



# Case study

# independence

**York |** How much independence does the YVV have?

## Who?

York Youth council is a group of young people from all over the city who represent the voice of young people in York. We work to make a difference and positive change for the young people of York. Young people 11 – 18 years can get involved. Every secondary school, youth group and college in the York City Council area is encouraged to send two or more representatives to be part of the Youth Council.

## What?

A demonstration of the independence of the York Youth Council is that it has its own constitution that governs the way it works and operates. The Youth Council also has its own bank account that enables it to fund raise to support the work it wants to do and its campaigns.

## How?

The constitution was developed with the young people who make up the Youth Council. A workshop was developed that took all the questions that needed to be answered in developing a constitution. Young people then worked their way through all the questions and by doing so had all the information we needed to draw up the constitution. Among all the information needed the constitution helps explain what the group is, reinforces we have an identity, lays out who is going to be in the group, who will be at the meetings and what level of support there is from the Council Leadership.

So it doesn't just sit on the shelf but rather supports the meetings and is a slimmed down, accessible document that is easily read and understood.

The York Youth Council has its own bank account. The account was set up by youth workers on behalf of the Youth Council. The youth workers are the signatories and undertake the banking but all expenditure has to be authorised by young people.

Young people decide what budget they will allocate to the work and manage it very tightly. Regular accounts are presented to the Youth Council meetings.

## **Impact:**

Each year the newly created Youth Council review and amend the constitution as part of their induction and training. This means that each and every new youth council member will have an awareness and understanding of the constitution.

The young people use it to fund their campaign work. For example, young people set their priorities for campaigns and last year one of them was mental health. We wanted to influence lessons in school and decided to do that through a short film. We were able to make a decision and get on with the commissioning of the film.

## **Learning points:**

- Refresh the constitution with every new intake to the Youth Council so they understand and own the constitution.
- Make sure all expenditure is authorised by the Youth Council.
- Take regular accounts to the Youth Council to give them the information that allows them to manage their money.