



The Citizenship Agenda in Scotland

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to review the citizenship proposals set out in the draft (partial) Immigration and Citizenship Bill and consider how the citizenship agenda can be taken forward in Scotland.

Recommendations

2. Members are asked to support the key responses to earned citizenship in the draft (partial) Immigration and Citizenship Bill.
3. Members are invited to discuss:
 - The recommendation that a Scottish strategy maybe beneficial in order to respond effectively to local and national citizenship issues.
 - The potential for a forum and infrastructure for pursuing the citizenship agenda in Scotland.
 - The need for Scottish focused research, which will explore and evaluate the current citizenship arrangements.
 - The proposal to establish Active Citizenship Trust for Scotland (ACT for Scotland) to act as a vehicle to promote and develop active and participative citizenship in Scotland.

Background

4. The UK Government has used citizenship as a key policy vehicle since 2002. The most significant arrangements that have been introduced regarding naturalisation are: the Life in the UK test, the alternative route demonstrating progress in learning English and the celebration of gaining citizenship through ceremonies. Citizenship pertains primarily to new immigrants, family reunification, refugees and long settled residents. The initial aim of the citizenship programme was to enhance a sense of belonging and integration.
5. The draft Immigration and Citizenship Bill was published on 14 July 2008. The Bill introduces a serious of changes in which citizenship must be 'earned', i.e. rights are matched with responsibilities. An individual will be expected to 'earn' the right to stay in Britain by learning English, paying taxes, obeying the law and contributing to the community.

Scottish perspective

6. Scotland has a distinct history in relation to identity and nationhood as well as its own developing political environment. Immigration adds another layer of complexity but also provides an opportunity for integration and to debate what it means to be Scottish and to act in a Scottish way.
7. Immigration is a crucial part of the solution to combat concerns around a depleting and ageing population, and plays an important role for economic prosperity in Scotland. Encouraging skilled people and their families to work and settle in Scotland will support the Scottish

Government's ambitious targets to increase population growth to European (EU15) levels by 2017 and to match the economic growth rate of small independent EU countries by 2017. Identifying ways to retain and encourage people to settle in Scotland is crucial for meeting these targets.

ABNI Scotland

8. ABNI was established in 2004 by the Home Office and its role is to provide independent advice to the UK Government on the requirements for citizenship. ABNI consists of members with expertise in ESOL, integration, community development and employment; ABNI sub-groups are established in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
9. ABNI Scotland has established a programme of work 'Welcoming New Scots' which has provided a forum for examining the work being carried out with new Scots (new immigrants, refugees and long settled residents) in the fields of employment, ESOL, citizenship and other support initiatives.

Draft (partial) Immigration and Citizenship Bill: Earned Citizenship

10. The key points made in the Bill are: a probationary citizenship stage will be introduced to ensure that migrants have 'earned' the right to full citizenship or permanent residence; the citizenship process can be accelerated through 'active citizenship', e.g. volunteering for a charity; a migrant's progress will be stopped if they commit a crime that receives a custodial sentence and progress will be slowed down for minor crimes; migrants will have no access to benefits, social assistance, local authority housing and homelessness assistance until they have 'earned' the right to citizenship; migrants will contribute to a transitional fund to counteract local impacts caused by migration.
11. CSMP welcome the principle of encouraging people to participate in public life and contribute to the local (and wider) community; however, we have also identified a number of concerns with some of the proposals detailed in the Bill.
12. The Bill does not fully consider the different economic, demographic and social circumstances in Scotland. In this sense, there are concerns around 'probationary citizenship' as it could act as a disincentive when an individual (and their dependents) are choosing to accept a post and move to the UK. This temporary status could be viewed as a period of uncertainty for potential workers where their permanent residence is not secure.
13. Any restrictions on migrants' access to public funds must take into account the additional vulnerability this could create amongst particular groups. This proposal could exacerbate the growing issue of NRPF for Scottish Local Authorities as migration to Scotland increases.
14. CSMP question how useful and effective a transitional fund will be in counteracting local impacts in Scotland. The UK Government have advocated the additional money generated would be redistributed to local authorities to compensate for additional demands and pressures placed on them by increased migration. It is unclear how this will work in Scotland as the public services involved fall within devolved responsibility. It is crucial that Scotland's needs are accounted for and Scottish public services receive their share of available funds.

A Scottish citizenship strategy: key issues for discussion

15. Citizenship is a reserved issue but the key policy areas that supplement the citizenship programme are devolved, e.g. ESOL, integration and community development. In this regard, a Scottish strategy is necessary in order to respond effectively to local and national issues. This is particularly relevant when considering the different economic, demographic and social circumstances in Scotland.
16. At a UK level, organisations such as the Citizenship Foundation, CSV (Community Service Volunteers), Hansard Society and others are active in promoting citizenship and civic cohesion but with relatively little concentration on or impact in Scotland. This issue could further intensify with future arrangements for ABNI, which will be announced in November 08, and these arrangements may involve a move from the Home Office to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). This has the potential to leave no forum and infrastructure for pursuing the citizenship agenda in Scotland, since DCLG has no remit in north of the border.
17. There has been no evidence gathered to suggest that the key arrangements in the journey to naturalisation (i.e. the Life in the UK test, the alternative route demonstrating progress in learning English and the citizenship ceremonies) is supporting the original aim of enhancing a sense of belonging and integration. This lack of research is particularly pertinent in Scotland as data collection processes, such as the Citizenship survey and EdComms' study for the Lord Goldsmith review, do not cover Scotland or limited consultation has occurred in Scotland.
18. Sir Bernard Crick (ABNI Scotland) and Mr Ashok Ohri (ABNI Scotland) propose to establish a trust to promote and develop active and participative citizenship in Scotland. The trust will be called Active Citizenship Trust for Scotland (ACT for Scotland). Overall, the aim of ACT for Scotland is to clarify what it means to be an active citizen in Scotland. Whilst recognising and respecting language, cultural and religious diversity, it would aim to foster a sense of belonging and to facilitate national, civic and civil engagement. ACT for Scotland's statement of purpose is:
 - To work to promote a greater culture of active citizenship in Scotland and participation in civic life and civil society generally.
 - To create the conditions in which everyone can have access to the skills, information, understanding and confidence to engage effectively in community life on both local and national levels.
 - To support the development of a just society where rights and responsibilities are protected, promoted and enabled for immigrant "new Scots" as well as old.
 - To promote and publicise research relevant to policies and initiatives to achieve these purposes.

Conclusion

19. Considerable work has been undertaken by the Scottish Government, Scottish Local Authorities, ABNI Scotland and other public and voluntary sector partners in areas such as equalities, ESOL, integration and community development. Members are invited to discuss how the current good practice can build on future areas for development.

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