

Consultation Response Form

This is the response form for the consultation on the green paper, *Integrated Communities Strategy*. If you are responding by email or in writing, please reply using this questionnaire pro-forma, which should be read alongside the consultation document. The comment boxes will expand as you type. Required fields are indicated with an asterisk (*).

Full details of the proposals being consulted on can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>.

The consultation will begin on Wednesday 14th March 2018 and will end on 5th June 2018. All responses should be received by no later than 23:45 on 5th June 2018.

To prevent losing your responses, you may wish to draft your response to the questions in a Microsoft Word document, before copying and pasting into the form.

Navigating the form

There are 14 top-level questions in this form. You **do not** have to answer every question.

Submitting additional information

At the end of the form information is provided on how you can submit additional information or evidence to support your consultation response.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Your responses will inform how we take the proposals forward.

Your details

Are the views expressed on this consultation your own personal views or an official response from an organisation you represent?*

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please provide the name of your organisation:

Christian Concern

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please select the option which best describes your organisation.*

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

If you selected 'Other', please state the type of organisation:

Click here to enter text.

General Overview

The questions in this section relate to the Introduction – Building Integrated Communities.

Question 1

We define integrated communities as communities where people - whatever their background - live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Do you agree with our definition?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please enter any additional comments below:

This definition is a helpful start, but it needs expanding. It is not just rights, responsibilities, and opportunities, but values that need to be shared. We need to agree on our cultural and societal values. Values that have shaped our culture and form the basis for our laws. Values such as freedom of speech, democracy, freedom of religion, equality before the law, respect for others, etc. It is Christianity that formed the basis for western civilisation and the values that we now have. It should be widely acknowledged and recognised that Christianity has formed the foundation of our shared values. It should also be recognised that a common language is required to enable integration according to this definition.

Question 2

We believe that the varied nature and scale of integration challenges means that tailored local plans and interventions are needed to tackle the issues specific to particular places. Do you agree?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please enter any additional comments below:

Broadly agree, though there are also national initiatives that should be undertaken.

Question 3

Do you have any examples of successful approaches to encourage integration that you wish to highlight, particularly approaches which have been subject to evaluation?

Please enter any additional comments below:

Christian churches are welcoming to people of all ethnic and socio-cultural backgrounds. Churches often run community projects such as toddler groups or friendship groups that help to build relationships in the community. Churches are very tolerant of different backgrounds and perspectives. Churches are also able to explain the Christian heritage of this country and the basis for many of our laws, values and traditions. Churches are therefore often significant and successful instruments for encouraging integration of people into the local community, and should be recognised as such.

Chapter 1: Strengthening Leadership

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 1: Strengthening Leadership.

Question 4

The Green Paper proposes that we need to build the capacity of our leaders to promote and achieve integration outcomes. Do you agree?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please enter any additional comments below:

Leaders need to be champions of the shared values of society. They need to understand where our values come from and how they came to be accepted by society. It is only by championing values that leaders can effectively promote and achieve integration outcomes. Leaders need to be trained to understand and defend our values.

Chapter 2: Supporting New Migrants and Resident Communities

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 2: Supporting New Migrants and Resident Communities.

Question 5

The Green Paper proposes measures to support recent migrants so that they have the information they need to integrate into society and understand British values and their rights and responsibilities. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please enter any additional comments below:

We agree that information on British values, rights and responsibilities should be communicated to, as well as understood by, migrants. A clear understanding of common British values (protecting individual freedoms such as free speech and freedom of religion), an appreciation of British traditions (founded on Christian heritage), and expectations for living in the UK (law-abiding, otherwise penalised for breaking the law) should be clearly communicated to migrants for successful integration and positive contribution to society. An understanding of how these values were informed by our Christian heritage and by Christian principles is also important for people to understand in order to integrate into our society.

Question 6

The Controlling Migration Fund was constructed to deal with the short-term migration pressures and associated costs that local authorities can encounter. Do you think it adequately achieves this objective?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please enter any additional comments below:

No answer.

Chapter 3: Education and Young People

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 3: Education and Young People.

Question 7

The Green Paper proposes measures to ensure that all children and young people are prepared for life in modern Britain and have the opportunity for meaningful social mixing with those from different backgrounds. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please enter any additional comments below:

Yes, an approach aimed at preventing parallel societies from developing and integrating all children into modern Britain is a good approach so long as “modern Britain” is defined broadly and any policy put in place respectfully takes into consideration of the rights of parents to raise their children according to their own religious or philosophical beliefs. This is particularly important in relation to sensitive moral questions surrounding sexual behaviour where certain approaches could easily undermine and do violence to religion or belief. Ultimately, a school’s duty is to assist parents in education but not to usurp that role.

The defining role of Christianity in Britain’s history and the positive influence that Christianity continues to have in society (for example: charitable giving, community outreach and volunteer work, and greater family stability) should be respected and not viewed with suspicion. While social mixing should be encouraged, it should be done to build mutual respect and tolerance among competing worldviews. Parliament has mandated that tolerance be one of the aims of education. Tolerance means respecting others; but can also mean disagreeing with those viewpoints. Children should be taught how to have respectful disagreement with those of other worldviews, and that disagreement is not the same as intolerance.

Question 8

The Green Paper sets out proposals to support parents with their choice of out-of-school education settings. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please enter any additional comments below:

Yes, parents should have the primarily responsibility for guiding the education of their children. Education is the entire process whereby knowledge and custom is transferred to young people. It therefore goes beyond just the teaching of curriculum. Numerous treaties to which the UK is a party guarantee the right of parents to educate their children in a manner they deem appropriate; importantly, including programmes outside of the traditional school setting.

While valid concerns exist in preventing extremism, we must be very aware that extremism has never been adequately defined. The overzealous policing of extremism often has the effect of being viewpoint discriminatory and subjective.

Traditional Judeo-Christian views often-times become labelled as hateful or fundamentalist as a result. This was not the intent of Parliament when it passed the Equality Act 2010. And all vigilance should be taken to ensure that efforts to support integration do not unduly restrict religion or belief.

That being said, national security concerns should trump equality concerns where there is evidence that violence or terrorism is being encouraged, and so some level of vetting of certain out-of-school educational settings may be appropriate. A wide margin of appreciation should however be given to Christian programmes given the special place of Christianity in the history of this nation.

Chapter 4: Boosting English Language

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 4: Boosting English Language.

Question 9

(a)

The Green Paper proposes a number of measures to improve the offer for people to learn English. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please enter any additional comments below:

Yes. A common language is essential for meaningful integration.

(b)

Do you have any other suggestions on how we can improve the offer for people to learn English?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please enter any additional comments below:

Click here to enter text.

Chapter 5: Places and Community

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 5: Places and Community.

Question 10

The Green Paper proposes measures to ensure that people, particularly those living in residentially segregated communities, have opportunities to come together with people from different backgrounds and play a part in civic life. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please enter any additional comments below:

Agree that there should be measures to ensure the social interaction and participation in civic life of all people, particularly segregated communities. Engagement of all parts of society to develop local vision will ensure that all perspectives, interests and needs are reflected, as well as encourage local ownership in creating united and peaceful communities. Christian views on moral and ethical issues should be heard respectfully alongside other views.

Chapter 6: Increasing Economic Opportunity

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 6: Increasing Economic Opportunity.

Question 11

The Green Paper proposes measures to provide tailored support to people, especially those who may not currently be active in the labour market, to build their confidence and skills to take up employment. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please enter any additional comments below:

Agree with tailored support which is focused on enabling the individual to take up employment.
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Chapter 7: Rights and Freedoms

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 7: Rights and Freedoms.

Question 12

The Green Paper proposes measures to encourage integration and resist divisive views or actions. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please enter any additional comments below:

It is important to clearly articulate what are “divisive views and actions”. Given the diversity of religions, cultures and opinions within communities, there is a need to protect the right to free speech and expression, particularly expressions of Christian faith and critiques of religious practices and socio-cultural norms which are wrongly labelled as “hate speech” and a threat to society. Expressions of Christian faith which challenge the standards of morality in society, and critiques of religious practices and socio-cultural norms (such as female genital mutilation, forced marriages, sharia councils, transgenderism, or polygamy) assist in addressing inequalities and building communities which are united and accountable.

The government should abolish the concept of a ‘hate crime’. A crime is a crime no matter why it was committed. The motivation or thoughts involved in why the crime was committed do not affect whether a crime was committed. The same applies to ‘hate speech’ and hate on the internet. Threats of violence should not be tolerated, but aside from this, people must be free to express their views without being concerned about whether it will be treated as a ‘hate’ offence. A ‘hate crime’ is effectively a ‘thought crime’ or an ‘expression crime’ that seriously undermines the important principle of free speech. Where a crime has been committed, judges already have discretion in sentencing relating to the motivation concerned, Therefore a separate category of ‘hate crime’ is unnecessary.

‘Extremism’ also needs to be defined well. There is a real danger that legitimate views are regarded as ‘extremist’.

Instead of saying “Religion has played an important role in our society, ...”, the government should openly acknowledge that it is Christianity that has set the foundational moral and cultural values of our society. Christianity should be promoted and taught as the foundation of our ‘shared values’. So-called ‘British

values' are actually values founded on Biblical principles. Our culture is heavily shaped by Christianity and Christian values. We need to recover the origins of our values in order to promote them effectively.

The Green Paper suggests that services which are organised and delivered to a single ethnic and religious group are exclusionary rather than inclusive. At the same time, the Green Paper also notes the need to tailor interventions for groups which disproportionately experience inequalities (vulnerable and marginalised groups such as those in poverty, the disabled, ethnic minorities, elderly, persecuted Christians). It should be clear that services for single ethnic and religious groups are necessary to promote inclusion, especially where mainstream services fail to adequately address their particular needs, or where they perpetuate existing inequalities.

Question 13

The Green Paper proposes measures to address practices which can impact on the rights of women. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please enter any additional comments below:

The government should adopt the proposal of the independent review into the application of sharia law to enforce registration of religious marriages. This will protect the rights of women when the husband dies, divorces or leaves her. It will also serve to prevent polygamy. This was also proposed in the Casey Review (p135, paragraph 8.50).

The government is right not to create a state-facilitated or endorsed regulation scheme for sharia councils because this will confer a level of legitimacy that is inappropriate.

Chapter 8: Measuring Success

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 8: Measuring Success

Question 14

The Green Paper proposes core integration measures for national and local government to focus on. Do you agree these are the right measures?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

Please enter any additional comments below:

One of the indicators at the institutional level is “strengthening governance of minority faith community organisations to promote integration”. It must be clear that this refers to strengthening “governance structures” of faith institutions in areas such as business resilience, the capacity to challenge intolerance, financial management, and compliance with standards set by the Charity Commission. Interventions relating to “governance” of faith institutions should not interfere with religious freedom. Religious freedom should be protected so that faith institutions can continue with their doctrines and beliefs.

The rationale for this indicator is to ensure that faith institutions are well-equipped to exercise freedoms in ways consistent with the law. However, oftentimes Christian faith institutions are discriminated against despite adherence to the law regarding for example visa applications for Christians seeking to study in theological institutions or refuge from conflict affected countries. The Green Paper plans to redefine the conditions of the visa system for religious workers. It is hoped that this challenge in the visa application process will not persist under the new system.

Submitting additional information

You can submit your additional information to the following email address:

IntegrationStrategy@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

You may wish to compress your document into a zip file before sending, or consider using a file transfer link if it is a large document.

If you send your additional information via email, please make sure the subject says "Consultation response: additional information from [insert your name/organisation]".

Personal data

The data protection legislation is changing and a new Data Protection Act will come into force in May 2018. It will give you greater powers to protect your own privacy, and place greater responsibility on those processing your data for any purpose. The following is to explain your rights and give you the information you will be entitled to under the new Act.

Note that this section only refers to your personal data (your name address and anything that could be used to identify you personally) not the content of your response to the consultation.

1. The identity of the data controller and contact details of our Data Protection Officer

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is the data controller. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at dataprotection@communities.gsi.gov.uk

2. Why we are collecting your personal data

Your personal data is being collected as an essential part of the consultation process, so that we can contact you regarding your response and for statistical purposes. We may also use it to contact you about related matters.

3. Our legal basis for processing your personal data

Part 2 of the draft Data Protection Bill (subject to change before it becomes an Act) states that, as a government department, MHCLG may process personal data as necessary for the effective performance of a task carried out in the public interest. i.e. a consultation.

4. With whom we will be sharing your personal data

Responses submitted using this template will be stored securely on the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's secure IT system.

5. For how long we will keep your personal data, or criteria used to determine the retention period.

Please refer to the records retention policy on our website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/departmental-records-retention-and-disposals-policy>

6. Your rights, e.g. access, rectification, erasure

The data we are collecting is your personal data, and you have considerable say over what happens to it. You have the right:

- a. to see what data we have about you
- b. to ask us to stop using your data, but keep it on record
- c. to have all or some of your data deleted or corrected
- d. to lodge a complaint with the independent Information Commissioner (ICO) if you think we are not handling your data fairly or in accordance with the law. You can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/>, or telephone 0303 123 1113.

7. Your personal data will not be used for any automated decision making.