



Department  
for Education

**Consultation Response Form**

**Consultation closing date: 16 April 2013**  
**Your comments must reach us by that date.**

**Reform of the National Curriculum in  
England:**

**Consultation Response Form**

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

<b>Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for confidentiality:	
Name: Natalie Samarasinghe	
Organisation (if applicable): United Nations Association - UK (UNA-UK)	
Address: 3 Whitehall Court, London, SW1A 2EL	

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Public Communications Unit by e-mail: [consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk) or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the Department's ['Contact Us'](#) page.

Please indicate one category that best describes you as a respondent

<input type="checkbox"/>	Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special School
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organisation representing school teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Subject Association	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Young Person	<input type="checkbox"/>	Higher Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Further Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Academy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employer/Business Sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other		

Please Specify:

The United Nations Association - UK (UNA-UK) is a charity registered in England & Wales (charity number 1146016) that promotes and supports good citizenship and education on international issues, in particular the work of the United Nations in poverty relief, conflict resolution, environmental protection and the advancement of human rights.

UNA-UK has an outreach programme for 13-18-year-olds called *Generation United Nations*, which supports teaching and learning about the UN under the formal curriculum and through Model UN and other activities. The programme also provides young people with skills-building, career development and volunteering opportunities.

For more information, visit [www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk)

Are you answering this consultation in response to particular subjects? Please tick all those that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/>	English	<input type="checkbox"/>	mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>	science
<input type="checkbox"/>	art & design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/>	computing
<input type="checkbox"/>	design & technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	geography	<input type="checkbox"/>	history
<input type="checkbox"/>	languages	<input type="checkbox"/>	music	<input type="checkbox"/>	physical education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable				

**1 Do you have any comments on the proposed aims for the National Curriculum as a whole as set out in the framework document?**

Comments:

**2 Do you agree that instead of detailed subject-level aims we should free teachers to shape their own curriculum aims based on the content in the programmes of study?**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure
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Comments:

While the United Nations Association – UK (UNA-UK) is supportive of teachers having more freedom, we believe it is important for the National Curriculum to include sufficiently clear and ambitious aims and targets to guide teachers and ensure consistent and high-quality education for all pupils.

### 3 Do you have any comments on the content set out in the draft programmes of study?

Comments:

UNA-UK was delighted by the decision to retain citizenship as a statutory foundation subject for Key Stage (KS) 3 and 4.

We believe that citizenship is the only subject that enables pupils to explore Britain's role on the world stage and pressing global challenges from a multidisciplinary perspective. We have, however, a number of concerns about the new draft programmes of study, particularly for KS4.

According to the draft purpose of study, "high-quality citizenship education helps to provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society". While the draft programme is right to focus on parliamentary processes and to emphasise the importance of volunteering, we believe that this presents too narrow a view of citizenship. Pupils should be equipped with a broader understanding of what being an active and responsible citizen means, and how young people can participate in community and public life.

We are also concerned that the draft programmes do not provide adequate opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of the wider world in which they live, or the skills necessary to navigate our increasingly inter-dependent global political and economic environment.

UNA-UK believes that pupils should understand and appreciate Britain's international roles and responsibilities. They should learn about the impact that global issues and multilateral decision-making have on their lives. This must include teaching about the United Nations. They should also learn about how local, national and international institutions interact with each other. This should include equipping pupils with the knowledge, skills and confidence to participate actively on all three levels.

As such, we feel there are four main areas for improvement:

1. Removal of reference to 'United Nations'

UNA-UK was dismayed to find no reference to the UN in the draft programmes of study. The UN is a key institution for pupils to learn about, and clearly integral to understanding "the UK's relations with the rest of the world" and "international governance" – both listed in the draft KS4 programme.

The UN is an important tool for the UK in tackling global challenges and achieving foreign policy goals. The UK's 2010 Strategic Defence & Security Review described the UN as "key to the UK's global security and prosperity interests". The UK's relationship with the UN, including its role as a permanent member of the Security Council, is a vital component of the country's international influence and effectiveness. It is involved in a

host of UN activities and pupils will simply not gain adequate understanding of UK policymaking without being taught about the UN and how the UK interacts with it.

The UN is also a key institution for pupils to understand in the context of the major challenges their generation will face, such as civil war, food security and environmental degradation. These are not challenges that countries can address individually – concerted global action is needed and the UN is central to these efforts. The current citizenship programmes for KS3 and KS4 both include studying the role of the UN “in the context of topical events such as conflict situations affecting the international community”. For many pupils, this may be the only opportunity to study and debate current affairs and global action.

UNA-UK therefore strongly believes that the draft programmes of study should retain explicit references to the UN. UNA-UK has produced a number of freely available teaching resources on the UN, including with support from the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development (DFID), which could be used to support the citizenship curriculum going forward.

## 2. Removal of reference to ‘human rights’

UNA-UK is also deeply concerned that human rights are hardly mentioned in the draft programmes. We agree with the assessment contained in the current KS3 and KS4 citizenship programmes, which states that “the curriculum should enable all young people to become responsible citizens who challenge injustice, are committed to human rights, and strive to live peaceably with others”.

Human rights are fundamental rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled. They represent protection of our basic needs, as well as the conditions we need to flourish as human beings. These rights have corresponding responsibilities, of governments to their citizens, and of individuals to each other and to their wider communities. It is important that pupils understand these rights and responsibilities. This will help to protect them, empower them and enable them to become responsible and active citizens.

Human rights are also part of British history, from the Magna Carta to the suffragettes. The Second World War was fought on these principles and since then, the UK has played a leading role in drafting and promoting human rights standards. It has chosen to ratify a number of international human rights instruments and human rights will continue to play an important role in the UK’s constitutional and domestic legal arrangements, whether it is through the Human Rights Act or a Bill of Rights. Moreover, as a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the UK is legally obliged to teach about children’s rights and the CRC according to article 29.1<sup>1</sup>. We are concerned that pupils in England will be denied this opportunity.

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<sup>1</sup> States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the UN.

The term 'precious liberties', which has been included in the KS3 draft programme of study, is not defined, understood or codified. Teachers are therefore likely to find it difficult to teach. Human rights and children's rights, meanwhile, are well-established concepts. They are defined in UK domestic and international law, and feature in a large number of treaties, policies and other documents. They have also been taught in schools for decades. Therefore, high-quality resources on these subjects are readily available, as are teacher training and support.

UNA-UK strongly recommends that the draft citizenship curriculum makes explicit reference to human rights. Teachers should be pointed in the direction of the CRC as a practical example of legislation that is directly relevant to young people. The Convention also provides an excellent example of how international legislation has an impact at the national and local levels.

3. Removal of references to 'policies and practices for sustainable development and their impact on the environment' and 'the challenges facing the global community, including international disagreements and conflicts, debates about inequalities, sustainability and use of the world's resources'

UNA-UK is concerned that pupils will no longer have the opportunity to learn about global efforts to combat poverty, solve conflicts and promote sustainable development – all areas in which the UK is heavily involved at the global level.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the UK has an important responsibility in maintaining international peace and security. It also continues to be a leading player in poverty relief and sustainable development. For example, Prime Minister David Cameron is currently co-chairing the High Level Panel appointed by the UN Secretary-General to determine the future international development framework.

Just last year, DFID commissioned the delivery of a Global Learning Project, with a budget of £16m over five years, signalling the priority that the UK accords to these issues. The project aims to increase and improve the teaching and learning, at KS2 and 3, of issues related to global poverty in at least 50% of maintained schools. Retaining the references above, which are included in the current citizenship curriculum, will enable **all** schools to teach about these key areas of UK activity.

UNA-UK urges the Department for Education and DFID to work together to ensure links are established between the new citizenship curriculum and the Global Learning Project. Schools will greatly benefit from getting coordinated messages and support, and DFID will have a better chance of meeting its ambitious targets.

4. Narrow interpretation of political participation and citizenship

UNA-UK is concerned that the draft programmes of study present a narrow interpretation of citizenship. It is right that emphasis is placed on appreciating the UK's parliamentary democracy. It is also right to promote community volunteering. We feel, however, that high-quality citizenship education should take a wider approach.

We live in an increasingly interconnected world and pupils should have the opportunity to understand how different levels of governance – local, national, regional and international – relate to each other. This should include learning about other ways in which decisions are influenced, such as through civil society campaigns, industry lobbying and through the media. It should also include a broader presentation of the role that young people can play in public life, particularly if they are not yet able to fully take part in democratic and electoral processes.

Many NGOs and charities work on issues that matter deeply to young people, from decent work opportunities at home to the right of girls such as Malala Yousafzai to an education. From Comic Relief to Amnesty International, civil society initiatives are deeply ingrained in British life, and it is important that young people have the opportunity to learn about how they can engage with them.

We also hope that the new citizenship curriculum will give pupils sufficient opportunities to develop key skills for active citizenship, such as critical thinking and enquiry, communication and cooperation, and advocacy and representation. Equipping them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to take positive action should be at the heart of the citizenship curriculum.

In addition, we hope that more will be done to ensure that citizenship education is developed and reinforced through the programmes of study of other National Curriculum subjects. History and geography have obvious links with the citizenship curriculum, but the draft programmes of study include few opportunities to make these connections. Joined-up learning will enrich pupils' experience, and strengthen critical thinking and analysis skills.

**4 Does the content set out in the draft programmes of study represent a sufficiently ambitious level of challenge for pupils at each key stage?**

	Sufficiently ambitious	✓	Not sufficiently ambitious		Not sure
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**Comments:**

The proposed programmes of study appear less ambitious than the current curriculum. The removal of references to key global institutions, issues and documents (in particular the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) will, we believe, leave pupils with a limited view of the world and the UK's role within it. We also feel that the draft programmes present a limited understanding of active citizenship.

**5 Do you have any comments on the proposed wording of the attainment targets?**

Comments:

UNA-UK is a member of the Democratic Life coalition ([www.democraticlife.org.uk](http://www.democraticlife.org.uk)) and agrees with its assessment that the proposed targets do not adequately set out the expected standards of attainment. These state that “pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the programme of study”. This will be hard to achieve as the skills and processes are not clearly delineated in the draft. It appears to list only knowledge areas.

**6 Do you agree that the draft programmes of study provide for effective progression between the key stages?**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure
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Comments:

UNA-UK is concerned that progression between key stages will not be effective if citizenship is not adequately addressed in KS1 and 2. Moreover, while the draft programmes allow for good progression from KS3 to 4 in some areas (e.g. democracy), there is less scope for effective progression in others (e.g. knowledge of the justice system). In addition, the absence of content on global issues and institutions will limit pupils' ability to understand different systems of government and governance in context.

**7 Do you agree that we should change the subject information and communication technology to computing, to reflect the content of the new programmes of study?**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure
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Comments:

**8 Does the new National Curriculum embody an expectation of higher standards for all children?**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure
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Comments:

**9 What impact - either positive or negative - will our proposals have on the 'protected characteristic' groups?**

Comments:

**10 To what extent will the new National Curriculum make clear to parents what their children should be learning at each stage of their education?**

Comments:

**11 What key factors will affect schools' ability to implement the new National Curriculum successfully from September 2014?**

Comments:

Schools will need clear guidelines and sufficient support to successfully implement the new curriculum. This includes high-quality resources and training and support for teachers. Commitment and buy-in from schools and teachers are also necessary.

**12 Who is best placed to support schools and/or develop resources that schools will need to teach the new National Curriculum?**

Comments:

Subject organisations, such as the Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT), play an important role in supporting teachers and schools in delivering high-quality education. Founded in 2002, when citizenship became a statutory subject in England, ACT connects teachers to regional and national networks, offering training, continuing professional development, support and advice. It is important that organisations like ACT continue to be supported and funded.

In addition, voluntary organisations like UNA-UK and higher education institutions are already producing excellent resources for citizenship, including high-quality teaching materials on human rights, children's rights and the United Nations. Many of them offer teacher training and support, and are well placed to continue this work having built up strong networks with schools. However, it is important that information on these opportunities is made available to all schools – which will require government support – and that there is sufficient time and funding available within schools for teachers to undertake training and procure resources.

**13 Do you agree that we should amend the legislation to disapply the National Curriculum programmes of study, attainment targets and statutory assessment arrangements, as set out in section 12 of the consultation document?**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure
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Comments:

**14 Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the proposals in this consultation?**

Comments:

UNA-UK strongly feels that the National Curriculum should challenge, motivate and inspire young people, and equip them to play active roles within their own communities, as well as nationally and internationally.

Learning about global affairs and institutions, as well as the important role that the UK plays internationally, will help pupils to understand the world in which they live and to navigate it more effectively. Ultimately, this will contribute to the UK's future security and prosperity.

**15 Please let us have your views on responding to this consultation (e.g. the number and type of questions, whether it was easy to find, understand, complete etc.)**

Comments:

The questionnaire was easy to find, understand and complete.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

**Please acknowledge this reply**

**E-mail address for acknowledgement:**

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

✓	Yes		No
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All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](#)

The key Consultation Principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and consult with those who are affected
- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy; and
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

Responses should be completed on-line or emailed to the relevant consultation email box. However, if you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: [carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk)

**Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.**

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 16 April 2013

Send by post to:

Consultation Unit,  
Area 1c,  
Castle View House,  
East Lane,  
Runcorn,  
Cheshire,  
WA7 2GJ.

Send by e-mail to: [NationalCurriculum.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:NationalCurriculum.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk)