

# Youth Voice: Positive Stories



February 2015



Participation of the Isles conference 2015

# Youth Voice:

## Positive Stories

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

Welcome to the February 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](mailto: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.

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# Young People's Stories

## East Midlands

### Leicestershire

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#### **Daria Eckert, Member of Youth Parliament**

February has been a very busy month. In January I said I would do a survey to consult the young people in my constituency on school age range changes in my area and I did. I made a SurveyMonkey survey called age range consultation for young people. I wanted to get pupils in years 5-9 but only the primary schools wanted to do my survey. So I will have to keep working to get the older year but once my consultation is complete I will write up the feedback and send it to all the schools, our MP and our Local Council. On Tuesday the 17th I meet with Alexander Komashie a systems engineer at Cambridge who focuses on the safety of patients in healthcare and does a lot about mental health. I meet with him to talk about the UKYP mental health campaign. I also went to a great residential with my youth council on the first weekend of the half term. I learnt lots about the mental health campaign, sitting on interview panels and we planned our annual event Unheard Voices (where we collect the views of our young people in our area) which will be on the 2nd July. Hopefully if I get permission from the Council I will meet with my MP Sir Edward and talk about all the things I am doing and discuss the UKYP national Campaigns.

### Lincolnshire

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#### **George Baker, 15, Member of Youth Parliament**



This month I had a meeting with the leader of Lincolnshire County Council as we could not organise a day before the National Campaign Day. The leader of the Council is Councillor Hill (conservative). Lincolnshire pays for a really good Kooth web service for those with mental health problems and one of my primary aims of the meeting was to make sure this service is not cut in the upcoming council budget cuts, which I was successful in doing. Furthermore I was asking that Kooth is advertised amongst young people which he agreed to look in to. We discussed different ways this

could be done and we both felt through schools would be the best option. Within the brainstorm we also discussed the option of advertising stickers on the back of toilet doors, a weird but possibly genius method. Although statistics are suggesting it is the summer holidays which presents itself as a particular danger period. Hopefully I will see something come of this in the future. We also discussed the living wage. The council currently employs about 5000 workers and just 80 of these earn below the living wage (mostly those doing apprenticeships). We had a debate on whether the council should pay everyone the living wage however he argued that would involve shifting everyone's pay packages up, they use a pay tier system, which would cause job cuts. They are also apprehensive about agreeing to becoming a 'Living Wage Employer' as this will tie the council down in the future. Overall I think it was a successful meeting which Cllr Hill posted on his personal Twitter account. Safeguarding remains a priority for the council and the council are a leading role model for paying new workers within 28 days. I also chaired this month's Lincolnshire Cabinet Meeting where we discussed some of the issues affecting young people with a Lincolnshire focus. Final meeting notes have yet to be finalised.

# East of England

## Central Bedfordshire

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### Ellen Burke, 17, Member of Youth Parliament

On the 27th of January. Michael Ita and I (MYP) met with Leader of the Council, Councillor James Jamieson and Councillor Mark Vasallion to discuss the possibility of raising the minimum wage to the living wage in Central Bedfordshire. Michael and I prepared for this meeting by developing a series of questions. Most of our questions were answered adequately. This meeting gave insight to some of the challenges this campaign may encounter. The main outcome of this meeting was; to have a living wage for all we need to make sure that people are equipped with education and skills that will enable them to get better salary scales.



### Kyle Fenton, Member of Youth Parliament



In December 2014, I applied to join Central Beds Youth Parliament, and I recently experienced my first session with them. After a shy start I soon realised that there was nothing to be nervous about and was made to feel at home by the other members of youth parliament. The main objectives for the session were to create an online survey and to organise a presentation to present to local councillors. Both went well and we were able to complete everything on time. When we were looking at the presentation, we had to be assigned certain parts to present and in doing so everybody was able to get a part to present even if they were absent. The most positive thing about this was that although Alice, Rory and I were new to Youth Parliament, we were still able to get parts to prese

## Essex

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### Jakub Makowski, 17, Procedures Group Representative

PoundAge! On Wednesday the 18th of February I attended PoundAge launch. PoundAge is a new local scheme in Colchester initiated by the MP for Colchester Sir Bob Russell. This scheme is a fantastic of involving the whole community in helping to save vital resources and support for pensioners, who are one of the most vulnerable group in our society. The event was attended by Minister of State Norman Lamb MP, Sir Bob Russell MP and many local councillors. I was proud to see this amazing community scheme in action!

# Hertfordshire

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## **Ahmed, 16, Member of Youth Parliament**

So my time has come to an end as an MYP and I don't know how I shall write about the amazing people I've met, the wonderful places I've been to and the difference that I hope I have made.

My first positive stories was about 2 years ago and the only thing I remember about it was that I complained about a cold shower before my first meeting, then here I am wishing it would all happen again just to give me a few more years as an MYP. The things I've done in UKYP are things I could never have imagined and didn't realise how much I've changed in the last two years.

UKYP is more than a 'bunch of young kids' trying to be something they're not. It's a 'bunch of young kids' with a passion and a fire in their heart for change, it's a 'bunch of young kids' ready to step out of the norm to challenge something that isn't right and it most importantly is a 'bunch of young kids' making a difference.

Through the last two years I've developed as a person, I've gained some friends for life and I've seen the organisation get stronger and stronger with each passing minute. UKYP is now an organisation to be listened to and respected and that's the least it deserves.

So here is my final fair well to it but everyone remember this, it is not what you have achieved, but what you want to achieve which gets you outcomes.

## **Evie, 18, Herts1125 Member**

Recently, I've been working hard in looking at the funding of CAMHS County wide and nationally and what cuts have been made by government and local government and what affect that this has had on young people. In order to do this I've had to take into account the changing population, young people on social media etc. I have come to the conclusion that early intervention and more rights for young people accessing mental health services is needed, such as caps on waiting times and a thorough assessment procedure, self-referrals etc.

I took these ideas along with the idea of mandatory sex education in every school and Mental Health First Aid training for senior members of staff to The Minister of State of Care and Support and to my local MP, Sir Oliver Heald. Both backed me completely and we're working hard to try and make positive changes, they were very interested in my experiences with CAMHS. The government is proposing capping 50% of waiting times by April this year (so patients must have an appointment within X amount of days of referral) and the other 50% in the next few years, it is unfortunate that this cannot be more speedy. The government also agreed a £150m grant in the autumn statement for young people with eating disorders and for young people who self-harm along with another £7m grant a few years ago to increase the amount of psychiatric beds available after the cuts in 2010 of 1700 beds across the country.

# London

## Brent

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### **Maansi Luhar, 16, Member of Youth Parliament**

Youth Services are known to inspire and allow young people to meet new people in addition to gain new skills. We would never consider abolishing these services, would we? Brent Council are facing dire cuts in their budget and have proposed the possibility of scrapping services such as these, which would include Youth Centres and projects such as Brent Youth Parliament. Members of Brent Youth Parliament have decided to take a stand against any possibility of this and have been busy writing letters to their local MPs and/or Councillors as well as starting a petition. We so far have 111 online signatures and would greatly appreciate any more. You can sign online if you live or go to school in Brent, regardless of age. Find the petition by looking on the @BrentYouthParliament twitter account or by searching for Save Our Youth Service ePetition on the Brent website.

### **Roisin Healy, 16, Chair of Brent Youth Parliament**

As we have previously spoken about Brent council are proposing to cut the youth services. We have set up a petition which has now finished and received 117 signatures as well as a paper petition which had around 40 signatures. We will be presenting at a cabinet meeting with the hope to change councillors mind about these cuts. Myself and the two UKYP representatives (Vikita Khetani and Hamza King) also attended a consultation with regards to the cuts and viewing other possible models for the youth service. There, we made a presentation about the importance of a youth service in our borough and how they have affected us all personally. I have also attended a meeting with the leader of the council and spoke about alternatives and emphasised the need for a youth service.

## Ealing

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### **Pervin Kaur, 16, Member of Brent Youth Parliament**

Whilst everyone else has been meeting up with their local councillors, Ealing has been working on the mental health campaign around our Borough. We have brainstormed as a group on ideas to spread awareness of mental health. Before getting started we met up with the local mental health organisation; CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and discussed our ideas with them. One of our ideas is to have a day-out with some young people in CAMHS, the purpose of this is to experience how a person with mental health problem goes through their daily life. In order to execute this we have asked permission from the head of the organisation and have enquire about any health and safety rules. We would be doing this shortly. Another action we have started on is to create a mental health film. In this short film, we hope to show the different stigma/ treatment that mental health people experience and as the film progresses we would show how they should actually be treated, like normal people.

Finally, we also want to create a blog/ website where we would give young people a platform to share their mental health problems anonymously. This would be a safe and regularly maintained site so that any sort of cyberbullying is not seen.

Additionally, we are doing a full curriculum for life resource pack. This pack would be available in both hard and soft copy for school. We would also be charging schools depending on the demand for the packs. In this pack, we would include lesson plans, helplines and the necessary information that young people should know about on a particular topic. Moreover, we would also include Mental Health as one of the topic.

## Islington

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### Ryan Mackin, 15, Youth Councillor



I'm preparing to take my GCSEs later this year, I'm hoping to go to college to study a levels in September. I've been a youth councillor for over a year now and it has been one of the greatest experiences of my life. I decided to stand for election because I wanted to be the voice of young people and prove that we are more than what the media presents us as. I would say the best bit of being a youth councillor so far was when I had the opportunity to ask questions to councillors and find out what was being done about our priorities.

As I mentioned, I have my GCSE exams coming up after Easter. These are the most important exams of my life so far and I realise it's important to prepare properly. I've always found it quite hard to revise, reading from a text book never seems to go in to my brain so I've worked out the best ways for me to revise. I like to find videos online about the subject I'm revising and watch them in my free time. My favourite way to revise is to write my revision notes on sticky notes and put them up all around the house so that even when I'm brushing my teeth I do a little bit of revision. There's many ways to revise but you have to find out what works for you.

I think it's important to stay calm during the exam period as it can be really stressful, make sure you get regular breaks during your revision and of course make sure you get enough sleep! It can be really hard to find somewhere quiet to revise

but I recommend you visit some of Islington's excellent libraries, you can have a quiet space to do revision with Internet access if you need it and of course lots of books to help you. Above all, make sure to relax during the exam period, if you revise properly then you'll be okay when your in the exam.

In the next few months I'm hoping to take part in a film the youth council is making which should be a really great opportunity to share what we are doing, I'm also looking forward to visiting the next full council meeting where I can really scrutinise what the council leaders are doing.

## **Harrow**

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### **Zak Wagman, 16, Member of Youth Parliament**

This month, I have continued my work as MYP for Harrow. I have attended meetings of the Harrow Youth Parliament, where we hosted the London PG, and also continued to work on the Raise the Wage Campaign.

## **Hounslow**

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### **Dunja Relic, 18, Procedures Group Rep**

From the 13th - 15th February, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the 'Participation of the Isles Conference' in Belfast, Northern Ireland. All five nations came together from; England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. On Friday 13th, we had a tour of the Northern Irish Assembly - which was wonderful as it gave an insight into the history of the NI parliament. Despite the fact that it is smaller than our own Parliament, its history and beauty could not be overlooked. We spent the evening bonding with the other nations and learning about everyone else's culture which was very interesting since I did not know much outside of England. During the Saturday, we had tours around Belfast itself and the City Hall where we learnt a lot about the history of the town in terms of the conflict which was interesting because we have similar conflicts in my home country. The day continued with other group activities which showed us that we were similar in more ways than others, bringing everyone closer together. We also did trampolining in the evening which was a lot of fun! On Sunday we wrapped it up with an evaluation session where everyone clearly stated they wanted the session to run again! Thank you BYC for an unforgettable trip!

# North East

## North Tyneside

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**Rebecca Moore, 15, Member of Youth Parliament & Youth Councillor  
North Tyneside Young Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing**

The North Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Reference Group has been working on a Mental Health Project for about a year now and we have completed our (very thorough) report. Our report has been presented to adult decision makers and we have used the information gathered from services and charities ranging from CAMHS to YoungMinds to design a lesson plan for all schools in North Tyneside to use. We have been invited to present our lesson plan to the PSHE Leads from every secondary school in the LA and hope we get a positive response.

## Northumberland

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**Annabelle Cooper, 17, Member of Youth Parliament**



Last weekend (6th – 8th February) The Alnwick Youth Hostel played host to the Annual Northumberland Youth Parliament’s and Cabinet’s induction residential. The weekend was very interesting. As I am now on my last year as a MYP this was my last residential with everyone. The many activities were great to get to know the newbies (quirks and all) as well as create an action plan for the new campaigns. The Northumberland Youth Parliament has 5 campaigns they will be enrolling out this year, including perusing the Public Transport campaign which started this time last year. In addition, the Northumberland Youth Parliament will be supporting

the UK Youth Parliament’s national campaigns of ‘Raise the Wage’ and Improving Mental Services for young people, which were debated and voted for by all MYPs in November of last year. It is hard to think I attended the same residential only a year ago because I remember it like it was yesterday. I wish all the former members the best in the future and I certainly cannot wait to get the campaigns off to a head start and at the same time, enjoy the next year with the new members.

On 22nd January I had the fabulous pleasure of heading down to Chapter House, Westminster along with 60 MYPs to celebrate the 750th anniversary of Simon De Monfort's parliament as well as the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta. Attending the event were MPs, Lords and Baronesses, gathering to commemorate the past, present, and future of Parliament. Simon De Monfort's Parliament is the first record of 2 houses (resembling the Commons and Lords) meeting together to represent the UK the population in various matters. The day involved speeches from the Dean, Speaker of the House of Commons, and The Lord Speaker.



The event expanded my knowledge of the tremendous history of the two houses as well as the nature in which they were created. It was an honour to represent the North-East alongside Newcastle's MYP Neil Kotre To learn about the history of parliament, as well as meet Newcastle Central MP Chi Onwurah, and Baroness Quinn from Northumberland.

### **Youth Cabinet Member**

Well we put together our manifestos with ideas from young people in Northumberland. Went on a residential to discuss what we are going to achieve within the next two years as well as team building.

# North West

## Bolton

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### **Gulwali Passarlay, Youth Representative**

The month started with my university second year, 2nd semester which means I am half through my degree.

In the first week attended the finally workshop for my political leadership programme the ParliaMentors; and had many meeting with group I work on the social action project.

Friday the 6th, I participated in Aljazeera Head to Head show in the audience to question Former Chief of Pakistan's intelligent agency the ISI on his country role in fighting terrorism, the ISI involvement in Afghanistan and what can be done to reduce the threat of extremism.

The next day, I visited UNICEF HQ in London for a day of training for the Children's Champions and supporters, learning how to campaign effectively in ending violence against children in conflict areas and what role the UK government can play to encourage UN members to have a target in the Sustainable Development Goal.

Also during the same weekend, I had meeting with Afghan Youth lead organisations representative. Considering, how best we can work collectively together to achieve our objectives for Afghans in the UK and support the peace process in Afghanistan and contribute positively to nation building.

On the 9th, I was invited for an interview with War Child UK, as they are selecting young people for their Youth Engagement Panel, who has come from a war zone or have experiences; so they can best represent the views of young people in that situation.

The next day I went to the Refugee Week Annul conference at Amnesty International, as I am one of their Young Ambassador. It was a day of importance, we heard from Refugee Council, UNHCR representatives on the current situation for refugees in the Middle East. Discussing what can be done to help and support people fleeing wars and conflict.

Take part in many events and meeting at Uni around youth empowerments and how we can get more young people involve in politics.

On Tuesday the 18th, I was invited to speak on BBC breakfast show on immigration and the risky journeys people make to get to Europe. It was an informative and interesting discussing with somebody from representing the work of Save the Children and how they help new arrivals in Italy. After the programme, I was asked to talk with BBC news which was my first time speaking to them live; a useful

experience and pleased to be able to share my views on the subject matter. Later in the week was invited for interview with different radios.

Finally attend an Active Citizen meeting at NCVYS to see what every has achieved with their social action projects and plan ahead for more challenges. Also part take in a protest in solidarity with women's in Kashmir, standing up for justice and against oppression - no matter where it happens.

### **Lydia Wolstenholme, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

#### **Health watch Reporters training**

Members of Bolton Youth Council were offered an opportunity to take part in a series of training days to become a reporter for health watch. In this training young people learnt important media skills including how to create media broadcasts, share podcasts and how to record several forms of media.

#### **Meeting with Better Transport**

Youth Council members and Youth MPs met with a representative from the organisation 'Better Transport' to discuss ways of continuing our campaign on lowering bus fares for young people. We found this incredibly beneficial and it gave us ideas on different types of campaigns and ways to get our campaign known.



#### **Meeting with TFGM and First Bus company to discuss changes being made to bus fares for young people aged 16-18**

Youth Council members met with First bus company to discuss the introduction of the



“FirstWeek 16-18” ticket was based upon market research conducted by First to identify ways to attract more young people onto bus services. As a result the ticket is available to everyone in the 16 – 18 year old age group, not just those in education. We agreed to help promote the new 16-18s bus ticket and we feel this is a huge step forward in our campaign to improve bus fares for young people not only in our local area of bolton but regionally.

#### **Meeting with Yasmin Qureshi to discuss the Living Wage Campaign and our Public Transport campaign. (#price2change)**

Members of Youth Council and Youth MPs met with Bolton MP Yasmin Qureshi to discuss UK Youth Parliaments living wage campaign where she agreed to sign a pledge to recognise the need for everybody to be paid the standard living wage and it was something that she agreed would happen. Yasmin was very supportive and eager to participate and help with the campaign however possible. We also discussed ways to further our public transport campaign with her help, something which again she offered support with as it was something which she also felt strongly about. We have arranged to meet with other MPs in our local area to discuss these campaigns in hope that they will offer the same level of support.



### Youth MPs to visit schools

Youth MPs have been visiting several local schools within our local authority in order to introduce themselves as Bolton Youth MPs and discuss with the young people the campaigns that they have been working on. They plan to do this with the support of Youth Council members.

## Cheshire West and Chester

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### Member of Youth Parliament

I have recently engaged in the 'raise the wage' meeting with Mr Stephen Mosley MP. It was a very interesting meeting, where we both exchanged ideas on the campaign. During the meeting I explained the campaign and its advantages, gaining much needed support and advice to strengthen the campaign. I can't wait to see how the campaign strengthens and develops. ☑

## Rochdale

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### Leon Hollinrake, 18, Member of Youth Parliament

Me and my youth cabinet are in the middle of making a mental health video based on a real life situation. This has been a success with the planning up to it and we aim to make this issue aware yo as many people as possible.

I'm active near enough Dailey attending meetings with different youth groups and different organisations.

## Salford

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### Youth Councillor

I have been a youth councillor since September 2014 and I honestly think it's an amazing opportunity for young people like me. There is just not enough publicity made by the authorities etc for young people to know that there are opportunities like this. I decided to take matters in my own hands and decided to do some assemblies in my school. You know come in, talk about us, talk about my experience and why I like it. I think students would be more eager to join if it was someone their age talking about it and not a teacher who probably never heard of the youth council herself. I hope young people will consider joining more with the share of my experience. I also love the atmosphere we have at meetings. I would recommend joining any time. Wiktoria Matuszewska ( Salford Youth Councillor)

## Sefton

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### Laura Curran, 16, Member of Youth Parliament



For the past few months, I, the chair of Sefton's youth cabinet called Shout It Out Sefton (SIOS), as well as the other SIOS members have been planning for our #SIOS15 event which was held on 18th February. Young people, councillors and parliamentary candidates attended the event and there were 5 main areas that we looked at: votes at 16, transport, gender equality, young people's employment, and mental health. We had a table for each of these areas so people could go up to them and find out information, and we had workshops for more in depth discussions. There was also a debate for each topic so people could vocally express their

views. Then we allowed the young people to vote for what they wanted our campaign to be, which ended up being transport. Straight after the event were the UKYP elections for Sefton. Former MYP Eleanor Gleeson and I spoke about our experiences as we were both MYPs last year. One of our youth workers also gave a speech commemorating Eleanor's work with UKYP throughout the years as she had to step down this year. We all wish her the best of luck now that her experience with UKYP has sadly come to an end. I am happy to announce that I have been re-elected as MYP for Sefton, Caithness my

fellow MYP being Ryan Everett. As part of my manifesto as MYP, I decided to use social media to engage young people in the votes at 16 and gender equality areas, as these are the ones I am very passionate about. I will be doing this by having a #VoiceOurVoices chat on Twitter every Saturday 7:00pm-8:30pm. During this, I will be asking questions (which people can submit beforehand) about both votes at 16 and gender equality. This will allow young people to have their say and so others can see that there are discussions happening about important topics.

As chair of Sefton's youth cabinet called Shout It Out Sefton, the other members and I have been planning our #SIOS15 event which took place on 18th February. We had main areas that we had tables for and held workshops for: gender equality, votes at 16, transport, young people's employment, and mental health. We had organisations such as Merseytravel, merseycare and NWRWU who came to support us at our tables and workshops. Many young people, as well as parliamentary candidates and councillors, were at our event and gave us a lot of positive feedback. At the event, the young people voted for what they wanted our new campaign to be, which is now transport.

Straight after the event were the UKYP elections for Sefton. Former MYP Eleanor Gleeson and I spoke about our experiences as we were both MYPs last year so those running and voting knew what the new MYPs would have to do. I am proud to say that I have been re-elected as MYP, with the other MYP being Ryan Everett. We all cannot wait to start working!



# South East

## Brighton and Hove

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### Thomas Soud, 17, Procedures Group Rep

This month I have officially taken up the position of Procedures Group Rep for the South East. In doing so I am in the midst of contacting all MYPs in my area to support them with the campaign work and in representing Young People as much as possible. This has been done mainly by sending emails, Facebook messages and phone calls to the MYPs in the South East. On top of this I have also been continuing the campaign work in my local area by continuing to speak with MPs such as Caroline Lucas and Mike Weatherly and I have got in contact with local independent cinemas whose staff are campaigning for a living wage.

## Kent

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### Angel Layer, 18, Member of Youth Parliament

Since the beginning of February a few important things have occurred in Kent! We held our UK Youth Parliament elections and I got re-elected which was awesome and I'm super excited to see what this year has in store! I am also joined by 6 more new MYPs and Deputies, so we're ready to make Team Kent proud! As well as that at the beginning of the month I was lucky enough to be in interviews with 4 of our party leaders, in which I asked Ed Miliband his views on Graduate Unemployment and what we can do to be tackling that! I also managed a cheeky selfie with Mr Nick Clegg! It's been a super month and can't wait to get to know more about our new MYPs and Deputies from across the country!

### Harriet Cackett, 18, Member of Youth Parliament

It was February 15th when I was elected to represent Kent as a Member of Youth Parliament. I was incredibly nervous and making a speech in front of the other members of Kent Youth County Council seemed daunting. But, after a lot of nervous laughs, shakey knees and unnecessary sweating I was delighted to find out that I had been elected along with 6 other members. We was pleased, obviously, but what had pleased us even more was the thought that amongst the 60 odd KYCC members, was a great community of young people that supported us. Having been in KYCC for just 3 months I was astounded to have been elected, and I realised that KYCC is more than just a group of teenagers who care about the community; we are a community within ourselves and we support each other to achieve. This year KYCC and Youth parliament are campaigning to improve mental health services for young people. So far in KYCC we have been working with the organisation Headstart to evaluate their services and let them know what it is exactly the young people need and want from a mental health service. We

have meetings planned with Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the organisation Mind. We are working incredibly hard to get this campaign going and to improve the services for young people. Harriet Cackett

### **Maddie, 17, Member of Youth Parliament**

This month, i have had a meeting with the leader of kent county council, paul carter and cabinet member for community services, mike hill. this meeting was to discuss the raise the wage campaign, which was successful and as well as this, they were also very keen and interested in finding out about the mental health campaign which ukyp are beginning this year. i found this very successful and was a great introduction to my role as an myp. i'm thoroughly lookng forward to the year ahead!

### **Member of Youth Parliament**

Got involved with Grow Wild to create an application process for people to apply for funding to make gardening more accessible to everyone. We will be deciding the recipients of the funding in May

### **Member of Youth Parliament**

In my first month I have had a meeting with Gravesham's MP Adam Holloway to discuss issues affecting Youths and am currently planning to visit schools to find out what affects them the most!

## **West Sussex**

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### **Kelly Balmer, 15, Member of Youth Parliament**



On 6th February 2015 I met with Rt.Hon Sir Nicholas Soames the MP for Mid-Sussex to discuss the Living Wage campaign. It was a brilliant meeting concluding with Sir Nicolas agreeing with the UKYP campaign to raise the Living Wage and with a few tweets coming out from both of our profiles raising awareness of the Living Wage.

# South West

## Cornwall

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### **Owen Winter, 16, Member of Youth Parliament**

This has been my first month as an MYP. Between 26 January and 6 February, over 5,000 young people in Cornwall voted in the Youth Parliament elections - a great turnout. All candidates promoted and campaigned determinedly and raised the profile of the Youth Parliament in Cornwall. I was extremely impressed by the enthusiasm of schools and young people across the county. The highlight of my campaign was meeting students of Liskeard School with Tabitha Wethers (now DMYP) for ITV Westcountry to discuss political engagement issues affecting young people. It was a really interesting discussion. <http://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/update/2015-02-06/meet-the-youth-parliament-convincing-the-next-generation-to-vote/> Candidates, councillors, and other representatives of young people met for the announcement of the results in the Cornwall Council Chamber of County Hall on Saturday 7 February. I was delighted to be elected and I am very excited for the next two years. I aim to represent young people to the best of my ability and campaign tirelessly for a better deal for Cornish young people. On Thursday 19 February, I attended my first 'Youth Reference Group' with local young people. Although the turnout was not high, the meeting was very productive and I was pleased with the ideas produced and issues identified. Hopefully, during my time as MYP, I will work with the 11+ Commissioning Service to improve and grow the meetings so that as many young people as possible will come and have their voice. At the meeting I met the chair of the St Austell Youth Council, run by young people alongside the town council. It was refreshing to hear of young people playing an active part in local decision making. I also sent my first letter to Dan Rogerson MP, to invite him to meet to discuss young people and the work of the Youth Parliament. I hope to start a regular working relationship with both of East Cornwall's MPs so they can hear the voice of young people. Hopefully before the general election I will meet all of the prospective parliamentary candidates to discuss issues affecting young people and the Youth Parliament's campaigns.

## Devon

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### **George Downs, 17, Member of Youth Parliament**

Back in November, in the House of Commons we voted for the living wage and mental health to be our priorities. As a result I've been working with the TUC for the upcoming Fair Pay Fortnight and other living wage campaigns. Not only is CAMHS underfunded, along with adult mental health services, but cuts to local authorities have exacerbated the crisis in mental health. Preventative services such as social work, youth centres and welfare-orientated LA-maintained schools have been under threat in the last few years. As a result referrals to CAMHS have and will continue to skyrocket. I am working with Public Health Devon to develop a pre-CAMHS service with the aim of early intervention bringing down CAMHS

referrals. Furthermore the fragmentation of the NHS has isolated CAMHS in many areas of the country including Devon. Only through fully funded and integrated community and health services can we significantly improve the mental well-being of some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

## **Dorset**

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### **Cerys Pumphrey, 17, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

This month I have been busy with my campaign for my re-election as a Member of Youth Parliament for Dorset: creating posters, giving speeches, and net working with other young people through such things as Facebook. The young people in Dorset voted for the two candidates they wanted to be MYP's for Dorset in the first week, and the results are announced on the 26th February, so I've got my fingers crossed! I've also been able to attend another Dorset Youth Council Meeting, and a Regional Meeting, where we welcomed a guest speaker from First buses, and we discuss the problems that could face buses in both rural and urban areas, as well as the benefits that buses provide, such as a cut in pollution. I've also made some more head way with my mental health campaign, and we're going to be filming a video this Saturday! I can't wait! It will focus on a group of teenagers that go to a greasy spoon for breakfast, and then the camera will zoom in on each one of the friends, each with a different mental health issue, at the same time a narrator will speak their mental health issues 'voice'. If anyone would like to keep updated with my campaign, or would like to see the finished clip, don't hesitate to contact me :) Thank you for taking the time to read this. Cerys.

### **Iga Sikorska, Youth Councillor**

I have done an assembly for every year group in my school - The Gryphon School . It has been fantastic, and my Head of year Mrs.Peocke had organised the BBC TV and radio to come. However unfortunately it has got cancelled last minute . Despite this being cancelled, it was arranged for the Western Gazette to interview me and my parent with lots and photos. They are looking to make my point the main point and have it on the gazette cover ! I have advertised myself Media wise and tutor wise.

I have encouraged young people to contact me if they have any queries about today's society.

### **Lucy Armstrong, Youth Councillor**

Hello! I've had a really exciting few months, aside from the UK Youth Parliament votes which took place during the first week of February I have also been working on lots of other things! We are yet to find out our election results but after spending today with all the amazing young people at the South West convention I am really looking forward to finding out the result and even if not elected moving on from there. I have also been busy as I have just been asked to be a UK Youth Ambassador for Girls and Children's Rights with Plan UK an international organisation which works on improving children's and girls rights in countries which may not be as far forward as we are. At the beginning of March I have my first event with that so I will be able to explain more about the work I shall be doing next month, but I am really looking forward to working with Plan UK and also expanding my knowledge on girls rights as it

is a subject I am extremely passionate about. I have also spent the month look at funding bids with my town youth council in which I am Chairman and helping decide what the priorities are and the positives that come out of granting small organisations funding. The next month should be really good as I will be attending my first conferences with Plan UK but I will also find out if I have been elected for UKYP.

## Gloucestershire

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### **Nathan Howarth, 16, Member of Youth Parliament**

This is my last entry as an myp as I am standing down after 2 years and it's been great and a very enjoyable time making friend that will last and memories I will never forgot. In my last month I attend the regional meeting were we discuss transport and jobs with different organisations. Also got the awards for the houses of commons. And did a recruiting event for the next myps. I will still be involved due to the nhs youth forum and will try and make the residential to help give an insite.

## Poole

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### **Francesca Reed, 18, Member of Youth Parliament**

February has been another incredibly exciting month! To begin with, I attended a meeting with members of the NHS Clinical Service Review Team in Dorset, to discuss the review, explore what it means to young people and discuss the best possible ways to engage and consult with young people across Dorset in the Summer. It was a fantastic opportunity to ensure young people voices are being heard when it comes to changes to the NHS and it really opened my eyes to the reality of the current strains on the NHS and the desperate need for a more efficient service to be developed for the future. As the Member of Youth Parliament I also had the privilege of chairing the 'Youth in the Community' funding panel earlier this month, through which we were able to give around £10,000 to local youth projects.



In addition, on Friday 6th, Poole held its annual Youth Parliament elections at the Civic Centre, at which young people from all over Poole had the opportunity to speak out about what's important to Poole's young people and elect their Youth Parliament representatives. Many candidates stood, all with great ideas and interesting topics to debate from bullying to political education and mental health. I am thrilled to have been re-elected as the Member of Youth Parliament along with the new Deputy Member of Youth Parliament, Matthew Jolliffe. Over the next year, we will be focusing on the 3 main

priorities on which we both got elected, namely a campaign around what it really means to be successful, bullying and increased political engagement and education.

My second year as an MYP began with a Children and Young People's Board Meeting, at which we reflected on the work we had done over the past year - we have successfully created 5 new PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) sessions entitled "PSHE FLIPPED" which covers mental health, financial education, youth opportunities, discrimination and youth unemployment. The main aim of these sessions are to provide the young people of Poole with a refreshing approach to PSHE which tackles the issues which are most important to them (the 5 topics were selected following a survey of over 800 young people). With the help of IT experts we have been able to create our own section within the Poole Borough website which we are hoping will be linked in with all of the local secondary school's 'Virtual Learning Environments', so that all of the resources and links to support can be accessed by young people at any time directly without having to go through the Poole Borough website. We also welcomed new members to the Children's Board and said goodbye to those that were leaving us and will therefore be starting work on this year's new projects in the next few weeks.

## Swindon

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### Youth Representative

This month I had the wage meeting (finally) with the Swindon MP. We discussed ideas such as a living wage as well and different ways that people get paid.

## Torbay

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### Youth Representative

This month has been slightly hectic with elections coming up. We have all worked hard to get ukyp out there in torbay and known about for votes. overall we got 1578 votes. Torbay have finalised the discount are and now all we have to do is the launch event and then start the new projects with the new dmyps manifesto points.

## Wiltshire

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### Courtney Pickering, 16, Member of Youth Parliament

This month I have been busy attending our regional meeting in Taunton. We had a session on First Bus where we spoke about what buses were like in rural areas and in cities. We also went around in groups and discussed many things like living wage to the amount of careers advice we get in schools. This month we also had our new UKYP and Wiltshire Assembly of Youth candidates elected. They also

attended our regional meeting. The candidates standing from East Wiltshire and myself did assemblies at the local schools and they campaigned by posting on social media also. They all tried extremely hard and achieved so much in a space of a week. We received just over 40,000 votes in this years elections!

### **Chloe Lintern, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

This month I participated in the first South West Convention with our new members as our elections in Wiltshire finished just a few days previous. We took part in a good session based first buses and transport in the South West and then we heard about the campaign that Dorset had been running in conjunction with them. We then after lunch had a round table session looking at work experience and the living wage as well as youth unemployment. We then heard about the residential for the SW that is happening in the middle of March.

I also am attending a Wiltshire Assembly of Youth meeting on the 25th Feb in which we will be welcoming our new members and getting to know each other. I also have a meeting planned with one of the Parliamentary Candidates in Wiltshire around the living wage and UK Youth Parliament.

# West Midlands

## Birmingham

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### Alia Khan, 17, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament



During January 2015, Birmingham's UK Youth Parliament held a meeting at the city's council house. Within the meeting, we discussed several plans of action involving the two campaigns we are working on this year in Birmingham! Steve Muneer who is the head of Therapeutic Emotional Support Service was also invited to the meeting where he presented many ideas and informed us about several concerns to do with Mental Health which we could consider working on for this year. Towards the end of the meeting, we also introduced our new addition to Birmingham's UKYP- THE SELFIE STICK! Smile everyone... Cheese ;)

### Sam Holmes, Member of Youth Parliament

This week I presented an assembly to my Sixth form about why people, particularly young people, should at least register to vote. With only 54% of those under 24 having done so, this is a very pressing matter. I wouldn't begin to claim that an assembly delivered by a member of the UK Youth Parliament is particularly inspiring for anyone, but it's the start of the message. Small actions ultimately lead to bigger actions (optimism, I know). If one person had a greater think about accountability, the freedom of democracy, and how policies weren't directed towards them, then there was some success. Maybe it sparked a conversation about voting. Maybe it was a complete failure, and no one cared, but at least I tried. If everyone tries, then there is more likely to be some change. So, I'd encourage everyone to spread the word – register to vote.

# Yorkshire and Humber

## Barnsley

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### **Lydia Harrison, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

Has a Prefect at The Dearne ALC I noticed that there was a need to reduce the amount of students going upstairs at dinnertime. With the help of the other Prefects we have worked as a team and introduced lunch passes to students. This has really improved the problem and made lunch time more manageable.

### **Danielle Hanlon, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

As well as my role as Youth Councillor I also volunteer on a regular basis a Church group for younger kids. I help run activities and help to supervise the children. As I am volunteering in both roles I can count my hours towards an IKIC volunteer award.

### **Gillian Fraser Barber, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

I am a Barnsley Youth Councillor and enjoy representing the views of the young people in my school. I also help out with Scouts and Beavers by running activities for the younger children.

### **Chloe Lindley, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

I am currently helping to plan for the Tour De Yorkshire event. I am helping to plan the handing out of drinks along the route for the cyclists.

### **Heather Dunn, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

I have undertaken my role as Youth Councillor and counting my hours towards an IKIC award. I also help out at the local YMCA supporting activities for the younger children.

### **Jasmine Meynell, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

As well as being on the Youth Council I am also a member of my College Council at UTC Sheffield. Students had noticed that there was a lack of vegetarian options on the College Menu so we carried out a survey of the students around what choices they would like to see. The results were used to create a new menu which is working really well.

### **Shaun Hudson, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

In my role as senior prefect I have been working to tackle smoking at the school gates. In a bid to tackle the problem the student council arranged a meeting with the senior leadership team. Teachers agreed

to stand next to the gates on a morning. This has solved the problem and students now come straight into school.

### **Leah Sykes, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

As part of my role as Youth Councillor I have been looking into setting up a health and well being peer support group in my school. I think there is a real need for this and I am trying to get the head of house on board.

### **Adele Denton, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

Recently I received the award for highest achiever of my class. As a reward I got to go to a local primary school to teach English and Maths to year 5 pupils.

### **Anton Dobson, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

I have been busy preparing my campaign for the 2015 Youth Council Elections. However I have still found the time to head up my student council in school. We recently organised a litter pick to clean up the school and have also been creating links with York Manor School to share good practice.

### **Tom Collings, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

I am very proud of the fact that my idea for our final GCSE drama piece was chosen. It will be a promenade piece based in a Prison.

### **Chloe Briscoe, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

I have been busy preparing my campaign for the 2015 Barnsley Youth Council elections. I have prepared a speech for my campaign flyers and posters and also for a video which will be shown in school assemblies.

### **Robert Jennings, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

I have been working with our local LGBT Youth Forum to help put together a presentation that will be delivered at the Celebrating difference and tackling homophobic bullying event at Barnsley College this month. The main audience will be teachers and our main messages are education, training and support.

### **Kyle Peace, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

I have been doing lots in school to help tackle bullying and racism. I am part of an Anti Bullying mentoring programme to help students deal with issues of bullying.

### **Demmi Lax, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

I currently have three roles which involve helping others, the Youth Council, being a Student President and volunteering with the Youth Association in my local area. This keeps me very busy but I enjoy helping others.

### **Pegah Moulana, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

In my role as Chair of the Youth Council I have been asked to speak at the Celebrating difference and tackling homophobic bullying event at Barnsley College this month. I am really looking forward to supporting the event and putting the views of young people in Barnsley to key decision makers. I have also been working with Berneslai Homes to put support in place for asylum seekers coming to Barnsley.

### **Connor Tate, Barnsley Youth Council Member**

Youth councillor changes the rules and initiates community growing project  
Local Youth Councillor Connor Tate has found a great way of doing things differently by encouraging local people to work together to make a difference to their community. And not just that, but he's found a way to change the rules and access support for what he's doing.

Connor knew that his community already worked closely together, and saw an opportunity to encourage more local action. Residents had already expressed a desire to clean up the green space off Grange Lane near Stairfoot, but so far nobody had really driven this project forwards.

Talking about Connor's idea, Clare Archer, Youth Council Co-ordinator, said: "With the help of Central Area Council and Dan Wildsmith from Voluntary Action Barnsley, a green space was identified where a group could build two raised beds for growing vegetables. Dan helped Connor's group understand how to look for funding and get any training needed."

Connor explained what happened next: "We applied to the council's parks services for approval to work on the land on behalf of the community. This has been approved, so our next task is to secure funding for the raised beds and seeds and to look at getting the area cleaned up and ready for the start of the 2015 growing season. There's a small group of us who are keen to take the project forward, but we're appealing to more local residents to get involved."

This is another great story coming from the Love Where You Live initiative, which encourages people to get involved in their local communities in any way they can.

Crucially, this story shows how it's possible for local community groups to access funding and training for themselves - with a little help from us and our partners, of course. I'm particularly proud of how the parks services team gave permission to Connor's group which meant they could get on with what they wanted to do within their local community. Changing the 'rules' so that people can love where they live in practice is a crucial part of our work now – enabling our communities and getting out of their way as they step in to improve their lives and the lives of others in Barnsley.

## Doncaster

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### **Keiran Bennett, Doncaster Youth Councillor**

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 2015, I and Cole Whitaker (LADDER Representatives – Disability Forum Group) competed in the Lord's Taverners Boccia competition as part of the Danum Disability Boccia Team.



This was broken down into two different categories; physical disabilities including wheelchair users and PAN. There were several rounds to the completion, with the event ending with the finals. The competition was a truly inspiring event, with people facing enormous physical challenges, yet they were still able to compete to a high standard like anyone else. Further proving the point that people with disabilities are just as equal in their own right to anyone else. The sportsmanship during the event was higher than I have ever seen and it was a privilege to be part of Danum Disability Boccia Team and compete with other people with disabilities. Overall, this gave me a better view and in-depth knowledge of other people with disabilities, both physical and non-physical, as well as having a fun day.

### **Georgia Wren, Member of Youth Parliament and Youth Councillor**

The Doncaster Youth Council sits under a new structure now due to recent changes in Children's Services and as part of that new structure we were asked if we wanted to be part of a young people's interview panel for the Head of Service Performance and Improvement. Emma, Viki, Liam and I were all involved, we interviewed 5 candidates over the course of the day and we then gave our comments and views to the Director and Assistant Director who formed part of the other interview panel. I am pleased to say that one of the candidates has been offered the post and we hope to invite them along to one of our meetings.

### **Roby Wainwright, Youth Councillor**

I have been involved with the Hear By Right review of the Adoption Service over that last few months. We reviewed the Service back in September and gave them some recommendations in our overall report. This month (Feb) we asked them to come back to see us and asked them to share their Participation Plan for Adoption with Senior Leaders and ourselves (Participation Review team). Hear By

Right and the reviews that young people do shows that our views do count and that we can help to shape and develop services for young people in Doncaster. I really enjoyed being part of the whole process.

### **Luke Dickinson, Former Youth Councillor**

I wanted to write my last positive story for you as I am moving on to pastures new. As part of my youth councillor role I volunteered as young person at Tom Hill Myplace, my local youth centre. I really enjoyed this and it helped me to keep up with young people's issues in that area. However, I have just had my birthday and now I'm 19 years old, so I have retired from the Youth Council now. Opportunities came up for me to be involved and help out as an adult volunteer in the youth centre, I have really enjoyed my time on the Youth Council and will take with me the experience and skills that I have gained on the way.

### **Kira Davies , Youth Councillor**

As a youth Council we have decided to run more training workshops at more of our meetings, this is to keep our skills up to date. At the last meeting we took part in a debating workshop. I wasn't looking forward to it as I am quite quiet. Anyhow, I really enjoyed it and found when it came to me I found myself really passionate and speaking up, I had to put my views forward and try to persuade others to vote for me and my ideas. I was really pleased with my debate skills which will be put to use particularly with service providers and decision makers across Doncaster.

### **Rachel Mungai, Youth Councillor**

This Saturday I had the opportunity to attend the Equality 4U 2015 Event in Manchester, Equality4U is a chance for young people to come together and explore four key liberation campaigns for groups within society that face discrimination. I went with Charlie and Keiran and between us we represented Doncaster and the liberation for BME, Women and Disabilities.



We looked at what equality is and how it affects young people as individuals and ways of how we can make policies and campaign to help to fight against injustice and raise awareness and how people are discriminated. We are discriminated against because of one thing about us...I'm black; she's a women he has a disability; people should see us for who we are not just see us for one thing about us!

I really enjoyed the day and think that more people should be involved and help raise awareness and campaign about injustice, we should respectfully challenge people who discriminate against others, we are all made up of so many things, so I want people to see the bigger picture and think about who we are, who they are... Who are you?

## Leeds

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### **Nicole Sabau, Member of Youth Parliament**

Last month was a great month! Firstly I was invited down to London by the BYC for the 750th anniversary of Parliament. It was a really great day, I got to travel down to London, I met Lord Newby and he was a joy to meet. We all had a big picture taken which included all of the other MP's and Lords and Ladies who were in attendance.

Soon after that, I travelled to York for my last Yorkshire & Humber steering group meeting where we planned the up and coming residential this March. It was a truly enjoyable day. ☺

During our Leeds UKYP meetings we have been working on the second national campaign (mental health) and we are planning to focus our work on schools and students.

### **Ella Goulding, Leeds Youth Council Chair**

*On the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup> January, Josie Lee and I were awarded the Leeds Rotary Young Citizens Award. This is an award given to young people to celebrate the positive citizenship and vital responsibilities assumed by young people.*

We arrived at the Banqueting Suite in Leeds Civic Hall and were sat on the front row right in front of the stage. Mr Walker, our friends and family were all sat a few rows back so it was quite daunting but we soon began talking to the others about what they had been doing and it was very interesting to hear about other young people's work around Yorkshire. First we were all taken to have a photo with the Lord Mayor, Councillor David Congreve, and the Lady Mayoress of Leeds which was pretty exciting. As Josie and I are also part of the Leeds Youth Council we have both had the pleasure of meeting the Lord Mayor before and he was just as welcoming and friendly this time round.

Every awardee was given £30 pounds to spend in a local bookshop in Roundhay and we were given our choice of books, alongside a very fancy certificate when our names were called out. Lots of pictures were taken, lots of hands were shook and all in all the night was a great experience. It really is reassuring to know that the members of the Leeds Rotary Club and many Councillors care for the work of young people in Leeds and this night just showed how much they value and support the work that we do as a younger generation.

Both Josie and I would like to thank Mr Walker for nominating us for this award and recognising the hard work that the students of Lawnswood put in. Hopefully there will be many more students in the future who can receive this award and positively contribute to our school and local community.

### **Jude Mason, Leeds Youth Councillor**

Currently at my school (prince henrys) we are discussing implementing a student marking group (name yet to be decided) but this group would be giving a young person's view on the marking and learning methods. This is very useful at our school as the teachers make all the decisions on how we learn and our new marking techniques. What this group does is they trial the marking and give their views on it as

a young person and suggest how it could be improved as the marking is for the students benefit so it only seems right for the students to have a say in it.

We also suggest new topics to learn so we recently in geography implemented a topic where we watch the documentary long way round and get tasked to produce a presentation on a chosen country featured in the programme and present in any way on iPad (we have an iPad scheme) or written. We really enjoyed this as it teaches us about country's that we wouldn't normally learn about and we get to choose what we learn about and work more independent which feels very rewarding in the end.

### **Szymon Podgorski, Leeds Youth Councillor**

Voters Assemble

With the up and coming general election, the politics of the country is now, more than ever, being discussed all media. But there is one social strand that barely gets involved with this – us, young people.

What we must begin to understand, is that politicians want votes. This is why they will cater to those who vote, and, due to the lack of young voters, their policies will be based on the wants and needs of older people. That is why votes at 16 matter, if we want our country to be more youth friendly, we must become a section of votes which matters, and therefore encourage politicians to develop policies which benefit young people.

So, whether or not we get votes at 16 this general election or the next, the important part is that we, as young people, show we are a significant and important part of society, and fulfil our responsibility as citizens of a democratic society.

I am working in my school to promote this.

### **Ansa Ahmad, Leeds Youth Councillor**

I have contributed to the campaign for better work experience for young people. The vision is to make change and highlight the important of work experience and how it affects young people's career choices. The Leeds Youth Council is going to do all that it takes to bring change towards work experience for young people.

### **Charlotte Williams, Leeds Youth Councillor**

This month I went to the Child Friendly Leeds awards, which I previously judged. Whilst at the awards with my family, I saw a video involving myself at the Temple Newsam cycling event. I was very pleased and proud to see how much I have grown since July 2014. I was also ecstatic to see that Herd Farm, which I have visited numerous times, won the best place for children and young people. Overall this month has been very productive.

### **Josie Lee, PR Officer Leeds Youth Council**

I was nominated for the Leeds Rotary Young Citizenship award. I got £30 worth of books and a certificate. On the night they spoke about why I had got the award and the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress were there to hand out the awards. It was really good and I felt honoured to have received the award.

I also attended a conference with school this month to promote the school leadership scheme to other schools across Leeds.

### **Mona-Lisa Curry, Leeds Youth Councillor**

At the Leeds Youth Council meeting we started to plan our work experience campaign. We are looking at planning an event and produce work experience booklets.

### **Crystal Miller, Leeds Youth Councillor**

In college I am starting to look at campaigns against animal cruelty. This is something I am very passionate about and I am working with other students to get the word out about the charities that are working to stop animal cruelty.

I am in the process of starting to volunteer with the Children's Society in Leeds. This is because disability is something very close to my heart and I want to give something back. I am really excited about starting my volunteering.

### **Ben Harper, Leeds Youth Councillor**

I attended the Leeds Youth Council meeting this month and we began to plan our work experience event and look at how we can improve work experience in Leeds.

### **Holly Lanforth, Leeds Youth Councillor**

This month I was involved, and played a key role of team leader in organising an assembly advising year 8's on their GCSE options that they will be choosing over the coming months. I spoke to them in an assembly and answered their questions. As I am a year 9 student I have already been through the 'option choosing' and know how tough it was. I encouraged the year 8 students to remember that at the end of the day, it's important to go with their gut and not choose an option to please someone else. Overall I got positive feedback from the students and teachers.

### **Patsy Armitage, Leeds Youth Councillor**

I did the school production and now the school are considering stopping doing school productions altogether. So me, and my friend are doing a petition to try and continue with the school productions as we believe passionately they are away of students being able to express themselves.

### **Francis Edwards, Leeds Youth Councillor**

On Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015 I was part of a history and politics trip. I visited the Houses of Parliament in London. We were taken on a guided tour by our local MP and visited Westminster Hall, the central lobby and the House of Commons. Throughout the tour we were given a comprehensive presentation about the workings and history of each area that we visited. We also took part in a question and answer session with our local MP, Fabian Hamilton.

Despite what people may think about the political system, visiting parliament works, it made me feel more connected with British Politics. It was a fascinating experience that I would recommend to anyone who gets the chance.

### **Nadia Saeed, Leeds Youth Council Vice Chair**

At our LYC meeting for February I ran our committee to plan our event to promote work experience to schools in Leeds. It was very productive and we are on our way to a successful event.

I am looking forward to leading the future planning sessions.

### **Zara Arshad, Leeds Youth Councillor**

I recently gained a heartstart qualification, which means that if anyone starts choking, bleeding heavily, has a heart attack or becomes unconscious I am qualified to help. I had to undertake 3 weeks of training and then had a written and physical assessment.

### **Joe Hill, Leeds Youth Councillor**

I was awarded the Leeds Youth Award for as a result of all the hours I have volunteered to the Leeds Youth Council attending meetings, extra events and my promotion of the LYC.

I also attended the Leeds Older People's Forum to discuss how the population can cope with the budget cuts and what the community can do to help.

### **Bethany Rodley, Leeds Youth Councillor**

I have been involved in working on the LYC work experience campaign. I think work experience is important because it gives young people a chance to see what the workplace is like and also how it can help them make a decision on what they may like to do in the future, and therefore will make choosing which subjects to study easier. Also, many university and employers value students with work experience so without it students are at a disadvantage.

The LYC are planning an event to improve standards of work experience and encourage schools to take part.

### **Isaac Grinnell, Leeds Youth Council Exec Member**

Ever since October 2014 I have been involved with organising the annual Child Friendly Leeds Award which recognises people making a change to children and young people in Leeds. On the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015, I presented with two others, the award in the city varieties music hall. The night was amazing and I had lots of fun. The winners were very happy and I couldn't believe how fast it happened.

### **Amy Kitchingman, Leeds Youth Councillor**

I recently experienced life from the other side of the classroom. For a day I became a teacher and planned and performed an English lesson on the poet John Copper Charlie. I created the PowerPoint presentation and work for my classmates to complete, and after the preparation the lessons arrived.

I took a deep breath and pressed play, watching my students enters the class to artic monkeys! After the class grew quiet, I began my lesson. Standing in front of my pe3ers and introducing them to something interesting and unique was enjoyable, but the response I received exceeded by expectations. To successfully teach others about something I love was a wonderful experience and a taste of a possible career in the future.

## **North Lincolnshire**

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### **Beth Sisi, 16**

Puberty; Procrastination v Proactiveness

Maybe you think you have one of your very own lazy teenagers, hibernating in a bedroom of your house; only surfacing to raid the fridge? Now ask yourself, are all teens the same, or are some of us budding members of the community?

Whilst the 'lazy teenager' generalisation rises in the minds of the community, adults are primed with the perfect ammunition to umbrella-term the youth of today as nothing but couch potatoes!

With the stereotypical image of the average teenager a sleeping, console playing zombie, we are said to be the laziest group of people, perhaps particularly the teenage boy.

But where did this idea come from? Was it truly the actions of ourselves and teens before us? Or was it the work of the manipulative media coverage of what was presumed to be the generic lifestyle of a 16 year old?

Recognisable characters like Kevin the Teenager and the infamous "Am I bovered" Lauren Cooper show young people as demotivated, idle minors with no sense of determination; thus leaving the older generation to promote this unruly stereotype.

But should we all be tarred by the same brush? Are we really all procrastinating, lazy youths? No is the answer! There's no doubt that Sunday morning lie-in's are appreciated, but aren't they by everyone? It's about time we put a stop to this poor representation of the modern day teenager!

As one of the many enthusiastic youths, I find the generic observation of fellow young people an inspiration rather than an insult. I can appreciate that there are lots of teens who spend their free time

lounging around; however I can confidently say that there are equal amounts of us youngsters that take pleasure in being pro-active within our studies and our community.

Schemes like the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the local youth council are in place meaning there are many ways in which a young person can be heavily involved in lots of various extra-curricular activities. Within the North Lincolnshire area, there are also an abundance of local events and volunteering opportunities available, for example the pantomime and positions at Café INDIEpendent.

As much as the average adult enjoys a period of relaxation after a hard day at the office, young people have a right to the same during their free time without getting branded as lazy or demotivated. The life of a 16 year old can be an extremely stressful time, what with examination processes taking a priority and the strain on family and friend relationships. I feel it is the easier option for the stereotype to prevail rather than the acceptance of the reality.

Speaking from a young person's perspective, I am proud to say that I am an extremely proactive student who flourishes under new and exciting experiences, as do many others. This makes me even more determined to prove the lazy teen accusation wrong!

The youth of today are the people of tomorrow; wouldn't it make more sense if you motivated teens, instead of branding them all as a presumed failure? Wouldn't you want to inspire us and not lead us all to believe that the faith in youngsters has been lost?

Procrastination vs. pro-activeness; the truth revealed! Independent, innovative, ingenious. Let us banish the 'lazy teenager' stereotype together!

### **William McCullion, 13, Member of Youth Parliament**

On being elected, I'm both extremely shocked and thankful, that for someone who's very much an outsider with very little social media presence could garner so many votes; until the votes were announced at the Count Event, I very much felt that the winner would be someone who's face is constantly out-there, someone from a big school (not one of 400, à la, mine) with a large social circle. But I guess that underdog, that outsider element is what appealed to so many, that feeling that "This person represents me, knows how I feel. He's not just some popular kid trying to find things to fill up his CV, he genuinely believes in what he's saying." Simply put, I'm happy about it.

As for my plans for the next two years; amongst other goals, the one I plan to be focusing most intently on shall be the stigma and lack of education surrounding mental health issues, be they major or minor. After enquiring with students from a variety of local schools, their education concerning such things is often very limited, which I feel prevents many of those living with mental health issues from being able to feel like they can be themselves, that they can gladly come out and say "I have..!" Or "I've had..!" for fear that if they did, they'd be ridiculed through others not fully understanding the issue. So hopefully in two years' time, the inverse of the previous sentence is true.

#### Youth Elections 2015

Kian Borg-Jackson 13years, newly elected Young Mayor

I was overjoyed when I got the role of young mayor and all of the great experiences and opportunities that comes with it. During the time I am young mayor, I would like to make long term differences to the community to give young people activities and promote an active and healthy lifestyle. I will give all the young people a voice and will try to accomplish as much as I can in my time as young mayor.

### **Jordan Hammerton,15, Youth Councillor**

#### Holocaust Memorial Service

I was honoured to attend the service for Holocaust Memorial Day at Central Hall, Westminster. I was invited through my school which is becoming a Holocaust beacon school. My teacher is leading this transition and she knew how much I loved history as well as my interest in the Holocaust. I was given the opportunity because of this interest and the fact that I have been a high achiever in GCSE history and RE. It was my first time in London and it was overwhelming. I got to see Kings Cross, the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, the QEII centre and of course Central Hall. I felt staggered because they are such historical monuments, and to be so close to them was a dream come true. It was just brilliant. I also experienced the Underground which wasn't such a good part of the day but it was quicker and easier than walking so it has its good points. The service itself moved me to tears.

This year's theme was 'Keep the memory alive'. This theme had a high focus on young people and our generation especially with us keeping the memory alive for future generations. The service was also attended by HRH Prince of Wales, HRH Duchess of Cornwall, The Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, the leader of the Opposition and survivors of the Holocaust and other genocides. The service was a mixture of music by victims and survivors, moving poetry and extracts read by celebrities, short films, speeches and acts of remembrance. All of this was very emotional, in fact I cried at certain times during the service. I was one of 70 young people who attended and was honoured to be asked to stand and light a candle when Auschwitz survivor Gena Turgel finished the extract from her memoirs. Whilst lighting a candle I could be glimpsed on the BBC television coverage of the service though for just a few seconds. The service was narrated by actor Adrian Lester. I felt it was all very fitting as it is 70 years since Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp was liberated. The service focused on this and others which must also be remembered.

After the service I gave a speech which included poetry from the service at the next meeting of my Youth Council. This received amazing feedback which made me feel proud of myself, because I had managed to get the message across. I have also written an article for our Young Reporters scheme to be published in our local paper.

I was honoured to attend such an amazing and interesting day and I hope that I can continue to help 'keep the memory alive'.



### **Chloe Musgrave, 14, Youth Councillor**

School President Elections

I recently stood in my school presidential elections and I'm really happy to say that I was voted in as Vice President with 99 votes. I was one of only four pupils put forward, out of fourteen students who put themselves forward to stand. Campaigning was difficult at first as I didn't know where to start but I got the hang of it with a bit of help from the other candidates. Voting was carried out just like in real elections, then put in a ballot box and counted. Being Vice President now means that I can have a say on behalf of all the other pupils on how the school is run. I also have a say in what charity days are brought forward. In our weekly meetings my role as Vice President entails chairing and various other jobs. I hope to work well with James the newly appointed President and bring great work to James and my school.

## **Wakefield**

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### **Alex Pennington, 13, Member of Youth Parliament**

Earlier in the month, I, along with the other members of Youth Voice Wakefield, attended a meeting with Leader of the Council Peter Box. The meeting was to discuss our new national campaign, raise the wage, and was a success, as it resulted in another petition being signed, and even new ways to link the living wage to our other campaign, mental health. This was the second meeting we have held with a councillor or MP, and both have produced petitions, and further support for our campaign. Alex Pennington MYP Wakefield West

# Northern Ireland

## North Antrim

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### **Christopher Harkin, Member of Youth Parliament**

This month I filmed my fix on integrated education, getting interviews from people in my school including myself who talked about how integrated education is the way forward. This video will be used in integrated schools across northern Ireland as propaganda. In addition to this, the fix was picked up for broadcast on UTV so I spent a day being filmed at school and home, talking about my fix and why it was important. It was a truly incredible experience and the fixers team are hoping to get me a meeting with the education minister to discuss my opinions before the end of my term as an MYP.

## South Down

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### **Member of Youth Parliament**

In the last few months I've done a lot of great things. I've been to London twice! Once for the amazing House of Commons debate, and just a few weeks ago I was celebrating the 750th anniversary of the Montforts Parliament. I've had an amazing time as an MYP and I hope the great work, not only mine, but everyone's hard work will be continued by whoever takes our places.

## West Tyrone

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### **Michelle Hamilton, Member of Youth Parliament**

This month I have done several things within my constituency. I was invited by the President and Vice President of the Probus Club in West Tyrone to deliver a presentation on cyber bullying to a group of elderly men. Although they are not the "young people" I represent, it instilled in them the knowledge they can pass on to younger generations and it appeared in several newspapers as well as my interview on cyber-bullying.

# Scotland

## Glasgow and West Scotland

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### **Ewan Mccall, Member of Youth Parliament**

In Glasgow and the West of Scotland positive action is being taken across the board. Without question the greatest accomplishment in the past month has been the long awaited implementation of toilet paper, soap and toilet door locks in the schools of East Ayrshire. For years schools in this area have been deprived of these basic amenities, leading of course to the occasional.. messy situation for naive newcomers to the areas schools. With a collective sigh of relief, in more ways than one, I can happily say progress has been made in its finest form.

I'm currently standing as candidate for the SYP elections 2015, and have helped push the council to attain the highest voter turnout for this election in the whole of Scotland. Over 9,000 ballot papers are being issued over the first half of March with a ballot for every possible voter in the area. Various school and higher education assemblies have been arranged with myself and the other candidates hoping to speak to at least 75% of the electorate directly over the course of the election.

### **Thomas Alexander McEachan, Member of Youth Parliament**

I discussed votes at 16 with my youth council. We had lots of interesting points made: one of which was about making the age to stand in elections 16 too. We also discussed the possibility of having a youth representative actually on Glasgow City Council.

## Lothian

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### **Martyna Napierska, Procedures Group Rep**

I had a great meeting with my YDC worker about planning out the year ahead for our regions! I need to say, everything is harder than expected but that's what makes it so exciting! New programmes have been made and I learned that organisation is absolutely key for success. I also attended a PG residential with all the other representatives and already made fantastic friendships amongst the group. This year began extremely positively and I cannot wait to see how everything turns out

# Support worker's Stories

## London

### Barking and Dagenham

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#### **Sally Allen-Clarke, Support Worker**

On 11th February 2015 Barking and Dagenham held elections for UK Youth Parliament representatives. Six young people stood for election and gave a speech as to why they thought they were the best candidates. Young people expressed interests in participating in regional and national meetings, meeting new people, learning new skills and most importantly representing their borough. Following elections Angel Olorode was elected as Member of Youth Parliament and Rachel Junaid was elected as Deputy Member of Youth Parliament. Angel and Rachel are looking forward to working together and representing their borough!

# East of England

## Hertfordshire

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**Debi Roberts, Project Officer- Youth Connexions**

### **Young people influence decision makers in St Albans**

Six members of St Albans Youth Council delivered a powerful workshop at the Five Ways to Wellbeing Conference on Thursday 22 January.

Ellie, Jamie, Harry, Eleanor, Kieran and Charles of St Albans Youth Council (SAYC) gave a key note presentation to a packed house of practitioners, Councillors and Hertfordshire County Council Officers, including Executive Member for Children's Services Richard Roberts, Director of Children's Services Jenny Coles and Head of Services for Young People Lindsay Edwards.



*Young people addressing the audience of decision makers*

The group also delivered a powerful workshop that highlighted the gap in provision between a young person seeking support from their GP for a mental health issue and any meaningful help starting. They asked delegates to consider how they could use their expertise and circle of influence to provide a safety net for young people during this time.



*Kieran hosting a feedback session during the workshop*

Three passionate table debates ensued as delegates were challenged to consider what to change, the desired outcome of the change and how to cause the change.



*The team gather feedback during the summary*

The comments of the delegates afterwards shows what a great effect the event had on them and how they plan now to act on what they learnt:

"Great to see young people so active in this issue. Encourages me to continue working towards providing workshops for the void between services."

"Great to have an open discussion with young people, rather than debating and doing something to them. I will try and ensure that our organisation hears first hand from young people the issues they face."

"Really interesting to hear the Youth Council express views on this."

"Great presentation! I will take back with me a better understanding of what/how the youth feel."

"An amazing and incredible presentation, very educational – I will continue to go into schools and push awareness of the support services available."

"Thank you so much for the well informed positive session. I will be taking a lot of the information discussed and I will work with those schools I'm in to effect some change."

The young people ended the afternoon by delivering a keynote speech that highlighted how Youth Councils and Youth Engagement Groups (such as Herts 1125) provide activities that give young people the opportunity to be active, take notice, learn, connect and give – the five ways to well-being in accord with Thrive and the Penn Resilience Programme.

At the end of the afternoon delegates were asked what they had enjoyed most about the day. To the delight of the St Albans Youth Council members, the majority of delegates said they had most enjoyed the Youth Council's workshop or speech. Harry said, 'It was great to get this opportunity but even better to know that we made such a strong impression and people enjoyed hearing from us. We look forward to the seeing some positive outcomes as a result.'

Youth Connexions supports the work of the St Albans Youth Council and a number of others in the county. Find out more about [St Albans Youth Council](#), or about other [Youth Councils and forums in Hertfordshire](#).

# South West

## Dorset

### Dawn Ball, Participation Worker Dorset



After a busy month of campaigning, meetings and a week of voting Dorset young people finally found out who the new Members of Youth Parliament were when the results were announced at the celebration event in the Council Chambers at County Hall. With 8 candidates standing for election, 34986 votes were cast in 40 schools, colleges and learning centres across Dorset. A record turnout increasing the number of young people taking part by more than 2000. After

a few changes to the election process this year the election ran over a one week instead of just one day. This enabled better participation from colleges and learning centres who have notably a very poor turnout as students are not always full time. With the help of Dorset school courier service more than 100 ballot boxes and 17500 ballot papers were delivered to 40 schools.

#### **Congratulations to ..**

MYP Jack Dunne: 9367 votes

MYP Lucy Armstrong: 4945 vote DMYP

Crystal-Lily Mills: 4860 votes DMYP

Grace Van Zyl: 4677 votes.

With more than the election to keep us occupied however, members of the Dorset Youth Council welcomed Jade Leahy from the PCC Safer Dorset Fund to the February meeting. Jade brought along two funding bids for the members of DYCE to assess, we were also joined by three new members from the North Dorset Young Inspectors group. Members also attended a meeting with young people from Poole to look at ways to publicise and encourage young people to take part in a Young Persons NHS consultation it is planned that an event organised and facilitated by young people for young people will take place in September, lots of work to do but a really great opportunity for young people to have a real impact on the services they use.



At SW Regional meeting in Taunton over half term saw a familiar face Natacha Tagholm from First Bus share with everyone the project Dorset MYPs and DYCE members have been working on, The SWAP WITH ME day where young people and bus drivers change places and experience each other's prejudices is a project First hopes to roll out across the SW Region. Followed the next day with a MAX Card meeting, plans are in place to have a publicity day with local radio station and press interviews to re-launch the card. Transport is always on the agenda where young people are concerned, good news was shared at the Transport meeting this week with the wheels to work publicising its own positive story about a young person who was able to access full time work with the aid of a scooter loan sponsored via funding from the last round of the Youth Opportunities Fund.

Good luck to the new Dorset MYPs and DMYPs looking forward to sharing it with you and watching you achieve your dreams, anything is possible guys just go for it.



# Yorkshire & Humber

## North Lincolnshire

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**Sarah Eales, North Lincolnshire Council Participation Officer**

### North Lincolnshire's Young Reporters Scheme goes live

This month saw the launch of the North Lincolnshire Young Reporters Programme. Three of our Youth Council members; Beth Sisi, Jordan Hammerton and Jordan Davison had been present at the Yorkshire and Humber residential weekend in Hollowford last year when Participation Co-ordinator Pippa Curtin showcased the Young Reporters scheme that was being successfully run in North East Lincolnshire. They were keen for North Lincolnshire's young people to do the same. After consulting further with Pippa and meeting with editors from the local newspaper Scunthorpe Telegraph, it was agreed that a 500 word article be submitted by young people each month.

Thursday 12 Feb saw the end of months of campaigning from the fourteen 2015 Youth Elections candidates.

After two weeks of voting in schools and colleges, the count event took place in Council Chambers - and what a day it was!

This year saw 5647 votes cast by the young people of North Lincolnshire - the highest voting turnout since elections began in 2012 and an increase of 21% on the previous election in 2013.

We are pleased to announce Kian Borg-Jackson as the new Young Mayor of North Lincolnshire. Kian is 13 years old and attends South Axholme Academy.

Kian's Deputy (by a narrow margin of three votes) is Connor Greenberg, 17 years of John Leggott College. The Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) for North Lincolnshire is William McCullion. William is 13 years old and attends The Axholme Academy.

The Deputy Member of Youth Parliament (DMYP) is Stefani Salvatierra, 16 years of Huntcliff Academy. All four successful candidates look forward to working on behalf of the young people of North Lincolnshire.

**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>**