# Communities and Local Government Committee

## Oral evidence: Integration Review, HC 881

Monday 9 January 2017

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**Watch the meeting**

Members present: Mr Clive Betts (Chair); Rushanara Ali; Bob Blackman; Helen Hayes; Kevin Hollinrake; Julian Knight; David Mackintosh; Melanie Onn; Mary Robinson; Alison Thewliss.

Questions 1-61

### Witnesses

Dame Louise Casey CB, Author of the Casey Review into opportunity and integration, Department for Communities and Local Government, and Neil O'Connor, Director of the Casey Review, Department for Communities and Local Government.

**Chair:** Good afternoon and welcome to the Committee's one-off session today, which is on the Casey review of opportunity and integration. Thank you both for coming. Before I come to you, I ask members of the Committee to put on record any interests they may have—and, of course, I wish everyone a happy new year. I am a vice-president of the Local Government Association.

**David Mackintosh:** I am a Northamptonshire county councillor.

**Kevin Hollinrake:** I employ a councillor in my office.

**Helen Hayes:** I employ a councillor in my office.

**Bob Blackman:** I am a vice-president of the LGA as well.

Q1 **Chair:** Okay—that is on the record. Over to you. Could you state for the record your names and the organisations you represent?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I am Louise Casey. I am currently working at the Department for Communities and Local Government.

***Neil O'Connor:*** Good afternoon. I am Neil O'Connor. I am a director at DCLG.

Q2 **Chair:** Thank you both very much for coming.

Louise, you put a great deal of emphasis in your report on the disparity in the economic situations of people from different backgrounds living in this

country, and on how families and individuals from ethnic and religious minorities generally do worse than their counterparts. Do you think that that situation is improving, or has it been getting worse over the years?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** That is one of the statistics or facts in the report that is not at all surprising and not new. The fact that BME groups in particular suffer discrimination and disadvantage is how it has been for some time. Do I think that it is going to get worse—is that your question, Chair?

**Chair:** Yes. Or has it been getting worse over the last 10 or 20 years?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** It is really difficult to generalise within any group. Within black and minority ethnic groups, there are different groups. Some are doing better and some are doing less well, so it is quite difficult to take it as an overall group. Do I think they suffer discrimination and disadvantage and are socially excluded? Yes, I do. Within that, there are some obvious areas that cry out for quite significant action. I would say that one of the things that I have found most difficult, out of the loads of things that are difficult to report, is the fact that young black men are still so significantly likely to be unemployed between the ages of 18 and 25. I think it is 35%. That is a cause for national shame.

Now everybody is talking about it, but the fact that kids on free school meals are still doing incredibly badly, despite many things that I have been involved with over the years, does not make easy reading. We have to accept these things and we have to do more about them. Then, of course, there is the issue—I will say it now, before it is put to me—that people within certain Pakistani, Bangladeshi heritage and/or Muslim religious backgrounds are also doing less well. I think it is quite difficult to overly generalise, but they were some of the things that we took out of the report that I am really concerned about.

Q3 **Chair:** In terms of the economic performance—the incomes people earn—is it simply a matter of individuals in those communities not earning as much? Or is it also about families and the fact that in those communities they are less likely to have a second earner, which may be down to language issues or cultural issues in some cases?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I think that those are all the case. The report is quite detailed—I realise that for a lot of people reading it, it is quite dense to get through. I think it shows quite a mixed picture, but it is very hard. Whatever the Government choose to do going forward, they will have to be incredibly fine-tuned in terms of trying to work out what action needs to be taken in certain areas. English language is an obvious one; they have already taken some action in that area, and the report calls for more action to be taken there. That seems like a no-brainer—the vast majority of the British public would agree that everybody should speak English, because it is a common language. It is a good thing, and very few people disagree with that across the political divide. But even within that, I would say that there are certain groups that are less likely to take advantage of English-language classes unless you do something specific to target them

and to help them to get the best advantage from them. It is complicated, in terms of what it is that we are trying to say.

Q4 **Chair:** We will come back to the English language issue in another question. What are the other main barriers to integration? I am thinking of my own constituency, where there is a large Bangladeshi, Pakistani and now Slovak Roma population. People live alongside one another without a great deal of overt community tension, but they have probably never been in each other's houses. Even the basic level of going in to say hello to your neighbour doesn't happen. How do we set about breaking down those sorts of barriers, and is it necessary to do so?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** When we have such significant levels of unemployment or a lack of educational attainment within certain groups, this becomes an issue of whether you want a divided society or a society that is united around trying to look after people who are less fortunate than yourself. The Prime Minister said something this morning about kids who grow up in a country that is ostensibly prosperous, but live in communities where they cannot see any of that prosperity coming towards them. Those sorts of things warrant a review of this kind, a discussion like this and further debate. That is one of the recommendations in the report and something I feel quite strongly about. I genuinely think we should mix people up. I think white people should meet black people, and rich people should meet poor people. As a general principle, mixing is a good thing, and part of the challenge as we go forward will be how that happens, in terms of making it real and proper.

Q5 **Helen Hayes:** As a consequence, in large part, of the pressures on local authority funding, some of the spaces that provide forums for people to come together and mix up—I am thinking of things like libraries, children's centres and parks—are exactly the services that are most feeling the squeeze, in terms of constraints on public funding. Do you think the content of your report and your findings make the case for the prioritisation of some of those services and spaces, perhaps in a different way, with a different focus and with a different sense of urgency behind the level of priority that they sometimes get when they find themselves in the hierarchy of needs of local authority pressures?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I think that is exactly right. There is a very strong argument for that in areas where you are looking at the types of factors we are looking at in the report—for example, where there is significant social and economic deprivation, or where there are issues of poor integration, deprivation and disadvantage. A very strong argument that flows from the report is that you should take action in those areas in a different way, rather than worry about areas that are more prosperous and of less concern. You probably expect me to say that, given the jobs I have done in the past. This report is no different from that. In fact, if anything, it adds greater weight to it.

Youth services and youth provision have also been quite challenging, because they are often the way that people meet. We need to be clear that we have to do this, and that we are going to be reliant on many

voluntary community groups and church groups to do it, because that money is not going to come back. I am assuming—let's take it that we are where we are with budget settlements—that in the foreseeable future it won't come back.

I have been interested in things like the Department for Communities and Local Government's women's empowerment fund. There are loads of things we couldn't put in the report because it was already so long, but they had 400 applications for their funding. That type of scheme is there precisely to try to reach into specific communities. It is called empowerment, but some of it is about English language, economic opportunities, IT literacy and those sort of things. They were able to give only 14 organisations funding out of 400. Some of those 400 may have been incredibly poor applications—I didn't go through the sifting process—but I would hazard a guess, given the last 12 to 18 months of my life, that some of those organisations could do with the money and could do a very good job with it. You can't do some of this without money.

Q6 **Rushanara Ali:** Can I pick up on the point about community organisations? The Government has rightly put a lot of funding into the National Citizen Service, which you referred to. Do you think that there should be more effort to broaden out the support that is provided to small and third-sector organisations, some of which are already involved? Sorry, I should declare an interest: NCS is a funder of one organisation that I co-founded and chair. I have just realised that—apologies.

Do you think that there is a role for looking at how there can be more capacity building? There is quite a lot of tension between organisations that are funded, like NCS and a number of other big agencies, and smaller ones that feel that they have been marginalised—they are floundering or having to close down. Then there is tension between these services in local areas versus these new initiatives, which are also doing good work. There is quite a lot of tension there.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** What I believe about something like the National Citizen Service and its predecessors is that a number of Governments, including this one, want every young person to have an offer that essentially goes to as many young people as is humanly possible. I feel, whether this is a job around poverty or crime, or the troubled families programme, which I have just been responsible for, that this is the same. Actually, one of the levellers in society is that kids all have some sort of experience like that, so that as we grow up we are able to think about something other than ourselves. As a statement—that society or communities are as important as individuals—that is a really good thing. Different Administrations have attempted to come at this in different ways, but the goal has been the same.

Obviously we wanted to head here in the review, and therefore we put quite a bit in about youth. Where you are absolutely right is that I think my slight thing is that, just because we want something called the NCS to go across the board as a concept and as something we want every child to experience, there may be different ways to achieve it. Perhaps we ought

to look at a more mixed economy—to use jargon—of how to deliver the National Citizen Service, because what the Government has challenged them to do is huge. I look at what the Government is asking them to do during the course of this Parliament and think, "Will they make it there?"

Q7 **Rushanara Ali:** Do you think that the Government has put additional funds in to back up and reinforce the capacities of these other institutions that you have mentioned—the other small organisations, the 400 or so—and the many thousands in the country that feel that they are not being properly supported? There is an inherent tension. I am a big supporter of NCS, but there is an inherent tension with that. Should the Government not be backing them up with further resources?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Dare I sound like a civil servant for a moment? I think that Ministers should look carefully—that is code—at where essentially we need to look at not making it a question of "NCS or". What we need is for NCS to be a broad banner that allows lots of decent organisations to flourish, but for us to have the same goal, which is kids mix—kids get an idea about what society is about beyond themselves and have an understanding of what Britain is in the 21st century.

Do I think that there is scope to look at that as they go forward? Yes, I do. We cannot put all our eggs in one pot, as an organisation, because we know—fair play to them—that NCS are giving it their best shot as an organisation, but they are not necessarily reaching. We show in the report, very positively, that they are moving in the right direction to reach certain groups that I would be worried about—the socially and economically disadvantaged—and other issues, but they are not necessarily going to get there in the time that we want.

If we have other organisations in those areas that can benefit, either from a relationship with NCS that means that they are in some way empowered to do that job, or from additional routes, then yes, I think they should. If there is one thing that comes out of this report, for me, personally, is that we have to give children in this country the opportunity to help shape the future. In a way, the more we do in the gluing area around young people, the better.

Q8 **Rushanara Ali:** Do you think it is right that the Government over the last few years has essentially reduced youth service funding in the country? Most local authorities have had to make major cuts to youth provision.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** You are talking to someone who used to work for the voluntary sector as well, so obviously I have concerns about some funding cuts over the last few years—

**Rushanara Ali:** Are you concerned about youth service funding cuts?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Do I think that sometimes we have—we never reformed the youth service. That has never happened, so do I think the youth service was perfect—

**Rushanara Ali:** I'm not talking about reform; I'm talking about cuts in funding to youth services, like in my constituency.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** But I'm saying this is not just about cuts in funding; I'm saying—

Q9 **Rushanara Ali:** Sorry, Dame Louise: my question was about funding cuts to youth services. In the light of your point about integration and the focus on younger people in our society being critical to integration, and all the other things you have said—I wholeheartedly agree with you—are you not concerned about cuts in youth provision up and down the country where there aren't alternatives? With all the will in the world and the work of the NCSs of this country—it has done a good job, but it has not been able to address the gaps that are there. In boroughs like mine, with the highest concentration of young people in Europe, when you have those sorts of cuts, there will be consequences. Are you not concerned about that? The question is: are you concerned?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** And the answer is yes, I am concerned. Do I think that is only part of the picture? Yes, I do—honestly, I do. For example, your borough does not make lots of referrals to the NCS—the National Citizen Service. It doesn't take up the same level of opportunities as neighbouring boroughs do, and that is not just about cuts in youth services in Tower Hamlets.

Q10 **Rushanara Ali:** Are you saying that that is because the borough is doing something wrong, or is it because the organisation—

***Dame Louise Casey:*** It could be a bit of both. What I am saying is that you have something there that is not just about money. That is all I am saying. Of course I would be concerned about—

Q11 **Rushanara Ali:** Well, my borough has done a great deal of work to make sure that youth service provision is not cut, and has found resources. I am talking about a wider problem, up and down the country, and I am sure that colleagues will want to come in on concerns about youth services. Can I turn your attention to a question in relation to the subject of your inquiry? How do you define integration?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Do you mind if I just go back to that last thing for one moment? It is so easy to say this is just about money, and it really isn't.

Q12 **Rushanara Ali:** You can come back to that later perhaps; I am conscious that colleagues will want to come in. Do you want to reinforce to the Committee what your definition of integration is?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** As we say in the report, there are multiple different versions of what people think integration is. What we did was look at it in the way we have done, so we have looked at social and economic exclusion, at population change, at settlement, at people's attitudes—we have gone right the way through it. I don't think it is easy to just say, "This is the definition of integration." I think that is one of the things that is very difficult to do.

Q13 **Rushanara Ali:** But what should be the Government's approach? Do you consider it to be a two-way process, or do you feel that some groups

need to make more effort than others?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I didn't realise I was heading into this controversial territory so early, but in terms of the two-way street, no, I don't think it's a two-way street. I think that's a soundbite that people like to say: "Integration is a two-way street." I would say—if we stick with the road analogy—that I think integration is more like this. You have a bloody big motorway and you have a slip road of people coming in from the outside, and people in the middle, in the motorway, need to accommodate and be gentle and kind to people coming in from the outside lane, but we are all heading in the same direction. I think it gets into this place where we have this idea that it's a two-way street. To some degree it's a two-way street, but to some degree it is not: there is more give on one side and more take on the other. And I think that's where we have successively made a mistake, which is that we have not been honest about that. I think that is partly what I am trying to say in terms of leadership, which is that I understand what people are saying when they say integration is a two-way street; of course it is, but only to some degree.

Q14 **Rushanara Ali:** So the majority does not have to change, does not have to adjust, very much.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** What you will note I said is that I think the people in the middle, the people in the motorway—of course they have to adjust a little bit, but the general thing moves in the same direction.

Q15 **Rushanara Ali:** Thank you. Can we move on to the next question? You highlight many of the issues affecting women, particularly from ethnic minority and religious groups. I was very pleased that you talked about some of the work of sections like the Forced Marriage Unit and the focus on human rights violations. Do you think the Government could do much more to prioritise those needs, and what do you think in particular they could do, building on some of the work that has been done in the past, in terms of sensitising public service providers to be much more assertive and clear about protecting the rights of women, young people and other groups who are experiencing violations of their rights?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** You probably expect me to say this but I think you can never do enough, and as long as women are being violated in those ways, you are not doing enough. How you do it gets difficult and complicated, but of course you should do it. I think the previous Administration set up some of the units you referred to. The current Prime Minister, when she was Home Secretary, put even more energy and effort into that work. Again, this is one of those things that goes across the political divide, thank God.

That leads me to something that, again, has not necessarily been as straightforward as one might have thought it would be at the beginning of this process. I found this challenging, and challenging to talk about in the report. There is a trajectory here—a definition of "forced marriage" is straightforward, as is a definition of "arranged marriage", and at one level we can sit in those definitions and think, "Fine," but I found, and I didn't have to look very hard, women's groups and organisations where one

person's arranged marriage was clearly another person's forced marriage. How we deal with that is much more difficult than the numbers of prosecutions for forced marriage or particular circumstances, so I think the need for campaigning, educational awareness and those sorts of things is quite important and profound. Obviously, that is in a context where women are generally still not seen as equal to men in society, and the report coming out tomorrow shows the asserting of a 45% target for women to be MPs in Parliament rather than a 50% target. So at one level you can see that this sort of attitude towards our gender is still not quite where it should be, but taking the issues you are talking about, we need a much greater awareness and understanding of the complexities. I didn't see *Guardian* Soulmates in some of the places that I went to. I didn't see nice little dating agencies that we would all like to benefit from when we are single. I saw some things that were actually incredibly troubling and where, in the name of religion, things were essentially—I felt—closer to forced marriages than I would probably have wanted.

Q16 **Rushanara Ali:** You are aware that there a number of dating agencies in different faith groups.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I am.

Q17 **Rushanara Ali:** Just to be clear, there is plenty of activity going on on that front as well.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** And I am not sure I agree with a great deal of it. But that's me—I am single, so there you go. Single and hopeless.

Q18 **Rushanara Ali:** On the subject of resources in the police service, for instance, and domestic violence units, a lot of work has been done to sensitise services to working with those groups who are particularly vulnerable—women facing violence, but then there are women with other needs, and there may be a language and cultural dimensions to the violence they experience, and so on. I am sorry to come back to cuts, but are you concerned about them, given some of the good work that has been done? Policing numbers and all that have a knock-on effect; I have seen it at first hand in my constituency, and I am sure others have. Are you concerned that your recommendations about empowering women and providing them with protection and support could be undermined by some of the broader sweeping changes that have been made and by cuts that have hit women proportionately harder than men, in terms of the broader socioeconomic context?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I suppose this is another "Yes, but" answer, I am afraid. So yes, of course I am concerned. I did the inspection into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham and in previous jobs looked particularly at the vulnerability of children and child abuse. But then you read the HMIC report into the Metropolitan police that was published just before Christmas and you realise that the Metropolitan police have made choices, haven't they? Do you opt for vulnerability or target hardening and different sorts of crime? As an industry they went there and they are now trying to come back again. I think what we need is a nuanced police service that is able to understand that is not one thing or the other, just

because the previous Mayor—I think it was the previous Mayor—or whoever said, "We need to go down this route in terms of targets." That does not mean to say you throw the baby out with the bathwater in terms of vulnerability. I hazard a guess that the experience of what happened in the Metropolitan police will not necessarily be different from what is happening around the rest of the country. This is an issue not just of resources; actually, this is an issue of how politicians and other public sector leaders decide to lead some of these organisations and the choices that they make and the language that they use. They have got to be careful, I think.

Q19 **Rushanara Ali:** I have one final question, which is about whether costings have been done around your recommendations on new cohesion programmes and also on more English language classes. I am really glad that there is a strong emphasis on English language classes, because the resources have not backed that up. There have been cuts to funding under successive Governments for English language classes, particularly at certain levels. Have any costings been made? If they have, what are they?

***Neil O'Connor:*** This a report from Dame Louise to Government, so it is now Government's role to look at the report, consider the recommendations and think about the resources that would be necessary to implement whatever the Government decides to do. It is notable, though, that during the course of the review there was an extra £20 million announced over the life of this Parliament for English language classes through DCLG, so we can hope that is perhaps a first step on the road towards a new approach.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Interestingly, the early indications are that that money got to the right sorts of organisations and the right sort of people to help them. One of the issues for me is: I understand again the issue around reduction in resources, but to say that this is just a question of ESOL, it just is not. Actually, in some cases it may be and in some cases it may not. So some of the people that I would be most concerned about—those not able to conduct a conversation with their own GP around their personal health when they may have been abused—will not be banging down the door of an ESOL class. That does not mean to say that I do not agree with some of what you are saying, but I am saying that it is genuinely more complicated.

Q20 **Rushanara Ali:** Just to flag up, when the initial changes were made—actually by my party—and some cuts were made to ESOL, a few thousand predominantly women came and protested against those cuts, and that continued. I want to raise this because it is really important to emphasise that there are people who want those language classes, and eastern European migrants needed those classes as well as ethnic minority groups. To suggest or imply that that is not an issue is—

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I am not suggesting that it is not an issue. I am saying that it is not the only issue. It is a bit like the youth service one.

**Rushanara Ali:** But it is a big problem in some areas. I am not saying it is the only issue, either, but we cannot underestimate it and say it is not an issue.

Q21 **Kevin Hollinrake:** Dame Louise, you looked at the education system. I was previously a parliamentary candidate in Dewsbury, which has a very divided education system. In your report, I think you referred to the Department for Education as having an inconclusive understanding of the impacts of immigration on education. Do you think it needs to improve its understanding?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Yes.

**Kevin Hollinrake:** Great.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Yes, I do, without doubt, unequivocally. The answer is absolutely yes. The other thing, though, is that that is symbolic of a wider lack of understanding and data around the impacts of immigration in certain areas. You cannot just throw it all in one basket and say, "There is one approach to deal with everything." I suppose, overall, fundamentally what we are saying in terms of the review is that whether immigration happened, did not happen or is happening, what you need is a more proactive integration strategy, whether that is around the Roma in the Chairman's constituency or the heritage communities in your own and Dewsbury or indeed in other areas.

In the report's 200 pages, we have put together—we had quite a long time to do it, eventually—nearly every fact and statistic and made sense of it if we possibly could. But I do think that some of the nuancing of local authorities, educational establishments and others around the impact of not only immigration but other changes is important. For example, I don't think I minced my words in the report about home schooling.

I worry that home schooling is one of those things that gets caught up in, essentially, the responsibility of this Committee and the Education Committee. I have worked in a number of jobs where the local authority—most local authorities do not do this, but some do—says "We can do nothing about education, Louise; it's nothing to do with us. That's now all academies, and it's all run out of DFE." Not every local authority does that—I am caricaturing—but some do.

Then you have other areas that are so frustrated that they cannot even—this has got nothing to do with an integration report. If one worries about child abuse, there have been some notable cases over the years. There was a seven-year-old who died whom we didn't even know about, who was home schooled. I can't remember where it was now; some shire in the south-west. I worry about home schooling. I want to know that children are safe, wherever they are. I see that that is a responsibility for local government, and I feel that it is therefore this Committee's responsibility to have a view on that and take scrutiny over. I think schooling is part of that.

Q22 **Kevin Hollinrake:** Looking at local authorities, do you feel that they

should be able to oppose the establishment of schools in their area that might make segregation worse and exacerbate the situation?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I am going to attempt to sound like a civil servant again for a moment and say that the review essentially shows just how difficult that is for some local authorities. I have found, in real time during the course of doing this review, reasonable local authorities that felt that they were dealing with something and nobody was listening to them. Chief executives of local authorities were making representations to colleagues in DFE and just didn't feel heard, let alone knowing whether anybody was going to respond to them.

I think we can't have that. I don't know whether local government needs new powers; that is a different matter for other people to worry about. You have central Government and you have local government. That is how our society works. At local government level, they need to be able to have a sense of who is living in their area, what children are growing up in their area, what type of vulnerabilities those children might have, how many are home schooled and how many are not, what types of school are being opened in their area and whether that is representative and what is needed right now. They need to be responsible in how they have those conversations—they do not necessarily have the ability to do everything—but there needs to be a greater level of communication, as a minimum.

Q23 **Kevin Hollinrake:** Is the proposed lifting of the 50% cap on admissions for new faith schools something that you are concerned about too? It is obviously a Government proposal.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Interestingly, "scrap the cap" was my sound bite on it, because it just wasn't working. The bottom line is that if it were working, fine, but it isn't working and it wasn't working. As for what the Government decide to replace it with, there is no single thing that will suddenly make this okay. I think that they have got their work cut out to work out what you would replace it with, but the 50% cap was not working and needed to be replaced. I think that was a really sensible decision made by the new Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening, when she arrived. I thought it was a very sensible thing to do. If not, I would have recommended it.

Q24 **Kevin Hollinrake:** Finally, do you think Ofsted are robust enough in terms of other inspections? I was involved in the case of the Zakaria Muslim girls' school in Batley, in which the inspector had not insisted on speaking to teachers and pupils at the school. Have they learned the lessons from that kind of case? Are they doing enough? Are they making sure that these schools are providing an inclusive education?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Certainly during the period when we were doing the review—so during the last 18 months—and probably before, we had some awareness of this, because I was involved with the troubled families programme.

I would say that the establishment of a specialist team within Ofsted, set up by Sir Michael Wilshaw with Michael Gove's support, was very sensible.

I think that they have reformed the way that they have gone about how they do some things, which is more to the good. Some of the time, I have felt that Michael Wilshaw has been shot down for telling the truth. It is another "shoot the messenger" job, really. People have different styles. I am sure some people do not like the way I work or the way I talk either. They found what they found in some of these schools and they should be finding it and, where they are not, they need to do better. I think the establishment of a specialist team within Ofsted really helped.

To give you one thing that I found extraordinary: it happened right at the beginning of the review and concerns someone in a further education establishment who is a bit of a hero. The thing about this is that so many teachers and head teachers and people who work in education are heroes in relation to this matter. The ends that they go to to try to do the right thing by everybody is extraordinary.

This situation was told to me by a guy who runs a further education college. Historically, Ofsted had arrived and the Ofsted inspector had said, "Isn't it great? Your electrical engineer chap who runs that course is essentially showing people how to wire plugs for Pakistan." It could have been anywhere, really. And the guy said, "Why is he doing that?" And he said, "It is great; it is an inclusive sign." At one level it is because he might travel back to Pakistan and he might need to do it and that's fine. That is all good. You might go on holiday to Spain and need to know that there is a plug. But the fact that they weren't also teaching was symbolic.

The person who raised that with me was the FE person, who is wonderfully inclusive and right on and doing every single thing he can and is very beloved by all people in his community—and he had the problem with Ofsted. I thought, "Okay, this is really interesting." That is a long time ago, I think that was three or four years ago, but I think we have still probably got— The experience you have described, I hope would not happen now.

***Neil O'Connor:*** It is one of Dame Louise's recommendations that Ofsted should be resourced for action in that area.

**Kevin Hollinrake:** That case was in 2016.

Q25 **Melanie Onn:** I share your concerns about children who are not in mainstream education. I think it is far too easy for them to fall out of any kind of system monitoring support. They can become lost and forgotten about. I was interested to read about the unregistered schools and wondered if you could elaborate a bit more about how widespread you think unregistered schools are. Is it an issue that the Government should be taking more seriously?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** The first thing to say is that, without doubt, we should take seriously any form of unregistered establishment, be that a school or what purports to be a school. The very fact that they sometimes call themselves schools is completely misrepresentative to the parents

who end up thinking that their kids are going to get a better education there or learn something there.

How can I put this? I don't think we have been on this as much as we should have been, hence one of the recommendations is to bump up—sorry, resource more effectively—Ofsted and the Charity Commission, because we don't know the size of it.

I probably have some views but they would be largely anecdotal and based on where I have been and people I have talked to. I also think that Ofsted and the Charity Commission don't find it very hard to find them. That cuts to something that is, again, at the more difficult end to talk about. That is, where essentially you have higher levels of segregation or higher levels of a particular religious minority and specifically Muslim—there are others; I would say that is about size as much as anything else—the desire to have alternative institutions feels greater.

So, the feedback we got from areas, local authorities, educational establishments and others is that these schools are growing up in areas that are already highly segregated. People are turning, in a way, more inwards. In a way, that is less about religion. In a way, partly what I tried to talk about in the report, is that we have got to be careful. The motorway has to be careful not to push people further away. Do you see what I mean? There is a vicious circle between people facing discrimination, racism and disadvantage and then pulling further away. At the same time, by pulling further away, you suffer more racism and disadvantage. It is almost impossible to know which comes first.

I didn't find it very hard to be taken through the streets of many of the places that I went to and see the growth of what are potentially alternative establishments, and I don't think we can have that. I can't guarantee to you, and neither can anybody else, that children are safe in those establishments. I don't care who the children are, what their religion or ethnicity is and what part of the country they are from. This is the United Kingdom in the 21st century. Every child should be safe.

We can't guarantee their safety in their own homes—we have a bloody good go at it with our child protection system, but we can't—so we should do everything we can in the system, whether that is for home schooling. We need to know where children are. That is one of the benefits of things like the children's centres. From antenatal to post-natal to when they are five, we need to have a sense of children's safety. If you then, in the name of religion, culture or diversity—in the name of anything—have a system that says, "We are going to have lots of alternative establishments," and those alternative establishments are keeping kids in those environments for hours and hours, we need to check that children are safe in the widest meaning of that word.

Michael Wilshaw has had a battering from lots of people for saying that out loud. He may not be everybody's cup of tea, but he just said what he saw, and he has had a bit of a battering for it. If he is getting a battering, imagine what it's like for the women's and communities groups that speak

out on some of these issues. Imagine the type of backlash they get within their own community and on social media. Even some of the people who were involved with the launch of our review only a month ago have been battered. That has got to stop. Nobody wants a child to be unsafe in this country. If they do, there is something wrong with them.

Q26 **Melanie Onn:** On top of unregistered schools, I understand that there are also unregistered children. Perhaps you can explain how that can possibly be. Where are those home-registered children? What is happening, in terms of their education and their formative years?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** It's funny isn't it? I've probably said this in a number of jobs over a number of years. We need to know where children are. That's not an unreasonable expectation. Every local authority has some sense of where children are. The fact that parents don't have to say—register has a capital "R" to it, and therefore everybody always runs scared from it. I would like to register all children to know whether they are home schooled or not home schooled. I think the responsibility should be on parents to let the system know where their children are, in terms of schooling in particular. That is one of your moments. It is a defining moment, when a kid is four, for knowing where they are. Are they being home schooled? What does that home schooling look like? Who is doing it? We shouldn't wait until a child is removed from school.

The other thing that I talk about in the report is the growth of home schooling. I didn't have to work very hard during the course of the review to find areas and people who are concerned about what that growth of home schooling is. I therefore think that there are multiple reasons why we should be much clearer about where children are being educated.

Q27 **Melanie Onn:** The reality, which I have experienced in my constituency, is that the relationship of families deemed to be hard to reach—perhaps troubled families—with state organisations might be with education welfare officers. Education welfare officers will say, "When we get to the front door for children who are not required to be in school, but in theory should be at nursery or attending different kinds of settings so they are outside their own home, there are no powers for us to insist upon accessing the property." Do you think there is more that could be done to give more powers to such professionals?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** This is not just this role. I feel passionately that you can't let essentially neglectful or abusive parents make choices around their children's educational opportunities—whether that is about this report, or whether it is about the antisocial behaviour job or setting up family intervention projects. I have met numerous families over the last 20 years, and you know full well why their kid is being home schooled. It is because he is bloody difficult, she doesn't know how to handle him, they are watching domestic violence, it's a complete nightmare and no one would get him to school, so they say he is home schooled. It is a minority, but back in the world of poverty, discrimination and disadvantage, that is at play. I have always had a bit of an issue around people being "opt to home school", and that is no different in this job.

Yes, of course I would like to see what more can be done to make sure that we are on this home schooling thing more significantly, because it is growing. If home schooling were diminishing, it would not be such an issue, would it? That is the way of public policy: where our numbers or issues are getting larger, we need to pay more attention to them and have more of a look at them; if the numbers were getting smaller and diminishing, we would worry less. Actually it is going in the opposite direction and therefore public policy needs to keep up, and I don't think it is. That is why it is a recommendation in my review.

Q28 **Julian Knight:** My constituency of Solihull borders Birmingham and I am wondering about the Trojan Horse scandal. Do you think it is the tip of the iceberg or a one-off?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** We are very honest in the review about this. In terms of some of the things that were seen during what is called the Trojan Horse, we did not find it very difficult to find things like segregation of girls and what I would describe as anti-equal opportunities and anti-liberal values. Again, because there are court cases and various things going on, I do not want to go into too much detail about the actual Trojan Horse—with a capital T and a capital H—

Q29 **Julian Knight:** But is that happening elsewhere?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Yes, it is happening elsewhere. Michael Wilshaw and others have talked about this, but we are asking teachers, day in, day out, essentially to be on the frontline of trying to work out when one community leader's request is reasonable and when another community leader's request is not reasonable. We ask them to manage that constantly. Should a secular school close at 1 o'clock on a Friday for religious reasons? I know what my view is on that, but I know that that head teacher has to have a very difficult set of conversations with the community, which often turns out not to be the parents. That is not everywhere, in every bit of the country, but it is in some communities in some areas and, yes, we found it.

The other thing that I worry about is that I came across one meeting of people in public policy positions who referred to the Trojan Horse as the "Trojan hoax"—as in they did not believe it to be true. Trojan Horse is a set of issues—they go from girls being split off from boys through to teachers essentially teaching extremism, which is a trajectory in the public domain—and I am not sure that I am saying that that end is everywhere, but do I think that some of the dynamics that happened in Trojan Horse are at play in other areas of the country? Yes, I do.

More importantly, when does a teacher running a secular school say, "No, it's fine for you not to do theatre," or music or those sorts of thing? When is that okay? I do not really have any view on which religion it is that it is promoting those sorts of views, but they are not okay, in the same way that it is not okay for Catholic schools to be homophobic and anti-gay marriage. That is not okay either—it is not how we bring children up in this country. It is often veiled as religious conservatism, and I have a problem

with the expression "religious conservatism", because often it can be anti-equalities. We have got to be careful that people can choose, obviously, to live the lives that they want to live, but that they cannot condemn others for living differently. That is a grey line, and the more we can talk about it the better. That is the most important thing: that people are able to talk about it, and that these head teachers are not left feeling isolated and alone when they are having those conversations.

Q30 **Julian Knight:** Are teachers and decision makers in schools afraid of being branded a racist because they say no to the leaders of certain communities?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Everybody is frightened of being branded a racist—well, there are some nasty people on the right who clearly are not, but most normal people are frightened of being branded a racist—so yes of course that is at play. Of course it is. The very genuine fear in all of this is that we have two extremes alive in our communities. We have the extreme right wing, which is milking this for all it is worth. When one looks across Europe, frankly, some of it is not pretty. We have the extreme right wing in our own country, which we are all utterly appalled by, but we also have Islamist extremism at play, and I have felt at points that it has been easier to talk about one than the other, and I think that does a disservice to thousands of people who are caught up in being on the receiving end of not having the start in life that they should have, living in the United Kingdom.

Q31 **Julian Knight:** So you mean that you feel that effectively you can talk about the right-wing extremism but not the Islamist extremism?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Okay, so I would say at least several decent, good chief execs of local authorities, when interviewed, said at points—there are two downsides of doing the inspection into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham. One was the personal wake-up call of, "Did I get stuff wrong for the last 20, 30 years in public service?" That is really, "Did you know this stuff was going on?" and, "You didn't ask the hard questions yourself, Louise." That was No. 1.

No. 2 is that, essentially, the EDL milked the hell out of that town. If you were a Muslim woman who was head-scarfed and walked through Rotherham town centre—at points I dread to think of the type of racism and abuse that they would experience; it was appalling. But what was interesting about points during the review was that, in a way, these chief execs talked about people coming together. They said it is "one of the only times we can get everybody together, Louise." One used the expression, "It is team building around the EDL." I want the same team building around other forms of extremism. It has to be balanced. We easily want to condemn racists, and so we bloody should! So we should, but we should also condemn people who have other extreme views. That is right, and I think some of these teachers really struggle with it—and we leave them to it, quite a lot, as well.

Q32 **Julian Knight:** Just to segue on that, you mentioned segregation—the

separation of women and girls—and there has been quite a lot of media coverage in terms of segregated public meetings. I am interested in what your view is of, say, politicians and civil servants who attend and speak at segregated public meetings.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Well, the first thing to say is that, in public terms, I have not come across that many very significant public meetings—I think we both know the two that are probably out there in the public domain. Neil and I turned up at something in Wales where they said he could not come in with me because he was a man, and I said, "Well, the game's off then. I'm not coming in. That is how it is." It was a bit of an unusual role reversal, but anyway—I had my moment, Neil, didn't I? There we are. I could be like that for a change, instead of the other way around, so that was very nice.

There is a long road here of all of us trying to do the right thing. This country is actually full of people trying to do the right thing, of every religion, every creed, every race and every colour. And, along with trying to do the right thing, at some point you think, "When do you reach out on somebody else's terms?" It is like people in the media who say, "Louise doesn't like it because people do not shake her hand." I am not that bothered, actually. I am more worried about other things that you may think if you do not shake my hand than about not shaking my hand. Do you know what I mean?

Q33 **Julian Knight:** Do you mean Robbie Williams?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Exactly—I did mention being single. No, in all seriousness, the point I am trying to make is that people try to do the right thing, and actually if you know a particular situation is going to be segregated, you might go to try to say, "Listen, do you have to be that way?"

I met a headteacher who went to a meeting where she sat right among the men—she could do because she was the headteacher—and slowly over five years she has gained the trust of everybody. There is much less segregation—that is with a capital S—and much more mixing in the types of meeting they have. More parents come to those meetings now, and more women and more mothers come to those meetings. So, it is hard to click your fingers and say, "You do this or you don't do that." Of course, it is easy for me to sit here and say after 18 months of this, "No." The same way that I went to that meeting in Wales and said, "No, that won't be happening. He comes in with me. We have the meeting or I am going." That is an easy place for me to be. Do I think sometimes you have to reach out in different ways? Would I cut people slack occasionally for that? Probably I would. It is very hard to judge from SW1 everybody about everything, isn't it? Maybe I'm being too nice.

Q34 **Julian Knight:** So you wouldn't say, for example, that the non-attendance of such meetings should effectively become a condition of public office? That you just basically don't take part in meetings that are segregated?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Ah, I do think that is a slightly different issue about public leaders and politicians and those sorts of thing. I am very interested in how we look at taking forward what public office looks like and integrity in public office and what the rules are.

Q35 **Julian Knight:** Should we be setting an example as politicians, civil servants and council leaders by saying, "I won't be attending meetings that are segregated."?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Yes, I think that is probably right. All I am saying is that we need to think it through before making hard and fast rules. Part of the problem of where we have got in 2016 is that we have not thought some of this through enough, and we have not worked out that not everywhere is the same.

Yes, of course, at one level—I now realise where you are heading—I want politicians and chief public officials to say, "We don't do segregation. Women are equal to men." Some obvious things. Of course, I do. If symbolically that is one way of pushing that forward then, yes, that is right.

All I am saying, though, is that beneath all that there are some people in some communities who we need to get to. It is a bit like saying that you might run some domestic violence services specialised for women from certain communities because otherwise you know you are not going to be able to reach them and help them. In the longer term, you wouldn't want to run those specialist services, but in the short term you may need to.

Q36 **Mary Robinson:** Dame Louise, keeping on the theme of good leadership and local leadership, chapter 11 of your report speaks about that and the role of community leaders and local councillors. Issues around Rotherham and the events there were referred to. We know that you talk about "repeated examples of regressive, discriminatory and harmful attitudes and behaviours being sanctioned by authorities in the name of tolerance and multiculturalism". On the other hand, there were areas where "unacceptable statements about radicalisation" were made. Just how widespread is poor behaviour among councillors?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I think it is difficult to judge from here how widespread it is. I have to say that we discussed at some length how we would talk about this in the report and how it would be presented in a way that people would listen to it and either not overgeneralise or not take it seriously enough.

I think I mentioned earlier that I was quite shocked by what I found in Rotherham. My sense is that that was not an isolated example. At the time that we were looking or inspecting child sexual exploitation in Rotherham, there were other authorities that were in a similar position and I hazard a guess that some of the politicians in those local areas might also not have been as aware as they should have been of what was going on and did not ask difficult questions.

Yes, more generally, I didn't know, for example, that you could be a serving councillor and not pay your council tax all year round, as far as I could gather, unless somebody has introduced a local rule. I thought, let's not tell the general public that, actually, these people set rules for us to pay our council taxes and take us to court, yet they can potentially in some areas vote and not pay their council tax.

In the same way, I find it quite hard to know that certain categories of offender are able to serve in public office in perpetuity without having any question over whether they are fit for public office.

I feel that we are at a juncture in terms of trust in public service and public office. I was at a Charity Commission event this morning, where within a decade—I think since 2012 to 2016—trust in charities has gone down incredibly significantly. We have to work out, as public office holders—whether elected or unelected—how we reaffirm that most people who come into public office do so not for money or glory, but to try to do the right thing—and to do that to the best of their abilities. It is a very wide part of the report. We could have written a whole report around leadership, but obviously we didn't; we were limited.

Q37 **Mary Robinson:** It is right to mention the huge and overwhelming number of people who go into public life for the very best of reasons, but we tend to focus on these issues where there are problems that come up, and you have referred to that. In terms of monitoring councillors' behaviour, is there more that could be done? We seem to rely on a system whereby the electors monitor councillors' behaviour every four years. Should more be done and could more be done?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I wasn't the biggest fan of the world of standards and the local Standards Boards and all of that, and I completely understand why both—I think—Labour and Conservative Ministers also had concerns about that system. There is a part of me that wonders just a little bit whether we threw the baby out with the bathwater, as it were. I found in Rotherham and elsewhere that monitoring officers, as such, are essentially now pretty toothless, really.

If there is strong overall leadership—although there was very strong overall leadership in Rotherham, so that is not the only issue—where essentially you have very strong chief executives and a strong majority and everything is proper and good, it is probably okay. When the isolated examples come up, the leader and/or the chief exec get them in and goes, "Come on!" Where you don't have that type of stability or any form of a system—or not enough of a system—to look at standards, you run into difficulty.

I totally accept that it is isolated examples. There are days when I think, "Who would be a councillor?", or, even more, "Who would be a cabinet member?" They have such huge responsibilities for very little financial remuneration, and often for very little credit as well; they are doing incredibly difficult jobs.

The problem is that, when a minority essentially do the sorts of things that we talk about in the report that are a matter of public domain, it brings all of us into disrepute. That is the problem with all of this: it takes just a small number to bring the whole thing into disrepute. The recommendations—which Sajid Javid has taken on entirely, in terms of putting some ownership around how the whole report goes forward—got coverage around the oath, although the oath is just one part of it; it is an option for a way forward and something we could think about. Behind that, I am interested in how you look at the role of monitoring officers and how we give greater clarity to chief execs and leaders as to these sorts of behaviour and conduct issues.

Q38 **Mary Robinson:** For a lot of local government, when we are speaking about our roles in public life it is based on the Nolan principles. Is that something that really needs to be reinforced? Is it just about an oath or is there more that could be done there?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I take personal responsibility for the oath; it was my idea. I think that, sometimes, symbolic things are important. I found it quite interesting when I became a justice of the peace—a magistrate—a long, long time ago that we had to swear an oath about not showing fear or favour to all members of the community. It is quite an impressive thing and it reminds you of your responsibility to everyone.

I thought it was quite interesting that, when Sadiq Khan became Mayor of London and gave his inaugural speech in Southwark cathedral, one of the things he said was, "I stand for all Londoners." I thought that was quite interesting and very symbolic. One gets elected by an interest group, in the broadest meaning. Once in office, that is incumbent particularly, I think, on local authority members more than anybody else.

Local politics is different from Westminster politics. Local politics and local government have to run the show. They have to get the bins collected. They have to make sure old people don't die. They have to protect vulnerable children. They have to do pot holes. They have to do regeneration. They have to do so many different things. In that brief, this should be part of how we get behind what local authority membership is about and how we reinvigorate what standards in public life are.

Most members of the public do not know who Louise Casey is. They certainly do not know who Nolan is, and they would laugh if they thought we all applied those standards in public life. If you did a poll tomorrow and asked them, "Do all politicians, locally and centrally, adopt these standards?", we would not like the results. That is what we are up against. It is about trying to grab that and say, "Most of us do the right thing". Most local politicians work unceasingly to try and do the right thing, and we need to make sure we have a system that supports people who do right and not people who collude in doing wrong. That is the problem that we have at the moment. You can get away with doing wrong.

Q39 **Mary Robinson:** It is kind of a carrot and stick. We talk about Rotherham

and other cases; would having an oath have made a difference to the behaviour of those councillors? Some people have called for a process to make it easier to remove councillors. Would that be a way forward?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I say in the recommendations that I want us to have a look at all of that—I would like to look at all of it, and I think we should look at all of it carefully. There has been feedback from people who do do oaths—I think it is called the behavioural insight team, otherwise known as the nudge unit. It should be called the "shove unit"—the nudge unit nudges where I like to shove—but anyway, they have given us very strong information that when people take a moment to symbolically swear an oath, it has an impact on them.

This is a slightly different issue, but look at citizenship ceremonies in our town halls throughout the country. They are wonderful moments where people from all over the world become British citizens. They take it incredibly seriously and they are very powerful moments. Police officers swear an allegiance. You do a mini version in the House. I think these are symbolic moments. They are not the only show in town, but they would help in my view.

***Neil O'Connor:*** They make the expectations more explicit—what we are expecting people to live up to.

Q40 **Mary Robinson:** On the expectations that people would live up to, what would the new oath for immigrants potentially do?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** It is in the same territory, really. Again, we feel that there needs to be a greater emphasis on this. Rights and wrongs of immigration are for other people to judge, but what is clear is that we ought to be more about integration—we should have been and need to be.

I hope the Chairman will not mind my saying this, but we were jointly in a meeting in his constituency. I felt at the meeting that we were kind of explaining the rules of the game to some of the people there who were from eastern Europe, who had never really been engaged with in that way before. It was with a local MP, and they had me, but I thought it was interesting that they said nobody had talked to them about this. They arrived and didn't get jobs when they thought they were getting jobs. They hadn't been treated that well, as it happens, and on we go from there. But also, nobody had talked to them about our way of life here, or about when to put rubbish out.

Let us take a real detail that would be a real issue for a local authority: if you put rubbish out on the wrong day, it costs a lot of money. So there were basics that we had not even run through. Nobody told them to queue. Nobody told them to be nice and all those sorts of things. We hadn't been on it. As part of the package, that would be no bad thing.

***Neil O'Connor:*** We had a joke in the review: we thought it was quite British to be too polite to tell people what we expected them to do, but to then get cross when they didn't do it.

Q41 **Alison Thewliss:** To take the discussion on the oath a wee bit further, I am in a slightly different position, coming from Scotland, and I am curious about what discussions you have had with the Scottish Government about the oath and ideas about that, and with the Northern Ireland Assembly as well. For some people in Northern Ireland, taking an oath of British loyalty would be quite problematic and difficult politically, and I wonder what discussions you had had on that.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Obviously we have not had—basically, the next step is for Ministers and others to have discussions about how to take all those issues forward, including the standards in public life, of which the oath is just one part. I have not had those conversations with either of the devolved Administrations. That said, we had a fantastic and interesting long visit—actually, I went twice to Scotland and was really quite impressed by some of the work that happens in Scotland around integration. They call it equalities, but actually it was proactive integration work.

I thought that some of what they did in Scotland—some of the recommendations are in that space, around area-based work, more proactive work, work on equalities for women and those sorts of things. I felt that some of what happened in Scotland was slightly further ahead, actually. I only met officials, but I thought that certainly their way of talking and their willingness was very profound.

That said, I also found some of the issues in the report in Glasgow, and I didn't find it very hard to find them, either. That is not about the oath; I mean more generally—some of the issues that I have talked about in the report, around certain communities. I had a couple of very interesting meetings in Glasgow. I think it's a matter of public record as well about the Central mosque in Glasgow having challenges and difficulties and some other Muslims in the community being absolutely sick to death of the male misogyny of that particular mosque.

So yes, it was very interesting. There was a lot to be said for some of their approaches, which I feel we have mirrored in the report; and then I saw what I have seen in other areas as well.

Q42 **Alison Thewliss:** This is also much more complex than just saying it is one community; there are different layers within that community. There is the older, first generation, and then there are other generations coming along and having different ideas. Managing that within communities can be quite difficult as well.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Without doubt, and that was definitely one of the dynamics that was happening at the time I was in Scotland and, I think, continues. This is a Glasgow issue specifically, but what you are saying I would say is true in other areas.

But again, I don't want us to duck a difficult issue, which is that I also came across young people who frankly are more British than I am—their heritage has been British longer than my own—and who actually had views that were further away from perhaps where liberal Britain would be. I

accept entirely what you are saying about the Glasgow mosque, and I think that plays out in a number of areas of the country, but there are dynamics that we talk about in the report, to do with people's approach to women in particular and gay people, that leave a great deal to be desired, and it was young people thinking those things, so we have a challenge here.

Q43 **Alison Thewliss:** I did not really see acknowledged in the report the extent to which Scotland is different, in terms of the education system, for example, and the "Getting it right for every child" approach. We have the Standards Commission in Scotland still, and it takes a pretty robust approach in some cases to councillors. We also have the "New Scots" strategy about how we integrate—that is specifically for asylum seekers and refugees, but a more welcoming approach has been taken and leadership shown, particularly in Glasgow. I say that; it is a Labour council and I am an SNP MP, but I am also a former Glasgow councillor, and the council has been consistent in providing a welcome to people who come to Glasgow. That leadership has been there. I don't see enough acknowledgement in the report of the good practice that is out there.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** One criticism of the report—fortunately, there has not been as much criticism as I was anticipating—is that I did not focus enough on the positives. I guess that is because I was so worried about the negatives that I filled 200 pages with what I was worried about, rather than some of the stuff that I was less worried about, so I take that as a criticism. There are examples of things that are good throughout the country, and we did put some of that in there.

Dare I say it? The thing about Scotland is that its population is smaller than London's, so getting things done is sometimes more straightforward in Scotland than it might be even here. We have 33 boroughs and one Mayor, and we have a country that is complicated. If you take England and Wales, getting things done there is different from getting them done in Scotland, is what I'll say. Of course I found things that I thought were progressive and helpful in Scotland, but I do not want you to go away from this meeting thinking that I did not also find things that I would be equally worried about, honestly.

**Alison Thewliss:** There are things that we know we need to make progress on; that is accepted.

**Chair:** To go back to what you said about rubbish collection, the interesting thing was that Sheffield Council actually prepared a leaflet to go out to the Slovak Roma community explaining things like how you put rubbish out, as new arrivals, and they were absolutely ridiculed and hammered by a certain national newspaper. That is a very good point on which to hand over to Julian.

Q44 **Julian Knight:** Dame Louise, on the role of the media in social cohesion, particularly in light of how your review was reported, what role do you think it should have, what role do you think it is actually playing at the moment and where do you think we can see improvements?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** The role of the media is absolutely up for discussion and of its moment. You are right to raise it. In relation to the coverage of the publication of the review, it is as I thought it would be and was actually a lot less negative than I anticipated, if I'm honest.

There are two things here. First, some of the best investigative journalism is done by the media. Some of the things that have showed what is going on in our country we would not know about sat here—even in some of your own constituencies, even though you are elected Members of Parliament and need to be aware of everything, you would not know about them if it were not for the media. That needs to be said over and over. If Andrew Norfolk had not stuck out like God knows what in Rotherham—we have already left countless children, who are now women, irrevocably damaged for the rest of their lives, but we could leave a lot more if it were not for him and, indeed, his newspaper, it has to be said.

Of course there are examples of that, but a more balanced debate within the media would be helpful. Part of it is that we need to be better about talking about the issues, both within politics and within other public offices and organisations, and need to not run scared when the media come after you. That is easy for me to say from here, although I hope that they don't after today, or any other day, because it is bloody awful when they do come after you.

The point that you are making about Sheffield is not a joke. Actually, whether we wanted eastern Europeans to come to Sheffield or not and whether we agreed with how they came or not—whoever agrees what—they're there and once there, we need them to know what the rules of the game were. Do you see what I mean? It is short sighted to let a national newspaper bang them to such a degree that they then did not do it. In the same way that I am asking that we are all slightly more robust about dealing with difficult issues, one of the things is that we need to be more robust about standing up for doing what we think is right.

Having said that, there was some negotiation with Neil, I hasten to add, over whether the Cornish language thing would be popped into the report. At one point I felt it was symbolic that a Department that totally got the direction of travel from—Eric Pickles knew what direction of travel he wanted on some of this stuff, but within his own Department we were spending more money on Cornish language than we were on English language. You can see that even when you have got the right direction of travel, if you have not got the eye on the ball; I am sure that I will now have a million letters. I have had some very tough letters from some people from Cornwall already, and I am about to get a lot more because of what I am saying. Do you see what I am saying? It is tricky.

While I am on this, I had a lot of groups that came in very early on that said things like, "You have got to stop social media. You have got to stop all of this." Look up in the sky, there are satellites; there is nothing that any of us can do about this. I don't like how they make me out either. I don't like being called fat and all sorts of things all the time by people. I

don’t find it easy either, and I get nothing in comparison to what the women on this Committee get—nothing, in comparison.

Of course I don’t like it either, but we have to work out how we deal with it all. The Pandora’s box is open, so how do we make sure that we manage it? It is a question of managing it and one of the ways of managing it, going full circle back, is English language. Over and over, a common language—so if those people from eastern Europe actually spoke English, it would mean we didn’t have to do bloody translation leaflets. I think 90% of the British public when polled—I don’t know; it is a huge percentage—said, “Everybody should speak English.” It is another occasion where we ought to listen to the public.

Q45 **Bob Blackman:** Dame Louise, the Muslim Council of Britain, the Muslim Women’s Network and even that enlightened newspaper *The Guardian* have all criticised your report for concentrating too much on the Muslim population in the UK. Are you surprised by that criticism from Muslim groups, and how do you react to it, given that that is what has been said?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** To be honest, when the Muslim Council of Britain said that they accepted quite a lot of what I said in the report and would look carefully at the findings, I thought, “Oh, okay. We’ve landed something that might be listened to here.” My biggest thing about the report was to hold a mirror up and try to say, “Like it or not, this is what we found, and it’s difficult.”

As I said in the foreword, I felt—I think we felt—this enormous sense of responsibility not to make life worse for some people who were already facing discrimination and racism, apart from anything else. It has been a difficult thing, so for the Muslim Council of Britain to say what they said, I thought, “Okay.” On the Muslim Women’s Network, again, I don’t think Shaista actually said that, if I’m taking issue, and *The Guardian* did a really positive thing and then very quickly someone said, “She’s demonising Muslim women.”

Look, the bottom line is this: we have talked about social and economic situations for many people in our community. We talk about disadvantage. We talk about all the issues. Whether you look at it as Pakistani heritage and Bangladeshi heritage and/or you look at it separately as the Muslim issue, 60% of those women are economically inactive.

If you look at English language—again, either way you look at it—they are less likely to speak English than other groups. If you look at the issue of where people are living in high-concentration areas and you layer that on and then you add a small minority of essentially male misogyny and sexism—that is sexist, misogynist behaviour towards women. It may be in the name of a religion; it may not be in the name of a religion, but that’s what it is. It’s not racism. It’s not me having a go at Muslims. It’s actually fact.

Part of my worry when we published this was that that was where people would go, and that is where they have gone before. Perhaps if I had been

a Muslim woman or a woman from Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage or any of the other Muslim groups, this might have been easier to say. I don't believe that. I had to say what was the right thing to say. I am concerned about people being disadvantaged and discriminated against whoever they are, so we had to say what we said in the report. Actually, we have had other responses from other people saying, "You've got to say this. It's got to come out."

Q46 **Bob Blackman:** A lot of the Muslim groups will say that what you have said equally applies to other religions. I represent an area that has a very large minority of Indians, and many of the first generation immigrants, particularly women, have virtually no knowledge of English at all, exactly as you are talking about, and because they were not educated in this country they have often been very isolated.

The only concern I have is that by seemingly concentrating on one element—religion, or the basis on which people came here, in first generation immigration in particular—the report downplays some of the other areas that I think are equally of concern. There is a great deal of isolation, particularly among more elderly women who have seen their families move away, not only elsewhere in this country but abroad, and possibly their husbands die. They are very isolated. That is a real concern in terms of integration, and this report has not touched on that.

Q47 ***Dame Louise Casey:*** We don't suggest in the report that those women don't exist in other communities. I don't for a moment suggest that there aren't other people in other communities who are isolated and disadvantaged, but the sheer scale that you are talking about is one issue. The second thing—this is really interesting—is that the previous Prime Minister got himself in hot water by saying that women would have to learn English even if they were elderly, or something like that about the English language. I am absolutely concerned about school-age girls. If you just looked at the BME or Asian issue, you would say they were doing fine. Actually, Chinese and Indian girls are doing fine, but there are some notable exceptions—for example, Bangladeshi and Pakistani girls are not doing fine and not doing as well. Even when they get through school, they do not move on to Russell Group universities or into decent jobs. That dynamic is not about a population that came here 50 years ago, 20 years ago or 10 years ago. It is a population that is happening now and the children growing up in our schools now, including some secular schools. That is where you can't hide away from the facts in the report that if you multiple layer the various disadvantages it points you towards certain groups that we should do a better job for. You can't walk away from that one. That is how it is.

Q48 **Bob Blackman:** I am not wishing to walk away from that. All I am concerned about is the heavy concentration—not only in this report, but also that has been picked up by the media. For example, we could talk about the area I represent where everyone is a minority. The Somalian community, for example, is very close knit, but you have not highlighted that community in such a heavy way. I realise you picked up the religious aspect, but there are isolated cases of countries of origin causing a great

deal of concern. I just wonder what layers you would look at to address that.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** My view about all these things is that you must start with size and highest risk. Sometimes the highest risk is small—small in number or a small problem—and sometimes size also dictates, so of course size is one of the biggest issues that dominates in this report. Let's remember that I am saying it is some Muslims in some communities in some areas of the country, but if you compare the number of different minority faith groups, there is no comparison. One is in the millions; everybody else is in the thousands. That is part of the reason we looked at this, but I honestly think that if you put it alongside the issues of employment for young Pakistani men in places like Oldham, it is just appalling. It is appalling. It is nothing to write home about and doesn't make me anything to say I think one of the issues in the Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage community is social exclusion. Part of the dynamic is racism and discrimination, part of the dynamic is disadvantage and some small part of the dynamic is an equality issue. My job is always to attempt to get us to talk about the difficult things, not necessarily to head towards easy.

Q49 **Bob Blackman:** Can I move on to an area I want to touch on? We talked about the role of NCS. What role do you think the voluntary sector and voluntary organisations have to play in promoting integration and taking on some of the aspects of your report? I go beyond what the Government can do. The Government can make changes, but it is the people on the ground who make the difference, isn't it?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Without a doubt. Again, we signpost and we talk about it a bit in the report. Quite a lot is happening out there already. There are some Government-funded schemes like Near Neighbours that do a tremendous job and there are many grassroots organisations that try to do the right thing. I used to be involved in the world of homelessness and there are an awful lot of groups in this area that do things like flood relief and homelessness shelters. Their contribution is phenomenal.

Yes, it is important that we recognise their contribution and the Government does that as they choose to go forward, but I feel this is a moment for leadership. We can't say this is down to charities and voluntary organisations. I'm not saying you are saying that, far from it—

**Bob Blackman:** I'm not saying that.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I'm saying that, whoever the Government was, I would be saying to them right now, "You need to lead this." In the same way, I would like every town hall in the country to talk about the debate about what the report is, what the emphasis is, whether we have got it right and whether that chimes with people locally, so we start to talk about these sorts of issue. I would like every governors' board, whether they recognise these issues or not, to say, "Do we recognise these issues or don't we recognise these issues?"

I feel that what is needed is for those of us in public institutions to start that type of conversation. What I wouldn't want is another, "It was put to us during the review that at times the Government strategy in this area was saris, samosas and steel drums." I have been on the receiving end of that in lots of jobs over lots of years and in different things. The solution to preventing crime isn't saris, samosas and steel drums; it is decent policing and making sure kids grow up knowing what is right and wrong. That is the responsibly of everybody, not just the local youth group. I worry slightly. I don't want this left and put back out to the voluntary sector and church groups.

Q50 **Bob Blackman:** I was not necessarily going to talk about church groups. What about the role, for example, of our traditional scouting and guiding groups, the Boys Brigade and the various different groups that are part and parcel of the British way of life and have a very good record of integrating people from all walks of life?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I couldn't agree more.

Q51 **Bob Blackman:** Very largely, they have been excluded from large areas where there is a great need for regeneration. The reason is that there is a lack of volunteers coming forward to be leaders and to assist that. Do you see a role for the Government to provide assistance to encourage people to do that role, particularly in hard-to-reach areas?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I definitely think that the Government and the state have a role in hard-to-reach areas—without a doubt. It comes back to what I was saying in the earlier discussion about the National Citizen Service. I think that we need to look at this across the board. Step Up To Serve and all those things are vital as part of this.

In the hard-to-reach, disadvantaged areas—whatever jargon whichever Government is using at the time, we need to work out which areas we are talking about—we need to look at what the offer made to those areas is and how it can become a rite of passage. I would like a rite of passage for every child growing up in this country at a certain point in the year. For kids who are middle class, doing the Duke of Edinburgh's award is seen as part of what they get, and they get university points for that. That's fine for a subset of our society, but what we need is something equivalent right across the board. Whether it is for struggling kids in Tower Hamlets or kids in private school in Surrey, I don't really mind. What I do mind is that we have something that engages everybody. I couldn't agree more with you about some of the more formalised cadet and uniformed services. The information that was received during the review about some of that stuff was very powerful. People from lots of different formerly excluded groups—groups that we would see as excluded—liked being part of that even more, because they want to embrace British institutions and cultures. They are part of them; they are what make the country great.

That is why I come back to my motorway, which I very badly described. The motorway has slip roads, with all of us coming into the middle and being part of one thing. We all move in the same direction, with give and

take on all sides. Part of it is that. I think that a rite of passage for all young kids to do something for somebody other than themselves is vital.

Q52 **Chair:** There are some supplementaries on this, and then we have a couple of final questions. Are you able to stay?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** No, I will rush off now before the difficult questions come. I'm out of here, Chairman. No, of course—whenever you are finished, I will be finished.

**Chair:** That's very kind of you. Thank you.

Q53 **Kevin Hollinrake:** Touching on the analogy of the motorway, the slip road and the two-way street, in my previous life as a candidate in Dewsbury—I am a Member of Parliament for leafy North Yorkshire, which is much more monocultural—we started a social action project called Tea for Two. It touched on the Chair's point about getting people from different communities into each other's houses, which wasn't and isn't happening. It was a chain initiative. The idea was that you would invite somebody round to your home and make them tea and biscuits, or whatever, and then other people would do it and it would gather momentum. But what we saw was resistance on both sides of those communities towards doing that, because of the nervousness and, I guess, the distrust between different communities. So isn't that the point about the two-way street: it is incumbent on both communities to open their doors to people from the other community, and that is not where we are at the moment?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I think there are two things there. First, I might have seemed slightly over-obsessed with children and young people today, but that is because I think that if we can broaden children and young people's horizons to something greater, they are more likely to do what you are suggesting. Some of the evidence around these mixing schemes is so powerful. It shows that they stay in touch in different ways nowadays, with things like Facebook—that is probably old hat, but whatever the latest thing is. Empowering young people to mix and to have a sense of the world and their own country being bigger than their own neighbourhood is a very good thing. For me, that applies to rich and poor: it goes across social and economic classes.

I suppose what I was trying to say about the two-way street thing is probably slightly more difficult and controversial. I probably started out 18 months ago also thinking that it is a two-way street—that what you want is for the host community, as people started to call it when I went out on the road, to give as much as the incoming community. But after a while, I was talking to plenty of people from the incoming community who said, "That is a nonsense. We don't expect the entire country to change to the way it was in the country I have come from. In fact, I have left that country because I want to come to this country and benefit from everything it offers."

I felt that, over time, as I was listening, it was not just nasty right-wing people who said "It's not a two-way street." There were some very

sensible people who were saying that. In fact, one chap in Bradford said to me that the host community should set out its stall—it should make clear what it is—and hence whichever newspaper had a go at Sheffield should not have done. He said, "It should set out its stall. It should make clear not only what the opportunities are but what the rules are, how we expect people to be and all those sorts of things, and then we can get our heads round it. That's why I have come here." That is what that gentleman said to me, and he brought his family.

I understand and I get that to some degree it is a two-way street, but the host community needs to be clear about what expectations are. For me, just so I am clear about what those expectations are, they are that a woman is equal to a man and should have the same opportunities in life, and that a person who is gay should have exactly the same rights and ability to love whom they want as somebody who is not. That is what I believe, and that is what the laws in our country now stand for.

That is the other thing that I felt quite strongly. As Neil says, we had these endless jokes about how British we all were. We had and have a diverse team with lots of different religious and other groups represented in it—not represented, but it just happened that way—and I thought we were all a bit shy about talking about some of this stuff. We need to be slightly less shy about it; that is the bottom line. In fact, I said to Justin Welby, the archbishop, that at points I felt, "It is the Church of England—it's okay." The state in this country is run by the head of the Church; that is the country we exist in. I am not a member of the Church of England, but I respect the rights of the Queen and the archbishop to be the head of state and the head of the Church. That is the country I live in.

Q54 **Kevin Hollinrake:** I am not suggesting a cultural shift by the host community. What I am talking about is engagement. It is incumbent on both sides of the community—or various sides of the community, depending on how many there are—to engage, to open the doors and to make people feel that they are part of one community.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I do not disagree with any of that, but often what happens is that people who want to mix, mix. I am not a politician. Having to turn out every weekday night to go to public meetings or be somewhere cold fighting for things is what you guys do. I don't do that; I go home and I watch the telly. I don't necessarily meet lots of neighbours. It doesn't make me a bad person just because I do not necessarily mix with people I don't know. It becomes an issue when it affects people through social and economic disadvantage, discrimination and racism.

It is of a different order of magnitude. Of course everybody should mix. Right back at the beginning, you asked about the National Citizen Service and mixing. It is absolutely right that in our institutions we have a much better approach towards mixing and integration at that sort of level. I am very happy for people to do saris, samosas and steel drums—I have enjoyed many of those events myself—but I think there is something deeper about getting kids to the right universities or the right jobs. That is what we need to focus on, in my view.

Q55 **Alison Thewliss:** On a slightly different matter, I wanted to pick up on something specifically mentioned in the report: the murder of Asad Shah in Glasgow. I felt that the way that it was placed in the report missed some of the wider context and recommendations that could come to the Home Office as a result of this.

Part of the issue here is about radicalisation and people coming into the country as well. There have been cases—Siobhain McDonagh has highlighted some of them as well—of hate preachers being allowed into the country by the Home Office, which has resulted in people being influenced to carry out acts like this tragic murder, which absolutely appalled Glasgow.

Is there perhaps a recommendation? In dealing with the Home Office, I have found it quite an unjust system. I cannot get a granny over from Pakistan to visit her granddaughter, yet a hate preacher can come into the country and influence people in an entirely negative way. Could more thought perhaps be given to that, and to how people see that system? If you are in the Ahmadi community and that is your experience—that your granny cannot come to visit, but this other person can come in and preach hate—that is not really in the spirit of British values that you are trying to get to. It is quite corrosive in that system.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** We did not focus on the whole hate preacher and extremism end of what we are talking about, although clearly you are right to say that quite a lot of us—I include myself in this—get incredibly frustrated by that seeming inability. I used to come across things where they would say, "Oh, we didn't know who was booking a room, and we didn't know it was an extremist preacher." Then you think, "How did that happen?" It is the local community group saying "Louise Casey is coming to preach," as it were, and then it turns out to be some absolutely appalling hate preacher. I used to go on these visits and think, "How does that happen?" Again, obviously, that is not the area that we focused on in this report, but it is fair to say it came up in a number of the visits that I did—the frustration that community groups, as much as anybody else, were not getting support from the police and the Home Office in this area. It is another one of those quite frustrating ones, I am afraid.

That said, when you then talk to some of the police in those areas and others, they felt that the community did not tell them what was going on, or they did not know about it until after the event, and they therefore did not know what to do about it. In some cases, it was people who put up stalls. There was one example where there was an Islamist stall—there is no other way to describe it—and everybody seemed frustrated by it. It was one of those scenarios where I was thinking, "Why can't somebody just go challenge them and take it all down?" Eventually the police did, but it took a lot of time before that happened. That is because they were borderline in terms of hate preaching. That is one of the things that is just insanely difficult. One person's freedom of speech is another person's hate.

I cannot help beyond that. That is more of a matter for Home Office colleagues, really, but I take that it happens. The point we were trying to make in the report, partly because I had walked down that street, like you and many people in this country, let alone Scotland—it was pretty appalling. I felt that some of what happened, and what friends and colleagues in Scotland reported about the reaction, was what we were trying to show in here, more than what you were saying.

***Neil O'Connor:*** And the relationship; there is a separate counter-extremism strategy and there is a hate crime action plan that the Government produced quite recently, in the summer, I think. In the review what we were finding was that if extremism and hate crime are tackled more effectively, that will have a positive effect on integration. It will reduce some of the community tensions that stop integration from happening. Equally, if we can get integration right, communities should be more resilient to extremism and hate crime. That is the relationship.

Q56 **Alison Thewliss:** I think it is about communities having confidence in that system as well. They need to know that that system is there to protect them and to support them, rather than this case where they can see hate preachers coming in and apparently nothing being done to stop it. If you are not the people looking at that, then that makes it quite difficult to see a system that is fair for you.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** It is interesting, though, isn't it, that quite often it is after the event that people realise they are hate preachers? What struck me about quite a number of the cases that I came across was that the horse had bolted. It was only when they had come and gone that essentially the community then were upset; because what happens is these hate preachers then bring an entire mosque or an entire group of organisations into disrepute and then they get the backlash from everybody for having a hate preacher in their area. What we need is areas to have quite a lot of support and help in dealing with all of those things; but it does come to something which I think Julian Knight asked about, which is—dare I be controversial yet again—that sometimes we don't take on some of that because some of the police and some others will be worried about being called racist, or upsetting community relations. Actually my sense of a lot of people in the community that I interviewed when I was involved was "Bring it on."

I have met plenty of people in all areas of the country where there is a significant proportion of Muslims in the population who are tired of being pilloried for these people coming in from wherever they come from and saying these things. They are tired of being blamed for things that they have no control or responsibility over and certainly do not support in any way, shape or form. That is why the chapter on leadership is so vital. Actually, we all need to show leadership on these issues and not leave it to essentially quite often impoverished organisations and individuals to take a stand. We need to be more obvious in how we take a stand against these issues. Again, as I say, I have felt increasingly in the last 18 months that taking a stand against right-wing far-right madness is often a more comfortable place for people to be than taking a stand against some of

these, and we just have to be better at it. We are doing no Muslim in this country any service at all as a non-Muslim to not support them in the battle against those extremist hate preachers. They are appalling.

Q57 **Rushanara Ali:** I couldn't agree with you more on that point, having been on the receiving end of both forms of extremism in my constituency, but I think one thing I would say is that across different parts of the country and across parties many of our colleagues are exercising considerable leadership. The relationship and interface between the media and political and other forms of public leadership, when those sorts of highly sensitive and difficult situations emerge, can be a tinderbox. That point is so important, and much more work needs to be done on that.

I just wanted to come back to you on the point about—apologies for bringing it up again—the sizeable numbers of one community versus another. I just think there is an issue regarding the road analogy that you made, which is that if we leave out the majority in our thinking and how they interact with minorities, if you like, then we miss opportunities and we miss a trick. Take the example of Birmingham, which is going to be a majority minority city. It is a very traditional way of thinking about minority integration to think that the minorities are not the host communities. The whole thing is turning on its head in some places. The newcomers in places like my constituency are not non-white; they are white middle-class tech people—entrepreneurs coming in from other parts of the world; highly educated people who actually don't know a great deal about the area, and they need induction about the minority communities that have been there for generations. Tensions emerge because they have expectations about what these minorities, who are visible minorities, should do.

I think the two-way process is about what visible minorities are expected to do in order to fit in, versus what newcomers—who might be white, middle-class newcomers from other parts of the country—are expected to do. I think there is something in looking at how we enable social integration, and putting much more effort into that. It is more of a plea really, rather than anything else.

There is a final thing I wanted to ask you. Almost a decade before this report, I was involved with setting up the Community Cohesion Unit after the riots, and there were huge issues in relation to some of the studies we did around "white flight". I see that in my constituency now in relation to ethnic minority groups moving further out, because they want to live in more mixed communities and to send their kids to more mixed schools, because the schools are de facto segregated, not because of religion or choice. We have faith schools—Catholic schools, Church of England schools, Muslim schools—as well as state schools, so there are choices being made here. How much did you focus on these issues around "white flight" and how serious are they? That goes back to the point about these problems existing in both dimensions.

Also, the worst performers here are white, working-class free school meal children, along with black-Caribbean. This is a problem that's been there

for over a decade. We dealt with this; we raised this issue under David Blunkett, when you were involved, and it's a huge issue for our country. It just seems to me that we've got to think about integration very much as a two-way process and very much about, "What can we learn from Chinese children here?" Your grid on page 83 shows that Chinese children are doing much better than any other group. With Bangladeshi children, you are actually contradicting yourself; Bangladeshi girls outperform all other groups at GCSE level. On free school meals, what can we learn from the positives, as well as addressing the negatives?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** That is completely fair enough. One of the things that I found profoundly difficult about the report—given everything around homelessness, the antisocial behaviour jobs, the family intervention work under the respect campaign, which is not big "r" but the Tony Blair initiative, and then onwards, and the troubled families programme—is that I have found it just desolating that in 2016 kids on free school meals still do so badly. I did toy with the idea of putting into the recommendations things from the troubled families programme around how you would come at them in a different kind of way. Some of that is not only around poverty; it is around poverty of aspiration.

I worry about the bottom 5% in the country who are failing to move up any ladder at all and who are on very significant levels of welfare benefit. I think that it will largely be their children who we are talking about. It is the families who are not necessarily being helped as effectively as we might want them to be by the troubled families programme.

We still have upwards of 250,000 to 300,000 children who arrive hungry at school every morning, and they still don't get a breakfast either at home or in the school. Again, there were some negotiations between Neil and myself over where we would end up with the recommendations, because I feel that there are some things that you could do around the free school meals group that would help with some of this stuff more quickly, but we decided to go for 12 significant recommendations in the integration space. That doesn't mean to say I don't have views in other areas, and this would be one of them.

We worry about kids in the report. We talk about kids arriving at the age of four or five not being able to speak English. There were plenty of examples of kids that I found in various areas of the country where they were not able to speak English as well as you might want them to at the age of four. I can tell you now that I can find plenty of kids who may have some form of English and they have never got any other form of language coming into their brains. However, they are certainly not able to be as good as probably your children would be at the age of four because they are kept in an environment at home that is not good enough, where the parents are just not good enough. It comes back to the issue around children's centres, early years and getting to families as early as you possibly can in order to make sure that the children do not arrive at school with something bordering on a speech impairment. If you stick a kid in front of the telly for the first three years of their life, they will not be brilliant by the time they arrive at school.

I think those are the sorts of things that the report signals, and everyone is talking about that issue at the moment, everyone is talking about this issue, so we need to come back at young black men—we absolutely need to come back at young black men. Why is the unemployment rate in that group still so high? It is just not on, basically. If we come back again, you are absolutely right about kids on free school meals. What is going on? What can we learn from other groups? I think we can guess what the answer to some of that is. Again, we should not shy away from other groups and, I have got to be honest, particularly where I think there is a dynamic in some areas, in some communities, where women are seen as a second-class citizen, or are being told for cultural reasons—as it is often put to me—that they have to stay at home, then they are not at Mulberry and becoming brilliant figureheads and role models for everyone else. That was an extraordinary school to go to, but I cannot guarantee that everywhere is like that.

**Rushanara Ali:** It wasn't when I was there.

***Dame Louise Casey:*** No, but it is now.

Q58 **Chair:** One final point, then I will call on David to wind up. You have had lots of nice easy questions so far, Louise. You did raise in the report this issue of transnational marriage. You used the phrase "first generation in every generation". You raised it; are you suggesting that something should be done about it?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** Yes, I think I probably do. What do I think about it? I think that we need an awareness of the dynamic about what that means. That is the most important thing. If you have a first generation in every generation, then I think that Goodhart—from Demos and now Policy Exchange—is right: that in some areas of the country we have essentially what he would put as almost a holding position on integration. I think that is fair enough to talk about. If the country whence you came does not see women as equal to men, or does not think that women should be politicians or working, then that is a dynamic that I have a problem with. That is not everywhere, but certainly David Goodhart and others have found that, and I found it myself during the course of the review. I do not think anyone will mind me saying this, but there are bits of Oldham where it is well nigh impossible to be a woman and to be a local authority elected member, because the community will stop you from doing it. That is the same area where in some of those wards the first generation in every generation is at play.

What I want is that we move slowly towards a time—not slowly, actually, because I would like it tomorrow—when those attitudes are not at play. I do not think there is anything wrong with that. That is what I mean by the motorway. The motorway is saying that women are equal to men, and everyone on that motorway is in the same place. It is not something we negotiate on. I say, "I might give a little bit as you arrive and need to learn to speak English," but after a while I have to say, "I am equal to you in terms of gender. You are not more powerful or more important than me just because you are a bloke, end of."

I think that what David Goodhart and other people have found is that some have not been honest about some of that. I don't know. I am not an immigration lawyer or immigration specialist, nor indeed do I currently work for the Home Office. I do not know whether that involves changes or not, but I did feel that it was worth talking about, I did feel it was worth putting in the report and I did feel that it is part of what we should discuss, because it is symbolic of what we want as a country.

Q59 **David Mackintosh:** When do you expect the Government to respond to your report?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I have to say that Sajid Javid very kindly put down an urgent question, and I was struck by how—I have met him several times, and I think this—well up for this he is. I am trying to think of the civil service way to describe it, but basically he has commissioned the Department to look at pulling together a strategy to respond to this in the spring. He is looking at what resources and what type of action will be needed to take this forward.

I had an equally good conversation with Amber Rudd about the Home Office's backing up our responsibilities in this area, but I think an integration strategy should be run out of the Department for Communities and Local Government primarily. It should be led from that Department. Certainly the Secretary of State for the Department has gripped this and has said to his Department that he wants the strategy by the spring.

Q60 **David Mackintosh:** I am pleased to hear that. In annex A of your report, you have listed 13 reports and Government papers on community cohesion since 2001. Why will this be different?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** First, I have no control over whether the response is different. It is for Ministers, the Prime Minister and others to decide how they take it forward. But I honestly think this is of its moment. If I wrote it, if somebody else wrote it, or if you wrote it, almost does not matter. What matters is that we are putting together in the public domain a set of issues that are absolutely of their moment. If people want to heal rifts and bind countries together for all sorts of reasons, you have a route map out of what we have talked about today, and you will have differences on how you think that may happen. It is for yourselves in Parliament to lobby as hard for change in this area across the political divide as it would be for a community group in the middle of Bradford. It is of its moment.

I have no power, control or say over that. I have done my report. I have given it to the Prime Minister and to Ministers. I hope with all my heart that they see that healing issues around integration, whether they are around social exclusion or white working class kids on free schools meals, or whether they are for a Pakistani girl who has no hope of getting to a university and making it to be Prime Minister in the next 10 years, are taken seriously. I cannot make that happen. You have a much greater chance of making that happen than I do.

Q61 **David Mackintosh:** Final question. Of all of your recommendations, which is the most important?

***Dame Louise Casey:*** I will answer that in a different way, to sound like a politician or a civil servant for a moment. I profoundly, throughout the last 30 years of my life, feel that we need to do a better job around children. If I were to pick one, it would be around the issues in the recommendations around children. Home schooling is one of them. Mixing and young people is another. Probably connected to that is integrity in public life. If we as leaders took vulnerability more seriously, particularly around children, we could stand and look ourselves in the mirror probably slightly more than I sometimes feel I can.

**Chair:** Louise and Neil, thank you very much for coming to give evidence to us today and for going through so many of the issues in the report. I am sure it is something the Committee will come back to in due course. Thank you.