

Youth Voice: Positive Stories



June 2015



Mita Desai (Centre), Chair of British Youth Council campaigning for Votes at 16

Youth Voice:

Positive Stories

A report by youth representatives and the workers that support them
June 2015

Welcome to the June 2015 edition of Positive Stories. Our format reflects part of our commitment to the **UN Convention on the Rights of a Child Article 13 - Freedom of expression** 'Every child must be free to say what they think and to seek and receive all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law,' (UNICEF UK).

The British Youth Council will share this report regionally and nationally, with local councillors and MPs, and certain media outlets, in order to raise the profile of the fantastic local work that we know is happening every day.

The case studies and stories of the work of young people in their local communities are reproduced here in their own words. If you would like to find out more about one of the projects you read about in this report, please email: mail@byc.org.uk

The online survey remains open and we produce reports once a month, providing young people the opportunity to shout about the great work they have been doing in their local areas during the previous month. Previous reports are available online: <http://www.byc.org.uk/uk-work/youth-voice>

The British Youth Council would like to thank all the workers and young people who took the time to promote and complete October survey and we look forward to hearing more from everyone over the coming months.

Contents

Young People's Stories

East Midlands	4
East of England	6
London	10
North East	13
North West	16
South East	17
South West	26
West Midlands	40
Yorkshire and Humber	43
Northern Ireland	48

Support Worker Stories

East Midlands	54
East of England	55
North West	56
South East	59
West Midlands	60
Wales	61

Young People's Stories

East Midlands

Leicestershire

Jamie Trusler, 18, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

Jamie Trusler, 18, CYCLE Member and Deputy Member of Youth Parliament for Leicestershire. My social action journey started when I was 13 years of age, I was a shy, timid young person who aspired to be a Police Officer, but soon realised that the personal skills I had at that time would not make me to be a Police Officer, I knew I had to be to gain some confidence, so I decided to do something about it and joined St John Ambulance. Since joining St Johns Ambulance I have been a Leading cadet, District Cadet of the year for Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland, East Midlands Regional Cadet of the year, a member of the National Youth advisory and now I am a Youth leader.

At The age of 16 I completed the National Citizen Service where I then stood out of 25,000 graduates to become 1 of 100 National Ambassadors and I joined the County Youth Council for Leicestershire – CYCLE – which led me to become the Deputy Member of Youth Parliament for Leicestershire.

Some of my biggest achievements are that I have spoken in the House of Commons twice, been to and spoken in 10 Downing Street, was invited to meet HRH Princess Anne at St James Palace and met HRH Princess Beatrice and Sam Branson who is the son of Sir Richard Branson. This year I have become an International Lion Club Young Ambassador where I have trained about 2,000 young people in Basic First Aid across Leicestershire. Then on June 18th 2015 I attended the Sunday Times Festival of Education, which is the biggest event in education. For this event I was a speaker and spoke alongside the likes of Nicky Morgan, Tinie Tempah, and Piers Morgan. I spoke on behalf of 'Step Up to Serve' and #IWill about youth social action within society regarding my experiences of it and my opinion. I sat on a panel with Dame Julia Cleverdon DCVO CBE, Sir Kevan Collins and Caroline Vernon. After starting my social action journey over 5 years ago I have developed myself into a person that is set for life, I have just finished my studies in Uniformed Public Services at Loughborough College, and I am currently in the assessment stages of the British Transport Police to be a Special Constable. I have achieved so much, and done things that I would never have dreamed of doing as a 13 year old.

Daria Eckert, 14, Member of Youth Parliament

Mental Health Campaign - June was the mark to the beginning of our mental health campaign which was launched at convention 1 in Leicester The mental health campaign was explained to

use and the MYPs from Leicestershire are looking forward to carrying out the campaign. I had a successful meeting with my head teacher about the UK Youth Parliament; he has now signed up for make your mark 2015 and has said we will do the mental health curriculum pack in PHSE lessons at our school. The Leicestershire youth council created the curriculum pack earlier this year. BYC Convention 1 | Leicester - I had a great time at the convention and I have learn lots of new things for example in the presenting higher level class I learnt a few new tips to help me with my presenting which I'm sure I'll put to go use for make your mark. In the organisation higher level class we made a plan for make your mark which we will soon carry out. I came away feeling inspired and more knowledgeable. Daria Eckert MYP Leicestershire

BYC Convention 1 in Leicester on June 6th marked the beginning of our mental health campaign. This was really well explained and now the MYPs from Leicestershire are looking forward to carrying this out. I had a great time at this convention, I learned a lot of new skills in the 'Presenting' and 'Organising' workshops, which will help me with planning for the Make your Mark Campaign which CYCLE (County Youth Council for Leicestershire) will start soon. I came away from the convention feeling inspired and more knowledgeable. Since then I have met with my Head Teacher about the UK Youth Parliament campaigns and as a result he has signed up for Make your Mark 2015 and he has also agreed to use the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing curriculum pack that CYCLE Members created in PHSE lessons at our school, so I would say a 'successful meeting'. Daria Eckert MYP Leicestershire

Nottinghamshire

Dylan Wilson, 14, Member of Youth Parliament

I was attending a meeting as an MYP with the Youth Voice I work with. The meeting was with Ofsted. They where coming to see what we have done. We all arrived, then we filled in a sheet about an event or similar. We then presented it to Ofsted inspectors. We also answerd a few question about the group. I think all in all, it went really well.

East of England

Essex

Camomile Shumba, 17, Member of Youth Parliament

After going round the Colchester sixth form, where ever a thousand youth are allocated, asking for youth what changes they wanted to see I found out that the majority of youth from ages 16-19 wanted to see changes in education and costs. I used this information and the information from last years make your mark campaign to start a campaign of my own that gains to truly inform the government of what changes youth want. Ultimately they want changes in education, mental health and costs (ECM). Because I want to act as well as speak out for these youth, I recently had a meeting with Jack Petchey. Informing them that I want to start a video that uses your people from different parts of Jack Petchey, youth who have been able to do remarkable things all because Jack Petchey prioritised our needs. All in all these video will empower youth and help conquer low self esteem as well as circulate my petition. My petition will be asking people to sign if they believe that youth should be prioritised in ECM. The video will help encourage you those because at the end of the video there will be a message asking those people who believe that although Jack Petchey has done his part its time for the government to start prioritising youth in the way that we desire, in ECM. Jack Petchey are excited for me to create a better proposal so that they can take the idea forward to the board of directors. Also, I discussed with them helping empower youth with mental health disorders that often seek counselling in youth centres by giving them speak out challenge lessons and again they showed the same excitement.

Recently I got elected for the NHS youth forum. The experience was eye opening. I never believed I would win but the fact that people believed in me enough to vote for me was some what eye opening. It made me aware that anything can be achieved, you can have anything if you want it and can show that you want it, bad enough.

I created a questionnaire that is designed to find out how equipped young people when it comes to dealing with their mental health issues as well as helping other people who are suffering from mental health disorders as well as help me find out what other problems youth feel need to be solved within the NHS. So far over 30 youth answered the survey within 30 minutes of circulating it. The details I gather I will be taking to the NHS youth forum residential. I am excited to represent the youth who have taken the time to fill this survey in.

Last week I went to my first NHS youth forum residential. It was such an amazing experience because they managed to get all these people from different organisations in the NHS who were

already making massive contributions in the NHS for youth. Just being able to talk to them and them turning around and saying that we inspired them in turn inspired me and made me even more excited about the future for me and other youth in the NHS YOUTH FORUM.

I am soon going to meet with my local mp , this I look forward to. I am excited to discuss my own campaigns as well as the make your mark campaign with him.

Matthew Tinker, 14, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

For the UK Youth Parliament's Mental Health Campaign, I got in contact with a representative of NHS England. We spoke about the ways that the NHS currently deals with mental health issues. I asked numerous questions about the ways young people could get involved in the work of NHS. Furthermore, I have contacted a local charity named Mind West Essex. They support young people with mental health conditions. I asked them about what the UK Youth Parliament could do to help improve mental health services for young people in Essex as part of the Mind the Gap campaign. They suggested that we should eradicate the negative stigma that surrounds mental health and this could be done by schools taking more responsibility and the media not negatively advertising the stories of young sufferers. I believe that Mind West Essex are a very important charity for young people and the UK Youth Parliament should support charities like it! In addition, I recently contacted the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson MP, concerning the inclusion of a date of birth line to the Zip Oyster Card. Its is my belief that the card should be used as a proof of age identification card. I received a reply for Mr Johnson thanking me for my suggestion, but my next step is to meet with him in person.

For my district youth council, we have been busy organising a youth debate to be held in October. This will see around 60 young people coming into the Civic Offices debating on three important issues. The EFYC members will give training to the young people prior to the afternoon debate in order to improve their public speaking and debating skills.

Hertfordshire

Amira, 14, Member of Youth Parliament

As one of the MYPs who are leading the Herts1125 meetings, we have now made surveys for our top five priorities voted for by young people in Hertfordshire.

The top priorities are:

Cyber bullying: how to protect yourself, support for victims of bullying and self-esteem post bullying (2952 votes)

Young people's Rights: appropriate adult, cautions, domestic abuse, working hours, pay, sharing of indecent images, right to be heard, etc. (2824)

Hate crime: What is it? How to report it? Hate crimes are crimes that are targeted at a person because of their disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender identity (2494)

LGBT+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, plus): Tackling homophobia, reducing stigma, increasing understanding, support for LGBT+ young people (2299)

Financial help for young people: pupil premium, 16-19 bursary, student grants, scholarships & bursaries, student & apprenticeship cards, etc. (2127)

Surveys have now been sent to all schools and youth projects as well as being online for young people to complete. I am looking forward to getting the results back to see what everyone has to say on the different topics. Also, the next Herts1125 meeting is coming around the corner so it will be good to see some familiar faces again.

Nick, 16, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

In Herts, we MYP's all work jolly hard over the summer months to compile a manifesto which highlights the issues facing the young people who elected us. This year, the five issues are: LGBT+ issues, hate crime, young people's rights, financial help for young people and cyber bullying. All 10 of us put immense effort into representing those aged 11-18, all doing our part to ensure that young people are not forgotten in today's society.

For that reason, I feel that this month, what has been really positive about being an MYP, is working with 9 fellow MYP's in an equal effort to support young people. The 10 of us are currently consulting with as many young people as we can, and every MYP deserves the equal recognition of putting so much hard work into this manifesto, be them a DMYP, or MYP. We all play our part, and I must say, I think the reward is in ensuring that young people have their voice heard.

Vivek, 13, Member of Youth Parliament

At the moment I am getting surveys for Herts1125 completed by as many young people as possible. We have composed different surveys on our top five priorities and I have been busy handing them out at school. It's going well so far and my aim is to get 1000 surveys completed by young people in my area. However, I am not looking forward to inputting all of the data onto spreadsheets: /. My experience as an MYP has been amazing, I have gotten more confident and I think a better person from it.

Work for the Hertfordshire Young People's Manifesto has also begun as surveys on key issues are currently being distributed to schools in Hertfordshire, the feedback from which will be used to write the Manifesto. I have also taken a liking to my new role as an East of England Youth Voice Secretary in charge of Positive Stories, as I believe it is important for us to share our work with the public and those who are interested as far as we can. On balance, a challenging but successful month.

Hertfordshire

Sahil Ali, 17, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

This month has been eventful at a local level for the District of Hertsmere. Work on the Hertsmere Youth Council has progressed yet again and the draft constitution is currently being reviewed and examined by my Youth Workers.

A Herts1125 summit will soon be coming up in July and I have been asked to do a presentation on the work on the Youth Council with my fellow co-founders, which I am very excited about!

Suffolk

Benjamin Denton-Cardew, 17, Member of Youth Parliament

I was elected in April of this year for the Central Suffolk & North Ipswich constituency in a by-election, since this date I have been exercising my plans on my manifesto and meeting with my other fellow representatives from both my area and the East of England. Since being elected I have put pressure on my headteacher of my VI form to distribute the pupil premium fairly, as was in my manifesto. At present the £935.00 Per child with a disadvantage is being used to fund the school trips, and is not benefiting them at all, in my manifesto one of my pledges was to find support from MP's to start a bill, to turn this into law that the funding must be used correctly, as is the disability funding. I'm also talking to young people in my area affected by mental health concerns that feel they have been let down by serious shortcomings in the system. A report is being compiled by myself to redress the failings in the system for young people - and most specifically for treatment of eating disorders. The report should be finished within a few months and I shall be handing it to MP's from all parties once I have completed it to allow them to understand what needs doing for the East of England.

London

Camden

Hannah Morris, 15, Member of Youth Parliament

Brilliant meeting today with Camden's CCG team. The youth council meeting consisted of a focus group where we were asked about the services we knew about in Camden, the services that actually existed and what more we need. We also focused on the ways we individually would deal with problems and others we would never use so we could discover where the problems lie. In addition we explored what sort of problems we felt adequate to deal with alone and which needed more support.. Finally we wrote a list of all the changes that have to occur and how we are going to promote both mental and physical well being.

Doing a massive campaign on the rising number of mental health issues in my school. Young people from CAMHS have agreed to come in and do workshops and assemblies talking about their experiences. We are also going to collaborate with the head of the school kitchen to work it how we can promote healthy eating and tackle eating disorders. In addition yesterday I did an interview for BBC Radio 4 for a programme to raise awareness about mental health issues and to highlight how drastic the cuts are, and how desperate some of these young people's situations are. We have got to overcome mental health issues and I hope my interview helped make a change.

Kingston-upon-Thames

Jodie Webb, 16, Member of Youth Parliament

I kicked off this month attending the British Youth Council convention for London and the South of England. During the convention I attended some workshops on public speaking and on strategies for the "Make your Mark" ballot. We also discussed the upcoming "Mind the Gap" mental health campaign; there was a brilliant guest speaker from Young Minds that gave an insight into his experience with CAMHS and reminded everyone of the importance of what they are campaigning for. We're currently in the process of trying to encourage schools to sign up to the "Make your Mark" ballot- an annual vote in which young people decide the Youth Parliament's next priority campaigns. We've been sending out emails to the Director of Children's Services and MPs to ask for their support plus Gagan Khurana (the Deputy Member of Youth Parliament for Kingston) has written an article to be sent out in an e-news letter to all the head teachers in Kingston about the campaign. Now everyone's exams are finishing we're very excited to begin focusing on getting as many schools as possible to sign up to the vote before the 17th July deadline. Work on the "Mind the Gap" campaign has also begun. I've been researching the mental health services in the area so that the Youth Committee can use it

to look at the national picture and determine how much of a postcode lottery children and young people's mental health services are. I have also been asked to evaluate how difficult the information was to find so the accessibility of the services can be investigated. After looking at data in the area and the manifestos of all our members, the Kingston Youth Council has also decided to focus on Mental Health. We're forming a working group to focus on the issue and are beginning plans to do a mass survey of young people in Kingston about their experiences with mental health. Another issue that Kingston Youth Council wished to focus on was substance misuse after data from an assessment of needs report revealed that Kingston's youth rates of substance misuse was above average and an alarmingly low number of young people knew where to seek help. Campaigning to allow 16 year olds a vote in the EU referendum has also been high on our agenda. Votes at 16 was determined to be a priority issue in last year's "Make your Mark" and the youth parliament especially feel that, due to the high stakes of this referendum and the success of the Scottish Referendum, now is the time for action. Lots of social media campaigns have been going on and I have been promoting a change.org petition started by a Youth Parliament member which now has almost 5,000 supporters! We've been trying to win the support of MPs and some youth parliament members have had great success. Sadly the House of Commons voted against the extension of the franchise by a reasonably narrow majority (265 Ayes to 310 Nays) but it is important to note not all MPs were present at the vote and we remain hopeful that there will be action in the House of Lords. I am very proud of the successes of the campaign and I have never before seen such wide support for Votes at 16. Despite the setback, there have been other positive advances in this area such as 16 year old being granted the vote in Scottish Parliamentary Elections.

Havering

Esther Showemimo, 12, Member of Youth Parliament

My name is Esther Showemimo. I was elected in as an MYP in May this year. My positive story is about a disability awareness event that took place 11/06/15. Michelle Pryke (one of our Youth Council workers) helped to assist with the event in order to raise awareness and money for disabled young people in Havering. I have chosen this event as it was fun, but i also leant a lot about how my everyday life could suddenly change and become a challenge for me if i had a disability. When i entered the Myplace building my heart was literally racing. I was excited for becoming 'disabled' for the day, but what i didn't realise was that i was in for a huge surprise! After signing in and scribbling down in an untidy scrawl how much i raised for the sponsorship (£33.70) i met Emma (a Youth Council worker) who carefully explained what i had to do and retrieved a wheelchair from the hands of some particular nosy kids. As i carefully lowered myself into the wheelchair a tingling sensation zapped through my body, i felt almost sick with excitement. Moving on, i rode my wheelchair into the towering lift and waited and waited for what seemed like a century before wheeling myself out of the lift and onto the first floor. Tommy from Havering Youth Service raced towards me directing me to the disabled toilets as i

gently peeled of the unusually large sticknote that had my name on it. Next I was inside the kitchen and had to come out with a cup of water. I put this between my mouth and attempted to open the door and wheel myself out. To be honest it was quite a challenge. I ended up spilling the water over my lap. Moving on to the next challenge was pretty easy. I had to wear gloves without inserting my thumb. Surprisingly I managed to pour some spaghetti/pasta into a 'hot' pan (while spilling a few on the way) and lay a table. After I had to write my name with my opposite hand. This was particularly shaky. Then I put the letter into an envelope and into a bag. I found this task mild. Finally the last two tasks were fairly easy. We had to put on a body suit whilst lying on the floor, & put on a jacket using one arm. I loved the disability event. I didn't just enjoy it but I learnt what it's like to be disabled, so my sympathy goes out to all those with disabilities. Also with the money raised, hopefully we will be able to help some people. Thank you.

Harrow

Zak Wagman, 16, Member of Youth Parliament

This month, despite the pressure of exams, I have remained active, and attended the BYC Convention in Victoria, for London, the East and the South East of England. We heard an empowering talk from a leading Young Minds activist, about mental health campaigning, before working in sessions on Make Your Mark campaigning, working with the other youth reps from Harrow to formulate a plan. There was also a great chance to debate about youth justice.

Dina Khadum, 17, Youth Councillor

Attending BYC's first convention of the year with other members of Harrow Youth Parliament, Zak and Lukas, was a great way to jump right in with getting the Make Your Mark campaign started. With an impressive turnout of just under 50% last year, led by MYP Zak Wagman, we were keen to get advice on how to top that figure and got some really insightful tips from nearby areas on how to increase turnout. The convention was a great way to start coordinating the campaign and now we've got a good headstart with getting our schools registered and hopefully, beating last year's figures! We also enjoyed getting involved in some interesting debates about the youth justice system and questioning the need for reform, which proved to be very heated but nonetheless gave us all a lot to think about! With all the amazing people with great ideas we encountered at the convention we are now inspired to go back to HYP and start brainstorming for the next year's plans, so we're really excited to get started.

North East

Darlington

Danny Brown, 15, Member of Youth Parliament

Resolution on general affairs From six different countries in the European Union, 27 young people involved in town partnerships have joined efforts to help resolve various issues that Europe face: tolerance, environment, mobility and political involvement.

Political engagement It was agreed unanimously that being politically engaged is very important; it helps with personal development; it has the potential to inspire people and provides young people with a sense of security of belonging to a political group. Additionally, by becoming part of a political group, it can provide a strong starting point for a political career. By being politically involved, young people also learn information about their right to complain, which is vital knowledge. Moreover, it was decided that by being politically engaged, it enables us to be able to discuss problems, find solutions, whilst respecting other people's opinions and raising awareness. Finding compromises is a skill that goes hand-in-hand with being politically involved.

Solutions proposed for Political engagement:

- More information needs to be made more accessible to young people, which could potentially increase the amount of people taking part politically.
- Additionally, it was suggested that the current approach to political discussions were too formal; they need to be less like interviews, and more like a simple discussion.
- In countries where there is no political education in schooling (for example, England) it should be made mandatory.
- Finally, Skype could be incorporated into school lessons to increase communication between town and Country partnerships.

Mobility Being mobile and travelling is important to young people for many reasons: it gives us a chance to learn other languages, which are vital in communication and making us more employable, we also get to experience other cultures, meet new kinds of people, broadens our minds and increases our knowledge on other culture's ways of living. The EU promotes youth mobility through the Erasmus project, in which you are entitled to study in universities in other EU countries for between six months and a year. The Erasmus project boosts employability, modernises education, training and youth work.

Solutions proposed for mobility:

- Education of the Erasmus program needs to be increased
- More young people need to be informed about the opportunities available to them

The Environment Plastic pollution has become a rising threat to the environment in recent years, especially to animals and plants. In order to have a sustainable future as a society we need to improve for the next generation for the benefit of our planet. The conference has increased our awareness and knowledge about the effects of our actions

Solutions proposed for environment:

- Regionally, nationally and globally we should be more ecological. For example, reduce the amount of plastic that we produce, such as packaging.
- Education on environment needs to be increased, especially regarding the dangers of plastic waste.
- More money should be spent on environmental protection, for example, tax relief on green energy products, such as the use of solar panels.

Tolerance Tolerance is where there is an environment of respect, equality, social justice, peace and freedom. It involves having a fair, objective attitude towards other's opinions, practices, race and religion. It strictly avoids exclusion, racism and homophobia.

Solutions proposed for tolerance:

- Local campaigns against

racism and discrimination • Education should be increased on the importance of tolerance • Commemoration day • Communication day for tolerance and against discrimination • Cultural exchange and travel should be promoted in an inclusive, tolerant way • Group activities – actively encourage people from varied ethnicities and backgrounds work together. • Ensure the laws against discrimination in the EU are followed stringently

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Emily Dormer, 16, Member of Youth Parliament

This month I spent a week in the House of Lords shadowing a peer, as a Member of Youth Parliament. In preparation for the Votes At 16 debate, I briefed and help develop points supporting Votes at 16 for a Member of the House of Lords. It was fantastic to see that Youth Parliament is an instantly recognised and valued body by those in the Houses of Parliament.

This month Newcastle's MYPs meet with Chief Executive of Mental Health Services John Lawlor. He is really keen to work with both the Youth Parliament and Youth Council, which is very exciting. Hopefully we will be able to see some of the services available to Young People in Newcastle for ourselves.

North Tyneside

Rebecca Moore, 15, Member of Youth Parliament

As a part of the M!ND YOUR HEAD Campaign, our group met with all of the PHSE Leads in North Tyneside to present our vision and the lesson to them. They were all very keen to be part of the pilot and 5 schools have signed up. They also offered to support us in any way we wanted them to.

The North Tyneside Young Persons Health and Wellbeing Board met with a local graphic design company called Roots & Wings to format the content of the lesson plan and resources we have created. The lesson includes a quiz, some group activities, case study videos (of young people) and even more. The project is planned to be piloted in September in 5 local schools who have signed up.

South Tyneside

Emma True, 16, Member of Youth Parliament

This month, I ran a mental health workshop for a group of college students in my local area. The workshop was named 'black dog' aptly named after a video that centred around the workshop named black dog. This video depicted a metaphor- used by Winston Churchill- as depression being a black dog that follows a person around. The video though very emotional, grasped the concept that is mental illness in an informative and accessible way. The young people responded well to this and appreciated the topic of mental health/illness by the end of the session through discussing the topic of mental health and mental illness and watching a video describing it.

Stockton-on-Tees

Jess Hugill, 16, Member of Youth Parliament

This month I was able to meet with other MYPs and members of the BYC at the first convention at which we discussed ways to encourage schools to sign up to make your mark and also had the privilege of attending a debate about the EU. As well as this, I have been encouraging schools in Stockton to sign up for make your mark and have already gained the support of a lot of my local schools. I have been into assemblies to inform students about the campaign and Youth Parliament itself.

Sunderland

Brian Terry, 16, Member of Youth Parliament

At Sunderland Youth Parliament we have continued existing work on better education in schools on topics such as politics and sexual education. We've collectively helped plan our way forward with this task and look forward to the future.

North West

Wigan

Grace Thompson, 18, Youth Councillor

As the weather gets sunnier, so does the future! We are embarking on exciting new journeys as a Cabinet which, we hope, will progressively lead to bigger and better things. Last year's Make Your Mark campaign saw 3 schools join us as "champion schools" to take part in voting on whatever issues were important to them as young people. This year we have 18 – a significant increase. We are both pleased and excited about this as it will enable us to receive votes from yet more young people in Wigan concerning issues that affect them. The reach of democracy is widening. It has been positive, recently, to have a couple of new attendees to cabinet, who are settling in and making useful contributions to the group. As ever, we are encouraged when we find yet more young people who are interested in politics and in helping other young people. We will be working as a Cabinet over the summer to recruit, train and select potential candidates for next year's new MYPs. Speaking of Members of Youth Parliament, it is with a mixture of sorrow and pride that we announce Alice Wilcock's resignation from her role as MYP, due to leaving for Oxford University in a few months' time. Alice has been a champion of advocating young peoples' issues and raising awareness around mental health. Those of you who know Alice can imagine how enthusiastically she has carried out her role as MYP, and losing her will be a heavy loss indeed. Her legacy shall be continued, however, by Rory Gilmore, who has been a devoted and dedicated Deputy Member of Youth Parliament and will now take over Alice's role as MYP, whilst Alice takes his role as Deputy. We have every confidence in Rory and look forward to what his plans will be for carrying his manifesto forward. As change occurs in different ways in our Cabinet, we will embrace it, learn lessons and improve...because this is how we grow.

South East

Bracknell Forest

Owen Griffiths, 16 & Sophie Lockyer, 14, Deputy Members of Youth Parliament

Hi after our little catch up we came up with this from our youth council meeting yesterday: On the 22nd of June our youth council had a meeting with slough youth council. The purpose of the meeting was to find out how well each of our councils worked and if any improvements can be made. We also shared our ideas for the upcoming make your mark campaign and how to make it most effective in our areas. It was a great opportunity to meet all of the slough youth council members and work together to achieve more.

Sophie Lockyer, 14, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

On the 22nd of June our youth council had a meeting with slough youth council. The purpose of the meeting was to find out how well each of our councils worked and if any improvements can be made on communication within the youth council and with other young people. We also shared our ideas for the upcoming make your mark campaign and how to make it most effective in our areas by thinking of how to deliver presentations in schools and areas where there are young people. It was a great opportunity to meet the entire slough youth council members and work together to achieve more.

Brighton and Hove

Maram, 16, Member of Youth Parliament

This month I have been working towards contacting schools in the area to sign them all up for Make your Mark, there is 22 schools, which hopefully they all sign up, so we can reach 1 million this year. I have also nearly completed the Mind the Gap, researching information. I have contacted the MPs and I will try again emailing them, on the positive side I have meeting Caroline Lucas MP in a weeks time.

Thomas Soud, 17, Procedures Group Representative

Throughout the month I have been ensuring the South East has been running as effectively as possible espically in regards to signing schools up for Make Your Mark and helping D/MYPs with the Mind Your Gap Campaign. One of the main actions I have been doing is to update all D/MYPs on the campaigns, Make Your Mark and much more through telephone calls which so far have been going exceptionally

well. On top of this I have also started working with areas in the South East which lack members of Youth Parliament to ensure that they also get as high Make Your Mark turnout as possible. Within the next coming days I shall begin to contact schools in these regions to ensure they are signed up.

East Sussex

George Kyprianou-Hickman, Member of Youth Parliament

This month I created a survey on mental health and sent it out to 200 young people to collect data for the youth select committee, as well as gather statistics for our campaign. I felt this survey was a success, and the statistics and information received was really interesting and helpful.

This month I was also involved in the Our Vote Our Future campaign. As part of this I have created and maintained an Instagram account, designed a leaflet as a member of the design team, organised a group that aims to deliver a survey to as many colleges and schools as we can about terms of votes at sixteen, as well as become head of the press and media team. I am also in a few other subgroups, and feel that the campaign has really taken off and I have really enjoyed the experience.

I also did a radio interview on my local radio about mental health, youth voice and our vote out future. I hope this has helped to make young people in my area more aware of the opportunities around them. I participated in a library launch of a card I have been working on with my youth council. I publically talked to several members of the council about the benefit of this card, as well as discuss UKYP and it's works. The launch was a great experience that aimed to make the card more acceptable, and I made some positive connections that I can use throughout my time in youth voice.

I had an informal meeting with another MYP in my area, and we discussed how we would work on the campaigns and structure MYM. I also wrote to my MP to arrange a meeting, as well as consult her and ask for her opinion on votes at 16.

At the beginning of this month I attended a UKYP convention in London, and I had a great time and left feeling informed and ready to act on the campaigns. I feel this month has been really productive and look forward to see what July holds!

Robin Holmes, Member of Youth Parliament

On 6th June I attended Convention 1 with my fellow East Sussex D/MYPs, and a great day was had by all. We took part in three excellent workshop sessions; 'organising', focused on making a plan for Make Your Mark, 'presenting', which was a great opportunity to gain some key public speaking skills, and 'youth justice', a debate – style session that really got us thinking about some controversial questions surrounding the issue of how young offenders should be treated. It



was also a chance to catch up with all the new friends I made at the induction residential in Kent, as well as meeting many more!

Maria Goptareva, 17, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

On June the 6th I went to my first UKYP convention. It has been such a great experience! I have had a chance to meet other members, make friends and discuss campaign issues and how to approach them. The convention was also very helpful in terms of Make Your Mark and mental health campaign, so we are all on track now to signing schools up and doing our research on mental health services.

So far I have researched some of the mental health services and I am currently trying to get my college signed up for MYM to help us reach our goal of 1000000!

Jessica Batchelor, 14, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

I was elected Young Mayor of my town by the young people of Seaford. I can incorporate my role in UKYP to this and build more support in my local area for our campaigns.

Harry Elphick, 17, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

Some members of the UK Youth Parliament in East Sussex met with Ruth Hillman from the CAMHS service. She was very supportive of the mental health gap campaign and asked for volunteers to help with the planning of the upcoming youth pilot in Hastings.

Isle of Wight

Connor Dyer, Member of Youth Parliament

I have been particularly busy and engaged in my area since the start of June. I have been doing all sorts, from starting my own mental health initiative, being published online, and talking with my local ferry provider's CEO in order to try and arrange possible student cards for their services in the future. I have also been a part of the British Youth Select Committee, giving evidence about Mental Health and my own experience with it in the past.

Will Matthews, 16, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

I was invited onto the local BBC radio station to talk about Votes at 16 on their breakfast show. It was a really good experience, and they even went and interviewed members of the public! I've been invited back in the future! I also met with my MP to talk about Votes at 16 - it was a tough debate, and although he didn't agree, I'm glad we could debate it, and will continue to in the future.

Kent

Angel Layer, 18, Member of Youth Parliament

This month has been full of the push for the start of the mental health campaign, I dropped into a local mental health clinic and was able to personally ask them about their services and what they would change if they could. Through this I was able to make a video too which informed other youth parliament members how to complete the spreadsheet which was wonderful. After getting to grips with that I worked with other Kent MYPs to split the schools between us and contact them about make your mark, hopefully that will be enough to get them involved! We already have 5/146 schools signed up but are determined to hit our target! I also did some tweeting to MPs about #Votes@16 for the EU referendum, which still needs as much momentum as possible, so I have been insuring young people in my constituency know a lot about it too! It's been a super busy month but I'm sure next month will be even busier with the Annual Sitting for UKYP members!

Ben Sizer, 16, Member of Youth Parliament

Meeting with other youth councils to discuss how the Make Your Mark Campaign is going and how it can be changed! It has worked well speaking to Medway especially discussing ways on how to sign up school affectively!

Elena Ewence, 15, Youth Councillor

Today we had a meeting in our transport committee. We feedback from various meetings with heads of public transport companies and transport councillors. Also, we discussed ideas for acronyms for our campaign for better behaviour on public transport. The head of one company has a leaflet that he gives to young people about their buses and we found criticisms, positives and amendments in it which we hope to feedback to him. A local councillor has a budget for cyclists and, as part of our campaign is for safer cycling for young people, we discussed and came up with ideas of what we want to do and how we want to do it. Our meeting was visited by two members of Medway Youth Council who are interested in how other meetings run.

Joshua Gray, 15, Youth Councillor

On 26th June, I and five other representatives from various Youth Councils from across the UK went to Portcullis House in London to deliver oral evidence about mental health services and to help in the British Youth Council's study into the quality of the services, involvement of young people and into the stigma around mental health. The evidence session took part throughout the whole day, and alongside the young people who gave evidence in the afternoon, there were other witnesses from national bodies such as the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy and other experts, along with a Mind ambassador - all there to submit evidence and to help advance BYC's study. During our evidence session in the afternoon, we were asked multiple questions, regarding certain prevalent issues such as bullying, stigma and education, and many of our conclusions boiled down to there not being enough education in schools - for teachers and students - and that because there is no compulsory education, the stigma

surrounding mental health would continue until students around Britain were taught that having a mental health issue is normal! This day was a really important one for the Youth Select Committee, who can now use our written and oral evidence to compile a report to try and encourage better education in schools and help eliminate the stigma surrounding mental health, and I would like to give a big thank you to BYC for letting me contribute towards this vital report!

Youth Representative

I have been working along side many others, to develop a campaign for mental health. Our goal is to help young people understand mental health better. We hope that by doing our campaign, young people will be better educated in what mental health is and how to detect it.

Medway

Luke Morgan, 15, Member of Youth Parliament

On Sunday 28th of June some members of Medway Youth Parliament went to a meeting of Kent Youth County Council. We did this to discuss ideas and to help to grow and develop our own ideas, for Make your mark and mental health campaigns.

Milton Keynes

Adam Rolfe, 18, Member of Youth Parliament

At my local authority's youth cabinet meeting, I participated in a mental health workshop which was run by a local organisation. I also chaired a Q and A session with MK director of people on the recent increase on bus prices.

Amber Saunders, 16, Member of Youth Parliament

On the 26th June, I went to an awards evening at MK Dons Stadium which was for young people in care. There were seven different awards which primary and secondary school aged young people were nominated for. I was a judge and helped decide who the fourteen winners and fourteen runners up would be (from 139 applications). It was a great night and fantastic to hear about all the good things that young people in Milton Keynes are doing.

Ellie Flint, 16, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

We had our next meeting, which included a workshop on mental health, to help give us a better understanding of the problems people are facing, and a Q&A session with our Director of Children's Services. This was very productive, and he has agreed to help us with getting schools to sign up to Make Your Mark. We have also elected our chair, and different committee positions, to ensure young people's voices are heard in council decision making.

Jacob Wilkins, 16, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

On 6th June it was the first BYC convention of the year. Cammeron Meades' (of YoungMinds) touching speech, sharing his own experiences and advocating better mental health services, was an inspirational start to the day. I found both the Organising and Presenting Workshops for Make Your Mark a helpful reinforcement of my prior knowledge. I ended the day feeling ready to take the Mental Health and Make Your Mark Campaigns forward with gusto! At this month's MK Youth Cabinet meeting we met with Michael Bracey - Milton Keynes' Director of People - mainly regarding the increase of bus fares for young people with 'All in 1' cards (MK's travel concessionary card). A petition has also been started in an attempt to prevent the 100% increase in price for some bus journeys, as young people recognise the need for prices to increase, but would prefer it to be gradual. We are now awaiting further correspondence. As well as this, the Youth Cabinet team participated in a Mental Health Workshop to help better understand what mental health is and how to deal with it - in order to fully engage in the BYC campaign, that we will be working on more in future meetings.

Oxfordshire

Aaron James Michael, 17, Member of Youth Parliament

I have been working hard to contact schools via direct phone contact and email across my area with a lot of success. One school has agreed to sign up and another is awaiting the heads permission.

The convention last month gave me the idea to email a set template with a custom paragraph to save me time and enable me to email multiple schools in a short amount of time which has increased the time I have to go into some of these schools.

Together as the MYPs for Oxfordshire we have been in meetings with the director of children's services and the head of our county council with moderate success including support for my own campaign to improve exam results for young people in care. I am also in the process of contacting my local MP David Cameron. Make your mark has very much taken off in Oxfordshire! A.J.M. Miles

Reading

Adrian Rodriguez, 17, Member of Youth Parliament

This past month I have focused on Make Your Mark. With the July deadline coming up soon, schools are finally coming back to me and signing up. Only after ringing them up and being persistent though! I was also called my Theresa May's office, and they have confirmed a meeting with her early in July, therefore I will write about this meeting in next month's positive story column. Alongside the MYP for Slough, Hamzah, we will ask her about her opinion on votes at 16 and the BYC campaigns for this year. Reading's partnership with nearby Slough has been cemented with the planned visit of their youth cabinet to Reading on Tuesday 30th June- another event that I will be able to explain in further in detail in July. For now, Make your Mark and Mind the Gap are my main priorities. By July I can feedback exactly how everything has turned out!

Slough

Faheem Anwar, 13, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

Fiona Mactaggart, our local MP since 1997 was once again elected in the recent parliamentary elections. I contacted her regarding the Early day motion 31, for votes at 16 in the EU referendum, asking her to support the motion in Parliament. I used statistics from the Scottish referendum to imply how responsible and strong-minded 16 and 17 year olds were, and that "as youths ourselves, the Slough Youth Parliament recognizes that youths will respond in a similar, constructive manner if given the chance to vote in the UK". Fiona replied saying that she had already signed EDM 31, "and 16 and 17 year olds have shown that they are able to make educated decisions on important matters". Labour put forward an amendment, which if accepted would have lowered the voting age to 16. Unfortunately the Government stood in the way and voted against it. We recognise the importance of having an MP on the side of the local youth parliament, and we will continue to maintain strong links with Fiona. The email was put on her website, so all the local youths could see that our MP was supportive of our campaigns.

West Sussex

Charlie Doherty, 15, Member of Youth Parliament

At the beginning of the month in a meeting I was given packs full of 'Free Your Mind' leaflets. Since receiving these leaflets I have told my school about them and their relevance. Due to the sudden burst of information (the leaflets and me telling them a bit) the school have now arranged to have the leaflets handed out in Mental Health PSE lessons which have now also been arranged, to really defeat the negative stigma of mental health and also to raise more awareness of mental health itself.

Kelly Balmer, 15, Member of Youth Parliament

In West Sussex, it has been a fairly quiet few weeks for me as I have taken it out due to exams. However as a Youth Voice Secretary I have been phoning up MYPs and DMYPs from LAs across the south east and finding out what they have been up to. It's been brilliant hearing the work they have been up to and how they are finding it. They have been doing some really inspiring stuff that is really worth reading in this month's positive stories. At the very start of this month everyone from the surrounding areas of London met in London at the BYC Convention 1. It was a great event and it was a pleasure to experience it from the running side of things. There were various workshops such as organising, speaking, the separate UKYP workshops and the government consultation which this time was focused around youth policing. It was a fabulous day and we were lucky that the sun was shining. Thank you to everyone who helped organise it and attended it! :)

Marvelous Jibogu, 13, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

I attended the British youth council convention on Saturday 6th June, and have had a youth cabinet meeting. I also asked my school's senior management team to sign us up to the make your mark elections.

I am involved in the free your mind campaign, and will be attending a meeting on Thursday 2nd July.

Sebastian Maxted, 14, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

I was really pleased to be published in the Littlehampton and West Sussex Gazette after writing my response to the County Council failing to support a motion of allowing 'Votes at 16 in the Eu Referendum' by voting against it.

Though it was most disappointing this was the case, I certainly made the best of it as I engaged the Chair of the Arun District Council and sparked further conversation on the topic. Since this article among others, I have established a good working relationship with the Chief Reporter & Political Editor at the Littlehampton Gazette which I feel is good foundation for the future.

In regard to votes at 16, I wrote as a member of 'Our Vote, Our Future' campaign to Sir Peter Bottomly, who not only supports it, but offered to meet with us (this is being arranged). However, since the motion failed I will be contacting Lords to gather their support in wake of their debate too.

I have designed leaflets for our LA to give out to school heads, and have of course contacted multiple schools regarding MYM, most notably, The Littlehampton Academy, a school of 2,800, which has not been keen on and chosen not to participate in Youth Engagement, was really pleased and willing to sign up when I E-Mailed them.

I also organised the pass of a vote at the Arun Youth Council to make 'Votes at 16' one of the debating topic at the Arun Senior School's debates in November- I will be running and planning this event, along with the Junior Debates on Thursday, which falls in line with the Healthy Lifestyle campaign with our local Youth Cabinet.

Sibil, Member of Youth Parliament

Hi my name is Sibil, so far we have agreed on what matters we would discuss further in meetings(youth funding,votes@16,mental health and discrimination). Talking to many of the pupils in my area I realise that they want more youth services. And many feel that discrimination is a big issue. I am going to report my findings to my Youth Coinvil at my school and talk further with my headteacher. That's all really ☺

Youth Representative

Held a meeting with young people in my area.

Youth Representative

I am in the process of talking with Nick Gibb, who would like to meet me, so far we have about 6 or 7 schools signed up, I plan to sign more schools up in and around Chichester and West Arun. that is all

South West

Bristol

Ella Marshall, Member of Youth Parliament

Once again, this month has been extremely busy and progress has been made! Like many other BYC representatives, I have had to fit Youth Parliament/Bristol City Youth Council work around revision and 23 exams. Sophie Giltinan (the other Member of Youth Parliament for Bristol) and I have begun contacting schools to ask them to register as a polling station for Make Your Mark, the annual UK Youth Parliament consultation of 11-18 year olds. This initiative is extremely important as it allows Members of Youth Parliament (as well as local councils and school councils) to gauge which issues are of the greatest concern to the young people we represent and thus set the agenda for our House of Commons debate in November. I have found many schools rather unresponsive and it is occasionally taking an email and three phone calls to get through to someone! The UKYP target is to get 1million young people involved a



125,000 people increase on last year. I feel very much that the Department of Education and local authorities should help to distribute resources and publicise Make Your Mark to schools as this would ensure a high turnout and keep adult decision makers tuned in with the issues that are of greatest priority to young people. In addition to contacting schools in Bristol, I have been given responsibility of North Somerset schools as there is no Member of Youth Parliament in the local authority - and I go to school their. My head teacher has been extremely supportive and invited me to present at a conveniently timed meeting for all head teacher's in North Somerset - who were all very enthusiastic about getting involved in Make Your Mark. I hope that if there is a high voter turnout, the local council will facilitate a Member of Youth Parliament in the county over the next year or so!

[On Wednesday 27th July](#), myself, Sophie, the Bristol Youth Mayors and a number of the Youth Council presented our manifesto to the Bristol City Council at their annual general meeting. You can watch our

presentation and listen to responding comments here (01:59): http://www.bristol.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/177052. It was an incredible experience; we were all extremely pleased with the positive response and the pledges the councillors made afterwards. Whilst speaking, I received an impromptu applause as I mentioned the Our Vote, Our Future campaign (mentioned in my

previous Positive Story) and said it was proof that young people are not plagued with political apathy, as often reported.

The BYC convention was this month also. We voted to elect our members for the NHS Youth Forum and took part in a variety of workshops. Our PG, Jess, launched the #MindTheGap campaign, which aims to record how accessible mental health services are in each constituency. I've started work on gathering information about services in Bristol. We also participated in a workshop that aimed to uncover and oppose stigma against the LGBTIQ community. As always, it was lovely to see the other South West BYC youth representatives! I met someone who works at Bristol Festival of Ideas this month as the initial step in a new project that I hope to incorporate in our mental health campaign here in Bristol. It's still in its initial stages so I won't give too much away but I'm very excited about the prospect.

On the 20th June, I travelled to London with Bristol People's Assembly and marched from outside the Bank of England to Parliament Square, as one of the estimated 250,000 people who attended the National March Against Austerity. This was an incredibly empowering experience and I was particularly pleased to have been able to hear Caroline Lucas MP, Jeremy Corbyn MP and Francesca Martinez speak when we assembled at the end of the march. I oppose austerity because I have seen first hand how it impacts upon frontline mental health services and the wellbeing of people. Just two days later, I was invited to the Houses of Parliament for a private tour and lunch with Liam Fox MP. This was my prize for winning the North Somerset Schools Debate this year and it was one of the most awe-inspiring experiences of my life. It was incredible to walk along the very same corridors that great leaders of this country have done for centuries. We were invited to Downing Street also, to have photos taken outside. Eleanor Laing MP joined us for lunch in the Strangers' Lounge also and we spoke about a range of things including the proposal for a British Bill of Human Rights, the EU referendum and Votes at 16. I promised to send both Liam and Eleanor the article I have written, which debunks arguments used often against votes at 16. It has been published by the think tank, Agora, and can be found here: <http://agorans.org/2015/05/31/im-another-myth-put-about-by-pro-europeans/http://agorans.org/2015/05/31/im-another-myth-put-about-by-pro-europeans/>.

I am pleased to have made progress on my political education campaign with Fixers UK also as we have met with them and set a date to meet a creative director. The campaign should consist of 4 short videos explaining various political structures, with the overarching message being one of empowerment. This is due to my belief that young people do care about issues, but feel disenfranchised with the system and unable to make a positive change. I hope to inform them of how easy it is to petition, protest, write to government representatives and campaign. These videos will be released along workshop templates, hopefully in time for local democracy week so that we can send them in to schools and get them participating!

Ella Marshall, 16, Member of Youth Parliament & Youth Councillor

Once again, this month has been extremely busy and progress has been made! Like many other BYC representatives, I have had to fit Youth Parliament/Bristol City Youth Council work around revision and 23 exams. Sophie Giltinan (the other Member of Youth Parliament for Bristol) and I have begun contacting schools to ask them to register as a polling station for Make Your Mark, the annual UK Youth Parliament consultation of 11-18 year olds. This initiative is extremely important as it allows Members of

Youth Parliament (as well as local councils and school councils) to gauge which issues are of the greatest concern to the young people we represent and thus set the agenda for our House of Commons debate in November. I have found many schools rather unresponsive and it is occasionally taking an email and three phone calls to get through to someone! The UKYP target is to get 1million young people involved a 125,000 people increase on last year.

I feel very much that the Department of Education and local authorities should help to distribute resources and publicise Make Your Mark to schools as this would ensure a high turn out and keep adult decision makers tuned in with the issues that are of greatest priority to young people. In addition to contacting schools in Bristol, I have been given responsibility of North Somerset schools as there is no Member of Youth Parliament in the local authority - and I go to school there. My head teacher has been extremely supportive and invited me to present at a conveniently timed meeting for all head teachers in North Somerset - who were all very enthusiastic about getting involved in Make Your Mark. I hope that if there is a high voter turnout, the local council will facilitate a Member of Youth Parliament in the county over the next year or so!

On Wednesday 27th July, myself, Sophie, the Bristol Youth Mayors and a number of the Youth Council presented our manifesto to the Bristol City Council at their annual general meeting. You can watch our presentation and listen to responding comments here (01:59): http://www.bristol-public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/177052.

It was an incredible experience; we were all extremely pleased with the positive response and the pledges the councillors made afterwards. Whilst speaking, I received an impromptu applause as I mentioned the Our Vote, Our Future campaign (mentioned in my previous Positive Story) and said it was proof that young people are not plagued with political apathy, as often reported. The BYC convention was this month also. We voted to elect our members for the NHS Youth Forum and took part in a variety of workshops.

Our PG, Jess, launched the #MindTheGap campaign, which aims to record how accessible mental health services are in each constituency. I've started work on gathering information about services in Bristol. We also participated in a workshop that aimed to uncover and oppose stigma against the LGBTIQ community. As always, it was lovely to see the other South West BYC youth representatives! I met someone who works at Bristol Festival of Ideas this month as the initial step in a new project that I hope to incorporate in our mental health campaign here in Bristol. It's still in its initial stages so I won't give too much away but I'm very excited about the prospect.

On the 20th June, I travelled to London with Bristol People's Assembly and marched from outside the Bank of England to Parliament Square, as one of the estimated 250,000 people who attended the National March Against Austerity. This was an incredibly empowering experience and I was particularly pleased to have been able to hear Caroline Lucas MP, Jeremy Corbyn MP and Francesca Martinez speak when we assembled at the end of the march. I oppose austerity because I have seen first hand how it impacts upon frontline mental health services and the wellbeing of people. Just two days later, I was invited to the Houses of Parliament for a private tour and lunch with Liam Fox MP. This was my prize for winning the North Somerset Schools Debate this year and it was one of the most awe-inspiring experiences of my life. It was incredible to walk along the very same corridors that great leaders of this country have done for centuries.

We were invited to Downing Street also, to have put photos taken outside. Eleanor Laing MP joined us for lunch in the Strangers' Lounge also and we spoke about a range of things including the proposal for a British Bill of Human Rights, the EU referendum and Votes at 16. I promised to send both Liam and Eleanor the article I have written, which debunks arguments used often against votes at 16.

It has been published by the think tank, Agora, and can be found here:

<http://agorans.org/2015/05/31/im-another-myth-put-about-by-pro-europeans/>
<http://agorans.org/2015/05/31/im-another-myth-put-about-by-pro-europeans/>.

I am pleased to have made progress on my political education campaign with Fixers UK also as we have met with them and set a date to meet a creative director. The campaign should consist of 4 short videos explaining various political structures, with the overarching message being one of empowerment. This is due to my belief that young people do care about issues, but feel disenfranchised with the system and unable to make a positive change. I hope to inform them of how easy it is to petition, protest, write to government representatives and campaign. These videos will be released along workshop templates, hopefully in time for local democracy week so that we can send them in to schools and get them participating!

Sophie Giltinan, 17, Member of Youth Parliament

This month we started our work on signing schools up to Make Your Mark. We decided to each take on three schools at a time and as soon as one signs up we pick our next one. We've found a lot of schools are poor at returning calls and emails but we're just going to have to be stubborn! On the 3rd of June Bristol Smile Instigation Collective hosted a massive water fight on Millennium Square. It was a really great event and I feel like more events like this should be held. Some people labelled it as 'immature' but I would say the majority of people who took part were over 18! It was a lot of fun and it was amazing to see such a wide range of people socialising. For me it really showed a sense of community within Bristol. On Monday the 8th Bristol City Youth Council had a campaign meeting. We voted on whether we agree with votes at sixteen. Overall we had 16 votes. 14 people agreed, 2 people disagreed and nobody abstained from the vote so the Bristol City Youth Council now officially endorse votes at sixteen. We had Nicole, who works for the Bristol Clinical Commission Group, in our campaign meeting. Sharing our health related priorities helped us figure out how best the group can help us. We discussed how we can work together to support each other's work. At the end of our meeting George Ferguson dropped in for a question and answer session which helped us understand why certain decisions have been made, often revolving around Bristol's status as European Green Capital. On the 15th I attended Ujima Radio's Big Green & Black Debate. This was focussed on how we can make sure the Green Capital message reaches everyone in Bristol. We also got to hear about more of the activities going on around the city this year as part of Bristol being European Green Capital. The event was live on Ujima Radio and can be found on their website. Bristol City Youth Council held their Formal Meeting on the 24th. We started by presenting our manifesto to the Directorate Leadership Team and then they told us a bit more about their roles and responsibilities within the council. I'm hoping to keep in contact with Paul Jacobs who is the Service Director for Education and Skills because I think he could help us get more schools involved in the Make Your Mark ballot as he has contacts in all of the schools in the city. Young assessors made a presentation to the youth council on what they do. They are a group of 10

young people who monitor and feedback on Bristol Youth Links services. Once they have collected their feedback it all gets put in a report and passed on so they can ensure youth services are improving.

Theo Davies, 14, Youth Councillor

Since the start of June, the BCYC has met twice - once formally and once in a campaign meeting. In the campaign meeting, we met with Matthew Jones, who is responsible for one of the neighbourhood partnerships in Bristol. We discussed the creation of a young people's working group on the neighbourhood partnership, and since that meeting, we have secured funding & arranged the first meeting of this group. In the formal meeting, we met with the council's senior leadership team (SLT), who have overall responsibility for many areas in the council, regarding young people. The primary purpose of the meeting was to present our manifesto to them, which we did. This was greeted with enthusiasm, and we went on to discuss how they can help us meet our goals. Following these two meetings, it's fair to say that we feel more confident about realising our ambitions, and we now have new ways of doing so.

Bath and North East Somerset

Ed Joseph, 18, Member of Youth Parliament

This month I finally finished my A Levels! Make your Mark is off to a flying start with over 10 schools signed up to participate. I ran a workshop about a Curriculum for Life at an event called 'young parliament day' and delivered a speech at the parliament. I have also put in a funding application for a project called 'Bzine' which I am running with a team of young people. I have also met with the Keynsham Youth Council to discuss MYM.

Cornwall

Saffron, 15, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

This month I have not been that busy, I have recently started to email all the schools in the mid Cornwall area so they will sign up for make your mark. I am also in contact with the cadet forces so they will sign up. Next month I am hoping to have a meeting to forward the process of the 'kernow card' as well as get into contact with people who have already started the campaign of putting first aid into schools and make sure that Cornwall is aware of this campaign.

Owen Davies, Member of Youth Parliament

Now that I have finished my exams I have been a bit more active in my Youth Parliament work. I have organised a meeting with MP for Camborne and Redruth George Eustice later in July, and also a meeting with Derek Thomas, MP for St Ives, to discuss ideas and issues with a group of young people this Friday.

I've written to all my local schools regarding Make Your Mark, the meeting with Derek Thomas, and the opportunity for young people to take part in the tender process for young people's services in Cornwall.

As well as this I took the coach up to London this Saturday to protest against austerity with quarter of a million other protesters. I've set up a Twitter account to promote the Youth Parliament across social media. I also attended a reference group in which we looked at and suggested improvements for the designs for new websites that Cornwall Council set up for young people to find jobs and get advice.

Owen Winter, Member of Youth Parliament

My exams finally ended on the 19th June and with limited time for celebration I woke up at 5.30 am the next morning to travel to London. I was one of 250,000 people who marched in London to oppose austerity. I am against the government's austerity measures because I think that the cuts, particularly in education and local government, have been damaging for young people, especially those who are most vulnerable such as the poor and disabled. Countless young people turned out and proved that they are active and engaged in politics. The next morning I was delighted to find myself quoted in the The Observer's main article on the event:

"Young people said they felt particularly exposed by the billions in cuts planned by the Conservatives. Owen Winter, 16, from Cornwall, finished his last GCSE exam on Friday. But he still got up at 5.30 am yesterday to get to London for the protest, and was marching with a placard saying: "Your cuts, our future."

He said: "I'm demonstrating because I feel that the cuts are particularly for young people and affect them quite negatively - and I'm going to grow up dealing with the repercussions."

Cornwall's MYPs are cracking on with getting school's signed up to take part in the Make Your Mark ballot. Currently, nearly 30% of the schools in Cornwall have signed up, much higher than the national average of around 8%. I will continue to work hard in my constituency to get all of the schools signed up.

I had a very constructive first meeting with the new MP for North Cornwall Scott Mann. It was refreshing to find that he already knew so much about the UK Youth Parliament because of the successful vote in the House of Commons on Tuesday, which allowed MYPs the use of the chamber for the annual House of Commons debate. We discussed a range of topics and found a lot of common ground, particularly transport in rural areas and improving employment opportunities for young people in Cornwall. He agreed to send a joint letter to schools in North Cornwall, to encourage them take part in the Make Your Mark ballot.

Also, I have been working with councillors to submit a motion to Cornwall Council in support of reducing the voting age to 16. Councillors will debate and vote on the motion to lobby the government to support votes at 16 in time for the 2017 council elections and 2020 general election. I hope to take part in the council debate and will be lobbying councillors to support the motion in the meantime. I have already received many messages of support from councillors from across the political spectrum.

Devon

Bethany Lee, 14, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

On Saturday 6th June, the Respect festival was held in Exeter to celebrate diversity. We – the UKYP Devon team – were asked to attend, and we used this as an opportunity to gather the opinions of a diverse range of young people. We also had a stall, where we did badge-making and had a photo booth. I think the festival was a great chance for the team to learn about people's views, and I really enjoyed the day! This month, I have also been getting involved in the Our Vote Our Future campaign by posting about it on social media and emailing my local MP. Now that my exams are over – and hopefully everyone else's too – I'm hoping to get a lot more Youth Parliament work done.

Helena Read, 15, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

On Saturday the 6th June the yearly Exeter Respect festival celebrating diversity began with music and celebrations. As D/MYP's we set up our stall with a variety of attractions and talked to young people about our county campaigns and we collected many questionnaires. Exeter Respect was a really useful and fun experience, the diversity of the different cultures, religions and beliefs was eye opening and visiting different stalls was a great way to learn about the diversity of our constituency. Even if the Youth Parliament does not attend next year I will!

Megan Chapple, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

So this month has been very busy. First of all a group of us had a meeting which we discussed careers advice and education. I think that I have learnt a lot for this meeting. Also, the day after that we had our regional meeting and we got to see all of the other members. We learnt more about Make your Mark and about LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) which I didn't have much information about. Now I do have a lot more and it has made me more aware of what sort of reactions that LGBT young people get. I also thought the rest of the workshops were really interesting. We went to a festival called Respect festival and I gained a lot from this. We learnt that everyone has the right to be treated to same. Finally, my exams have now finished so I'm going to be turning my attention to youth parliament and I'm hoping to be proceeding with my Fixers campaign with the help of the others and to get the process moving forward.

Olivia, 15, Member of Youth Parliament

This month we went to the respect festival in Exeter where we gave the chance for young people to have their say on our surveys we had a good result from it because we had a lot of young people willing to do it. Also at the respect festival we done badge making so they could make a make your Mark designed badge or youth parliament there were loads of different designs and also we had a photo booth and fixers videos which were also just as successful.

Ryan Harnell, 15, Member of Youth Parliament

This month the Devon team has attended the Exeter Respect Festival where we surveyed 50 Young People who were in attendance at the festival. The Respect Festival was a first time experience for me and I very much enjoyed the range of cultures, faiths and ideologies. After receiving the statistics from our survey I decided to take more surveys, but this time in my School: Okehampton College, where this month I also represented the Student Council at the KS3 Awards Ceremony. Unfortunately much of my time this month has been occupied with revision for my Mock Exams and my Bronze DofE Expedition, both of which I hope to achieve highly in. Next month I should have gathered more results from our surveys so that we can decide upon how to best help Young People in our constituency.

Tom Burrows, 15, Member of Youth Parliament

In June, Members and Deputy Members of Youth Parliament from Devon (myself included) held a stand at the Exeter Respect Festival, to provide information on what Youth Parliament is and to get surveys. After, we had a look around the festival; it was great! As well as this, progress has been made with the Make Your Mark Campaign, with many more schools being signed up for voting, and allowing us to hear their thoughts and ideas.

Dorset

Jack Dunne, 17, Member of Youth Parliament

June Positive Story: This month as an MYP started with a regional meeting. All the MYPs, DMYPs and local Youth Councils met to discuss what we have all been doing since are last meeting and also elect a NHS Youth representative for the south of England. A few weeks later the British Youth Council (BYC) contacted me and told me that I had been elected to do this job.

So I am now a member of the NHS England Youth Forum 2015. I went to the Tol Puddle 'Liberteas' event to celebrate the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta. This event consisted of members of the TUC and other people gathering around the Martyrs tree in Tol Puddle with a cup of tea provided by the National Trust. A couple of people and myself spoke about what Magna Carta and the Tol Puddle Martyrs did for the people and our democracy. I then spoke about the importance of engagement with young people and democracy, following the lines of 'how significant' are events such as Tol Puddle and Magna Carta.

I spent a weekend with BYC in Kidderminster for the NHS Youth Forum. The residential consisted of many meetings with external and internal groups of our NHS. The group talked about the importance of the NHS for young people and what we could do to engage people in using the NHS and the services that it provides. All the meetings and talks proved really useful, I felt that the people we talked to understood what and who we are and were able to listen to use so much so that they will hopefully take on board what we said and our recommendations.

I am now looking forward to my holiday and aid work in Kenya next month and the upcoming political events such as the Tol Puddle Martyrs event and others. Many thanks for taking the time to read this and I hope you enjoyed your month as well.

Jake Perkins, 15, Youth Councillor

June has again been as busy month, from attending, the DYCE meeting to organising and helping to run a stall during my school's charity week. At the DYCE meeting we talked about starting a shared twitter account for the youth council, to further create a media presence; as well as a visit from a person from our local paper's weekly youth page. I also attend a youth transport forum, I was a great experience; I suggested methods of reaching young people about their views on the public transport they receive.

As my role as Head of House at my school, I helped to run and organise my school's charity week. I helped to run a stall, which had a raffle and 'guess the number of jelly babies in the jar'. The stall its self raised £75, and the week over all an estimated £700. This was split between several different charities.

Gloucestershire

Nathan Sexton, 13, Member of Youth Parliament

This month, I have mainly been focusing on Make your Mark. I have successfully signed up my school for it, and the MP for Cheltenham is helping with signing up the schools in Cheltenham. I am in the process of contacting the MP for Tewkesbury, although I cannot find an e-mail that he will reply to.

Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

This month I attended a regional sitting in Exeter to discuss issues that will help us decide what our national campaign will be

I was also invited to a couple of Stroud Council meetings to introduce my self and my MYP although neither of us could attend because of exams.

Alysha Bodman, Member of Youth Parliament

This month I went to a meeting about public transport in the Cotswolds where I learnt more about the different types of community transport which are available and contributed ideas about how to make them more accessible. I was the youngest person at the meeting and therefore acted as the voice of the young people of the Cotswolds.

It was a very interesting meeting as we found out the results of a recent survey completed on public transport in the Cotswolds and found out the main problems with public transport. These were: the uncleanliness, the infrequency of services, the expensive fares and the difficult accessibility.

We then split off into small groups and discussed some of the solutions to these problems. I suggested that there should be concessionary bus passes for young people in education between the ages of 16-18 who are now considered as 'adults' by the current system. Moreover, I also told the rest of my group

that there should be more frequent late night buses as this would benefit many young people who are unable to go to social events because of the lack of these buses.

The rest of my group were very keen to make more people aware of the different types of community transport available in the area and as a result will be working on this soon. I also found out from the Cotswolds Council representative that they are currently developing a real time app which will notify people of bus timings and any alterations that may occur.

Overall, it was a very informative meeting and it was a pleasure to be able to contribute ideas to adults in the public transport sector of the Cotswolds Council.

I also attended the Gloucestershire Youth Parliament's monthly meeting where we caught up with each other and updated each other on our progress with the Make Your Mark campaign. I have emailed all of the secondary schools in Stroud and the Cotswolds and have called them in order to prompt them. I have also emailed both of the MPs offices and the Mayor of Stroud in order to ask for their help with the campaign.

At our monthly meeting, we were visited by Jane and Charlotte from a charity called the '2gether Trust' which is a NHS foundation trust which provides specialist mental health and learning disability services to the people of Gloucestershire. They told us all about the 2gether Trust and the good work that they do to help those suffering from mental health illnesses. We were inspired by the work they do and hope to work with them in the future as we believe their work is very important for the well being of young people in Gloucestershire.

Plymouth

Sahil Ali, 17, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

I've got a fair bit done this month. Unfortunately the votes at 16 motion in the EU referendum did not pass through, despite a lot of work going into the whole campaign and certain local MP's letting us down. Other than that, I've been working with an MYP on putting together a politics day for schools and we have a meeting with councillors coming up in early July. We also have Make Your Mark which is being worked on, and hopefully some other things in the pipeline too.

Sarah Staples, 18. Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

My main campaign has been pushing for votes at 16 for the EU referendum, particularly working with the Our Vote, Our Future campaign. I spoke about the campaign in both my local press as well as in the Daily Mirror and I also spoke about what the defeat in the commons means for young people. I have also become involved in Politics in Education as a HQ member to lead the campaign in the SW area to try and get politics and political education taught in schools and I am working with Joshua Pope DMYP on this in Plymouth. As well as getting on board with the Lets Think About It project to raise awareness

and reduce the stigma attached to mental health. Coming up I have a meeting with Cllr Sue McDonald to speak about an event and programme myself and Joshua have planned to engage young people with politics and in particularly local politics in the area.

Poole

Francesca Reed, 18, Member of Youth Parliament

On a national level, I have had an incredibly exciting month as a member of the 2015 Youth Select Committee on young people's mental health. On the 26th June we held the first of our Oral Evidence Sessions in Parliament, during which we heard from a range of panelists from health services. This provided an invaluable insight into the current state of young people's mental health services as well as some of the experiences surrounding stigma and bullying which face young people today. This will ultimately help us to produce a report with recommendations for the Government to consider. It was also an amazing opportunity to develop my skills around questioning, reading and analysing information and to gain a greater understanding of the workings of a Select Committee within Parliament.

Furthermore, I have also been making progress with my local priorities. With regards to the project around the meaning of success, we have a meeting with Fixers next week to begin the process of bringing the project to life. As a member of Poole's Children and Young People's Board, I have been continuing work around the FLIPPED project, through which we have produced 5 lesson plans covering the 5 most important issues to the young people in our area following consultation. These resources have subsequently become an online resource and we have an official launch of the project on the 8th July, where a range of professionals involved in young people's education and development have been invited to attend.

Somerset

Kira Lewis, 15, Member of Youth Parliament

During June, I tried to both represent my constituents, and develop my skills as a representative. I attended a three day PGL training weekend with the Volunteer Police Cadets, and also helped at a new Cadet induction evening. I volunteered at Glastonbury Festival of Contemporary Performing Arts to build community engagement and to help prevent crime, and I also attended the Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner's annual meeting.

At a breakfast meeting of Somerset's Chamber of Commerce, I presented a speech on young people's experiences around careers talks, fairs, work experience and future career prospects, which was received well and my focus group's results were fed back to businesses and schools. I also attended a UK Youth Parliament Advisory Group meeting.

Swindon

Ellie James, 17, Member of Youth Parliament

After finishing my exams, the drive to sign up schools for Make Your Mark began. We are currently collating and updating our list of contacts ready to send out letters and follow up phone calls before the deadline. I had a discussion with my youth worker who has done a useful piece of work prior to Mind the Gap regarding access to mental health services. With myself and Wolf's input we will update the discovered data and give a young persons perspective on how easy it was to access such support. I have also created a finalised action plan for my Educational Achievement campaign which involves sending out resources to raise young peoples aspirations and confidence in their abilities to all Swindon schools. The first step is to create the resources and consult with others as to what it should include and what may be useful. A further meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner has been organised to create a survey asking what is taught in PSHE and how can we fill in the gaps wherever that is missing. Myself and other MYPs in Swindon and Wiltshire will give input into what young people want to know and how best they will answer the questions. Recently, I had a meeting with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services where we discussed creating stronger links between UK Youth Parliament members and the Swindon Borough Council to ensure all we do is heard by those who can have an influence. For example, we may be able to sit in a meeting with all Councillors from each area who will have contacts to the head teacher of each secondary school. Therefore, their powerful influence may increase our Make Your Mark turnout. This includes a permanent slot in their frequent meetings on each topic surrounding Children's Services, such as Education or Safeguarding.

Youth Representative

I had a meeting with members of Swindon Bourgh council to discuss matters such as a meeting with headteachers for make your mark. We also discussed my own anti-bullying campaign and mind the gap.

Wiltshire

Chloe Lintern, 16, Member of Youth Parliament

This month I have been contacting schools about make your mark and ensuring that they are sign

This month I have been contacting schools about make your mark and ensuring that they are signed up ahead of September. Currently we have 10 schools signed up in Wiltshire and we have also arranged for an MYP from Wiltshire to attend a headteachers meeting to get more schools signed up on the 9th of July. At our local youth council meeting we spoke about what we want our PSHE conference to look like and include along with someone from ublic health came to talk to us about a leaflet and how to

make it more user friendly. We also said goodbye to our worker Christina which was an emotional time for us all. Next month I hope to sign more schools up for make your mark.

Freya Pigott, 16, Member of Youth Parliament

June saw an end to my AS exams, which I'm unsurprisingly thankful for! The weather down south is gradually getting all the more sunny, and I'm making a conscious effort to make time for UK Youth Parliament activities. Last month's positive story just missed coverage of the BYC's South West Convention – it was great to see fellow Youth Parliamentarians and Youth Councillors again. A massive thank you to all who organised it – it's safe to say it flew by! As soon as study leave finished I was back on the 49 bus to County Hall in Trowbridge, where I was going to sit on the Apprenticeship Growth Group alongside fellow WAY member, Em. It was the first time that the group had young people sat in the meeting, and I think it's fair to say that it was beneficial for all. We heard about the group's huge efforts to engage young people in apprenticeships, and we fed back various views held by young people in Wiltshire – most prominently that the stigma surrounding apprenticeships still hasn't vanished. It was an extremely successful meeting – so much so that the AGG are now asking if they can have representatives of young people to sit on every meeting. The following week I headed to a Local Youth Network Management Meeting to review potential funding for a local youth council, to enable them to hold various activities through the summer. We also reviewed the internal structure of our LYN Management team – notably the position of Chair. It was agreed that the current Chair would remain and a co-chair would shadow the Chair, until the co-chair becomes the Chair in their own right, which I was honoured to be chosen to be! The current Chair had to leave early, meaning I acted as Chair for the rest of the evening which was a great experience, and I look forward to improving my skills over the next year or so. On the Saturday I made my way to London to take part in a street rally alongside a few other south west MYPs. Although the cause of the protest may be controversial, and you may disagree with my views, the concept of direct activism is vital to British democracy. I was extremely proud to take part to the streets, with 250,000 other people, who all felt so passionately about a cause. When the turnout of this year's election stands at 66.1%, the electorate are often labelled as 'apathetic', but then when a quarter of a million people partake in direct political action, and people label them as 'undemocratic', it simply doesn't add up. We must encourage as much political participation in any shape or form – voting once every five years is no democracy in my eyes. A few days later I returned to County Hall for this month's Wiltshire Assembly of Youth meeting, which very sadly was our Wiltshire Council worker, Christina's last meeting with us, before her maternity leave. We had a few visits, including a woman from Public Health England speaking about antimicrobial resistance, and a man from Healthy Schools organising a PSHE conference with us. It was extremely sad to see Christina go – despite only knowing her for 5 months she was extremely passionate about our cause and gave incredible help to us all. Wishing her all the luck and love in the world for Baby Gregory and a huge thank you for all your hard work! As I type this I have just come out of a talk given by Lord Rosser, an extremely active member of the House of Lords since 2004. He came to my school, St John's, to speak to students about the role of the House of Lords, its make-up and how it differentiates from the House of Commons. At the end of the session we had the chance to ask questions – I enquired about his feelings towards House of Lords reform, to which he effectively said that for now, he feels that the ideal solution hasn't been found. It was really interesting to hear from his first hand experiences of being a Lord, and it was a great opportunity to engage in the works of Parliament. Thank you Lord Rosser for coming in! That's pretty much it for this month – in about half an hour I will be on a train going to Portcullis House, Westminster

to feed back to the Youth Select Committee about Wiltshire Young People's feelings around mental health. For now June is winding down – until next time! Freya J

West Midlands

Dudley

Emily, 14, Youth Councillor

I, along with other members of the youth council, went to the first BYC convention of the year for our area. I got to meet and interact with lots of new people and find out what they did and campaigns they were working on. I also got to find out about lots of different projects going on in the country and gain ideas and inspiration for collecting even more ballots in this year's Make Your Mark!

Maisy Neale, 14, Youth Councillor

This month at Dudley Youth Council we have been doing a lot with developing our campaigns. We chose to change the format of the youth council this year; doing our campaigns for the first time in 'working groups' which are small groups made out of the youth council each focusing on either Votes at 16, Mental Health, Save Our Youth Services or Exam Resits! This new format is a working progress, it means that we can all have a role in the development of the campaigns and do more as a council but it is also meaning that communication is key! Last meeting all the groups did a speech about why their group should go onto to BYC manifesto which was very interesting, we also worked on what are aims for the campaigns would be, and how we would achieve these goals! We have also been working on the YOFest, fun day event, funded by a Think Big grant, which I am on the team for – at the moment we are contacting professionals and performers to help with the event and we have some very exciting opportunities for young people. We have also launched a competition for young performers to play at the event! The planning is going really well and we have gained a lot of skills in leadership, and organisation – realising that for deadlines to be met there is a lot of hard work involved!!!!

Wolverhampton

Kashmire Hawker, 17, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

Hello the world of Youth Democracy! I've been so busy, this is my first proper Positive Story since March! And as a result of doing so much within the last few months, I shall be different and list in date order all democracy related activities since April (Plus 1 bit in March too I haven't yet mentioned). Here goes: March: 7th, 8th, 11th & 19th-Uprising's My Voice, My Vote programme which enables graduates of NCS (Like me!) to develop an online campaign through Social Action Through MVMV, I took part in 1 of 10/11 National Youth Debates on the 26th in Birmingham just before the Election Campaign starting gun was fired... I spoke twice-something I didn't do from those Green Benches last year! April: 7th-A public meeting in nearby Dudley which Nigel Farage was at-a superb public

speaker and something I was never going to miss as a Youth interested in Democracy. 8th, 10th, 11th, 12th & 14th-All NCS! The 8th and 10th were 2 visits to help NCS Trust's national work; the Friday's session included the greatest surprise of this year-meeting both Tinie Tempah & Alfie Dayes at the National Youth Board meeting session on a VERY BIG event planned for 2016-a seriously incredible day! The 2 following days saw me & 50 or so other Grads from the Black Country take part in a Sleepout, on the streets at the Black Country Living Museum to raise awareness of homelessness-it was an 18 hours or so I shall never forget in the fact other young people are in a situation of such. As a result of that period, my awareness has increased and generosity to homeless people have gone up too. Finally, the other date was for my NCS Regional Youth Board's 2nd last meeting. 13th-Youth Council meeting-it's been too long to remember what was discussed but of course it was of the significance for our city's Young people. Also on the 15th; Youth Zone Development Group-Interior designs for the inside of the building were continued. 21st & 27th-Changing Our Lives; a progress report update and then chairing the final We Have a Voice Schools Network meeting of the 2014-15 year. May: 2nd-The 2nd session and most important with GrowWild here in Southern England-grant funding day! 12 projects slimmed down to 10 in a tricky process at BYC's HQ with 3 others-followed by the most funny attempts to make a video message to all the applicants-Doug Hallam can back me up on this... A Pizza dinner made the day better; making up for my home town club Wolves missing out on the Play-Off's only just... 5th-The final NCS Regional Youth Board meeting which our project progress was analysed and next steps were taken. Then came May 7th and the most intense General Election in our life time-in some sense it was totally worth staying awake for about 36 hours straight-the result all I shall say puts the UK into some difficulty for the next 5 years. 11th & 18th-back with Youth Council and planning for multiple things were off, including the development of our next Manifesto for this year 20th-Mayor Making where Liverpoolian Ian Brookefield took the oath of office for 2015-16; always a fantastic night. Straight after, it was back with Youth Zone at the Molineux for more interior designing. 28th- the 6th session for the Rights for All programme with Changing Our Lives all on Policy (A good follow up to the session at Westminster a month and a bit before) And Finally, June! 1st & 8th-Rights for All again with our final Group sessions before the launch on July 1st-a session on Citizenship was followed by our final Mentor-Mentee session the following Monday. I also met world superstars; and my musical baes Little Mix that 2nd Monday morning too (So worth the morning off school...). 3rd-Council's Annual Scrutiny Planning Event: We as a Youth Council got to explain why 6 of our big topics should be part of the Council's Scrutiny programme for 2015-16 in around table discussions-all seemed positive afterwards and we have hopes of influencing Scrutiny as much as possible now. 5th-The Lord Speaker, Baroness D'Souza popped into Birmingham for a speech and Q&A on Women in Democracy which I managed to attend; she made a pretty though revoking speech on many parts of both areas and caused a lot of discussion among fellow attendees. A DMYP from Telford & Wrekin was there too. 6th-The first BYC Convention of 2015! My 2nd ever visit to the East Mids-a pretty good day included reuniting with last year's bunch, meeting a whole load of new faces which is always refreshing, taking part in those workshops to develop us, starting to plan Mae Your Mark and finally giving updates on stage about my work with the National Express Youth Panel and GrowWild (as mentioned earlier). 15th-Youth Council-feedback on Convention and a farewell to Italian exchange student Eugenio Ciliberti who left Youth Council after 6 months with us-and helped make a massive difference in things within YC, as a Youth PCC and much more. All of us thank him for being a superstar and wish him all the best back in his home country now that his exchange has ended. 19th-the My Voice My Vote Graduation where we all got our certificates and I even got an award for most Persuasive Speaker in the debates we had during the programme. Surely Mr Bercow should of chosen me after all last year... That is just about everything covered-the summer seems as busy as this year has been already. And with a new part time post with Changing Our

Lives secured, I should have pretty good fun. Bring on my 8 week school holiday! And all those finally heading to Exeter for the National Sitting between July 31st-2nd August, enjoy every moment! I went to Lancaster last year and it was so worth it so work hard and have fun; which should get Make Your Mark bigger than last year! :-D

Yorkshire and Humber

Barnsley

Ali Khosravi, Youth Councillor

For the past couple of months I've got involved in a project to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta.

The project was all about young people's involvement and I was lucky enough to be part of it. We visited Lincoln Castle and managed to see one of the surviving copies of the Magna Carta from 1215. We also visited the National Union of Mineworkers Headquarters in Barnsley. This visit was an amazing opportunity to explore the untold history of our region.

Throughout the project we had access to Barnsley Museum and Barnsley Archives to follow the footsteps of democracy.

I am proud of participating in this project because I believe it is really important for our generation to learn about the importance and the magnificence of the Magna Carta and its influence on our lives over the past 800 years.

It is important to know the price of freedom so then we can appreciate it.

Kyle Peace, Youth Councillor

I am part of an anti-bullying group in school. I recently helped someone overcome bullying. After speaking to the person about the bullying and helping him to understand how it can be dealt with there has been a decrease in this type of bullying around school.

Lily Price, Youth Councillor -

I recently did a questionnaire in school about mental health. It asked if young people know how to access mental health and also where to get help.

It made me realise how valuable help for mental health really is and just how many people don't know they have access to help if they should need it. I

I got around 60 pupils to fill in the questionnaires and suggested what could be done to make mental health more known in and around school. All-in-all, I really enjoyed the experience and it helped me understand more about mental health issues.

Lydia Coles, Youth Councillor

On the 20th September 2014, I auditioned for my street dance finals. While I was writing my name down I grew a massive smile on my face thinking 3 months and I'll finally be on a stage.

3 months later...

My heart was pounding before I stepped foot onto the stage. While my name flashed on a screen I made my way onto the stage. I begin to dance...

After I had finished I walked off the stage. For an hour I watch the other contenders.

While everyone was finished they begin to announce the places. 8th... 7th... 6th... 5th

While the places become closer. I heard my name... Lydia Coles... 2nd... I was over the moon with happiness and from that day I still remember.

Danielle Hanlon, Youth Councillor

I really enjoyed the BYC convention that took place on 6th June at Doncaster. I had a chance to take part in the debates and see other people's views on things. I got to meet many more MYPS and took part in teamwork activities.

Ella Sides, Youth Councillor

On Thursday, me and my fellow youth councillors, attended a school governors' meeting. We talked about our findings and recent things we have been doing at our school drop in and our youth council meetings. We discussed the recent E Cigarette questionnaire that we had given to fellow school friends and our forms. Our workers kindly put it in a table to see the overall total and what the most common answers were. We all had a question each to feed back on. The student governors also put in their own opinions and took in the information from the questionnaire. The student governors have invited us back to the next meeting. I think these meetings are good for youth councillors to come together and share what's been happening with the student governors.

Anton Dobson, Youth Councillor

Eco Club – I have been attending eco club where we look at lots of different environmental things. We are looking at linking with the Lets Grow campaign to see what kinds of projects we could get involved in. We have invited a guest speaker to our alternative curriculum day.

Make Your Mark – We have been preparing for MYM in school, we have booked assemblies in for Sept. School are signed up and I am a MYM champion.

Anti Bullying Charter – We have been working with the student council to start the process of applying for the anti bullying charter mark. From Sept we will start to gather evidence for submission.

School Council – As the Chair of student council I have been helping to link our school with York Manor school. Students came to visit last week and we discussed lots of ways of working together, improving schools and student voice.

Connor Tate, Youth Councillor

I am really excited about nominating for a Central Area Council Award for the work I have done around Lets Grow in my local community. I have been invited to attend the awards ceremony on 25th June. This will hopefully encourage more young people to get involved in Lets Grow.

Doncaster

Charlie Lavemai-Goldsbrough, Youth Councillor

In our Youth Council meeting in late May we were joined by two people from the First Transport group who were here for a Q&A session on transport issues for young people. As a youth organisation who prides itself as the voice of the young people, it was important that we met with First and discussed the issues surrounding transport since it is one of the most troublesome areas for young people.

When we met, several issues were raised which mainly included the difference in treatment of young people and adults, as well as concerns regarding rising fares and inaccessibility for young carers. Although some of the issues could not be answered by the two people, including questions as to why the student bus passes cannot be made to expire on August 31st instead of July 31st as this is a national, not local, issue.



There were many areas of improvement that were cited because of the partnership, which included common problems of the differentiation of treatment between the older and younger generations.

Perhaps one of the most interesting developments that came out of this was that there could be opportunities for the Doncaster Youth Council to be part of a “mystery shopper” program, where customer service standards would be tested on drivers in order to make sure that a good and proper bus service can be accessed by all. Overall, the meeting was fascinating and a worthwhile experience, not just because the people at First could listen to our problems with the service but also because real action between groups is being taken to ensure better day-to-day lives for young people.

Keiran Bennett, Youth Councillor

On the 15th of April, Doncaster Youth Council took part in a Dementia friendly video, in this video we said short statements and phrases to help destigmatize thoughts about people suffering from dementia. This piece of work contributes to Doncaster going dementia friendly, where young people play just as an equally important part as adults in achieving this goal. In addition this goes towards our priority of ‘mental health’, which we have been working on.

If you want to see the video, follow the link below

<https://youtu.be/kdCA3HMPjj4>

North Lincolnshire

Jordan Hammerton, 16, Youth Councillor

Staying Safe Conferences

Several youth councillors and I attended the local Staying Safe conferences held in our area. The Staying Safe conferences aim to give knowledge and train children and young people to help others, be aware and stay safe through series of workshops that range from fire safety to emotional wellbeing.

There are two conferences - one for secondary schools and one for primary schools, I attended the secondary conference as a youth councillor to attend workshops, however I attended the primary conference alongside other youth councillors to assist the conference attendees and workshop holders. I also attended as a Young Reporter as we intend to write an article on the events.

Overall the conferences were enjoyable and very informative. They receive really commendable feedback in what they give to the schools and from my point of view they were really beneficial to attend.

Jordan Hammerton, 16, Youth Councillor

Interviewing Skills

On Wednesday 17 June my local authority's DMYP and I and took part in interviewing a candidate for a position within our local Council.

We sat on the board alongside council officers and a member of the local carers advisory board. We firstly listened to a presentation that had been put together by the candidate and were then encouraged to ask questions. I asked the first question. After we had completed questioning the candidate we gave feedback on how well we think they did through the use of numbers which added up to a final score.

Takin part in the interviews was really rewarding, and it's great to have such a direct input into the teams who work within North Lincolnshire Council.

Jessica Russell, 14, Youth Councillor

Young Reporters

I recently became a North Lincolnshire Young Reporter and wrote an article on the farming of angora rabbits. This is a subject close to my heart; I feel strongly that these poor creatures suffer at the hands of those seeking to use their fur for the fashion industry.

My piece was published in my local newspaper - the Scunthorpe Telegraph - and I am really pleased to have had the chance to inform more people about what I consider to be an inhumane practice.

North Yorkshire

Youth Representative

This month was convention one, which meant lots of organisation and last minute phone calls, however in convention 1 I saw people grow and develop myself included, since the induction weekend in April. Also this month, we continue to ask MYPs to get their schools signed up to make your mark, with a reasonable amount of success and have also launched the mental health campaign #mindthegap, the results are expected at the annual sitting

Sheffield

Anne Solademi, 14, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

Well to begin with my experience at the Doncaster Convention was a great and motivating one with lots to learn. I felt welcomed and the Mansion House was amazing. The food was good but most importantly the learning experience was very helpful. I took part in two workshops: Presenting and Organising. These workshops help me grow in not only skill but confidence which I am grateful about because I know foundational skills like these will help in the future. I'm excited about future opportunities to be part of such a movement and uplifting environment.

Abigail Kirk, 13, Youth Councillor

This last month has been really busy because of Convention One and our Sheffield Youth Cabinet campaigns (reinstatement of Work Experience in schools and combatting Legal Highs in Sheffield) but really interesting. Convention One in Doncaster was really fun and worthwhile. My favourite workshops was public speaking because I am not that confident in speaking in front of large crowds, so this was a perfect opportunity for me to improve my public speaking skills. I also enjoyed meeting new people and taking part in the Youth Justice consultation because it was extremely interesting to hear all the different opinions on the issue. This month I took it upon myself to email secondary schools asking them if they allow their students time off to take part in work experience, the responses were varied but are contributing to our campaign. In addition to this we have put together a petition stating: 'Work experience is vital for young people to undertake to enable them to gain experience of the world of work. We the undersigned want the reinstatement of work experience by those schools that no longer offer it'. I have taken the petition to school and an overwhelming number of students have signed it already! Our second citywide campaign is to try and combat the use of legal highs by young people and asking that all shops that sell them should ask for ID in the same way they do for tobacco and alcohol if they think the young person is under 18, we have also created a petition for this and a survey is also in the process of being put together to ask young people in Sheffield of their experiences of legal highs.

Northern Ireland

Belfast East

Ross McVittie, 18, Member of Youth Parliament

During the last week of May Gavin Robinson MP for Belfast East and myself signed and posted out letters on Westminster headed stationary to all post-primary East Belfast school Principals telling them about the Make Your Mark - the UK's largest youth consultation exercise and asking them to sign their schools up. To promote the Make Your Mark exercise further across NI I wrote to Peter Weir MLA the Chair of the Committee for Education to request that the committee endorse the initiative and issue letters to all post-primary school Principals to encourage them to sign up their schools. I even got a mention at the Committee for Education meeting recorded on the NI Assembly TV channel and my name and agreement to my request recorded in the official minutes. My letter also requested a meeting with the Peter Weir MLA as Chair of the Committee for Education which was scheduled for 17th June. On 28th May and 3rd June I was given the opportunity to be in the audience of Northern Ireland's biggest show in the country "Nolan Live". This gave me a chance to see first-hand how televised political debates are managed. I made a contribution to the 3rd June debate on MP's pay rises and I said "the pay rise is unnecessary as the current amount of £67,000 is enough!" Short but sweet but it was live on NI BBC1 so felt a bit nervous! On Tuesday 16th June I had a great catch up with one of my local East Belfast MLAs Sammy Douglas MLA where I discussed my campaign issues and what I've done so far and the Make Your Mark initiative. I asked for his support in getting the local youth groups signed up for MYM as well as the East Belfast schools and Sammy agreed to support me in taking this forward. After the meeting Sammy invited me along to listen to a Christian choir from Uganda who had been invited to Stormont for a reception where I also mingled with the Health Minister Simon Hamilton MLA, Finance Minister Arlene Foster MLA, Edwin Poots MLA and David McNarry MLA. We all had the privilege of hearing the children's choir praising God in the main hall in Stormont. They sounded awesome and afterwards I had the opportunity to talk with them and have my picture taken with the choir on the steps of Stormont. On Wednesday 17th June I organised a meeting in Stormont with the Committee for Education Chair Peter Weir MLA and two other members of the committee Robin Newton MLA and Trevor Lunn MLA attended. The meeting was to discuss the Make Your Mark campaign but I also gave the opportunity for some of my fellow NI MYPs who had education related campaign issues to take part in the meeting to discuss their issues. We had a fantastic time and were able to go through our campaign issues and I was able to get support from Peter Weir MLA to sponsor (along with myself) the NI Make Your Mark Launch Event sometime in September in the Stormont Long Gallery. This is a brilliant opportunity to raise the profile of the Make Your Mark initiative amongst the NI post-primary schools and should attract significant

interest from the local media. The MYPs who came with me were Emma McCaughern (East Londonderry), Niesha Kelly (North Antrim), Jordan Graham (South Antrim), Ryan Simpson (Lagan Valley) and Darragh O'Reilly for Fermanagh (South Tyrone) who was a late substitute for Amber McStravick (Belfast West) who couldn't make it due to studying for her exams. The other MYPs were able to discuss their issues and all of us found the meeting very beneficial and we got lots of advice on how to take our issues forward and raise them officially. All of us went away very excited and energised to take forward our issues. Just want to say a big thanks to Peter Weir MLA, Robin Newton MLA and Trevor Lunn MLA for taking the time out of their busy schedules to meet up with six MYPs and a big thank you to my fellow MYPs for coming with me. The start of June proved a bit more turbulent because we were told by BYC that due to budget cuts they could no longer fund the full cost of our attendance at the Annual Sitting in Exeter at the end of July. This left a funding gap of £2250 and after an initial panic the NI MYPs and our PG swung into action !! Rebecca Connolly PG created a fundraiser page and Amber McStravick MYP Belfast West decided to contact all 108 MLAs asking for their help. After 1 hour we had raised £250 and after 2 hours due to Amber's initiative and the help of Judith Cochrane MLA one of my East Belfast MLAs we had an offer from Politics Plus to cover the full £2250 funding gap !! It would not have been the same or felt right attending the Annual Sitting without having all the other MYPs there as we are one team. The NI MYPs are proof that young people from different backgrounds who have different political opinions can work together to make things better for everyone. As NI MYPs we are very thankful to Politics Plus, Judith Cochrane MLA and Amber for sorting this out and we are looking forward to a formal reception hosted by Politics Plus on 30th June in Stormont to celebrate NI MYPs attending the Annual Sitting. Onwards !! God Bless

Belfast West

Amber Mcstravick, 18, Member of Youth Parliament

For me, June was and still is quite a busy month for myself and most other MYPs! Since the beginning of the month, I have met with Paul Maskey MP for West Belfast for the second time since his re-election to Parliament. Within this meeting we discussed how important Make Your Mark is to the UKYP, BYC and to the general population of 11-18 year olds. Paul and I signed the letters I made to be sent out to each post-primary school within the constituency of West Belfast, encapsulating how crucial it is for each of them to sign up to be Make Your Mark schools as the deadline to apply is approaching - 17th July. As well as this, we discussed what we have been doing since the last time we met which helped me see how much work I have done and how much I still have to do - which excites me. Paul then agreed to send out a reminder email to all schools in West Belfast however, only 2 out of 9 have signed up to Make Your Mark. Also, in regards to this, I have emailed each school as well to again, reiterate the fact that Make Your Mark is deeply important. As well as this, due to the funding cuts for Northern Ireland, the 18 MYPs had lost their funding to attend the Annual Sitting which was a big loss for us all because

we then would have had to pay our own way - however, many of us would not have been able to afford it. We, as a team, decided to start fundraising for this and our PG, Rebecca Connolly, set up a page for people to donate to us. Within a day, we had raised £250 through this which was amazing and we are so thankful for the support everyone has been giving us. Initially, I had asked my school for support in funding myself and Nicole McCann to attend however, they had no more money in their budget to accommodate us. Thinking on my feet and taking initiative, I acted fast and emailed all MLAs in the Northern Ireland Assembly asking if there was any way at all for funding to become available, and if not, did they have any tips and ideas for us to raise the money quickly. Within hours, Judith Cochrane MLA for East Belfast, had emailed me to say that she could secure the full funding of £2250 for all 18 MYPs to attend through a company called Politics Plus. This was absolutely amazing news and we received confirmation a few days later that the funding was definitely secured for us after back and forth emailing between myself and the Senior Director of Activities of Politics Plus. They have now invited all of us, the MLAs, NI MPs and employees of Politics Plus to attend a reception in Stormont on the 30th June. We are all especially excited for this event and I am honoured to have been asked to speak for 15 minutes at the opening of this reception in regards to the UKYP, Annual Sitting and my local campaign - The War on Drugs. On the 15th June - Emma McCaughern (MYP for East Londonderry), Darragh O'Reilly (MYP for Fermanagh and West Tyrone), Ryan Simpson (MYP for Laganvalley) and I were honoured to speak to Millersville University (Pennsylvania) Students about Politics and Education within Northern Ireland. I was privileged to be asked by an old friend who works with students from Pennsylvania to speak to them as she felt as if I'd be up to the task due to recent achievements. I asked my fellow MYPs if they would like to speak with me as I thought it would be a very good opportunity for us all. It turned out to be a great evening as we were able to unwind afterwards and speak to the students about every day life and compare the USA to NI. We also received free food, so that was good. I have recently emailed the Health Committee for Northern Ireland and each of its members in relations to my campaign and the Mental Health Campaign which a lot of the NI MYPs have chosen as their local campaigns. I have received an email from the Committee acknowledging my thoughts and opinions and they have invited me to their next stakeholder event - which I will receive more details about soon. Also, West Belfast MLA, Rosie McCorley, who is a member of the Health Committee, has also taken an interest in what myself and other MYPs have to say in regards to the War on Drugs and Mental Health so she has agreed to meet up with me in her office on a later date that we are both free. I cannot express enough how relieved I feel that my local campaign is starting to be acknowledged and how work is starting to get done! On the 26th, 29th and 30th June, I will also be up in Stormont with the Erasmus+ NI Connections Programme. which will be helping me further my skills and develop my confidence in campaigning and debating as well as discussing the workings of Parliament in more detail. Myself and Ross McVittie, MYP for East Belfast will be attending this programme and we are both so happy and excited to see where these events lead. Lastly, I will be showing my support for the LGBTQ+ Community at Dublin's Gay Pride festival this Saturday (27th June). I will be there to encourage equality for all and have fun with the community down there. I am

extremely excited for this especially after the recent Same-Sex Marriage Referendum as the atmosphere will be absolutely breathtaking. See you all in July!

East Londonderry

Emma McCaughern, 16, Member of Youth Parliament

On the 15th of June, I was fortunate enough to have a meeting with Students from Millersville University in Pennsylvania. We met to discuss the education system in Northern Ireland, as well as my experience of being a member of the Youth Parliament and representing the young people of East Londonderry. On the 17th of June I had the opportunity to travel with fellow MYPs to Stormont to have a meeting with Peter Weir MLA, chair of the Education Committee. Also attending were two other members of the committee, Robin Newton MLA and Trevor Lunn MLA. The meeting was to discuss the Make Your Mark campaign and also gave the opportunity MYPs to discuss their campaigns. On the 26th of June other MYPs and myself met with Dr Alasdair McDonnell MP and Claire Hanna MLA at the NI Youth Forum offices to discuss lowering the voting age to 16. This month I have also been working hard on Make Your Mark. I have sent letters, emails and telephoned schools in my constituency encouraging them to sign up.

Fermanagh & South Tyrone

Dáire ÓRaghallagh - Darragh O'Reilly, 14, Member of Youth Parliament

Over the recent months I have - met, again, with my newly elected MP & MLA - organised and chaired a meeting with the Fight4Equality campaign about organising local young people to campaign for equal marriage in Northern Ireland. - met with one of my local MLAs, Mr. Phil Flanagan; I am hoping to shadow him at Stormont in the following days. - Contacted Schools in my constituency regarding the Make Your Mark Campaign, of which; none have signed up.

I have consulted the my electors and am now actively organising local young people in the fight for LGBT Rights, which can often be neglected in rural areas, and marriage equality, following the recent passing of the referendum on it in the Republic. I headed a group of young people, who travelled to Belfast and took part in the EqualMarriage March, along with 20,000 others, and organised a meeting at Fermanagh House for Young People about the issue.

Foyle

Thomas Chambers, 18, Member of Youth Parliament

It was another exciting month as MYP for Foyle which involved a number of different issues and events. A major part of this month was dedicated to getting schools involved with the Make your Mark campaign. To do this, I wrote letters and emails to inform schools of the campaign and try to persuade them to get involved in this amazing opportunity to enable the voice of young people to be heard. I also contacted my MP who in turn was happy to show his support by writing to all school principals in the area encouraging them to become involved in this consultation. I was also delighted this month to attend a march for marriage equality in Belfast organised to show support for the extension of same-sex marriage to Northern Ireland. On a beautiful summer day, the greatest sight was thousands of people marching in the hope that our politicians would listen to public opinion and deliver marriage equality to this region. I am hopeful that one day our politicians will take the progressive steps that young people demand and we will achieve the equality that the LGBT community deserve. As a MYP I will continue to fight against discrimination and strive to make sure our elected representatives bring about the changes needed to guarantee equality. I have also been having discussions about the creation of a forum in Derry to better represent the views of young people. The proposals to try and increase political participation amongst young people is an area which I am passionate about and I hope to explore this in more detail in the weeks ahead to secure a platform that allows the youth of Foyle to positively interact with the political process. In terms of mental health, one of my campaign issues, I have been working alongside Plymouth MYP, Sarah Staples to attempt and bring the Let's think about it project to Northern Ireland. This project which aims to challenge the stigmatisation of mental health issues in young people is something I believe can help tackle one of the major concerns of the youth of Foyle and I am eager to extend their work to our region.

North Antrim

Niesha Kelly, 14, Member of Youth Parliament

This month I have been very busy with my mental health campaign and make your mark. I had a meeting with my MP Ian Paisley Jr discussing MYM and mental health education in schools and awareness, I was also featured in the front newspaper of the Ballymena Guardian that brought warned to my constituency about mental health and the Make your mark event. I also had a meeting with My school principle updating him on all the events and tasks I've been completing. I sent out letters to all my constituencies schools to inform them and get them to sign up for MYM but sadly only one school which is my school has signed up. So now I'm going to email them all and hopefully they will sign up. I met with committee of education chair leader Peter Weir (MLA) with a few other fellow MYP's where I talked about mental health

education and the outline of my campaign. This month I'm really determined to work hard on getting all my schools signed up for MYM and hoping to make it a very successful event!

Aside to do with MYM and my mental health campaign. I got in touch with the Northern Ireland commissioner for children and young people Deborah Crawford about a case where I represented my school mates in a rule the majority of the school and I strongly disagree with about having to tie up all long hair throughout the entire day. (NICCY) are currently studying my case and will get back to me sometime this week about the situation and hopefully it will be brought up about and be took off the code of conduct for the next school year.

Strangford

Aaron Addidle, 16, Member of Youth Parliament

Throughout the month of June I was very busy. This month I met with Jim Shannon MP and we had a discussion about my campaign ideas and Make Your Mark. It was very good discussion and he was willing to help me in anyway I needed especially with Make Your Mark. I had been emailing a number of councillors back and forth and have a number of meetings coming up, one which is very important to my campaign of setting up a youth council in my local area. I sent emails to all my local schools asking them to sign up to Make Your Mark. Progress is definitely being made with all and all a busy month with July looking to be an even busier month.

Support worker's Stories

East Midlands

Leicestershire

Jane McCormick

At the last CYCLE (County Youth Council for Leicestershire) Hannah George from the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland 'Better Care Together' Partnership came to talk to members about a programme of work which will transform the health and social care system for that area. BCT brings local NHS organisations and Councils together to ensure that services change to meet the needs of local people, working closely with the public and Patient Involvement representatives to develop plans for change. Hannah explained how members can get involved in their next big consultation and asked for CYCLE's help with how to engage with the under-represented groups of young people and where they thought would be best to promote their questionnaires and focus groups. Hannah is going to keep in touch with CYCLE and feedback any updates.

Tracey Flower

Mental Health Awareness Day BBQ at Venture House Melton Mowbray As part of the Make your Campaign young people want the U.K's mental health services for young people to be improved. Young people should all learn about common mental health issues at school and negative stereotypes should be challenged. At Venture House we held a BBQ for mental health awareness week, we organised the day which turned out to be a great success. Around 30 young people turned up and got involved in a quiz about mental health. The quiz helped us learn about what mental health is and we learnt that anyone can suffer mental health problems. After the quiz we had some burgers and hotdogs and played giant Jenga which had questions written on the Jenga blocks about where to go for help if we are worried about ourselves or anyone else suffering mental health problems. Olivia Coleman ran a session for the group on 'feelings'. This was fun and helped us to think about how we were feeling when things that are important to us are taken away, we also wrote how we felt on the wall before and after the 'feelings' session and learnt that how we feel changes all the time. Inside the youth centre was lots of information about mental health that we could take away with us. Young people wrote down on a scale of 1-10 how much they felt they knew about mental health on the way in and on the way out of the building. The scale showed us that lots of people learnt a lot about mental health at the BBQ.

East of England

Suffolk

Lisa Gordon

Hi, my name is Lisa Gordon and I'm the new Support Worker for the Suffolk Members and Deputy Members of UK Youth Parliament. There has been a lot going on in Suffolk recently with MYPs working on their local and national campaigns. For the mental health campaign all MYPs are working on an initiative called #MindTheGap which involves mapping the mental health services available across the country and Toby Jeffery MYP has given evidence to the Youth Select Committee. There has also been a lot of talk around lowering the voting age to 16 with MYPs being in contact with MPs, tweeting and being featured on Radio Suffolk. There have recently been by-elections meaning that there are now a total of 13 MYPs and DMYPs. A special welcome to those recently elected: Benjamin Denton-Cardew MYP for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich, Alex Bowers MYP, Onica Hussian DMYP and Byron Babbs DMYP who are all covering Ipswich and Nathan Bowkett MYP and Jed Levett DMYP for Waveney.

North West

Bolton

Bolton Youth Council

Building Health Partnership

Youth MP Ebony Cropper and Youth Councillor attended the Building Health Partnership meeting around suicide prevention support. Both young people have made really good contacts and we are now after meeting with Shona Green – Safeguarding Officer going to organise for young people from Young Voices group at CAMHS, young people connected to BAND and Youth Council and Voice 4 U to meet together to discuss what everyone is working on and how we can forward plan together.

Lads and Girls NCS

Lads and Girls visited the Youth Council/Youth MPs to discuss NCS project and get the young people to help promote this to group's schools that they visit.

Make Your Mark

We are trying to get all schools in Bolton to sign up to the UK Youth Parliament Make Your Mark Campaign- ONLY Westhoughton High School and Bolton School have signed up to date.

Last year over 875,000 pupils took part in a national ballot, Make your Mark. This is the UK Youth Parliament's annual ballot of 11-18 year olds. This year, the hope is to surpass the 1 million mark. We are writing to encourage your school/college to register, by 17th July, and take part in the consultation (which runs from 12th August until 9th October 2015). Register online www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/makeyourmark/ schools will also You will also be sent information on a brand new 'Discovering Democracy Award' which celebrates schools supporting young people in democratic engagement

Budgeting Activities

Youth Council took part in a budgeting activity to get an understanding on how Children's Services budgets work, before our meeting with the Director of Children's Services.

Meeting with John Livesey – Acting Director of Children's and Adult Services

Youth Council and Youth MPs had a very productive meeting with John Livesey– they presented to him there role as a Youth Council and Youth MPs and the campaigns that are priority to them and asked him several questions about his priorities for Children's Services.



Outcomes from the meetings were that John will meet with group every 6 months to feedback and exchange priorities and also possible involvement in the election process in Bolton. John also agreed to back their mental health campaign that they are currently working on.

Mind the Gap

The #MindTheGap campaign aims to praise services that are meeting the mental health needs of young people, and highlight where young people are missing out on mental health services.

Members of Youth Parliament are going to map out mental health service provision for the whole of England by researching and recording what's available in their local area; and in order to get reliable and credible data, we need you!

Westhoughton High School Visit

Youth MPs visited Westhoughton High school council members to talk about the role of a Youth MP and the campaigns that they are currently working on. They talked in particular about Make Your Mark Campaign and Mental Health. The school council are really interested in Youth Council running Make your Mark in school in September and also doing some joint work on raising awareness about mental health for young people.



High Rid Trip

Some Youth Council Members and Voice 4 U members took part in a teambuilding session at High Rid Reservoir with the Outdoor Learning & Adventure Team.

Reclaim Project

Reclaim is a Manchester based youth leadership charity who have an aim to end leadership inequality within a generation. They are trying to recruit a North West group of young people in which two young people from Bolton would represent. Some of our members are interested in this opportunity; they are going to hold an event at the Octagon date and time to be announced.

Meeting with Band

We have regular meetings with Band to talk about our plans for raising awareness for young people around Mental Health in Bolton and across the North West.

Youthforia meeting

Youth Councillors and Youth MP represents Bolton at the North West Youthforia meeting. Items on the agenda; Presentation skills, organisational skills – using the mapping tool from British Youth Council, Government consultation – “The Youth Justice System”, Exploring and Understanding the world we live in and a debate discussing the positives and negatives to constitutional reform in the UK.

BBC Radio – Radio 5 – The Youth Council put forward some questions around mental health for young people in Bolton to be asked to ministers to ministers live on the radio 5.

Mobile Skate Park Launch –

Youth Councillors and Youth MPs helped out at the new Mobile Skate Park Launch at Westhoughton Central Park and waggon Road Young People’s Centre.



Youth Select Committee 2015 – Enquiry to Mental Health

Youth Council and Youth MPs have been involved in providing some Oral evidence for the @BYClive #YouthSelect Committee inquiry into #mentalhealth

The enquiry has begun last week, the Committee will question witnesses for their knowledge and opinions on mental health. They will be using facts and views from written evidence sent by all Youth councils/Youth MPs throughout the country.

Mental Health Campaign visit from CAHMS Young Voices

Youth Council/Youth MPs are working closely with Young Voices a group of young people who are involved with CAMHS. We are going to organise an evening to get all working groups of young people together to share our views on raising awareness around mental health. We will also invite the Safe guarding Officer from Bolton Council and will look at the next steps to how we can move forward our Mental Health campaign.

South East

Buckinghamshire

Simon Billenness

Youth Voice Event 4th June saw another success Youth Voice event in Buckinghamshire with young people from across the county coming together to discuss and debate on Mental Health. The young people were able to quiz and challenge a panel of representatives from health, education, counselling services, mental health charities and the Deputy leader of the Council. As the debate went on key ideas and suggestions from young people and professionals were collated. These ideas will be compiled into a guidance for young people and professionals about mental health and how to get and give support. Young people are now joining working groups to take on lead roles to promote the Youth Voice events. Young people were also recruited to be involved in planning the September Youth Voice residential. We Do Care Children in Care council Work on a current campaign about what age young people should start receiving support from the after care team has come to a successful conclusion. Young people made a recommendation that the support of an after care PA should be provided if young people want this support. Senior managers in Social care have taken this on board and agreed to start rolling this out over the coming months. At the moment the young people are working together with We Do Care juniors to investigate the quality of the Coming into care packs and how they can be improved/ United Kingdom Youth Parliament The application process is now open for young people to put their names forward to run as candidates for the United Kingdom Youth Parliament elections in Buckinghamshire. For the first time young people can register their interest online. A training day is set for the beginning of September where the candidates will be chosen by their peers.

West Midlands

Herefordshire

Antonia Dixey

Herefordshire's Voice of a Child work is growing! Participation People are hearing about all the amazing work happening in Herefordshire. From Y-Teams to Student Councils to Youth Leadership Groups. There is a wealth of #YouthVoice opportunity across the county. Read on to find out the existing opportunities and get involved!

1. BIG BOSSES ON THE SPOT

100 young people and 20 Decision Makers will be "Speed Questioning" each other, Tuesday 7 July. They will talk about how they can improve Herefordshire together. The event report, #SelfiePledge's and Photos from the event .will be available soon.

2. Voice of a Child Audit

We want to share best practice and help organisations: - Listen - Act on - Evaluate - The Voice of a Child. We are asking organisations for their feedback on what they are doing with #YouthVoice.

3. Voice of a Child Network

This meeting brings professionals together, who are passionate about listening to young people! This group will become the Voice of a Child Experts for Herefordshire! This will take place 11 September in Hereford.

4. FREE Voice of a Child Training Woah, 80% of our #YouthVoice course places are booked up! Which means, we are delighted to offer even more FREE Training Opportunities for Adults and Young People. To find out the Voice of a Child Training Offer follow this link: <http://participationpp-herefordshire.eventbrite.co.uk/>

5. Young Inspectors

Are you a young person who enjoys telling others exactly what you think? Do you like interviewing people? Do you like solving problems?

Are you an adult reading this and know a young person who fits this description? If so contact Antonia for more details pronto!

Email: antonia@participationpeople.com Call/ Text: 07921 907210.

Wales

Caerphilly

Lee Kabza, Support worker

The Caerphilly Young Inspectors is a project to train young people to raise awareness of the National Participation Standards and to carry out inspection of youth services to ensure they are meeting these standards. It is all about making sure that young people's voices are heard in the services that are being run for them. Crosskeys Youth Centre were recently visited by the young inspectors. The team did some awareness raising with the staff and young people telling them all about the national participation standards. They then carried out an inspection checking all the evidence the club put forward in their self assessment. The club passed with flying colours and was awarded the National Kitemark. This is an excellent achievement and shows that young people's voices really are getting heard in Caerphilly. To find out more about Caerphilly Young Inspectors please contact Lee Kabza (Youth Participation Worker) on 01443 863323 or Kabzal@caerphilly.gov.uk

Forum takes part 10 mile walk for Charity A group of young people from Caerphilly Youth Forum volunteered their time at the weekend to take part in the 10 mile Caerphilly Challenge Walk. The group aged 13 to 19 laced up their boots and headed for the hills to raise money for Velindre Cancer Centre. Led by the Caerphilly Ramblers, the Youth Forum braved 10 miles of steep muddy climbs and tough terrain. Lee Kabza Senior Youth Worker said " The group were amazing and gave up their time to take part in this awesome event raising money for an excellent cause. They should all be extremely proud of what they achieved and raised in excess of £500" Sophie elected as YSC rep for Wales The chair of Caerphilly Youth Forum Sophie Jones aged 18 has just been successful in being elected as the Wales Representative on The Youth Select Committee (YSC) which is a British Youth Council initiative, supported by the House of Commons. This year's Youth Select Committee will focus on Mental Health Services, which has been chosen by UK Youth Parliament as the priority campaign. When Sophie was asked, how she felt about being elected as a representative she said: "I can't believe I'm the only person to be representing every young person in Wales! I didn't think I would be in with a chance of being selected as I knew lots of young people with lots of amazing experiences would be applying too. I can't wait to take part in this opportunity and I hope I'll be able to encourage other young people to take part in their local youth forums". Youth Forum Priority Issue - This year's priority issue is health: Raising awareness about Domestic Abuse. The young people have said there are not enough services for different age groups affected. The youth forum have been meeting on a weekly basis to discuss the issue and have come up with ways to raise awareness about domestic abuse. The Youth Forum has come up with three ideas that they feel will raise awareness on the issue. The first idea we are going to focus on is creating posters They have also designed Festival style wrist bands to tie in with the National White Ribbon campaign in November 2015. The Youth Forum are also going to create films highlighting healthy/unhealthy relationships and raising awareness of the huge problem of young people being the victims of domestic abuse. We hope to have these ready by the end of the summer

Thank you for your submissions this month, we look forward to reading more positive stories next month.

Also we have The Youth on Board (YOB) Awards which is an exclusively youth-led rolling award scheme that recognises innovative and exciting youth participation, both from young people and the projects and organisations that support them.

Deadline for submissions is quarterly.

To apply see more on: <http://www.byc.org.uk/training-services/youth-on-board-awards.aspx>