

[Press release: Minister discusses barriers to voter registration for people with disabilities in Brighton](#)

Minister for the Constitution, Chris Skidmore today (Monday, 7 August) visited [Brighton Housing Trust](#), [Blind Veterans UK](#) and [Brighton & Hove Speakout](#) to hear firsthand about the experiences members have faced when voting or registering to vote.

The Minister heard from all 3 charities about how they raised awareness of participation in the democratic process for the General Election 2017 and what support they provided to residents and clients.

Brighton Housing Trust advises on issues around housing, homelessness, substance misuse and mental health. It is a people-led organisation.

Blind Veterans UK provide support to veterans who are adjusting to sight loss and the charity has been offering physical and emotional support to vision-impaired veterans since 1915.

Brighton and Hove Speakout supports people with learning disabilities to have more control over their lives by giving individual support as well as raising awareness in services and communities and campaigning for changes in services and policies.

Chris Skidmore, Minister for the Constitution said:

“Brighton Housing Trust, Blind Veterans UK and Brighton and Hove Speakout are all fantastic organisations that ensure people experiencing homelessness, or those with disabilities feel confident, empowered and remain an active part of their society.

“A big part of this is being able to register to vote and remain a part of our democracy. Today’s visits have helped me understand how we can support vulnerable people to ensure that ours is a democracy that everyone can participate in.

“Nearly three million applications to register to vote were received online between 18 April and 22 May but there are still under-represented groups we can improve the processes for. Regardless of who you are, or how you vote, every voice matters and we encourage you to register to vote.”

Andy Winter, CEO of Brighton Housing Trust said:

“Homeless people, especially those who are street homeless, can be multiply excluded. To know that their right to vote is being considered at the highest level in government is a great encouragement.

“Voting changes things, not always in a way politicians want, but it is at

the heart of our democracy. Chris Skidmore showed a deep understanding and awareness of many of the issues we deal with on a daily basis. He was keen to learn how voter registration and voting itself can be maximised amongst people who are often invisible and ignored.”

Lesley Garven, Centre Manager at Blind Veterans UK said:

“Whether it’s at one of our centres or in the community, Blind Veterans UK provides vision-impaired veterans with the equipment, skills and support they need to enjoy a full life beyond sight loss.

“Still being able to exercise their democratic rights is a vital part of this, and our veterans and staff enjoyed taking part in the discussion on accessible voting with the Minister for the Constitution, Chris Skidmore.”

Sarah Pickard, Director of Brighton and Hove Speakout said:

“As a learning disabled people’s organisation we know that learning disabled people want to have their say and have their voices heard. We firmly believe that given the right support, access to information and opportunity to build confidence and make their contributions, learning disabled people can participate in all aspects of participative democracy.”

The Minister is visiting Brighton as part of his Every Voice Matters Tour. The tour has taken him to every part of the country to understand how to tackle barriers to voter registration.