

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.

Radio Leeds Interview (February 2018)



Only days after we were elected we were in the BBC Radio Leeds studios to represent young people in Leeds in our new roles as Members of Youth Parliament. We were interviewed in pairs, and asked our opinions on all different issues present at the time. We cannot say we enjoyed the 'early morning' but the overall experience was fantastic!

Chapel FM Radio Interview (March 2018)

Not long after our BBC Radio Leeds interview, we were asked to feature again on the radio. This time we were interviewed by other young people for a section on their show on Chapel FM. The interviews were really interesting, they asked us about lots of different current affairs as well as what we hope to achieve in our role as Members of Youth Parliament for Leeds.



Regional Induction Weekend (April 2018)



Our first real taster of UK Youth Parliament was the induction weekend with the other Members of Youth Parliament from across Yorkshire and Humber. The weekend proved very useful in getting to know other MYPs and other youth campaigners; this proved very helpful as it has allowed us to work together more closely on campaigns. This also gave us time to plan our campaigns and share our experience of effective methods.

Regional Youth Voice Conventions

We attend 3 conventions a year (6 over our term as Members of Youth Parliament) with youth voice representatives from across Yorkshire and Humber, the convention proved extremely useful for catching up with people and planning the rest of the campaigns.



Annual Sitting (July 2018)



In July we attended the annual sitting along with MYP's from all over the UK. We spent a weekend at Nottingham University looking through all the manifestos the UK Youth Parliament support, debating them and then voting on the ten issues that will feature on the Make Your Mark ballot. The annual sitting was great preparation for the House of Commons.

US Embassy Exchange

Sylvia was selected, by the US embassy, to attend a 2 weeks cultural exchange in America with a focus on social cohesion.

During the trip they visited Virginia, Washington DC and Philadelphia and attended meetings with a variety of different organisations and people who were working to bring Americans together despite cultural differences.

Community work, and to mix with such a diverse group taught Sylvia how brilliantly unique the U.K. is and also how much there is to be learnt from listening to others. Sylvia is grateful for her time in America, it was fun but also completely humbling to meet with such influential figures and try to work together to bring communities together both in America and the U.K.



Make Your Mark 2018



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 2018; 24,708 young people from Leeds voted (35.6% of the youth population). The top issue for young people in Leeds was **put an end to knife crime, too many young people's lives are lost to knife crime; the Government need to do more to help end the knife crime epidemic.**

House of Commons (November 2018)

Members of Youth Parliament attended the House of Commons in November, to debate the top five issues from the Make Your Mark ballot and chose the national issue for young people in the UK. Tackling knife crime was chosen as the top issue, and is the campaign that we are working on and we hope to do everything we can to make a positive change with our work.

The standard of debate was exceptionally high at the House of Commons and Sylvia was fortunate enough to give a speech to commemorate 100 years of female suffrage. To speak at the dispatch box age 17 was an opportunity she will never forget.



Children & Families Trust Board Takeover (January 2019)



On Monday 21st January 2019, Members of Youth Parliament and the Leeds Youth Council took over the Children and Families Trust Board as part of National Takeover Challenge. We discussed the important issues of knife crime and mental health, with a focus on how these issues affect young people. Both members of the board and the youth organisations found the meeting informative, interesting and engaging. We all gained an insight into how the issues are perceived and what is being done to make progress. The meeting facilitated a direct channel of communication between young people and the local authority, allowing young people to express their feelings and opinions about the issues.

Community Youth Voice Summit (March 2019)

On Wednesday 13th March 2019 we joined 134 young people from 17 different youth and community groups at Leeds Civic Hall for the 'Let's Talk About Leeds' event. In 2018, the Leeds City Council Children & Families Scrutiny Board set up an inquiry to ask the question "is Leeds a child friendly city?" The event was hosted by the Voice and Influence Team and provided the opportunity for us to speak to scrutiny board members about our views of Leeds.



The summit was a success and we really enjoyed meeting lots of different young people and hearing their views on our city.

Tackling Knife Crime (2018/19 national campaign)



We started off our campaign by meeting with West Yorkshire Police and other key organisations to find out what is already happening to tackle the knife crime epidemic in the UK. On the 27th February we attended the West Yorkshire Police's knife crime awareness day at their Carr Gate Training Centre, the event provided over 100 students from across Leeds the opportunity to take part in different workshops and hear real life experiences of knife crime. This has really opened our eyes to the potential reasons why young people feel the need to carry and use knives.

On the 16th July 2019 we held a knife crime summit at Pudsey Civic Hall secondary school students. The purpose of the day was to raise awareness of knife crime, its causes, risks and outcomes, and educate young people on steps that they could implement to protect both themselves and others. The morning was made up of workshops on first aid, delivered by Leeds Beckett University, talks from Life Experiences, victims and assailants of knife crime, and a law and order talk from West Yorkshire Police which served as an opportunity for young people to learn about knife crime and the law.



The afternoon session was a chance for next steps to be decided, with schools drawing up action plans on ways in which they could feedback what they had learnt to their schools. Ideas included assemblies, notice boards and ambassador programmes. We are currently following up these action plans and hope to hear from the schools soon.

Annual Sitting (July 2019)

Leeds were delighted to welcome MYP's at the UKYP annual conference 2019, which was hosted at the University of Leeds. We took part in regional workshops discussing the issues of the Big Debate and planned for the future climate change campaign and looked at actions we can take to reduce pollution.

We all fully enjoyed the annual sitting, and hearing from the Little Mermaids, who gave us an insight into issues faced by the LGBTQ+ community and how everyone can support individuals who might be going through a hard time due to their sexuality.



We all took part in the Big Vote and debated issues like child poverty and unnecessary homework. We are looking forward to meeting everyone and respecting the views of young people of Leeds at the House of Commons this November.

Make Your Mark 2019



We coordinated the 2019 ballot in Leeds, which ran from August to October 2019. 11,734 young people, 11 to 18 years old, from Leeds voted in the 2019 Make Your Mark ballot. This is 17% of the youth population.

The top issue for young people in Leeds is **Protect the Environment**, we believe that we have a responsibility to protect the environment from the effects of climate change for the next generation; and the government should look towards carbon neutral alternative.

Protect the Environment will be the Leeds Youth Council's campaign for 2019/20

House of Commons (November 2019)

On Friday 8th November 2019 we joined Members of Youth Parliament from across the UK at the House of Commons for our annual debate, which was chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Sylvia was elected as the Yorkshire and Humber debate lead, which meant she got to speak at the dispatch box to represent our region. Sylvia did an amazing speech, we were all so proud. Arqam and Samuel also got to contribute to the debates from the back bench.



We debated the top five issues from the Make Your Mark ballot and then voted for the 2019/20 national campaign for young people. Members of Youth Parliament and Youth Councils across the country will be working on the campaigns over the next 12 months.

The campaigns voted for as the national campaign was... **protect the environment!**

Awards



We have had a fantastic two years as members of youth parliament for Leeds and during this time we have achieved 2 Leeds Youth Awards as recognition for our contributions to youth voice in Leeds.

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.

*Arqam, Harry, Samuel & Sylvia
Members of Youth Parliament for Leeds 2018-20*

To follow the work of the UK Youth Parliament in Leeds visit www.breezeleeds.org/haveyoursay
or follow @LeedsYouthVoice on social media