

Hello!

We are your four current Members of Youth Parliament for Leeds, and we are coming to the end of our two year term.

The UK Youth Parliament represents the voices of young people from across the UK at a national level and enables young people to use their energy and passion to change the world for the better. Here is a snapshot of what we have been up to in the last 6 months!

We would like to share with you some of our highlights and achievements from the last two years.

Regional Induction Weekend (March 2016)



Our first real taster of UK Youth Parliament was the induction weekend with the other Members of Youth Parliament from across Yorkshire and Humber. We attended the residential at Dearne Valley at which we learnt about the UKYP, participated in workshops, planned campaigns and made contacts in other local authorities. It really was a crash course in UKYP but a great way to find out about everything that happens.

Tackling Racism & Religious Discrimination (2015/16 Campaign)

Tackling Racism and Religious Discrimination was our 2015/16 national campaign which had been voted for by the previous Members of Youth Parliament at the House of Commons. We took on this campaign and worked with the Voice, Influence and Change Team to deliver two Youth Voice Summits to gather the views of young people in Leeds on how they would like to see discrimination tackled and what they could do within their community and school. At both summits young people / youth groups and schools made pledges.

In May 2016 we took over the Children and Families Trust Board with a youth group for East Leeds. It was a great experience to chair the meeting and also work with board members around discrimination in Leeds and what young people would like to see. At the end of the meeting all board members made pledges. Read our full campaign report [here](#).

Annual Sitting (July 2016)



The Annual Sitting 2016 was a weekend event held at York University. All 350+ Members of Youth Parliament come together for the weekend to prepare for Make Your Mark! It was great to meet Members of Youth Parliament from across the UK and we were privileged to hear from Gulwali Passarly and Rt Hon John Bercow MP.

Following the annual sitting we had the task of looking at all the British Youth Council's manifestos and choosing the ten issues we thought were most important and would become the Make Your Mark ballot.

Make Your Mark 2016

Make Your Mark is the largest youth consultation for young people 11 to 18 years old in the UK. Each year young people in the UK are asked to vote for the one issue they feel is most important from a list of ten.

In 2016 978,215 young people in the UK voted in the ballot (16.6% of the youth population) and in Leeds 14,308 young people voted (20% of the youth population). The top issue for young people in Leeds was Tackling Racism and Religious Discrimination.



House of Commons (November 2016)



On Friday 11th November 2016 we attended the House of Commons along with the 350+ Members of Youth Parliament from across the UK to debate the top 5 issues voted for by young people from the Make Your Mark ballot. The day was full of interesting debates and Muzdalfa gave an amazing back bench contribution to the Tackling Racism and Religious Discrimination debate, and received a standing ovation. At the end of the day we voted for our 2016/17 national campaign, Votes at 16.

Equalities Assembly (November 2016)

In November 2016 we were invited to present at the Equalities Assembly and represent the voices of young people in Leeds. We presented to over 150 people about our campaigns and what we have done around tackling racism and religious discrimination (2015/16 national campaign). We then participated in a number of workshops with the other hub members from across the city.

Regional Induction Weekend (March 2017)



Our second regional induction weekend training with all members of youth parliament from across Yorkshire and Humber took place at Dearne Valley. We spent the weekend attending workshops and planning our future campaigns. This was also an opportunity to share our knowledge and skills from the last 12 months as members of youth parliament with new members of youth parliament from the region.

Votes at 16 (2016/17 national campaign)

We have been campaigning for Votes at 16, our campaign involved running two youth voice summits with the Voice, Influence and Change Team where we invited youth groups and secondary schools along to the events to provide them with information about the campaign, training and raise their awareness of voting. Following this we deputised to full council in July 2017 and asked them if they would publically support Votes for 16 & 17 year olds, the deputation was a highlight of our two years and we received a standing ovation at the end. Following the deputation the Leader of Leeds City Council wrote to the minister for the constitution to publically show their support for votes for 16 & 17 year olds.

This was a fantastic achievement for us!



Tackling Racism and Religious Discrimination (2016/17 local campaign)



Following Leeds young people voting tackling racism and religious discrimination as the local campaign for 2016/17 we looked back at what young people had told us via the 2016 youth voice summits and found that a lot of young people were wanting community cohesion events with an awareness raising element to them, and also that a lot of young people use social media to find out about things.

Working with the Voice, Influence & Change team we applied for funding and planned and delivered an event on the 1st June 2017 called #LetsTackleIt and then launched a week-long targeted social media campaign designed to challenge discrimination.

48 young people along with their workers attended the event which brought together young people from different backgrounds and set them five different challenges which were designed to discuss and challenge racial and religious stereotypes in a safe environment.

A full report on our campaign can be found [here](#)

Annual Sitting (July 2017)

For our second annual sitting during our two year term we went to Liverpool University. The format of the weekend was very similar to the 2016 annual sitting. Rt John Bercow MP gave a passionate and inspirational speech to all members of youth parliament and we also had the privilege of hearing from Julie Hilling, Robbie Young, Dr Andy Mycock, Jim McMahon MP and Margaret Greenwood MP.



We attended workshops, planned our campaigns with our region before taking part in the big debate to choose the ten topics that would feature on the 2017 Make Your Mark ballot.

Make Your Mark 2017

The Make Your Mark ballot 2017 was completed by 954,766 young people from across the UK (16.2% of the youth population from across the UK) and 17,013 of these young people were from Leeds (25% of the youth population). Through our efforts in Leeds we increased the number of young people completing the ballot in 2016 by 5%, this was an amazing achievement!

House of Commons (November 2017)

On Friday 10th November 2016 we attended the annual debate at the House of Commons. This was a particular highlight of our year as 3 of the 4 members of youth parliament in Leeds got a chance to contribute. Scarlet and Liberty both got the opportunity to contribute to the debates with back bench contributions and Charlotte had been nominated to give the LGBTQ+ celebration speech on behalf of the members of youth parliament from Yorkshire and Humber.



The end of the debates saw votes at 16 and the curriculum to prepare us for life being voted for as the two campaigns the members of youth parliament will work on for 2017/18.

Equalities Assembly (November 2017)

In November 2017 we were invited along with Leeds Youth Councillors to present at the Equalities Assembly and represent the voices of young people in Leeds. We presented to over 150 people about our campaigns and what we have done around tackling racism and religious discrimination and votes at 16 (2016/17 campaigns). We then participated in a number of workshops with the other hub members from across the city.

Conventions

During our two year term we have attended 5 regional conventions. The conventions are an opportunity for us to get together with members of youth parliament and youth voice representatives from across the region. We share what we are doing locally around youth voice and also take part in workshops to further our skills and knowledge.



Awards



We have had a fantastic two years as members of youth parliament for Leeds and during this time we have achieved 5 Leeds Youth Awards, were shortlisted in the 2017 Child Friendly Leeds Awards, Local Youth Voice Award and also received recognition of our contributions to youth voice at the Civic Reception.

We have had an amazing two years and we wish the new members of youth parliament the best of luck and we hope they get as much out of the project as we have.

*Charlotte, Liberty, Muzdalfa & Scarlet
Members of Youth Parliament for Leeds 2016-18*