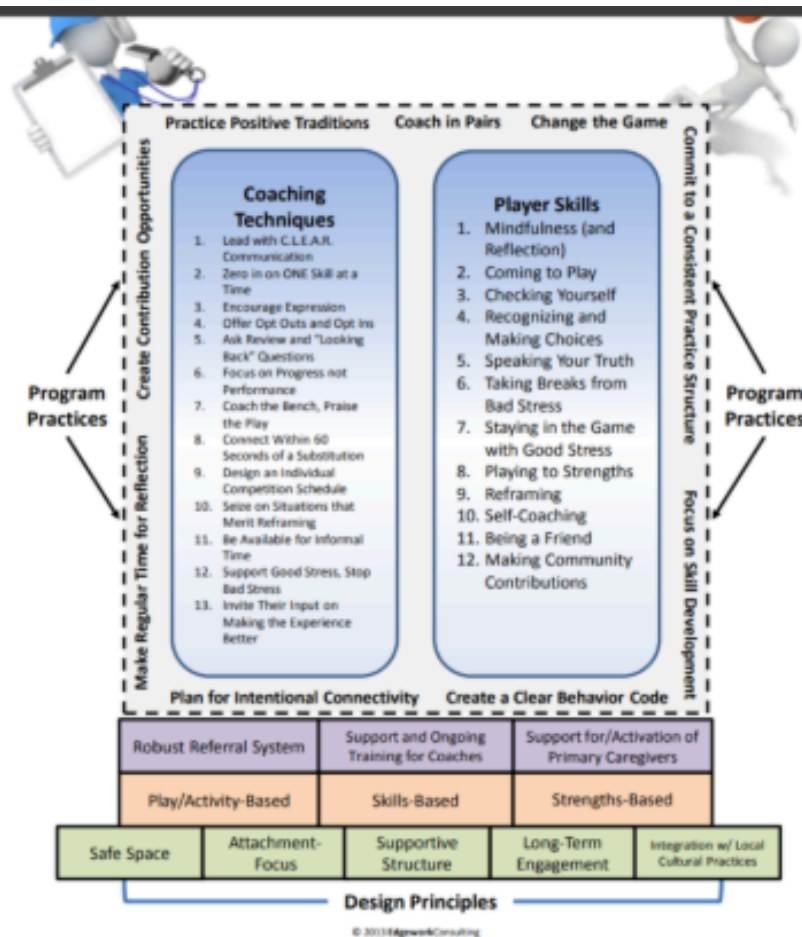


Figure 21: Laura Bergholz, *Playing to Heal: Designing a Trauma-Sensitive Sport Programme* (Boston: Edgework Consulting, 2013) p.25

As this model indicates, to maximise positive outcomes, programme engagement with and support from a wider context is also crucial. Any attempt to function in total isolation from knowledge of the outside world is flawed;¹⁶² programmes should

¹⁵⁹Chris Stone, *Football – A Shared Sense of Belonging* (Sheffield: FURD, 2013).; Josh Denington, *Jumpers for Goalposts*, pp.34-35

¹⁶⁰ J-P Ha and Andi Lyras, ‘Sport for refugee youth in a new society: the role of acculturation in sport for developing and peace programming’, *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation*, 35.2 (2013), 121–40.; J. Nadeau, N. O’Reilly and A. Scott, ‘Community sport and the newcomer experiences in small cities’, *Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal*, 6.2 (2016), 110–36.

¹⁶¹ Mark Doidge, Marc Keech and Elisa Sandri, ‘Active integration’: sport clubs taking an active role in the integration of refugees; Berber Koopmans and Mark Doidge, “‘They play together, they laugh together’: Sport, play and fun in refugee sport projects,”

¹⁶² Stone, ‘Utopian Community Football?’ p.178; Mark Doidge, Marc Keech and Elisa Sandri, ‘Active integration,’ p.306

instead provide coaches with prior knowledge relating to refugees' experiences,¹⁶³ and seek to communicate well with social support schemes in place, and the wider sporting community and authorities.¹⁶⁴ Some ways suggested to smoothen the stresses of integration for participants include employment of bi-cultural workers, and alleviating financial burdens through subsidising fees and transport.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, programmes should seek to actively involve participants in programme decision making and delivery where possible, as argued by Jay Scherer when requesting for funding to "meaningfully democratize sport."¹⁶⁶ Inevitably, this requires local and national government long-term funding and planning to ensure that facilities and capacities of clubs are sufficient to deliver high-quality sessions.¹⁶⁷ To be maximally effective, they also require a wider environment that helps support refugees and asylum seekers with integration, starting with foundational rights for participants.¹⁶⁸

This study also used wider literature in order to ensure the ethical standards of the research. It acknowledges the heterogeneous nature of the refugee population's background, experiences, and needs, therefore does not imply that one participant universally reflects the needs of all, instead seeking to identify a range of teaching approaches and policies to achieve a range of impacts.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, through actively including participants, as well as coaches and project managers in research, the study looks to avoid victimisation narratives,¹⁷⁰ but instead frame refugees and asylum seekers as social actors with an active role in research.¹⁷¹ The work done brings out powerful individual voices through the passion expressed for the clubs by all actors in quotes obtained by interview and questionnaire. When referencing quotes and practices, the study will not name individuals, but will instead give their role (coach, player/ participant, project manager), and their club's initials in order to allow for comparison, for which consent has been obtained (H2H being Hurdles2Hoops, BF being Bloomsbury football, CLFC being Changing Lives Football Club.)

¹⁶³ Siu-yau Cheung and Jenny Phillimore, 'Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK', *Sociology*, 48.3 (2014), 518–36. p.540.

¹⁶⁴ Chris Stone, *Football – A Shared Sense of Belonging* (Sheffield: FURD, 2013). pp.84-5

¹⁶⁵ Karen Block and Louise Gibbs, 'Promoting social inclusion through sport for refugee-background youth in Australia: analysing different participation models', *Social Inclusion*, 5.2 (2017), 91–100.

¹⁶⁶ Jay Scherer, Ashraf Amiri, Dallas B Ansell, Paul Nya, Nancy LI Spencer and Nicholas L Holt, 'Forced Migration, Resettlement, and Sport: Lessons from the Kabul-Edmonton Soccer Team', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 59.6 (2024), 805–825 (first published online April 18 2024)

¹⁶⁷ Chris Stone, *Football – A Shared Sense of Belonging*, pp.84-85; Phillimore, 'Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK', p.543; Małgorzata Zaborowska, *Sport for Dialogue: Good Practices Around Europe* (Warsaw: Fundacja dla Wolności, 2014). pp. 59-60

¹⁶⁸ Rahela Jurković and Ramón Spaaij, 'The "Integrative Potential" and Socio-Political Constraints of Football in Southeast Europe: A Critical Exploration of Lived Experiences of People Seeking Asylum', *Sport in Society*, 25.3 (2022), pp.636–53.

¹⁶⁹ Ramón Spaaij et al., 'Sport, refugees, and forced migration: a critical review of the literature', *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 1 (2019). p.11.

¹⁷⁰ Karen Block, Elisha Riggs, and Nick Haslam, 'Ethics in Research with Refugees and Asylum Seekers: Processes, Power and Politics', in *Values and Vulnerabilities: The Ethics of Research with Refugees and Asylum Seekers*, ed. by Karen Block, Elisha Riggs, and Nick Haslam (Toowong, Australia: Australian Academic Press, 2013), pp. 3–20.

¹⁷¹ Spaaij et al., 'Sport, refugees, and forced migration: a critical review of the literature' p.15; Ramón Spaaij, Carla Luguetti and Nicola De Martini Ugolotti, 'Forced migration and sport: an introduction', *Sport in Society*, 25.3 (2022), 405–17. p.410

Responses indicate that each programme has a profound drive and impact on its players, with integration being a key focus for all programmes. Rather than simply enacting assimilationist practices, or just prioritising intergroup contact, coaches and project managers emphasised the importance of facilitating values and skills to promote cohesion within sessions, and develop personal skills intended to support wider integration also. Players' responses indicated the importance they placed on their involvement, and often identified these values and skills also, but with considerable diversity in terms of their own individual feelings and priorities. Thematically outlining impacts and teaching focuses allows for clearer demonstration of potential social and integratory benefits of refugee and asylum-seeker focused sports clubs, and policies and practices that can help maximise these.

3.2 Emotional wellbeing

One impact that was regularly cited during conversation was the emotional pleasure and support that players felt during sessions. Younger participants (under 16s), most generally acknowledged a feeling of happiness or relaxation when asked how the session, and sport in general, made them feel. Adult refugees and asylum seekers at CLFC usually tied these feelings to alleviating mental health burdens, and escaping negative emotions.

Younger participants were usually more brief in answering questions about feeling. For Bloomsbury Football (BF) and Hurdles2Hoops (H2H) participants, this meant often one-word expressions were given, which were unanimously positive. Though differing on a player-to-player basis, the most common answers were either simply that participants felt “good,” or “happy.” Some players also justified this feeling- many spoke of the importance of seeing and playing with friends, whereas others were enthusiastic about the harmonious environments created. A H2H player spoke of how basketball...

“is actually a fun sport and makes me feel great... as I can be a better me while making friends along the way.”

A BF player thought that playing football “makes me feel good because nobody is rude to each other.” Some players saw the possibility to improve their sporting abilities as a source of happiness, whereas others drew good feelings from a sense of relaxation, and feeling comfortable. A number of participants noted that emotional wellbeing was a key intention of their programme. This was particularly true of BF players who, when asked to identify the most important things about their sessions, considered enjoyment and happiness as the most common priority, alongside respect.

Participants also spoke about how sport allowed them both escape from and coping mechanisms for the troubles that either face or haunt participants. A H2H participant felt like they “don’t worry about anything” when playing basketball, whereas a football

player at BF felt that “sports are like a therapy to me.” This response was much more common from the usually more thorough, and considered responses of young adult CLFC players, who were more open in discussing vulnerabilities.¹⁷² They see the football team as not only an escape, but as a space of personal empowerment, where participants build both individual agency and social networks. Rather than paraphrasing and reinterpreting words, the powerful feelings of these participants expressed in questionnaire responses speak for themselves:

“Football makes me forget my problems and feel strong. When I play, I am not worried about anything. I feel the same as everyone else on the pitch.”

“Playing football helps me when I am sad or stressed. It makes me feel better and stronger. I also practice my English with other players and learn about British life.”

“Football makes me feel free and happy. It helps me make friends and forget the bad times from before. When I play, I feel like I can do anything.”

“Football helps me deal with stress in a good way and connect with people who understand my journey. It shows me that even after difficult times, we can still win and be happy.”

Furthermore, participants identify coaching intentions and achievements of helping regulate more destructive emotional qualities, through developing players patience and resilience, often in dealing with perceived injustices. Those who show awareness of these intentions also feel that this enables them to better integrate into their community. A response asked to identify the club’s most important feature claimed it “teaches us how to handle our anger and stay calm,” which helped beyond the football pitch “when I look for work or talk to people in the community.” Similarly, another response to what coaches wanted players to learn emphasised “respect and how to control our feelings, teaching us that football helps us become better men in our community.” This appeared to be a more important issue for CLFC participants, with an added performance drive acting as a motivation used by the coach to encourage emotional control. They spoke of how gametime could be used as an incentive for players to behave with good discipline, and also used training exercises where players had to tolerate unfair decisions to build emotional control under pressure. Deliberately looking for moments to antagonise participants had to be a carefully managed interaction so that trust and respect was maintained between players and coaches, although the fact that more well-established players responded patiently to wrong decisions, whilst some newer players still displayed some retaliation, suggests that this was a practice their coach had experienced success with, and delivered confidently.

¹⁷² Additional time was given to CLFC questionnaire responses, whilst other groups' players responded during the session..

Elsewhere, project managers of H2H and BF both spoke of how crucial emotional wellbeing and mental health support was to their programmes and participants, and spoke and acted with a passion that demonstrated genuine care and emotional investment in the children that their activities supported. A BF projects manager specifically mentioned a need to collaborate with professional services, and ensure coaches apply trauma-informed approaches, whilst also adapting their programme in ways that can provide a more friendly environment for participants, such as using coaches that have English as a second language, or no male staff and covering glass for sessions supporting Muslim girls. From a coaching perspective, both H2H and BF shared the intention perceived by participants to optimize fun for participants. The lead BF coach spoke at length about how this is an underlying motivation, suggesting “sweaty smiles” demonstrate a successful session. They offer further advice to similar programmes, and applicable to coaches in general, of humanising the children which coaches work with rather than being overly-demanding, suggesting “reminding themselves out they’re working with kids and they just need to make sure that they have a safe space.” The coach also spoke of a need to adapt to the individual emotional needs of participants in order to best support them on a session-by-session basis, whether this be a need to “just play football and kick the ball around,” or help them develop technically. “At the end of the day,” they say, “we are just trying to meet every kid’s needs.”

Overall, it is clear that emotional wellbeing is an important motivator for programmes, and appears to have a significant impact on players, who all express positive feelings in relation to their programmes, and often extend these to being capable of alleviating other burdens. Programmes successfully enable this by ensuring that their sessions are fundamentally safe environments for all participants. Once this is assured, a variety of strategies can be used to ensure player’s emotional needs are met, ranging from game management to ensuring a general club ethos and environment that consults players, asking how they are in general and in the session specifically. Through helping refugees and asylum seekers manage challenging emotions, and providing them with an adaptive source of happiness and fulfillment, sessions help to combat a mental health crisis within the asylum seeker and refugee populace.¹⁷³ Participants and programmes believe helping participants with their mental health and emotional stability allows them more capacity to interact positively with other community members, as well as alleviating loneliness and helplessness, thus enabling them to better participate in society, and two-way forms of integration.

3.3 Belonging

Conversation with participants, observation of sessions, and coaching priorities reveal that offering a sense of belonging and community is a crucial feature of

¹⁷³Teresa Pollard and Natasha Howard, ‘Mental healthcare for asylum-seekers and refugees residing in the United Kingdom: a scoping review of policies, barriers, and enablers’, *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, 15.60 (2021),

refugee and asylum seeker sports clubs. This is enabled by sporting teamwork that requires the bridging of language and cultural barriers, combined with an environment of respect and equality within which friendships are made. Emphasis of a club culture of respect and mutual co-operation helps to develop and solidify values that enable better wider communal relations. This also adheres to principles of two-way integration: clubs provide participants with a platform to express and consolidate their own identities, whilst also collaborating with others to function effectively as a team, or group.

Child participants in H2H and BF spoke about how important making friends at sessions was. One H2H player interviewed felt that some of his closest friendships were formed through the club and, given that he also played at a highly competitive level elsewhere, enjoyed the communal elements of the club. Furthermore, all clubs did not impose strict barriers to non-asylum seekers and refugees, but instead encouraged participants to bring friends along to sessions on a casual basis. This ensured participants felt comfortable, whilst also opening the sessions to including others in a way that does not fully isolate asylum seekers and refugees as an impermeable social group. In the H2H and BF sessions, players were observed to have brought along friends, with the wider diverse makeup of the local population meaning that there was no obvious separation between asylum seekers and refugees, and other participants. In the CL session, training in a public park meant that not only did players bring friends, but coaches and participants allowed other 'strangers' into the group who were interested in joining the training session.

For CL adult players who likely had less opportunities to otherwise form friendships and communities in the way that school would have provided for child participants, their football community took on an even more prominent, at times familial, level of importance. Players spoke of the importance of co-operation and the welcoming environment facilitated to maximise an inclusive sense of belonging, and also often tie these attributes to success when competing for the club, and in wider life. Again, it seems appropriate to let participants use their own words:

“I have good friends here and we help each other. When I first came to UK, I was alone but now I have my football family.”

“This club makes me feel important and gives me hope for my future. Every time I come here, I know my teammates care about me. It helps me feel at home in England.”

“Playing here makes me feel thankful and gives me energy to help others. The club is like a family that supports me when life is difficult. I want to give back to this community that helped me.”

“The most important thing is that everyone is welcome here. We come from different countries but we are one team. The coaches teach us to be good people, not just good players.”

“The focus on good behavior and working together shows how different people can be successful as one team. Our promotion and cup win proves that when people support each other, great things happen.”

“They want us to learn that we are stronger when we work together. The coaches show us that football can help different people understand each other better.”

Observing sessions demonstrated how inclusive and powerful feelings of belonging were forged on and off the pitch or court. H2H training sessions were reflective of typical basketball environments more generally, in that there was more individual practicing of skills than in football sessions, and stronger expectations of focus, engagement and hard work set by the coach. However, it was ensured that through casual conversation with players, and continual group praise, a friendly environment was maintained throughout where players were treated as equals, and stakeholders in their sessions. Similarly, values of team-work and co-operation were emphasised as drills developed from individual skill rehearsal to three-man weaves,¹⁷⁴ and then an informal scrimmage game. Whilst individual praise had to be earned, general encouragement was constant. Feedback was visually and verbally precise, and ensured that those with lower English proficiency still understood messaging. Given that the session was the most mixed ability of any, more capable players felt a need to help others, and punishments of suicide runs for mistakes were never overly-demanding, and always occurred as a group, emphasising collective responsibility.

These practices were reflective of the administrator’s and coach’s emphasis on respect and co-operation as beneficial to the session, and wider societal interactions also. The administrator spoke of how respect was crucial to enabling belonging, and the need to adapt within the session to a plurality of cultures and values, but also for understanding “what’s okay and what isn’t” in the country more broadly. The lead coach also saw connection, teamwork and leadership as values that allowed for development in sporting and societal terms. A key focus of their coaching approach was...

“ just making it clear that we’re all part of some type of common goal. So in society, you know, whether you’re a part of a business team in a job, you’re only going to be, you know, surrounded by other people with often a common goal in mind. So whenever I’m teaching basketball or coaching it, just making it clear that its about your teammates its about other people it’s about supporting them, helping them learn just as much as it’s about helping you

¹⁷⁴ A well-known basketball drill involving three players passing and moving interchangeably from one end of the court to the other.

learn yourself, just to enforce the idea that teamwork is ultimately what's going to get you to that next level. “

Another practice employed by H2H, and both other programmes, was at times 'playing in' during the sessions. Although most of each session only involved participants, coaches choosing moments to play in added enjoyment, allowed for them to offer different levels of challenge for different players, and create an egalitarian atmosphere. During the BF session this felt particularly impactful, especially given the longstanding relationship a lead coach had built up with the players. In this section, a positive, inclusive sense of group belonging was facilitated by a generally relaxed, informal environment, where coaches showed genuine interest in participants, and joked with players. New haircuts, in this case, were a popular topic of discussion that players and coaches enjoyed. On the pitch, a highly-skilled match took place with minimal regulation required, as players displayed good sportsmanship when clapping good goals, and had a footballing ethos that moved the ball around to involve all players, but did not shy away from individual expression either. On rare occasions where the game became overly tense, coaches used the tactic of playing silently for five minutes to calm players, but also encouraged them to find different ways of communicating, and ensured that the silence was imposed and adhered to in an entertaining way.

For the lead coach, creating an environment of belonging was a bigger priority and trickier challenge than alternative sessions, given the diverse background and language barriers of players. Coming from a minority group background themselves, the coach expressed empathy and understanding with difficulties their players might encounter with forming connections. Whilst they emphasised that “we had loads of barriers we had to break through,” a harmonious session observed supported the coach's assertions that the session had successfully developed a communal identity. For the programme's project manager, difference was explored and accommodated through trust and respect, which were both monitored as good outputs to indicate the success of the session. They shared the coaches optimism for their achievement in helping to instill these values, giving primary credit to the players themselves:

“I would just genuinely say that the young people, specifically just in this programme, are just such fantastic, lovely young people, so it's just a privilege to work with them and they do really understand those values.”

At CLFC, given the additional incentive for the club to be an effective team due to their competitive orientation, achieving group cohesion, mutual respect, and inclusive belonging became crucial for successful performance. This meant preventing cliques of certain ethnicities developing, but also taking advantage of these micro-communities to help translate instructions. Further language barriers were overcome by slow speaking, and physical demonstration, as well as using football as a 'universal language,' of communication on the pitch, and passion for following the professional game off the pitch. To help instill respectful, collaborative values that fostered group belonging, the lead coach, also an immigrant, with an ex-player and

refugee as an assistant, viewed themselves as a teacher primarily. They were clearly well liked by the players, who attributed their recent success to the coach's input. For the lead coach, as with the players responding, the clubs "pillars of respect, unity, and discipline" were used to "create a very inclusive environment" internally, but also saw this as an enabler for wider integration. In his view,

"we help them understand how important it is to work in unity and how to work in a group. Basically understanding the dynamics of the society, which is one of the key factors that we've developed. Everyone will be learning to respect each other, (and) communicating needs understanding emotions-their own emotions, and other people's emotions."

In summary, each of these programmes gave participants a sense of belonging in an inclusive, respectful environment of collaboration. This means participants learn to overcome differences to form friendships, but in an environment of shared solidarity. Coaches and teaching practices are crucial to constructing these spaces as welcoming, inclusive, and egalitarian- though programmes differ in specificity and orientation, these three traits each appear as non-negotiables. It is interesting that each club used 'playing in' as a tactic to ensure coaches were not seen as above participants, and all showed capabilities of using strategies to craft their session environment to favour inclusivity and respect. These principles were intended to extend beyond the boundaries of the programmes themselves. Two-way integration occurring during the sessions allowed for a specified place of support, and cultural and identity expression, but also required adaptation to others in the session. Furthermore, the emphasis on principles of inclusivity and respect are values which participants are empowered to display in wider social interactions. It is important also to note that these clubs do not exclude others: while focusing on refugees and asylum seekers, boundaries to the wider community are fluid, not fixed.

3.4 Personal Development

Though some studies warn against prioritising sporting improvement over enjoyment, practices at these three programmes suggest that the two are not incompatible, and that a variety of skills could be acquired from sessions that provide participants with useful integratory tools. Some of these already heavily touched upon include development of values and emotional control that enables participants to interact more cohesively. Additionally, some participants noted improvement as an important factor of their enjoyment of sessions. Improved sporting ability and genuine quality delivery can still be aspired to, whilst being adaptive to player wants. Supplementary skills, such as language proficiency and education, can also be seen to increase job opportunities, which in turn are a source of further integrative measurement and potential.¹⁷⁵ Though values of communal citizenship should be developed and

¹⁷⁵ Migration Observatory, *English language use and proficiency of migrants in the UK*, Migration Observatory briefing, 12 March 2024, accessed 9 September 2025 <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/english-language-use-and-proficiency-of-migrants-in-the-uk/>.

prioritised, this does not require the negation of individual practical skills that might help refugees and asylum seekers adapt to competition, and neo-liberal citizenship realities.

At H2H, there was a particularly strong belief in personal development and hard work, which included developing adjacent skills. Improvement was cited here as the most important thing about the club by players. For one participant, “doing the best I can for something I love is the greatest joy there is,” reinforcing that some participants want a platform to work hard and improve their sporting ability in order to feel enjoyment. Another player also spoke about how basketball had improved his focus in ways that has helped his life off the court. Demand and difficulty levels could easily be adapted to individuals: for some technical feedback was given, whereas approaches to others prioritised boosting self-confidence. Additional skills were also incorporated into the session, such as by asking maths questions as a prerequisite to beginning an activity, or to decide who started with the ball in a game.

For the H2H project manager, encouraging participants to “come out of their shells” when challenging themselves was crucial to helping them “integrate for whatever happens next.” This also included development in terms of educating other participants who are not asylum seekers or refugees about their experiences, which could then cause a ripple effect of sorts where they may go on to educate others. For the session’s lead coach, this link between integration and personal development was also fundamental to their approach, though not incompatible with a drive to pursue a “common goal” that was discussed above. They saw the sessions as opportunities to build values of hard-work and resilience that children participating could apply to their current and future lives. According to them...

“Ultimately, the lessons that translate is the hard work, is the discipline, is being able to follow instructions in a way where, you know, it’s beneficial for yourself. It’s not always easy to put the effort in, but the results mean that the effort is always worth it, and I try and reinforce that message that, okay, today might be your hard session. You might not always want to do the running, you might always want to do the cardio, but it’s going to benefit you in the long run, so yeah pushing that message.”¹⁷⁶

This was not pushed at the expense of player enjoyment, but instead looked to help players become “great people” as the “main focus” that could also enable integration, and that the coach cared about. Here, personal development is linked by them to earlier discussion of developing emotional resilience and teamwork:

“A lot of the time we would do a lot of drills based on understanding what your impact is on somebody else. So instead of getting frustrated, getting mad, we’re trying to control their temperament, teach them that it’s better to have, you know, the next play mindset, which is essentially not crying over spilt milk. Things in life are going to happen outside of your control, you

¹⁷⁶ One possible impact on a particularly strong advocacy for hard work and discipline in the H2H programme may be informed by the elite performance levels that both the lead coach and project manager have competed, or continue to compete at.

might apply for a job or not. and not get it, you might try your best to achieve something in the real world and it doesn't go your way but how do you respond to that? being able to bounce back from that, understanding, it's just lessons and learning, being able to get to the next level without dropping your head all the time, that's kind of how I feel like in society it's going to help them grow.”

In terms of purpose, this coach's intent was shared by their BF counterpart, who did not prioritise football impact, but saw the session to be about “making people” primarily, achieved through instilling respect, and envisioned as an enabler of further social opportunity. Again, developing social skills through adjacent activities such as learning to make their own ways to sessions gave players an increased self-confidence away from the pitch. The project manager saw this to be an especially productive output of their sessions, speaking with pride when recalling how....

“In one of our sessions in south London, the boys saw a mother with a Pram struggling on the stairs, and all just rushed to help her and carried the Pram and everything, and their social worker had said that before they would never have done that.”

The administrator is also keen to emphasise that sessions should still be delivered to an equal level to any other....

“Kids want to play, kids want to learn. They want to play on a team, they wanna feel that they're working towards something and so I would encourage other sports groups and other football clubs to kind of take that step in committing to developing the skills of kids, not just other positive outputs.”

This aligns the administrator with the views of other coaches and personnel in seeing sporting achievement as supplementary to consolidating personal values, but still an important part of sessions. For BF, connections to a wider footballing programme allowed high-performing players a pathway to competitive football also, though timetable clashes meant that this was sometimes at the expense of involvement in the refugee and asylum-seeker- specific sessions. For others, sporting opportunity came in the form of encouraging older players to take up coaching roles within the session, and wider club, thus giving participants a stronger foothold in sessions intended for their own benefit. Play on the pitch was also an enabler of wider confidence development, multiple players thought coaches wanted them to learn to “be confident with myself,” sometimes specifically “on the ball.” This reflected an assistant coach's drive to help participants express themselves on the pitch through their style of play, offering another way in which the sessions created platforms for individual and communal identity.

At CLFC, the competitive nature of the club meant an additional want and ambition of winning for the club, making football development a more important aspect, although a capable group of players meant this was often still secondary to team cohesion in

enabling successful performance. The lead coach was also keen not to abandon the foundations of the organisation that were rooted in wanting to “do good in society using sport,” and help steer players away from negative paths. This included approaching and talking with players who may have got involved in drugs or gangs, and helping to steer them towards a better path. Demanding better levels of performance was still done in ways that preserved the environment’s friendliness: the coach’s use of the phrase “I’ve seen you do that better before” demonstrates how trust and respect for players can be maintained alongside high standards.

Players at CLFC shared a belief in the club’s abilities to help them develop personally, speaking of health benefits and increased language proficiency:¹⁷⁷

“Football keeps me healthy in my body and mind. It gives me a routine and helps me practice English with my teammates. I feel like I belong somewhere when I play.”

“Football gives me power and makes me feel positive about life. It helps me stay fit and talk to new people. Through sport, I learned to speak English better and feel more comfortable in the UK.”

The importance of wanting to win for players should also not be underestimated, boasting of how they had improved from a 7-win to 16-win season under their new coach. Winning and competing at a good level of football also brought with it further opportunities for players- the coach cited a particular player whose on-pitch performance helped him gain employment, with a role in playing for his company’s team. Some players were also involved with administration and coaching, leading to further skill developments. Overall though, whilst development in personal values, and wider social skills are important facilitators of integration, sporting opportunity, and the emotional empowerment experienced through winning, or improvement, should not be understated or abandoned. This was made clear by two of the remarks from CLFC players detailing how winning benefited their wider lives:

“I feel very proud when I play for this team. When we won the cup, I was so happy because it showed we can achieve good things. This club gives me confidence in my new life.”

“This club makes me believe I can succeed in the UK. It gives me purpose and shows that my hard work matters. Now I have confidence to try new things and believe in myself.”

It is worth strongly emphasising that discussions around personal development do not intend in any way to suggest that refugees and asylum seekers are morally flawed people that need to be ‘taught how to behave properly to fit into society.’

¹⁷⁷I was informed by the CLFC coach about a collaboration between the team and the University of Essex, whose study identified that the club had a positive impact on the player’s health and wellbeing.- University of Essex, ‘Changing Lives Community Services’, *University of Essex*, <https://www.essex.ac.uk/business/expertise/case-studies/changing-lives-community-services> [accessed 8 September 2025].

Instead, it emphasises that positive values and character does not develop without facilitation. Lessons of personal development and learning to uphold good values are important nationally in enabling integration, hence why it is a fundamental goal of education. Whilst other sections have already discussed in detail the integratory benefits of personal development in relation to key values of respect and inclusivity, there is no reason why this has to be contradictory to offering pathways for sporting improvement also, as well as developing wider skillsets through sessions that may boost self-confidence, or help with everyday life. Personal and sporting development also has to occur in co-operation with participants, adapting to the extent they are capable of challenging themselves, and ensuring this is never at the expense of enjoyment or security. Offering pathways of progression for players into becoming coaches appears to be an excellent way to ensure that efforts to enable sporting and personal improvement are aligned with the wills of participants, and a welcoming ethos.

3.5 Structure and Wider Community Relations

Finally, this section looks to consider how the ways programmes are structured in relation to the wider community might affect their integratory capacity, as well as identify barriers to programmes, and ways in which they can be alleviated. Any misreading of this report as assimilationist should be untenable beyond here- the environment and practices discussed in sports clubs contain lessons that can be extended to two-way interactions with the wider community, and require government facilitation, primarily through funding and facilities, to be achieved internally. On the side of the programmes, schemes should aim to consolidate their multi-functioning impacts in ways that are flexible enough to adapt to the needs of its participants. Having semi-permeable boundaries to the wider community also appears important, including providing wider pathways and connections for participants within and beyond their sport. When wider interactions occur, aligning to conditionalist models of intergroup contact theory already evident internally, is important. Respectful, considerate, and committed approaches need to be promoted to optimise positive and meaningful interactions. When funding, facilitating, and implementing these programmes, programme stakeholders,¹⁷⁸ the local community, and government enablers require a mutual awareness and subsequent enablement of the programme's diverse potential positive impacts, as opposed to a singular directive, or a narrowly-defined sense of how integration can occur.

Structurally, programme adaptability appears crucial in order to best support participants, and further integration. In their responses to questionnaires, players clearly identify a range of session and sporting qualities that they feel is important to

¹⁷⁸ Referring to the coaches, participants, and project managers who engaged with the study

their happiness, and potentially their ability to integrate within the session, and more widely. Thus, there is clearly a consensus around the player's love for the sessions, but experienced in a range of ways. Feedback therefore implies that coaches should be aware of these ranging motivations, and look to ensure their delivery and programme can accommodate this. Furthermore, programmes require structuring in ways that ensure sustainable inclusion and accessibility for refugees and asylum seekers, so that messaging around inclusivity for all was not hollow. On the whole, programmes included seemed to do this relatively effectively, though also had their own individual ethos, where certain benefits or approaches may have been emphasised more than others. This variation can be seen to be driven by programme preference, reach and capacity, as well as the type of sport, and participant input. At BF, adaptability and ensuring inclusion was a particularly popular topic of conversation for coaches and project managers. "It very much depends what you're looking to do" were the words of an assistant coach when asked what practice other similar programmes could learn from their session, acknowledging the diverse needs of participants, and options for programmers. This awareness was shared by the administrator, who outlined how....

"We're always looking to improve mental, physical health, emotional wellbeing, giving young people the chance to succeed in whatever they wish to do in life. In the refugee asylum programme specifically, and something that we really care about is confidence and development of English language, making friends, building skills and learning actually also football skills and basically meeting the young people where they're at if they want to play competitively, or if they want to play recreationally, we're just here to provide that support."

The club also spoke about the importance of taking their safeguarding seriously to ensure a safe space, and referenced the bursaries available to refugees and asylum seekers that ensured free access to sessions including and beyond just their own specifically allocated one. This meant participants had the platform to fully engage in their own tailored safe space within the session, and the facilities to engage with others more widely also.

In terms of how interactions with the wider community occurred, references have already been made to how semi-permeable boundaries of belonging ensure a safe space of belonging for refugees and asylum seekers, but provide the opportunities for friends and sometimes any local community member to support and participate in activities. Given the additional safeguarding responsibilities of BF and H2H sessions delivered to children, this was only appropriate in formal and more restrictive contexts, such as bringing friends. For BF, wider interaction and opportunity was facilitated through the possibility of joining their competitive sides, whereas H2H used funding support from the council to ensure that sessions across the wider programme could be open to all of the community, with sufficient financial support to rent facilities and pay coaches. This meant that for both lead coach and administrator, they viewed the programme and activities available as a community asset, whilst still maintaining a focus on delivering for refugee and asylum seekers. For the lead coach...

“it’s a place that’s really helps the community through sport and through many different clubs and different projects allows people, especially asylum seekers and people that are coming to the country with less opportunity than, you know, the average citizens would, I think it provides them with a space to not only develop their skills, also learn to gain key attributes that will help them eventually, you know, integrate into society itself. And top of that to learn, grow and meet people.”

For CLFC adult players, there was an inherently increased level of external community interaction given the public nature of sessions, and competition against other teams. As discussed above, players often correlated belonging to the team with belonging to the local community, but were also conscious that they represented the wider population’s perception of refugees and asylum seekers. In their words responding to the club’s importance...

“This club makes me feel hopeful about tomorrow. Every match shows that refugees can do good things for local people. I am proud to be part of this team and this community.”

“ The club shows other people that refugees work hard and want to help the community. When we play with respect and discipline, people see that we are good people.”

“The club teaches us good behaviour and how to respect everyone. This shows people in Harlow that refugees can be good for the community. We are not just taking, we are giving too.”

“The club brings together people who have similar problems and helps us become strong together. It shows local people that asylum seekers want to work hard and be part of the community.”

And in response to questions asking that they thought their coaching wanted them to learn...

“Our coaches want us to be leaders and control our emotions. They teach us that when we represent our club well, we represent all refugees well too.”

“Our coaches want us to be responsible and never give up. They show us that working together makes us strong and helps us succeed in our new country.”

“They want us to learn patience and good teamwork. The coaches teach us that how we behave on the field shows what kind of people we are in real life.”

“The coaches want us to understand that football teaches us life skills like never giving up and respecting others. They show us that sport can help bring different communities together in the UK.”

Whilst the perceptions of participants on the role of football are perhaps overly optimistic and utopian, studies suggest that encouraging thinking along these lines can be useful in achieving real benefits.¹⁷⁹ However, limitations can be seen during incidents where competitive fixtures have produced challenges, with opposition teams occasionally showing unsporting behaviour or disrespect, such as through comments made about passports. In response, CLFC coaching staff have focused on ensuring players uphold values of respect and self-discipline regardless of provocation.

If hostility driven by a will to win often means that mutual respect and possibilities of positive interactions are abandoned, these behaviours would be fundamentally destructive and counter-productive to goals of integration and social cohesion.

Though one might not expect ‘battle’ between sides to result in harmonious interaction, it seems realistic to strive for ways to ensure underlying respect between sides can be maintained, including general implementation of anti-discriminatory rules where appropriate. At a youth level, a H2H player found this to be the case when competing at a high level playing basketball for a team unrelated to the programme, where competition on court was tense, but mutual respect was maintained, and facilitated by positive interactions before and after the match.

Whilst the work done by each club appears meaningful and impactful, they also each encounter obstacles that prevent them from further expanding, or improving delivery. Primarily, sustainable funding and facilities are required to support programmes further, and an initiative that can help ensure replication of the examples set by some charities. As one may expect, each club expressed a desire for further financial support to expand their programmes. H2H was a project still in its infancy and with good links to the borough council, and local community sponsorship also. These arrangements stabilised the scale of operation, and did not necessarily support recruitment and expansion that an administrator saw as a goal for the programme, particularly to move towards becoming a registered charity. Bursaries and providing food for participants were also felt to be productive current expenses for the programme, and required sustainable support to be made possible. For BF, although already having a larger network, the administrator held the aspiration for the programme, or equivalent initiatives, to be within reach of any child refugee or asylum seeker across London, and suggested linking these to bus routes given the free passes available to children. Both programmes expressed frustration at losing

¹⁷⁹Chris Stone, ‘Utopian community football? Sport, hope and belongingness in the lives of refugees and asylum seekers’, *Leisure Studies*, 37.2 (2018), 171–83..

asylum seeker participants as they were moved to different areas by authorities, and not being able to signpost members to alternative local initiatives. For CLFC, adequate facilities proved the main obstacle in need of addressing, their current pitch in a local park was of a state where it potentially posed an injury risk to players, attracting talent elsewhere also.

Thus, discussions around what clubs required to help them, and consideration of findings discussed earlier, imply that structurally, clubs need to be adaptable, sustainable, and have attachment to the wider community. In fitting with the principles of two-way integration, this requires communities to actively engage with or found programmes of a similar nature. Given the diverse integratory impacts that clubs appear capable of facilitating, it seems aspirational to have such sporting services available to as many refugees and asylum seekers nationwide as possible, as would be the case for offering sport to the wider population at large. Though strong community relations and branches to further connections are optimal, this should not come at the expense of delivering a service specifically adaptive to the needs of refugee and asylum seeker participants, which would not be possible if participants instead only had the opportunity to participate in mainstream sports. Ultimately, given the integratory potential of such initiatives in empowering and enabling participants with skills, spaces, and community that can help them better adapt to life in the UK, and when well-orchestrated allow for communities to better adapt to refugees and asylum seekers, supporting programmes through funding and facilities appear worthwhile investments.

3.6 Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, research collaborating with three sports programmes supporting refugees and asylum seekers found that they offered significant and diverse benefits to their participants, which were facilitated through good practice. This study has grouped its analysis topically by considering emotional wellbeing, belonging, personal development, and structure and wider community relations in separate examinations. However, quotes taken from players and discussion that overlapped these distinctions are demonstrative that boundaries between benefits are not so pronounced in reality. Identifying diverse benefits that participants and programmes determine to enable better integration also moves away from models that prioritise *directly* facilitating intergroup contact above all else. Though clubs should be connected to wider communities, having spaces specifically attributed to refugees does not counteract integration, but instead can promote its enablement by crafting welcoming, respectful, and inclusive environments of belonging that participants can feel attached to, and be empowered by personal skills and values that can ease further integration.

This is not to say that such clubs are able to transform wider social relations in isolation. Whilst the positive intent of programmes and feelings of many participants are important, this does not automatically mean their ambitions regarding integration are fully realised. Furthermore, to expect to only put the onus on refugees and asylum seekers to develop skills and values that smoothen integration would be an assimilationist model. On a wider scale, these clubs should form part of a two-way effort to replicate goals of teaching respect ,amongst other values, across society. The programmes are valuable assets for refugees, asylum seekers and the wider community that can help to accommodate differences, and build social cohesion and trust. But, this does not make them a comprehensive solution to all issues of integration and social cohesion. This would require wider examination, although some broader ideas based on research for this study are given in the general recommendations in chapter four.

Collaboration with these programmes has helped provide ample evidence of successful teaching and coaching approaches in relation to ensuring that the clubs have a positive, impactful role in their participant's lives. Measuring and quantifying integratory impact is somewhat abstract, and prioritises less quantifiably beneficial social capital over financial capital, hence likely a reason much positive government or report rhetoric around investment often appears unfulfilled. The Home Office's acknowledgement of the multi-dimensional and adaptive necessities of integration is well-recorded in their 2019 framework of indicators, although often appears undermined by the increasing toxicity of messaging. When we measure the impact of the sports programmes against the framework's indicator, which is intended to inform policy and funding decisions,¹⁸⁰ clubs are themselves a 'marker and means,' of integration, where building social connections are paramount. They are also able to encourage development of other facilitator skills, and create a welcoming environment where participant's rights and responsibilities are key. Therefore, supporting the establishment and development of such programmes would be a valuable use of Government resources.

Conclusions on the impact and approaches of refugee sports programmes, based on research findings-

Through effective delivery and good practice by coaches and project managers, possible benefits for participants in refugee and asylum seeker sports programmes include:

- Supporting emotional well-being through being in a safe space, enjoyment of sessions, facilitating friendships, and learning to process negative emotions through sport.

¹⁸⁰ Chrysoula Ndofor-Tah et al., *Home Office Indicators of Integration Framework 2019*, 3rd edn (London: Home Office, 2019). p.13.

- Creating a community, and a sense of belonging for participants, that can help build collaborative mindsets, and empower further identification and co-operation with the wider community also.
- Through this community, feeling a sense of inclusivity, and allowing participants cultural and individual self-expression, whilst also learning to adapt to others.
- Developing personal character and values instillation, such as respect and tolerance, self-confidence, resilience, and empathy.
- Developing skills such as communication, teamwork, and leadership, and sporting ability, offering participants empowerment through improvement.

These are facilitated by programme practices that include:

- Accessible sessions, with financial subsidies or specific adaptations to participant needs.
- Awareness of refugee and asylum seeker contexts, including the internal diversity of this group, and trauma-informed coaching
- General adaptation and player understanding.
- Ensuring a sense of collaboration between participants and coaches by specific practices that emphasise collective responsibility, and equality of importance for all.
- Offering sessions that prioritise fun and enjoyment.
- Simultaneously, still offering a high-quality session that provides opportunities for participants to improve.
- Building personal relationships between players, and between the coach and their players, through coaches demonstrating care and personal interest in participants.
- Coaches communicating in friendly, and demonstrative ways, including making an effort to overcome language barriers.
- Creating trust between the coach and their players, often enabled through familiarity through employment of coaches that are bi-lingual, or immigrants themselves.
- Giving participants a stake in sessions through active consultation, and roles and opportunities in administration.

- Working with local communities, and other social support workers that work with participants.
- Enabling wider social and sporting opportunities where possible.
- Encouraging utopian thinking around sport's role in uniting participants.
- Explicitly stressing the importance of building personal values through sport, as opposed to mere implicit acquisition.
- Appropriate practices that help to build emotional resilience.
- Allowing participants to bring friends, and including any members of the wider community when appropriate.
- Most importantly, by creating welcoming environments of respect and inclusivity, and co-operation for all.

Impacts and programme focuses may also be impacted by the makeup, needs, and ambitions of both the programme and its participants.

Policy recommendations- applicable to the Government (particularly DCMS); sporting governing bodies; and other leading funders and policy co-ordinators of sport in the UK:

- More substantive funding should be provided for the establishment and development of refugee and asylum seeker sports programmes, or clubs. This may be in the form of totally new initiatives, supporting the expansion and quality of delivery of current programmes, or supporting existing sports clubs to set up sessions and support schemes for refugees and asylum seekers.
- A key funding priority needs to be making sessions accessible to refugees and asylum seekers. This requires a widening national coverage, and subsidising travel and session costs. This also includes making sessions accessible to particular groups, including the promotion of female-only sessions.
- Programmes should be set up and supported in ways that develop important community ties. This will and should vary in specifics, but needs to ensure that whilst a safe space catering specifically to refugees and asylum seekers is maintained, there should be open or semi-open boundaries to the wider community where possible to participate in and facilitate programmes This

ensures such sessions and clubs are seen as collaborators, and not inherently competitors.

- Further to this, clubs and sessions should be encouraged to where possible act as a gateway to further opportunity for participants. This should be through collaboration with social support services already in place, considering participant needs and aspirations, and providing appropriate pathways in response. Administrative bodies can play a facilitatory role in developing these networks.
- Communication to the public around supporting these initiatives should have clear messaging about all the integratory benefits these clubs can help realise. This can include the framing of sport as something fundamental to British culture, but also universally loved and shared. Messaging around integration also needs to emphasise knowledge demonstrated about integration as a multi-directional and multi-dimensional process, and needs to be demonstrative of the respectful, welcoming environments it should seek to create.
- Guidance should be issued on how good practice can be demonstrated by programmes, and ensure that they maintain safeguarding responsibilities, and trauma-informed delivery. Beyond this, room can be given to programmes to form their own identities, so long as they meet fundamental thresholds of respect and welcoming environments.
- Refugees and asylum seekers need to be thought of not only as a recipient of programmes, but as active participants in their construction. To this regard, local, national, and club governments should look to involve them in consultation, administration, and reflection processes around programmes supported.
- Sporting national governing bodies could look to provide a free, easily accessible coaching qualification in relation to leading programmes for asylum seekers and immigrants that is practical to both charity leaders familiar to working with asylum seekers and refugees that are looking to establish more sporting programmes, and sports deliverers more confident keen to learn more about how to adapt to and support asylum seekers and refugees specifically in coaching.
- Administrative bodies should also look to create spaces where different programmes can share their knowledge and experiences, thus learning from each other.
- During competition between sides, involving refugee and asylum seekers sides but also more generally, sporting governing bodies must enforce anti-discrimination laws and regulations in place, and ensure a basic level of respect between teams.

Part 4- General Conclusions

4.1 Respect and Empowerment- Integration and Citizenship's non-negotiables

This study has conducted two primarily separate research pieces, with distinct conclusions and recommendations for each. Overlapping themes of emphasis are indicative of their shared linkage to questions of integration and citizenship. Whilst education curriculum ideas focus on citizenship, and sports clubs on integration, these two larger terms need to be approached in tandem. Both are areas where the need to find common unity and acceptance of difference are crucial in order to reflect diverse realities of the nation. Similarly, social relationships, and how they are framed, are at the heart of both concepts.

In relation to citizenship, this entails defining how we as a society decide to relate to each other, and as a populace relating to a state. In essence, citizenship is about actively 'imagining' Britishness and its terms of contract. However, who controls definitions of Britishness, and how it is displayed, is of crucial importance. Given the contentious nature of 'operation raise the colours,' there does appear a returning normality of racial and anti-immigration exclusivist nationalism (not to say this represents the views of all protestors), but with categorical opposition and retaliatory measures by pro-immigration, multi-culturalists demonstrating that Britishness is a contested notion. Attached to these competing narratives is a feeling that for the former group, there is a perceived suppression of Britishness and national pride, whereas the latter group seem to be split in whether conversation around the primacy of nation needs to be steered away from, or whether to and reclaim a strong but fundamentally different British patriotism. Arguably, the violence and aggressiveness of these projections embody a tribalistic approach to politics that has abandoned the concept of persuasion through *respectful and inclusive* discussion.

Political response from most major parties so far has appeared as a scramble to depict themselves as 'the most patriotic,' as opposed to critical engagement with ,or even open discussion about, what Britishness is to them. This means that instead of more careful consideration of how Britishness can be constructed and contested by its citizens, thus informing the terms and boundaries of citizenship, a battle for patriotic hegemony replicates the tribalism evident at a grassroots level. This does not appear to be a stable approach to political democracy or any governance, and certainly runs contrary to the so-called fundamental British value of tolerance and mutual respect. Whilst conversation is clearly rife, what appears lacking is a framework that enables dialogue to be considered and productive and most significantly a "stronger stake in the nation" for 'ordinary citizens' which would make such conversation more meaningful and impactful. If policy can help to provide this stake for participants that should regardless be a key feature of active and engaged citizenship, it can also hope to facilitate and re-solidify respect as a foundational value of society.

Similarly, a growing normality to demonise immigrants and asylum seekers in particular, undermines the efforts of integration, being the antithesis of the respectful, welcoming environment identified as key to the refugee and asylum seeker sports club's successes. Clearly for some, this is at least partially driven by the 'imagined' immigrant or asylum seeker as arriving through unregulated means, violent and hostile in nature, and pampered by the state on arrival.¹⁸¹ Ultimately, political proponents and supporters of this narrative usually either view multi-culturalism as completely untenable, or demand that new arrivals assimilate into society. Though it is not the Government's place to control political opinion, if it attempts to adhere to rather than challenge misinformed perceptions, this only acts to confirm misinformed takes, and denies a reality of a diverse Britain, where immigration and asylum seeker intake has and continues to be an unavoidable part of the national makeup and story.¹⁸²

Instead, when re-prioritising integration, the Government needs to find ways to return to conversation and social attitudes underpinned by respect, and where possible grounded in realities. This requires policy that is ambitious relating to education, and social investments in schemes such as the refugee and asylum seeker sports programmes discussed above, but needs to be supported by messaging that reconfirms the multi-directional and multi-dimensional nature of integration to the public, rather than continuing to allow these notions to fade from political vocabulary.

It is important to note that despite current tensions, Britain has not abandoned diversity or the idea of immigration, more broken down polling, or results looking back over a longer period still indicate seismic progression to more inclusive and fluid public conceptions of Britishness, thus potentially enabling a sustainable citizenship agenda, and encouraging integration. Similarly, the ideas put forward centring respect, inclusivity and dialogue are not new or untested, but resemble both the visions of the nation advocated for by key 2000s theorists such as Cattle and Parekh, as well as being a reappearing priority of all those who contributed their voices to this research. Cattle's words illustrate how “

“ By actively seeking to maintain different traditions and views, we make it clear that one 'value' that we hold in common is to respect what we do not have in common.”¹⁸³

This conception of social relations was clearly crucial to the successes of the sports programmes this study engaged with. Coaches and project managers continually emphasised the primacy of this value in their sessions, and participants often

¹⁸¹ YouGov, 'Is There Public Support for Large-Scale Removals of Migrants?', *YouGov*, <https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/52704-is-there-public-support-for-large-scale-removals-of-migrant>

¹⁸² Jens Allwood, 'A Model of Intercultural Communication Revisited', in *Multiculturalism and Interculturalism: Managing Diversity in Cross-Cultural Environment*, ed. by Muhammad Mohiuddin, Md. Tareque Aziz and Sreenivasan Jayashree (London: IntechOpen, 2023)p. 181 stresses that we have no choice but to communicate interculturality

¹⁸³Ted Cattle, *Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). p.159

identified it as an important part of the club, or something that coaches wanted them to learn. In the words of Bloomsbury football's head coach...

“I believe what we're trying to achieve is... through football to teach kids certain values like Be respectful, have respect for everyone, including yourself, your coaches and everyone that you communicate or work with or play with.”

This sentiment is echoed by Changing Lives' lead coach:

“Our first value is respecting everyone. Your players, players from other teams or referees, and even the environment that means equipment means cleanliness and everything. Respect is what we have built everything on.”

Similarly, students identified respect as the most important value to learn through citizenship education, echoing Parekh's belief that respecting difference “requires changes in attitudes and ways of thought” on top of legal arrangements.¹⁸⁴ Arguably though, where earlier initiatives have fallen short is by attempting to ensure this is adhered to purely by top-down demand, as opposed to looking to build social agreements of trust and respect. To do this effectively, a more collaborative approach to national discussion relating to Britishness, citizenship, and integration is required, with an emphasis on giving the individual members of the public a more meaningful stake in national conversations and creations. Creativity and bravery is needed to find spaces and methods of doing this effectively. In the above chapters, citizenship education has the potential to be a substantial enabler of such relations, and developing a populace capable of continuing to progress and expand these ideas. Similarly, providing refugee and asylum seeker sports clubs in ways where participants and wider communities feel attached to them also develops respect and conversation drawn from collaboration, not imposition. Another key area where population input should be enhanced is the *Life in the UK test*- clearly its current content is unrepresentative of the varied knowledge and sources of Britishness that its populace draw on. Other spaces where an improved public empowerment and engagement could occur also need identifying and considering.

Although many of the more general recommendations made here focus on messaging, and do not come with comprehensive plans of enactment, it is worth mentioning the capabilities of digital communication with the wider population available to the Government, and the value of investing in social capital in pursuit of a more cohesive and optimally-functioning country. Ultimately, as this study shows in relation to visions for education and sport, citizenship and integration are exciting and important concepts that enable society and its members to express itself, whilst embracing difference. It is crucial that environments facilitating this expression are built on agreements of respect, and meaningful participant empowerment.

¹⁸⁴ Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002) p.2

4.2 General Recommendations relating to Citizenship and Integration

On Messaging:

- The government needs to be stronger advocates and demonstrators of respectful, considered conversation in relation to Britishness, and immigration in particular.
- This should include confident reassertion of British multi-cultural realities and histories, including a diverse and deep history of immigration, and supporting refugees.
- Furthermore, in relation to immigration, the Government needs to challenge *misinformed* perceptions, aiming to ensure that the public perception of 'imagined' immigration is an accurate one. This can be supported through education units within a citizenship curriculum.
- When addressing integration, the government should reassert and explain the multi-dimensional, two-way process in which integration can and should occur.
- The Government needs to acknowledge that definitions and sources of Britishness are and always have been inherently contested. Alongside this, there needs to be an emphasis on creating respectful spaces of celebration and discussion around what Britishness means.
- Aligned with this emphasis needs to be an attribution of meaning to outcomes, and general emphasis of empowering the wider population with a stronger stake in the nation. This means supporting active citizenship principles in ways that are constructive, universally accessible, and visibly impactful.
- Education and social investment should be key to achieving these aims, as outlined in depth in conclusions and policy recommendations to Chapters two and three. Here, alternative, broader consideration is given to spaces and means of promoting impactful active citizenship, and respectful discussion.

Actions - On the *Life in the UK* test:

- One area in which this emphasis can be made clear, and explored, is an initiative to rethink the *Life in the UK test*, given its current deeply-flawed state.
- If we maintain a citizenship test, its content needs to be informed by discussion with the public in relation to the balance of topics, and question content. The majority of the population should be able to pass the test otherwise it is rendered a pointless exercise, and loses any integratory value.
- Students and schools are a great vehicle to use to help make these discussions happen, and should partake in exercises such as proposing questions, and informally taking the test to ensure correspondence.. The government should also explore ways in which the public can propose and vote for particular questions, especially in relation to a share of historical and cultural content.
- Based on a discussion with students, and wider study and observation, it seems appropriate to give the test a more practical and modern focus. This means more inclusion of relevant legal and civic questions, ensuring cultural questions are accessible and change with the times, and moving away from niche historical questions, instead prioritising history that is more widely known, or attached to the curriculum.
- Question content needs to be representative of diverse British realities and histories, rather than a singular, non-contested narrative.
- Consideration should also be given on how elements of the test could be adaptive. For example, some local content could be included, or partially open questions that allow applicants to demonstrate relevant knowledge, but be more selective in choosing British symbols they identify more strongly with. Similarly, test structure could benefit from some variation in question types.

More General Actions

- For future reports into questions of citizenship, integration or social cohesion, the government should in general look to place more emphasis on enacting recommendations, and maintain consultancy with contributors.
- As suggested by Prof. Thom Brooks in his ‘New arrivals,’ pamphlet the UK could take inspiration from countries such as Australia in creating a ‘UK Day’ bank holiday where Britishness can be discussed and celebrated.¹⁸⁵
- Given the success of the Homes for Ukraine refugee sponsorship scheme, the Government should look to expand and promote this model through working

¹⁸⁵ Thom Brooks, *New Arrivals: A Fair Immigration Plan for Labour*, Fabian Society pamphlet (London, 2022),

with Homes4Refugees to support refugees more generally, as it offers a key opportunity where two-way integration can occur.

- The Government needs to address minimising usage of systems that delay or disable integration. This entails problems commonly cited as problematic relating to a large case backlog, lengthy processing times, and unsustainable housing and communal systems during this period. However, solutions need to emphasise sustainability and humanity mutually beneficial to all. One example of a policy change that could help ease community cohesion during this period is returning to allowing asylum seekers to work as they wait the outcome of their case.
- The Government should consider ways in which democratic participation could be increased or sustained better than it currently is, providing the public with a stronger sense of collaboration and effect in society.

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