

The Citizenship Manifesto:

For a world where
everyone matters



www.citizen-network.org

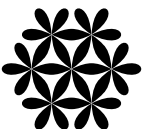


We fell asleep.

We forgot that they don't take care of us, we take care of each other. We forgot that it's the rich who need the poor, not the poor who need the rich. We forgot that politicians work for us, we don't work for them. We forgot that government doesn't innovate, people do. We forgot that government doesn't create wealth, people do. We forgot that government doesn't know best, people do. We forgot about citizenship, we forgot about families, we forgot about community. We confused good with big. We confused achievement with wealth. We confused love with control. We forgot that the welfare state was built by us, that it belongs to us, and it needs to work for us.

It's time to wake up.

Simon Duffy
Citizen Network



We are all equal.

We are all different.

We are all citizens.

Citizens are each unique, free and absolutely equal members of a community.

Citizens have human rights. They know that they have responsibilities, to each other and to the planet.

Citizenship is not about your passport or where you are from. It is not about borders, walls or guns.

It is not about blaming each other for the world's problems, it is about solving them together.



Keys to Citizenship

The first step to treating each other as citizens is to make sure that we each have what we need to be a citizen.

We call these things the Keys to Citizenship. They are things that everyone can have. They are affordable and practical.

In fact, if we help everyone to have the Keys to Citizenship, then many of our problems will disappear.

The next few pages describe each of the seven keys. You can find out more about them in the book, *Everyday Citizenship*.

1. Meaning

Enjoy life and make a difference.

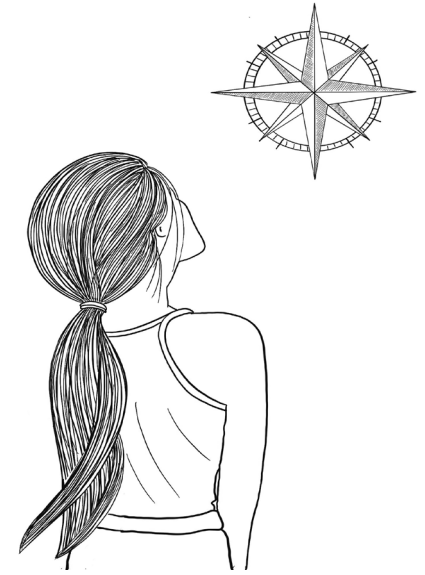
Every person is unique. We all have valuable gifts, skills, knowledge and possibilities.

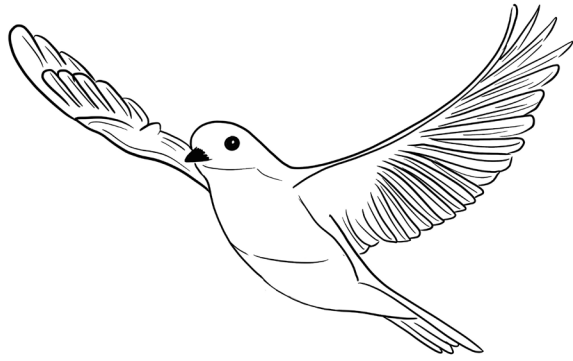
We can follow our dreams and find meaning in our day-to-day lives.

We can connect with other people to share our interests, talents, ideas and passions.

Then we will learn from each other, help each other, and work together to make a difference in the world.

Our search for meaning gives us the chance to grow and help others.





2. Freedom

**Take charge of
your own life.**

Freedom means we can make choices about what we think, where we go, what we do, and who we spend time with.

It means trying new things and making mistakes without fear of being judged or restricted.

Freedom can keep us safe from harm and abuse. We need to express ourselves with people who will take the time to listen and understand.

Freedom helps things to change because it creates new possibilities. As free people, we can say “no” to injustice and stand up for those who are being attacked.

3. Money

**Get the money you
need to live.**



Poverty makes it harder to be a citizen.

We need money for a safe place to live, enough to eat, and the ability to get around.

These things give us the strength and security we need to be able to contribute to the world.

Money helps us to look after our health, learn new things, and spend time with people who are important to us.

Poverty is unnecessary and harmful. We must end it by sharing things together.



4. Help

**Get good help
from other people.**

We all have unique talents and experiences that can help people around us.

Giving and receiving help brings us together and builds strong communities. Nobody is independent: we are all connected and we all need each other.

Our need for help should not be seen as a problem. It is an opportunity for us to build strong relationships with other people.

Citizens cooperate and cooperation creates security.

5. Home

**Find a place where
you belong.**

A home is somewhere we feel safe and secure. A place to rest, relax and recharge.

We should not have to worry about losing our home.

We should never live in fear of being hurt by the people we live with.

Nobody needs to be homeless or forced into an institution. We must make sure that everyone has a place of their own.

Having a home means we can go out in the world and make a real difference.





Community

**Take part in the life
of your community.**

Together we create
opportunities to
grow and connect.

There are many different ways that we can
gather around shared interests and identities.

Neighbourhoods are especially important for
citizens. The places where we live are full of
people with diverse skills and experiences.

When we bring different gifts, talents and needs
together, everybody is stronger.

Citizens create communities, and this gives us all
the chance to flourish.

7. Love

**Enjoy friendship, love
and family.**

Nothing is more important
than our relationships: family,
friends, partners and the people
we meet.

Loneliness and isolation are harmful or even
dangerous. We need people who know how to
help when we are unhappy or unwell.

We all need encouragement, kisses, smiles and
hugs.

We all need people who know us, people we can
trust, and people to look out for us.

Love is the fire at the heart of citizenship.



The work of citizenship

Equipped with the seven keys to citizenship, we can work together to make the changes we need.

There are five important tasks for citizens to do:

We must start with **inclusion**. We must reject discrimination and welcome everyone as an equal.

We must take **care** of each other. This means connecting and supporting each other at every stage of life.

We must embrace **democracy**. We need to get involved, make decisions and work together at every level.

We must act with **justice**. We must share our resources to ensure everyone has what they need.

Finally, we must look after **nature**. We have a responsibility to the planet, to other species and to future generations.

The next few pages describe some of the changes we all need to make.



Inclusion

We welcome everyone.

Inclusion should be at the heart of all our communities.

A good place to start is education. The current system encourages young people and schools to compete with each other.

“Success” is measured in exam results. When we leave school or college, we are encouraged to go to university and get into debt, so we can apply for well-paid jobs that increasingly don’t exist.

Schools have become larger, further from people’s homes, and regulated using standards that have little to do with what children really need to learn.

Too many children and teachers find that the system doesn’t work for them. Opportunities for creativity, flexibility and joy are disappearing.

If young people don’t fit in, they are excluded, sent to a special school, or they simply refuse to go. Some people never return to education.

If we fail to teach children how to accept and welcome our differences, we encourage fear and ignorance.

We need small, local schools where everyone learns together. These schools must help every child to learn, grow, and become an active citizen.

**We support Inclusive
Education: design schools
so that they welcome the
gifts and talents of every child.**



Care

We take care of each other.

Care is essential in our society, but we don't value it enough. We expect families to do all the work and then we do nothing to support them.

Many parents are working multiple jobs and still need to visit food banks to give their children enough to eat.

Carers give essential help but get little financial support or understanding. Too many families break down and children have to go into care.

Some people have their children taken away just because they have disabilities or extra needs. If they are given the right support, this does not need to happen.

Care is often institutional. People are sent to care homes or hospitals because they cannot get the right support in their own home.

Some of these institutions make big profits.

Some people sit at home waiting for 15-minute visits from a stressed, underpaid carer who has to travel across a vast area every day.

We need to create neighbourhoods of care, where we take care of ourselves, each other and the planet.

We need to organise support so that everyone is connected to people in their community and can contribute in their own way.

We support Neighbourhoods of Care: create communities where everyone can flourish.



Democracy

We decide things together.

We say we live in a democracy but many of us feel powerless.

It feels like decisions are made in big cities by people who don't know us or our neighbourhoods.

We blame local government and other public services for things not working well, but we don't know how to change them so they get better.

Democracy should be more than reluctantly putting a cross in a box, then hoping that whoever is elected will listen to us.

Democracy should mean people power!

Democracy starts with people meeting each other in their own neighbourhood, town or village. It means talking about things together in a thoughtful way.

By doing this, we can find out which problems are the most important to people and what the solutions might be.

Democracy means being involved in deciding how money is spent in the places we live. It means actively working together to get things done.

Above all, it is about loving where we live and wanting to make it better.

**We support Neighbourhood
Democracy: shift power into
neighbourhoods so people can
make decisions together.**



Justice

We share what we have.

Justice is vanishing and is being replaced with food banks.

More and more people are living in poverty. If we need benefits we often get bossed around by strangers who do not understand our lives.

Many of us can't work because we're unwell or because we are taking care of people we love.

All the valuable things we do in the community are ignored.

It is time to end poverty. As a society, we have all the things we need, we just need to share them out fairly.

If everyone has a secure and reasonable income, we can all contribute more:

- We can do paid work and volunteer for community groups in our local area.
- We can take care of our families and help our neighbours.
- We can remove a lot of stress and worry so that we can all give our best.

We can make sure everyone gets the basic services we need and a basic income to live on.

The solution is to make sure that everyone has enough.

**We support Basic Income
Plus: give everyone economic
security and a fair income that
matches our individual needs.**



Nature

We look after our world.

We say we love nature while we watch our planet burn.

The Earth is heating up as carbon is released into the atmosphere. The amount of carbon has been growing since 1945. Despite many global agreements, there is no sign of real change.

The rate of plants, animals, birds, reptiles and fish becoming extinct is extremely high. This is caused by the harm we are doing to the planet.

We are damaging the soil and polluting water with micro-plastics and other toxic substances. This harms our own health, as well as the health of many other living things.

All of this damage is not necessary. We already know how to reverse the trends and make a difference in our lives and communities.

Regenerative farmers can teach us how to produce food in ways that support diversity and make the soil more fertile.

Green spaces across our communities can be a source of food, beauty and life.

We need global change, and this becomes easier if we start in our communities and are honest about the changes that we need to make.

We support Grassroots Policies for Sustainability: tackle the environmental crisis so all species on our planet survive.



Neighbourhoods

The thread that runs through this manifesto is the importance of the neighbourhood.

Small is beautiful. Just as every person matters, so does every place.

If we are going to wake up and take our own citizenship seriously, we also need to be responsible for our immediate surroundings.

The neighbourhood is where we can act now. It is where we meet with our neighbours and agree to take action. It is where people's hidden talents lie.

Inside each community, however neglected or disadvantaged it may appear, there are people with valuable skills and a sense of pride or hope.

There are lots of things we can do in our neighbourhoods:

- Educate our children.
- Create jobs and homes for young people.
- Connect generations around shared action.
- Create celebrations, festivals and events.
- Make decisions together.
- Protect local waterways and green spaces.

Neighbourhoods are the places where we can activate our everyday citizenship.



A world of citizens

The ideas and policies we have described may be hard to imagine. We are living in a time of crisis where people are increasingly isolated and fearful. Some people take advantage of these fears and set groups against each other.

But the desire for citizenship is very real. People who face disadvantage or disability can teach us that what really matters is the kind of everyday citizenship we have described in this manifesto.

Even in a society so full of injustice and inequality, we can treat each other as citizens and as equals.

The value of citizenship is that it unlocks the power that lies within us. We all have skills, passions and gifts that go to waste. Everyone matters, and we can work together to make a difference.

Citizenship leads us towards a better world:

- A sustainable world where humans live in harmony with nature.
- A world of justice where we all have what we need.
- A democratic world where we cooperate and respect different points of view.
- A caring world where we are loved and love others.
- A world of inclusion, where nobody is alone or unwelcome.

A world where everyone matters is within our grasp.

We begin by recognising that we are all citizens.



About Citizen Network

Citizen Network began in 2009 as a think tank in Sheffield, in order to:

- Offer an inspiring vision of a better future where we are all equal citizens.
- Share information, grow connections and provide support and encouragement.
- Carry forward the values of inclusion for future generations.

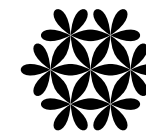
Today we are a global community of over 6,000 individuals and 350 groups.

**Join Citizen Network for free,
as an individual or as a group:**

www.citizen-network.org



**Citizen Network is just
one of many communities
working to make our world
a better place.**



We'd love to work with you.

**We are all equal.
We are all different.
We are all citizens.**

Read the book *Everyday Citizenship*,
by Wendy Perez and Simon Duffy:

www.redpress.co.uk

**“In these pages, Citizenship
is a form of action.”**

John O’Brien