

# MAKING CITIZENSHIP MATTER

*Why London needs an Office for  
Citizenship and Integration*

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British  
Future...

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About British Future:

British Future is an independent, non-partisan thinktank engaging people's hopes and fears about integration and migration, opportunity and identity, so that we share a confident and welcoming Britain, inclusive and fair to all.

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# I. Why it's time for an Office for Citizenship and Integration in London

London has a strong claim to be the greatest city in the world. That is why people from across Britain, and all over the world, have often made their way to the capital – calling themselves Londoners, as they become part of the city that they all call home.

Over a third of London's population was born outside of the UK and it is hard to imagine London without immigration. This era of high migration to Britain has been the source of much public anxiety, yet Londoners have remained more confident than most about the gains of migration. Maintaining that public confidence, however, will not happen all by itself.

The capital has a long history of being a city of religious freedom and ethnic tolerance. Yet when people from different cultures live side by side there is always the possibility of tension, especially if we do not have contact with our neighbours and a shared sense of pride in the identities we have in common too.

So we need a London that we can all share. We need to promote more contact and understanding between Londoners from different backgrounds. And we need to build a sense of citizenship that reaches and matters to Londoners born and raised in Britain as much as to this country's newest arrivals.

London has been a city of opportunity since its earliest days, long before Dick Whittington and ever since. The candidates vying to be the next Mayor of London will surely wish to build on that legacy, so that young people coming of age in the capital feel that they too have a stake in our city and our society.

The new Mayor will lead a city where the pace of change is fastest of all. In London, as across Britain, it will be increasingly important to be proactive about integration, to help make sure that we can all live harmoniously together. That's why we are calling on the next Mayor to create an Office for Citizenship and Integration. A Deputy Mayor, answerable to the Mayor of London, who is responsible for making it work.

Whether Zac Goldsmith, Sadiq Khan or another candidate is London's next choice for City Hall, we believe that the new Office for Citizenship and Integration would prove an important way for the new Mayor to pursue a proactive and practical agenda on integration, as other world cities have done with notable success.

So, during the Mayoral campaign, as they seek to persuade Londoners, we want to encourage all of the candidates for Mayor to commit to this idea – and to set out their own vision and priorities for making integration work in the capital.

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In this short paper, supported by and developed in partnership with London Citizens, the largest and most diverse civic partnership in the Capital, we begin that debate by setting out some of the **key priorities** that we believe that the new Office for Citizenship and Integration could pursue, in setting a positive integration agenda for London:

- The Deputy Mayor should encourage more migrants already living in London to take British Citizenship, with a target over the four-year term of 100,000 more registrations than the previous term.
- The new office would promote greater involvement in civic life and contact between people from different backgrounds, including through voter registration and volunteering drives. As part of this, the Deputy Mayor could seek to encourage all young Londoners to register and use their first vote, as a step towards understanding the value of common citizenship.
- They would help ensure that more people speak English so they can be fully part of British life.
- And they would mainstream citizenship and integration, ensuring that all GLA departments are doing their bit.

We believe this agenda can be pursued effectively at limited cost, with existing GLA resources supplemented by philanthropic partners in the city and charitable foundations. A new London citizenship fund could be created pulling private and public monies together, aiming to agree pledges that will total £1 million in private donations, with the expectation that they would be matched by the Mayor.

This is something for all Londoners, of all backgrounds. Integration should not be seen as a challenge only for migrants and minority groups. The new Deputy Mayor should champion a vision, relevant to London and well beyond it, of integration as a shared challenge for us all: about the value of our common citizenship and the responsibilities it places on us; and about ensuring the gains and pressures of migration are handled in a way that can be seen to be fair, both to those coming in and to those already here.

London is already an integration success story. Look at other capitals and you'll see that we all rub along better than most. But we can't just assume it will work out by itself. With a dynamic individual driving forward a proactive plan, London could do so much more, becoming a beacon for more successful integration across the whole of Britain and helping to develop a stronger, shared sense of what integration means and how it can work in practice.

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## 2. London's integration challenge: some key facts

- **London's population has now returned to its highest ever level**

Until last year, London's population peak was in 1939, when there were 8.6 million Londoners. The city's population then fell by a quarter – to 6.5 million – over the three decades after the Second World War, but has risen by more than 2 million over the last twenty years.<sup>1</sup>

- **Over a third of Londoners were born abroad**

37 per cent of Londoners were born outside the UK, while 63% were born abroad: the foreign-born population rose from 27% to 37% in a decade after 2001. Of the 2.7 million Londoners born abroad, the most popular countries of origin were India (254,000), Poland (123,000<sup>2</sup>), Bangladesh (116,000), Ireland (108,000) and Nigeria (93,000) in the last census.

- **London is a city with no majority group**

Under half (45%) of Londoners are white British, 3.7 million people in the 2011 census, though the census showed that six out of ten London residents belong to white ethnic groups. Over a million Londoners (15%) belong to the 'white other' ethnic group in the census, including many people from Ireland, Western and Eastern Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the USA. Around 3.6 million Londoners - 40% of the capital's population - belong to black, Asian and mixed race groups. Today, there are just over 5 million white Londoners. Over the next Mayoral term, the number of non-white Londoners is projected to rise to over four million by 2021, with the white London population rising much more gradually to 5.1 million. Yet London will not become a 'minority-majority' city in the foreseeable future: the GLA currently projects that the capital will be 53% white and 47% non-white in 2041<sup>3</sup>.

- **Integration at home**

Almost half a million Londoners (5%) are of mixed ethnicity. An increasing number of Londoners live with people of a different ethnicity: one in five households in London contains people from different ethnic groups living together. This rises to four out of ten households in inner London<sup>4</sup>.

- **London contains more religious diversity than any other city in Europe**

Seven out of ten Londoners identify with a religious faith. Again, there is no longer any clear majority group, though just under half of Londoners (48%) did declare themselves to be Christians at the last census. So our capital is a city of over four million Christians, a million Muslims (12%), almost half a million Hindus (5%), 150,000 Jews and 130,000 Sikhs. One in five Londoners report that they have an entirely secular identity and worldview, but successive waves of migration and

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integration – from Ireland and Italy, the Caribbean and Asia, Africa and Poland – have slowed the rate of secularization, and left the capital that little bit more faithful than the rest of Britain<sup>5</sup>.

- **Over 1.5 million Londoners have become new Britons**

Over one-and-a-half million London residents born outside Britain have become naturalised citizens. In 2014, over 44,000 Londoners went through their citizenship ceremonies to become proud new Britons. More than 40% of citizenship ceremonies in Britain take place in London<sup>6</sup>.

- **Just under half of the capital's migrants are already citizens of Great Britain**

In 2011, 46 percent of the people living in London but born abroad held a UK passport, compared to 52 percent that held only a non-UK passport<sup>7</sup>.

- **235,000 London residents of working age do not speak English fluently<sup>8</sup>.**

Nine out of ten foreign-born Londoners speak good English, but nearly a quarter of a million London residents still don't. While 62% of those who speak English well are in employment, this falls to 46% of those who do not speak English well, and 35% of those who do not speak English at all<sup>9</sup>.

- **A young city – though Londoners are living longer**

The median age in London was just 33 at the last census – six years lower than the average for England and Wales. In the London borough of Newham, the median age is just 29<sup>10</sup>. At the same time, we are living longer - life expectancy in London today has risen to 82, twenty years higher than it was back in 1939<sup>11</sup>.

- **Voter registration – opportunities and risks**

Based on the last census, an estimated 500,000 young Londoners will turn 18 over the next mayoral term, presenting an opportunity to imbue a generation with the values of inclusive citizenship and the responsibilities that entails. At the same time, the move to a system of Individual Electoral Registration means that many people could fall off the electoral register, with a disproportionate number of them likely to be young people and private renters – meaning London could be significantly affected. A 2015 Hope Not Hate report estimated, based on Electoral Commission data, that up to 415,000 voters could fall off the electoral register in London alone<sup>12</sup>.

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## 3. International experience

Cities across the world are grappling with issues of how to make immigration and integration work fairly, both for newcomers and existing residents alike. Implementing this new proposal for London can draw on the experience of citizenship and integration offices elsewhere.

The United States in particular has pioneered the introduction of integration and citizenship offices inside city governance structures<sup>13</sup>. There is now also growing interest in this approach across Europe, as integration becomes a significant focus for European cities seeking to manage the pressures and realise the gains of migration in an era of rapid change.

As one of the great global cities, London has contributed to building the evidence base on integration, hosting and contributing to comparative exchanges with city practitioners across Europe. London hosted the launch in 2010 of the Integrating Cities Charter<sup>14</sup>, taking part in the Eurocities working group of cities on migration and integration, to compare city experiences with policies to address integration challenges. It has also hosted transatlantic exchanges on the practical experiences of organising integration efforts<sup>15</sup>.

With the creation of London's new Office for Citizenship and Integration, the Mayor and his team would be able to draw on and learn from many initiatives in other major cities around the world.

We also believe that London today has particular potential to be a pioneer in deepening a mainstream model of integration, one which understands that integration is a challenge for everybody in the city to get right and not an issue that is solely or primarily about how migrant citizens or minority communities navigate their way into the city's public life. If that was largely the focus of the first generation of offices of immigrant affairs in North America, there has since been a marked shift in city governance towards mainstreaming the integration agenda, which the new London Office is well placed to develop. This proposal will not realise its full potential if the new office is seen as being led by a Deputy Mayor for migrants and minorities; it should instead be an approach which sees integration and citizenship as a shared goal for us all.

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## City experiences with integration

**New York** remains among the most pre-eminent cities that have made integration a real focus of governance, issuing blueprints for integration. The influential Office of Immigrant Affairs in New York City has influenced a range of policies, from language access through to municipal IDs, service access and civic inclusion.

**San Francisco** has a foreign-born population that is broadly equivalent to London's (35 percent). The office of civic engagement and immigrant affairs in San Francisco city created an Immigrant Rights Commission in 1997. The commissioners seek input through public hearings, including with immigrant communities, making recommendations to public agencies and publishing an annual report. Other projects have included working to prevent hate crimes and an effort with private donors to increase the number of new citizens.

**Cupertino** in California is among cities that have seen contact with existing residents as core to integration. The city created a programme that trained neighbourhood leaders to build contact between long-standing residents and newcomers and articulate issues at local and city-level services. 350 leaders (each representing 90 families) are actively supported and engaging with the city since the initiative began—defusing tensions and helping improve services.

**Littleton** (Denver, Colorado) the office created a citizenship mentoring programme for aspiring citizens alongside investments in English Language tuition.

Several US cities are also working together on **Cities for Citizenship**, a major national initiative, chaired by **New York City** Mayor Bill de Blasio, **Chicago** Mayor Rahm Emanuel, and **Los Angeles** Mayor Eric Garcetti, which aims at increasing citizenship among eligible US permanent representatives, and encouraging cities across the country to invest in citizenship programmes.

In **Hamburg**, the Mayor has led an “Ich bin Hamburger” campaign, seeking to promote the uptake of German

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citizenship positively, using the motto ‘Hamburg. My Port. Germany, My Home’. Over half of migrants resident in Hamburg currently do not hold German citizenship, though most meet the naturalization requirements. In addition to a public campaign, the Hamburg project saw volunteer facilitators, many of them citizens with a migrant heritage, helping to guide qualified city residents through the naturalisation process.

In **Barcelona**, where one in five residents was born outside Spain, the city has created a new ‘department of immigration and interculturality’, to take forward the Barcelona interculturality plan. This was developed through public engagement on those factors which impede or assist integration in a diverse city. The plan promotes language acquisition as an essential foundation of integration, promotes citizenship and democratic participation, and seeks to champion both equality and diversity through a focus on promoting positive contact between people from different backgrounds.

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## 4. How the Office for Citizenship and Integration would work

A new Deputy Mayor for Citizenship and Integration should be appointed by the new Mayor, shortly after the election, to lead an Office for Citizenship and Integration. That office would have three main elements:

First, the dynamic new Deputy Mayor, with the full support of the Mayor, would serve as a public champion of the integration agenda.

Second, a future vision of London that puts integration at its heart, with a policy focus on how to mainstream integration across all aspects of the work of the Mayor and the Greater London Authority. The vision would be underpinned by a new and tightly focused programme that would achieve concrete results for Londoners.

Third, a programme of integration and citizenship that encourages democratic participation and contact between citizens and communities in London – encouraging and championing new Londoners.

The Deputy Mayor for Citizenship and Integration would take responsibility for a small team to deliver on the Mayor's core integration priorities. The role would be as public champion of integration and citizenship, helping civic society, business and the London public to play our roles too. This would include close work with London Councils to ensure local place-based strategies incorporate work on migrants<sup>16</sup> and integration, and with the London Strategic Migration Partnership.

To provide accountability, the Mayor of London would publish an annual report on integration and citizenship in London that would be scrutinised by the Assembly. There are also opportunities to engage the public in this respect, through the existing Talk London panel.

The integration goals are ambitious and resources are tight. We believe, however, that this agenda can be pursued effectively with limited resources. We propose a smart partnerships model, through a new Citizenship Fund, which could attract philanthropic engagement alongside limited public investment, generating additional resources to meet London's integration challenge by pulling private and public monies together.

In the United States, there is a long history of such partnerships. A few select examples include the Robin Hood Foundation and JM Kaplan Fund in New York, the Barr Foundation in Boston, Haas Jr. in San Francisco or the Silicon Valley, James Irvine and California Community Foundations in cities in California. Private (philanthropic) funds could support

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programming directly or could underwrite secondments and fellowships for leading experts to work in any new Office for Citizenship and Integration. Private funds could help provide a “proof of concept” that the new Office is having an impact before precious public funds are committed in the long-term.

A number of leading trusts and foundations have already expressed interest in offering financial and practical support for such a partnership approach, so we believe that it would be realistic and achievable for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to secure pledges of £1 million in private donations, if matched by the Mayor, to launch the Citizenship Fund. Relevant support in kind may also be available from business and leading civic society organisations.

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## 5. Integration priorities: key themes for the new office

The Mayoral campaign will see the major candidates offer their visions for London. Advocates of a proactive approach to integration will want to hear candidates and political parties seek to compete for ownership of the integration agenda as they seek to attract voters. Ideas about inclusion in the London we want to share should join housing, transport and work as among the big issues of the Mayoral campaign.

Competing candidates may have different views about the most important priorities and practical ways in which the Mayorality and the GLA can make a practical difference to integration. The democratic argument of the campaign will and should shape the future agenda for integration in London – and the priorities that a new Office for Citizenship and Integration would pursue. That political debate should also demonstrate that there is a good deal of common ground about what helps and what impedes integration in London.

Here we propose a set of potential priority areas of focus for the next Mayor, where the new office could help to bring about useful, practical changes.

### (i) A new vision of a shared London – and mainstreaming that agenda across the GLA

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor would need to set out the vision of integration that would drive a programme of work for the new office.

They would develop and be accountable for mainstreaming integration, including ensuring scrutiny, accountability and best practice in the development and implementation of strategies across the Greater London Authority (GLA).

This would be underpinned by work with internal departments and a coherent effort by the GLA to build a clear and deep social evidence base around integration that will see measurable progress on key areas.

Building on English language as a keystone to integration and ensuring strong emphasis on inclusive British values throughout the GLA's programming will be key. Speaking English is already a requirement of the process of becoming a British citizen and the GLA thus has the chance to help people along their path to citizenship. Particular attention could be paid to the GLA's plans around young people, arts and culture, health and sport, and volunteering.

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The Office for Citizenship and Integration could also take a proactive role, working with those London Boroughs that wish to take part, in ensuring that London plays its part in the resettlement of refugees from Syria. As with other areas of integration practice, there is value in London being seen as a beacon of best practice, showing that refugees can successfully be supported to rebuild their lives and become contributing members of British society.

The bulk of this policy coordination role would be neither headline-grabbing nor glamorous, but it would recognise that the city's interest in integration outcomes are likely to be most effectively pursued by mainstreaming this agenda into the existing major areas of policy activity and public spending, especially at a time of fiscal pressure, rather than trying to create stand-alone programmes or funding streams on integration.

## (ii) Actively promote citizenship – and show its value to new arrivals and the settled majority alike

The new office should actively encourage the take up of British citizenship as a mark of belonging to London and to Britain.

This would chime with majority public opinion. Most people in Britain would prefer migrants to stay, settle and become citizens. Some may find this counter-intuitive – since a preference for migrants to leave after a few years would help to reduce numbers. But British Future's research has found that a clear majority of people take a pro-integration view of this trade-off. Opinion polling by ICM found that 63% believe it is better for Britain when migrants who come here put down roots and integrate into our society, becoming one of us, while 37% prefer migrants who have come to work here for a few years to then return home<sup>17</sup>. Temporary migration may add to a sense of faster churn, without turning the short-term pressures of managing immigration into the benefits of integration for the city and country, as well as for migrants themselves.

To meet the goal of increasing the rate of registering new citizens by 100,000, the Mayor could help register young people with an automatic right to citizenship but who lack the means and advice to do so<sup>18</sup>. Such work would need to be done together with London Councils, but also with the London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP)—already anchored by the GLA.

By working with the LSMP, the Deputy Mayor would be able to significantly reduce the costs associated with processing some citizenship claims and support Councils in their efforts to simplify the process.

London should also help to breathe new life into citizenship ceremonies – increasing both their practical value in facilitating integration and contact, and the public projection of

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this important rite of passage for those choosing to commit fully to our country as well as our city. The value of ceremonies is not well understood. For example, when pushed, few members of the public are certain that the ceremony is mandatory for new citizens (it is) or whether new citizens swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen (they must).

## The value of citizenship ceremonies

The first UK citizenship ceremony took place at Brent Town Hall on 26 February 2004 in the presence of Prince Charles and the then Home Secretary David Blunkett. It was conducted by Mark Rimmer, Head of Nationality services for the London Borough of Brent, who still conducts weekly ceremonies today.

New citizens were welcomed to the nation and the borough, swore (or pledged) an oath of allegiance to the Queen and sung the national anthem, before being presented with their certificate of British citizenship.

When the authors of this report attended a ceremony in Brent in January this year, the format was very similar. Thirty-five new citizens swore allegiance that day, each bringing along family members to pose for photographs receiving their certificates before a portrait of the Queen. The new citizens appeared delighted to be welcomed to Britain in this way, with those we spoke to excited that their journey to citizenship had reached its destination.

Mark Rimmer conducted that January ceremony too. He told us that Brent had made great efforts to raise the profile and impact of citizenship ceremonies, conducting them in iconic locations – including the nearby Wembley Stadium – and in schools, linking them with students’ citizenship studies. Nationally, however, there has been a distinct cooling of enthusiasm for citizenship ceremonies over the twelve years since their introduction. That, we suggest, is a wasted opportunity.

*“I have been involved in conducting citizenship ceremonies since the very first one 12 years ago. I have seen first hand the passion, pride and emotion that participation in ceremonies generates and I feel privileged to have been a part of these life-defining events.*

*“The introduction of a welcoming event to celebrate the acquisition of British Citizenship was a great step forward but I do feel that we*

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*now lack a political champion to take the initiative to the next stage. It is important that our new citizens feel welcomed and valued by our politicians - to encourage belonging and integration and to celebrate those who wish to join us as part of the British family”*

-Mark Rimmer OBE, Head of Registration and Nationality for Brent and Barnet Councils

Citizenship ceremonies are of great value to new citizens themselves, formally marking their transition to becoming British. But they could be of far greater value to our society as a whole – if only more effort was invested in publicly promoting them.

It is well known that public concern about immigration is at a relative high. Much of that is concerned with the numbers, and with perceptions that the Government does not have a grip on the system. But our research shows that much of the public also shares a series of anxieties about the cultural impact of high migration: how does Britain remain ‘British’ with so many new arrivals? Will they integrate, learn our language, contribute positively to our society and share our customs and values? Do they want to be ‘one of us’?

At the same time, especially if this question is posed a shade too forcefully, new arrivals may well ask a question of their own: am I really welcome to join this society? Will I ever be fully considered a member of it?

Citizenship ceremonies will not, on their own, offer all the answers to the complex challenges of making integration work. But they do provide a powerful, symbolic reminder to new migrants and anxious Britons alike that a commitment is being made on both sides. To those most worried about the cultural impacts of immigration the citizenship ceremony, with its oath of allegiance (not to mention the various costs and tests required to make it that far) is a visible demonstration of new Britons’ commitment to become part of our shared society and to abide by its rules and norms. To the migrants taking part, there must be something particularly powerful when a representative of the Crown concludes the ceremony with the words ‘Welcome – you are now British’.

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Integration matters primarily because of its social and civic importance – to life chances, social inclusion and democratic participation; to quality of life and the lived experience of citizens; and in providing resilience against extremist groups and shock events. So the case for integration goes well beyond economics. But there is also a good case for the new Office to build an evidence base to investigate whether there would be economic benefits from encouraging citizenship.

In the US, detailed research from the Urban Institute has found significant economic impacts of naturalisation, with earnings increasing 8.9% when migrants eligible for naturalisation become citizens, and employment rates rising 2.2%. The study suggests that 21 US cities could increase federal, state and city tax revenues by up to \$2 billion by promoting citizenship to those eligible, with significant net fiscal impacts in large cities, from increased tax revenues and some reduction in spending from public benefits programmes<sup>9</sup>. This evidence has added further impetus to the Cities for Citizenship push nationwide, an initiative jointly led by the Mayors of Chicago, Los Angeles and New York.

No comparable study of the potential economic impacts of naturalisation has been carried out in London, or the UK as a whole. With a different demographic profile of migration, and a different political context in the case of free movement for EU citizens, the impacts could well be different from that of the US. However, there is a good case for the new Office of Citizenship to carry out a study of the potential economic gains of increasing naturalisation in London. Integration is about more than the cost-benefit analysis of the impact on the city balance sheet, but credible and robust evidence of economic and fiscal returns to promoting citizenship would help to sustain and deepen broad support for investing political capital and scarce resources in this agenda.

### (iii) Promoting universal English fluency in London

A shared and common language is an essential foundation of integration. Speaking English is the passport to full economic, social and democratic participation in the life of the city and the country. It makes it possible for us to meet and talk as neighbours, to find common interests and causes with our fellow citizens, and so can make a vital contribution to building public confidence that a city of high migration can be an integrated, not segregated one.

Nine out of ten migrants to London do speak good English – and most are strongly motivated to do so, so as to unlock the opportunities which their new city can offer. But this leaves over a quarter of a million Londoners without good English language skills. New funding for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) has been promised by the Prime Minister, with £20 million earmarked for classes for women from isolated

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communities<sup>20</sup>; but with many courses oversubscribed this may not be sufficient to close the gaps in provision caused by previous cuts<sup>21</sup>.

The Mayor and new office should therefore promote the goal of universal English fluency in London - championing the goal that everybody who has been in the city for a year should know English, or be learning it. That shared civic norm is one which a wide range of London stakeholders and civic institutions should be invited to share: the new Office for Citizenship and Integration would then have the role of developing an effective partnerships strategy, seeking to deepen understanding of the barriers and challenges and to identify effective and practical opportunities to overcome them.

The Office should also help to build and share the evidence base about the gaps in provision, and the types of intervention that have proved effective. It would help to develop understanding of the different challenges with two significant but distinct groups: some recently arrived East European migrants, where work with employers in particular sectors might overcome time pressures; and the historic legacy of the poor English of some first generation migrants, particularly women, where social isolation provides a significant barrier. In this latter case, health services could offer an important opportunity to engage those who may have limited contact with public services with relevant support and opportunities.

London's world-class universities – among the city's great champions and beneficiaries of migration and diversity – could also be engaged as important partners. Higher education providers could, for example, offer in-kind support such as the use of relevant facilities for language teaching outside term-time and weekends. They could also promote and champion voluntary opportunities to participate in educational and mentoring efforts, to students, graduates, staff and others.

New streams of funding, both from the EU in the form of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Department for Community and Local Government's Cohesive Communities programme, as well as new funding announced by the Prime Minister in January 2016, may offer opportunities for the LSMP to develop further English language programmes - for schools, charities and statutory partners across London.

There is strong and broad support across London – across party politics and civic society, and among the general public – for the positive economic and cultural benefits that migration brings to higher education. The higher education sector seeking to play a positive and popular public role in the civic integration agenda could offer a useful way to sustain and entrench that public and political support.

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## (iv) Bringing London together – promoting contact between Londoners from all backgrounds

A core message of the new office should be that our shared citizenship means that integration is a matter for everybody – not just for those newly-arrived in our city. The new Deputy Mayor should therefore look for the best opportunities to encourage civic engagement, creating space for meaningful contact between new Londoners and existing London residents and encouraging democratic participation of all young people.

- Around half a million Londoners will turn 18 during the four-year term of the next Mayor. We should mark this ‘rite of passage’ into citizenship for New Londoners and New Britons, and should have a stronger focus on the practical and symbolic importance of citizens who come of age. A central finding of British Future’s ‘Voice of a Generation’ project with the Daily Mirror, which spoke to first-time voters around Britain in the run-up to the General Election, was that this generation, while engaged with political issues, feels distant from the formal processes and structures of politics – and has an expectation that they should be invited to participate, rather than being expected to seek out opportunities to do so<sup>22</sup>.

The Office for Citizenship and Integration should work with London’s boroughs to maximise voter registration, helping to study the evidence about what makes most difference to people registering and choosing to vote, and to spread best practice with regard to maximizing registration. An annual audit and report on voter registration levels across the London boroughs could help to deepen understanding of the challenges and barriers, and successful approaches to overcoming them.

More than 40 percent of citizenship ceremonies are held in London and there is no reason why Councils who host ceremonies cannot register new Citizens immediately as part of the process of becoming a new Citizen. The best Councils in London are already doing this and a new Office of Citizenship and Integration could help spread that best practice.

- Nobody should go to school in London without meaningful contact with people of other faiths, other ethnicities and other social classes. In many of the capital’s schools, this is part of the lived experience of being educated in London, but it will also be important to engage with all types of school – community schools, faith schools, academies, free schools and private schools – to ensure that this is a shared civic goal that is given practical effect. The Deputy Mayor could also champion volunteering as a way of bringing Londoners together, building on London’s role as Capital of Volunteering in 2016. The National Citizenship Service programme could also be utilised further as a way to encourage greater contact between 16-18 year-olds from different backgrounds.

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- London should celebrate its history as a global, British and English city. The mayoralty rightly celebrates a wide range of religious festivals across our diverse range of faiths. We should also come together to mark **St George's Day** as a day when we take a shared pride in English identity and history – and ensure that everybody is invited to the party, to share a sense of belonging to the England that we have become today.

This can play a powerful role, including in reassuring those who are anxious – whether from a white majority background, about the felt unfairness of the lack of public recognition of English identity; or an ethnic minority background, about whether a public recognition of Englishness will feel inclusive – that there is an appetite for a shared sense of belonging around occasions that can bring us together.

- The growing profile of **Remembrance** offers a particularly powerful opportunity to demonstrate that Britain's most cherished and resonant traditions are becoming more rather than less relevant as our society becomes more diverse – and that our shared history goes back much further than we sometimes realise. A strong majority of Londoners across ethnic and faith backgrounds believe that Britain's tradition of Remembrance does strengthen relationships between ethnic and faith groups, with only a small minority worried that it could be the cause of frictions and tension.

Many people have been surprised to learn, during the First World War centenary, that the armies which fought for Britain a century ago resemble the Britain of 2016 rather more than that of 1916. Around 1.5 million soldiers from the Indian army – 400,000 of them Muslims – fought for Britain in the Great War of 1914-18. One-third of those who arrived in Britain on the Windrush in 1948 were ex-servicemen returning to Britain. These examples of our shared history can help to generate new conversations about the city and country that we have become today. Research shows that 80% of people believe that it is important for integration that all of our children should be aware of our shared histories.

There are many opportunities to make sure that happens. Particularly beyond the First World War centenary commemorations, it will be important to link these powerful accounts of our shared history to contemporary opportunities. Many London boroughs have signed Community Covenants with the armed forces – and the new office could help to encourage and deepen efforts to develop these as opportunities for contact across London's diverse ethnic and faith communities. With an increased focus from the armed forces and the Ministry of Defence on deepening relationships with ethnic and faith minorities, including setting the stretching goal of increasing ethnic minority recruitment to one in ten new recruits, there is an important opportunity for the armed forces to again be a practical example of integration in a diverse society, and shared pride in institutions which serve and protect us all.

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## 6. Beyond London: Making integration matter for Britain

As almost half of migrants to Britain come to or through London, getting integration right in London can make a significant contribution to integration outcomes. But getting it right in London won't be enough.

London is the place where the pace of change is fastest – yet it is probably not the place where integration is most challenging. London is also, comparatively, the place in Britain where there is most confidence that we can make integration work fairly for everybody. Both London's lived memory of its history as a place of migration and integration, and its sense of economic opportunity, perhaps makes London the easier half of Britain's integration challenge.

So London's new Office for Citizenship and Integration – and the role of the next Mayor and the new Deputy Mayor – could also make a useful contribution to the national debate that we need about integration.

### Depolarising and detoxifying national debates

London's political leadership can make an important contribution to depolarising some of the national political conversation about immigration and integration. It is clear that there is a cultural polarisation in attitudes to immigration. Those who embrace change most strongly see immigration as bringing both economic and cultural benefits, a view most likely to be held by graduates, younger Britons and the more affluent, especially if they live in London and other major cities. Others have entirely the opposing instinct, feeling 'left behind', fearful and sometimes angry about both social and economic change: this is a view held more strongly by older people, those with fewest educational qualifications, especially strongly clustered among those who live in coastal towns, practically and psychologically furthest from the metropolis.

As British Future's research has shown, most citizens are in neither these 'open' nor 'closed' minority camps – so a public debate polarised between metropolitan liberals and those who wish to turn the clock back half a century simply leaves most people cold, and doesn't address the concerns held by the 'anxious middle'. Yet a greater focus on integration can do something to bridge these polarised views. While people will disagree about their felt emotional reaction to change, most share considerably more common ground when it comes to issues of integration,

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and broadly agree on the fair deal, between incomers and existing residents, on the two-way street of how to make integration work.

It may be particularly useful for London's political leadership to take an active and prominent lead in debates about the practical challenges of making integration work. This can disrupt the idea that London is somehow 'different' from the rest of the UK and does not recognise the pressures felt by communities in other parts of the country as a result of high immigration levels.

Mayoral candidates will want to follow current Mayor Boris Johnson in championing the significant contribution made to the city by those who come to London from elsewhere. It is also strongly in London's interests to make that case in a way that makes sense beyond the capital – because London's ability to continue to benefit from immigration will largely depend on the outcomes of broader national debates – as exemplified by the key role that immigration is playing in current debates around the referendum on Britain's EU membership. By demonstrating that we can make integration work in the most diverse part of Britain, London can offer reassurance to those across the country who are anxious about whether we can build a new 'us' that includes citizens from all backgrounds.

## A potential model for city governance beyond London

A new Office for Citizenship and Integration could provide a useful model for city governance elsewhere in the UK. The challenges of managing migration and promoting integration will differ in the North-West, in Yorkshire, in the Midlands and across the South of England, so local and regional priorities may well differ significantly. But, if successful, this model of a champion of integration – combining the hard graft of mainstreaming integration into the policy agenda of local government, along with a role as a public champion of integration as a shared goal, could be useful to other cities and regions. That would depend on political leaders in other cities and regions deciding this made sense for their own demographic and political challenges. The increased use of this type of model could also enable a stronger exchange across cities – and the ability of local voices to influence and be heard in the national debate about integration and identity.

## A constructive challenge to national leadership too

Integration is about the state of the nation and about our local, lived experiences of the places in which we live. Both matter. A state-led, top-down approach to integration would be neither effective nor legitimate: there is certainly no way to 'deliver'

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integration with a top-down approach from Westminster and Whitehall, nor to integrate our capital from City Hall.

But there are dangers too of going too far in the other direction, and ending up with an integration agenda which lacks any significant national dimension. The framework of the last Coalition government, *Creating the Conditions for Integration* arguably fell into this trap, having much to say about the importance of integration as a challenge for local leadership, yet largely leaving a vacuum in terms of its account of the role of national policy, beyond the expression and championing of shared values.

David Cameron's government has an opportunity to change this, particularly through the review into integration, led by Louise Casey, which is taking a 'full spectrum' view across government. It is a significant opportunity to place integration at the heart of a One Nation agenda at a national level, while being clear about the limits of a top-down approach and the importance of taking a proactive approach to integration at city, local and neighbourhood level too.

Given the high proportion of immigration experienced by London, the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor could be among the most effective local champions of the importance of a practical integration agenda – and how to build the right links between local, city-wide and national policy agendas. There is strong potential to unlock a powerful 'common ground' public consensus about integration – but this needs to be more than a rhetorical debate. If the integration debate is going to get practical, it is time to be clearer about the roles and responsibilities we can all have to make it work.

London has an opportunity under the next Mayor to take a lead and show how this proactive approach could make a practical, measurable difference to integration in the nation's capital – helping to build the shared London and the shared Britain that most people want us to work for together. The next Mayor should place this at the heart of their vision for London.

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## 7. Notes and references

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14. The initial signatories to the 2010 Integrating Cities Charter were London, Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Copenhagen, Genoa, Ghent, Helsinki, Milan, Munich, Oulu, Oslo, Rome, Stockholm, Tampere and Utrecht. A December 2015 update on city experiences in integration can be read in 'Cities and Migration: Implementing the Integrating Cities Charter' at [http://www.integratingcities.eu/integrating-cities/integrating\\_cities\\_charter/2nd%20implementation%20report%202013](http://www.integratingcities.eu/integrating-cities/integrating_cities_charter/2nd%20implementation%20report%202013)
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# British Future...

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