

# Youth Voice: Positive Stories



July 2015



UK Youth Parliament Annual Sitting 2015

# Youth Voice:

## Positive Stories

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

Welcome to the July 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

### Derbyshire

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#### **Lucy Boardman, 16, Member of Youth Parliament and Youth Councillor**

July was obviously an amazing month, because I got to travel down to Exeter for the UKYP Annual Sitting. I had a great weekend and learnt a lot, mainly focusing on Make Your Mark and how to effectively get a high number of ballots. Since getting back from annual sitting I have been using social media to raise the profile of the consultation in my area, and am preparing assemblies for the three registered schools in my constituency. Last year I also wrote an article for my local newspapers regarding Make Your Mark, and was the guest on my local radio station, which I plan to do again this year as it was a great experience that proved very effective in raising publicity of Make Your Mark. I am also writing to my local MP to ask him to express his support for Make Your Mark whenever possible, as he has been extremely helpful in the past and incredibly supportive of the UK Youth Parliament.

#### **Libby Louise Brown, 14, Member of Youth Parliament**

In February/March 2013 I was elected on the youth Council. It was my first year but I just went for it. I try to get on the childrens Trust board and was successful. Then about a month or 2 back then I was elected on the UK youth parliament. I'm so glad I when for the youth council or I would not be writing this story today. On the 31st of July to the 2nd of August I went to Exeter University for my annual sitting of UK youth parliament. I met some amazing people there and learnt a lot of things. My biggest achievement of that weekend was adopting a Lord. My Lord was Lord Paddick. I email him about voting at 16 and see if he was with the campaign or not. Lord Paddick practical email me straight away and guess what he was willing to help and support me and other youth councillors to get the voting age down to 16. Thanks you Lord Paddick. Two messages: number one just go at life with a fight and if you know you want to do something don't let anyone tell you that you can't do it. Number 2: if you smile I will smile too. That is my 2 message and that is what got me through life.

## Leicestershire

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### **Daria Eckert, 14, Member of Youth Parliament**

On the 18th of June I went to an event in Melton, Leicestershire, about young people and the European Parliament. The event was a Q and A with our local MEP, where we discussed the different ways young people could engage with the EU and the range of issues that can be dealt with by that level of government. I learnt how the EU works and what others my age think about this organisation. This month I have completed the #mindthegap research for the UK Youth Parliament mental health campaign and I have been talking and emailing schools in my area and asking them to get involved with the Make Your Mark ballot. The good news is some have signed up, but I need to get more, so when I get back from my holidays I plan to make a video to promote the campaign and I will continue to contact schools when they reopen at the beginning of September. Daria Eckert MYP Leicestershire

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

### **Jamie Trusler, 18, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

Jamie Trusler, 18, CYCLE Member and Deputy Member of Youth Parliament for Leicestershire. My social action journey started when I was 13 years of age, I was a shy, timid young person who aspired to be a Police Officer, but soon realised that the personal skills I had at that time would not make me to be a Police Officer, I knew I had to be to gain some confidence, so I decided to do something about it and joined St John Ambulance. Since joining St John's Ambulance I have been a Leading cadet, District Cadet of the year for Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland, East Midlands Regional Cadet of the year, a member of the National Youth advisory and now I am a Youth leader. At the age of 16 I completed the National Citizen Service where I then stood out of 25,000 graduates to become 1 of 100 National Ambassadors and I joined the County Youth Council for Leicestershire "CYCLE" which led me to become the Deputy Member of Youth Parliament for Leicestershire. Some of my biggest achievements are that I have spoken in the House of Commons twice, been to and

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

## Nottinghamshire

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### **Sami Ayoub, 14, Member of Youth Parliament**

This month all of the MYPS went to the Annual sitting, we focused mainly on the Big Vote and having a debate on the issues that we wanted in our manifesto, we also did workshops on how to have positive relationships with MPs and councillors, we also had an organisation one which helped us with how we are going to proceed with Make Our Mark...

# East of England

## Hertfordshire

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### **Corey, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

This year Corey, along with eight other young people from Oaklands College have been nominated for the Young People of the Year award for their contribution to their local community and for making a difference within their college. You can read more about the work that they have achieved here: [http://www.hertsad.co.uk/news/student\\_leaders\\_are\\_making\\_a\\_difference\\_at\\_st\\_albans\\_college\\_1\\_4\\_188885](http://www.hertsad.co.uk/news/student_leaders_are_making_a_difference_at_st_albans_college_1_4_188885)

### **Amira, 14, Member of Youth Parliament**

The past month has been quite busy but in a good way. I was lucky to go and view the Youth Select Committee's Oral Evidence Session and support my peers who presented evidence. Recently, we held another Herts1125 meeting where myself and the other MYPs presented a preview of what we have had back from the surveys young people have completed over Hertfordshire.

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

Recently myself and Ahmed went to London to give oral evidence to the Youth Select Committee to put forward the evidence collected of Herts1125. The experience was fantastic. At first I was a bit nervous but having other young people ask you questions was actually really cool. I feel like myself and Ahmed put across the points we wanted to well and answered the questions as best we could. Hopefully what we said and the data we gave will have some input in the final report that the Youth Select Committee present.

### **Nick, 16, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

On Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> of July I was invited to Parliament by the Speaker, he then offered me a very kind opportunity to watch Prime Ministers Questions from the Speakers Gallery. I really enjoyed this event. Afterwards, I arranged to see Mike Penning who is the MP for Hemel Hempstead, part of the area I represent. We had a wide ranging discussion about various issues, including the Hertfordshire young people's priorities, votes at 16 and police relations with young people. Mr Penning made many good points about all these issues, and I must say I agree with a lot he was saying, especially to do with votes at 16. This year again we have asked young people in Hertfordshire whether 16 and 17 year olds should be able to vote with the results being published in October. In all, I think it was an incredibly successful day and would recommend to any MYP to speak their local MP.

# London

## Camden

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### **Hannah Morris, Age, Member of Youth Parliament**

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

I have emailed all of the schools in Camden about Make Your Mark and am publicising the campaign! A few have signed up already and hopefully this number will continue to increase. The Director of Children Services and Camdens MP additionally support.

I am currently doing work experience in the House of Commons and have been photographed with MP Stephen Twigg, supporting Cancer Research

Just home from the annual sitting and I'm kanckered! It was such a brilliant weekend jam packed full of debates and interesting conversations. I attended workshops on positive relationships and organisation, with a specific slot with my worker in which I could make a plan for the future and reflect on all I had learnt. There were also many productive workshops on Make Your Mark in which we received a set of tasks and a plan of action on how to achieve our goal of one million! I have already chased up all schools that didn't previously reply and have encouraged them to register for Make Your Mark. Of course the most exciting part was the big debate where I was able to speak twice. Once was in favour of giving young people more powers, especially over their education to reduce cuts and stress, a cause of mental health issues. I additionally spoke on motion '2 Degrees' in favour of immediately tackling climate change as our actions our devastating to little islands such as Tovalu who have a highest point of 4m above sea level. After the siting I have also now adopted a new Lord who I can't wait to get in touch with. On receiving a new Lord to adopt, I additionally remembered my previous Lord who couldn't support votes at 16 due to governmental restrictions. I re emailed her again, asking if her views had changed and she now supports the motion and will back it in the Lords! I additionally have two upcoming meetings with both the MPs in Camden, Keir Starmer and Tulip Siddiq. These will touch on MYM as well as Camden's future plans and their attendance at our annual Shout Out Event. Finally I have backed and supported the proposal of a new BMX track in Camden. I have given a quote to the press on the topic and hopefully it will be included in their next release. I have upcoming meetings on how I can help achieve the building to go ahead.

## Croydon

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### **Luka Kos, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

Currently running a campaign to improve the quality of public transport for young people in Croydon. Based on feedback from young people he found that young people are finding that weekday buses that they rely on to get to school in the mornings are less frequent than buses used in the afternoon when the demand is a lot less. Since finding out about this issue Luka has talked to transport councillors and has also attended a council scrutiny meet on travel and proposed his plans and has got in contact with TFL to work together and improve young people's experience on public transport.

## Harrow

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### **Abdulaziz Kilani, Youth Representative**

This month, Harrow Youth Parliament debated whether the voting age should be lowered to 16 or not. My position in the debate was on the side of those who support the voting age to be lowered to 16. The reason I believe that the voting age should be lowered to 16 is because of that, many of the decisions, which is taken by the government does affect my life, and when something affects my life, I should have the right to say whether I'm happy with it or not, and in the world of politics, showing whether you are happy with a government decision or not happens by voting either for it or against it. Moreover, I believe that one of the reasons why young people aren't engaged in politics is because they basically can't vote! I think that allowing the 16 and 17 year olds to vote will bring a brighter generation to Britain as they are the future of this country.

## Redbridge

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### **Aiyanna Precilla, Youth Councillor**

The Schools Councils' Conference is an opportunity for all secondary schools in Redbridge to come together and discuss what their own schools have been up to. We hold three of these every academic year and they are a great opportunity to get schools engaged and to sign up to different events that we will be running in the near future. Also, it enables students to interact with one another to share their ideas and projects whilst enhancing their knowledge about issues that affect the young people in Redbridge. As a member of the youth council I think that these conferences are very successful and we get lots of great feedback about the events. The students are engaged with the activities and topics we discuss. I look forward to the next one, which will be held in November!

### **Ailish Farrell, 16, Youth Representative**

Over the last few months, two youth council members have regularly been attending panel meetings discussing our boroughs new leisure and culture plan. These meetings included a range of people from areas included in leisure and culture; officers from the council, local Councillors and other related community members. Being asked to, and in sitting on the panel has made us, as a youth council, realise that the borough values and encourages our input, and that we have the ability to be heard in a wide range of ways. Personally, this experience had benefitted me greatly as I have grown in confidence in voicing opinions and suggestions.

### **Amani Khan, 15, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament and Youth Councillor**

One of my manifesto points during the youth election, when I was elected, was to create more opportunities and events to celebrate young peoples talents in creative arts and literature. To achieve this I have started planning a youth poetry night which will be taking place in October on world poetry day. This poetry night will feature Yomi Sodi as the lead poet. The night will celebrate spoken word as an art form; there will also be an open mic for young people to showcase their talent and passion for poetry/spoken word. The event will take place at Gants Hill library after closing hours, there will also be professional spoken word artists performing. This event will hopefully give young people a chance to show their talents and be inspired by established poets. There will also be group writing activities to engage everyone and uncover the poet in everyone present!

### **Ishrat Hossain, Youth Representative**

BYC convention To start the day off, I and all the people going to the venue from Redbridge met up at our local train station where we took public transport to the venue of the convention “ Westminster school. We arrived at the school after a few hours and we were just in time to catch the motivational speaker. He spoke to us about mental health and soon after it was time to go into our course group sessions. The first group was called organisation and we learnt about how to organise Make your mark events. After splitting up into small groups, we decided on small event to make people aware of what Make Your Mark was. These were like small assemblies in schools and I believe that this is something that we could all take back to our schools to promote it. After attending this session, I was more aware of what Make Your Mark was and how it worked and what it achieved. It made me feel important to be a part of a nationwide event. Our second course group was called presenting. Again the theme was Make Your Mark but this time it was more fun and relaxed. My course group manager was really friendly and encouraging and really helped to overcome my fears on talking in front of a big group of people. It was good to try out different accents and ways of speaking. We then had to have a small debate about random subjects. This taught me how to express my views in a formal manner. The third and final group was called consulting and to be honest I had no idea as to what it would be about. When we got there, I was once again greeted by a friendly group of people and lovely course managers. They gave us some really big questions about our safety, rules in the country and our safety. We were told to pick one of two sides, agree or disagree. Then we were sometimes asked to justify our views and reasons. This again was fun and helped me to learn how to express my views. Overall, the BYC convention was an amazing experience where I got to learn valuable lessons about organisation, presenting and consulting. The main theme about the day was Make Your Mark and about how we could promote it within our borough and our schools. I thoroughly enjoyed it and I look forward to future BYC conventions!

### **James Edwards, 15, Member of Youth Parliament & Youth Councillor**

This month I have been working to get as many schools as possible signed up to become a Make Your Mark school. Make Your Mark is the UK's largest youth consultation and last year my constituency of Redbridge achieved 10962 participants. This year I am hoping to have 20000 people to take part. To help with this I have been emailing and calling all of the schools in my borough to persuade them to sign up. After a few difficulties and lots of time talking to voicemail machines! 54% of schools have signed up! I'm really pleased with this result and hope that this will get even more young people in my constituency involved in youth politics, one of the manifesto points on which I was elected. Along with the push on signing up schools, I have also created a core group from our Young Cabinet and Youth Council to meet regularly to work on the delivery of Make Your Mark in the borough. I'm really looking forward to running Make Your Mark in Redbridge and I hope we can achieve our targets and get everyone engaged!

### **Valentina Vettore, 14, Youth Representative**

In May I had just been elected as a Young Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement. Just a week after that, there was a cabinet reshuffle and like Bridget, I too found myself in a sort of limbo. I was a Young Cabinet Member - but what of? After many frantic emails, an additional meeting was set up to sort out new portfolios and I found myself as the new (and probably First) Young Cabinet Member for A Fairer Redbridge. Great! Except I had no idea what that really meant. To decipher this cryptic code, my Youth Involvement Worker suggested I attended the local Fairness Commission. This had previously been attended by two Youth Councillors, Sabah and Gursimran, but had been going on for quite a while when I first joined. I remember being incredibly nervous going into this meeting with a load of adults, many of whom I had never met before. It was even more daunting knowing that Sabah and Gursimran were not going to be present, and that I would arrive late due to a school trip - but alas, my fears had dissipated when I was met with warm smiles and a few familiar faces. The Fairness Commission is like nothing I've ever experienced. I had always anticipated it being long, slightly tedious, and very formal... Yeah, nothing like that in the slightest. There's a very relaxed sort of atmosphere in which we can still work efficiently but there's room for banter (If the Chamber of Commerce ever becomes too boring, I reckon Geoff would do well as a stand up comedian). Jokes aside though, one of the best things about the Fairness Commission is the fact that they actually listen to the Youth Council/Young Cabinet Members who attend. Some boards don't exactly value our opinions as such, but here I've felt almost as if our opinions are valued more. It's given me a great opportunity to raise issues surrounding the youth to all sorts of people such as the police Chief Inspector. So whilst the evidence packs are thicker than most of my textbooks, I had to spend three hours getting pins and needles in a public meeting, and I had to sit in a room by myself because I accidentally arrived at a meeting two hours too early the Fairness Commission has given me an experience I will never forget, and one I'll always be grateful for.

### **Vanessa Madu, Youth Councillor**

Last month 3 members of Redbridge Youth Council, including myself, attended the Safer Neighbourhood

Board meeting where many topics and issues surrounding safety and enforcement were discussed. One recurring topic was the MOPAC (Mayors Office for Policing And Crime) Statistics and their inaccuracy. The Borough Commander, Sue Williams, said that these statistics were really outdated in comparison to the ones the MET produce in the borough daily. This meant that some crimes that were reported to be on the increase had actually gone down in recent times. I found that the statistics were very interesting and showed the good work the MET had been doing in our borough - regardless of the fact that the statistics used in the meetings were not nearly as up to date as the statistics used day-to-day by the police, and some of these statistics were actually far better at the time of the meeting than when they were originally recorded. Aside from the erroneous statistics, other interesting points raised included the launch of MET Trace, a new product to be put into homes to act as a deterrent against burglary as well as making it easier to identify where stolen goods had come from if there was a burglary. I thought it was quite remarkable to hear that there had been up to an 85% decrease in burglaries in areas where MET Trace had been installed and will hopefully be seeing the domestic burglary rates plummet. Overall, I found it to be a very insightful meeting and the other Youth Council members also thought the same. I'm looking forward to the next one!

# North East

## North Tyneside

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### Youth Councillors

I won a Kindle Fire! I filled in a form at a meeting about young peoples health and got picked as a winner. By Shannon

I attend an acting class every Saturday afternoon. I was awarded the performer of the week award for doing my best and trying hard. Im very proud and happy about it. By Elizabeth Pybus

We attended a Voluntary Sector meeting where we discussed issues faced by local volunteer sector. It was very useful as we discussed things like mental health and many more important issues. At the meeting they suggested that they invite young people along to all of their meetings. It was very interesting and they were very supportive of our ideas and listened to us. By Maggie McClure and Amy Bell.

I was invited to Reading by Microsoft after being commended in a programming software competition. I worked a lot after school to complete, Maggie was commended too. I also came third in a physical computing competition, again with Maggie at the Marden City Learning Centre. By Harry Cook

A few weeks ago my school for girls rounders team won the North Tyneside rounders competition with only two weeks practice. I went scuba diving for the first time. I went to the BYC convention meeting for the first time. By Emily Doughty

Recently I have started to work with YouthWorx to try to help their group to begin a project focusing on breaking down barriers that prevent young people from getting jobs with a specific focus on those young people who may have been involved in the care system throughout their young lives. By Mark Strasshine

A couple of weeks ago I went to a voluntary & community sector meeting with members of youth council and adult council. This was the first meeting where young people were invited. It was very successful. By Tammy Morrison

There is a lot of progress in my Wallsend park users meetings. We have got a lot of fundraising events coming up to raise money for the park. By Beth NTYC

On Saturday I helped to run a Geordie night at the Seaton Delaval Arts Centre. Over 70 people attended and were given a 2 course meal. It was a great event. By Mathew Hall

In the school year we done a young mathematical challenge. A few weeks ago I found out I got a bronze award! By Libby Doughty

Young Mayor Abbie and I visited the Helping Hands group from Phoenix Detached Youth Project they had produced a video on legal highs. By Abbie Herron

I wanted to learn Spanish so i got a private tutor and worked (and still) work hard so that I can speak fluently. In May I went to rural area of Spain with my family to practise, I was very nervous because nobody spoke any English at all! But I was brave and after the first few days I was confident with having fluent conversations with Spanish people on a daily basis. This gave me even more inspiration to keep working hard to improve my ability in Spanish. By Louie Haigh

We are currently planning finance and budgeting lesson to roll out to schools around North Tyneside, targeted at year 9s as a pilot. We hope to achieve a sponsorship from local finance companies. By Jamie Clark

I attended an anti-bullying meeting. We discussed the issues a bully might have forcing him/her to take it out on other people. We represented this information on posters and flip charts. By Rebecca Railton

I attended a Youth Council meeting where we discussed the best way forward on various youth council policies, this was a brilliant way to represent young people. By Isaac Sidney

# North West

## Blackburn with Darwen

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### **Cecilia Adekoya, 16**

I attended the International School Nurse Conference with 7 other young people to change the way school nurses carry out their role and the involvement of children and young people. It was incredible learning about issues in public health (i.e. childhood obesity, female genital mutilation, young carers and supporting and guiding vulnerable children) and how school nurses can be involved in things such as counselling and advice to help young people. It was extremely eye-opening to see the resilience of school nurses finally understanding the position they are put in and their immense capacity. We interviewed many school nurses from foreign countries (Denmark, America, Sweden, Australia and New Zealand) learning much about the difference in the processes that are taken place according to their policies. It was my first time attending such an event and I am really grateful for such an opportunity. At the end of the week, we created a poster called 'Upfront and centre' to show what we had learnt throughout the week. We had 8 big issues to talk about and linked those back to how school nurses could be involved. They were: young people involvement, stigmas, effective impact, improving young lives, vulnerable young people, making an influence, the care of young people and education. The title of our presentation was called 'Positive change' because of the positive change that young people and school nurses can make. Our graphic display was named 'Upfront and centre' because we as young people are at the centre of any decision making. It was amazing to have made an influence at the conference and have represented young people as a whole. I want to thank Liz Harding of Youthforia for giving me the chance to be at such an inspiring event.

## Cheshire East

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### **Joe McBride, 15, Member of Youth Parliament**

We've been working hard to get schools signed to the national 'Make Your Mark' campaign by ringing and sending them letters. We've also consulted our 'Young People's Champion' to ask her to send a letter to schools to try and get them signed up! Despite several other campaigns, Cheshire East Youth Council's commitment to regional and national campaigns remains strong.

## Cumbria

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### **Will Adams, 17, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

It might be a little bit late, but over the past few months Furness Youth Council has been running an anti-bullying campaign entitled 'S4Stop' which has involved young people and adults from various organisations coming together to figure out how best to tackle this problem, something which our youth councillors felt was commonplace for many young people in our area. With a target age range of years 5-8, we worked with local primary schools and lower year secondary school students to develop various different creative pieces which displayed bullying and its effects on young people. Some of the work included small plays; songs; poetry and a short rap. We displayed these at a large event with many attendees, which was greeted with much interest from the local media and local politicians. During the event, we decided to hold a social media test to show young people how quickly information can spread; this worked very well, showing that somebody many miles away who doesn't necessarily know who you are, can get access to a social media profile in seconds. The event was a great success and we're really proud of everyone involved: special thanks must go to Bethany, Vice Chair of Furness Youth Council, who has co-ordinated the project over the past few months. Long may it continue!

## Halton

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### **Molly Wright, 15, Youth Councillor**

Members of the Halton Youth Cabinet (HYC) have teamed up with Mersey Forest and Halton Borough Council to kick start fresh growth across the borough. In January, they collaboratively planted over 300 trees in The Bongs, Widnes! Recently, there were interviews held for a new service provider and HYCs Molly and Tasha were invited to help out in order to get young peoples view on a service aimed at them. Doing this helped us get a more varied opinion from the borough and should help ensure a young person focussed service for Halton. Recently, concerns have been raised in HYC about the costs of school uniforms and the difficulties this causes for many families and young people in Halton. Therefore, we are beginning to form the basis of a campaign to challenge schools and the council on this issue and are aiming to work with them to reduce the cost of uniform and find a long term solution to the issues associated with high uniform and other school related costs. Halton Youth Cabinet represents the young people of Halton and takes action on the issues that matter to them. HYC has been alerted to the issue of Homophobic Bullying and the use of Homophobic language in and out of schools across the borough. The national equality charity, Stonewall, has placed Halton as the 27th best local authority for preventing and tackling homophobic bullying, celebrating difference and supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in the community. Thats why were launching our new campaign 'HYC Vs. Homophobia' The campaign is still in its early stages. Back in February we launched a survey to gain young peoples insights into Homophobia across the borough and well be publishing the results of this survey in the next few weeks. We have already made links with GLOW (Halton LGBTI Youth group) and LGBT North West and we have gained the support of Cheshire Police for this campaign. Were currently seeking funding to enable us to train young people in effectively challenging Homophobia in all its forms

and will be working with schools across the borough to ensure that teachers are able to effectively challenge homophobia and promote an inclusive learning environment

From doing all of this, members of HYC have built up team working skills and have been able to help make changes in Halton to help others.

## **Rochdale**

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### **Ethan Marriott, 16, Member of Youth Parliament & Youth Councillor**

Hi, I'm Ethan Marriott, MYP for the borough of Rochdale. In Rochdale, we have the position of Children's Champion, who represents children aged 7-11 in the borough, similar to the role of an MYP. A panel including the outgoing Children's Champion and I were bombarded with many applications of an amazingly high standard- from children aged just 9 and 10! This made the shortlisting very difficult. When we had interviewed the chosen candidates, and after some tense discussion, we managed to cut it down to 6, who made a video explaining why they were the best candidate, which was shown through Rochdale primary schools for children to vote. An astonishing 8221 children voted, who elected Zara Shah as the new Children's Champion and Stephanie Webb as the deputy. Congratulations of their fantastic achievement and I hope they enjoy their term in office!

To commemorate the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, we held a debate with young people from our youth cabinet in the town hall, discussing key political issues such as the amount of freedom in our society and how far the right to vote should extend. The young people involved took a lot of time preparing their speeches, which were given to an audience of local dignitaries and other guests, who had the opportunity to challenge and ask questions. The arguments were complex and we had a lot of positive feedback from all who attended about the level of thought, public speaking skills and confidence shown by the young people. I was delighted to be involved in the event and I think it shows just how engaged young people can be in politics, and how deeply we care about our society

## **Sefton**

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

After finishing my exams in the middle of June, I was finally able to get back involved in all the work I had done beforehand, even more so in July. I went to a Young Commissioners & Inspectors residential in my local authority, Sefton. This panel of young people gives up to either £5,000 or £10,000 to other groups of young people to start their own youth led project/group, which will benefit the young people in their communities. Afterwards, the panel would visit said groups to inspect their progress and how they have spent the money. At the residential, the panel of young people (myself included) were being trained to carry out the latter task, which would occur during the summer holidays. Also, the next regional meeting in the North West, Youthforia, would be held in Sefton for the very first time! This

would also be the AGM for Youthforia. However, I was away on holiday on the date of it, so I was unable to attend. Nevertheless, I was still able to be involved in Sefton's presentation which consisted of a video of us talking about Sefton, as well as having shirts with an "ugly selfie" of ourselves on it (the reason behind the shirt is because the young people who attend Youthforia also attend a group in Sefton called SELFIE, and we wanted to make the presentation enjoyable and fun, so decided to have an ugly selfie on a shirt!). I decided to wear my shirt at the UKYP Annual Sitting on the first day since I didn't get to wear it at the regional meeting. I would like to give a massive congratulations to Laura Hughes, the newly elected Merseyside Rep from Sefton for the Youthforia Steering Group! Congratulations also to everyone else who was elected onto the Steering Group, I'm sure you'll all do an amazing job during your year in the role! After returning home from my holiday, I had a meeting with the newly renamed Sefton Youth Council (formerly Shout It Out Sefton). Different topics we discussed were: the National Express Youth Panel with their Youth Promise; visiting youth groups to carry out focus groups for our transport campaign - Your Transport, Your Say; going through Make Your Mark and possible methods; and the sad farewell to our chair, Stefan Price. We were all sad to see Stefan leave due to his new apprenticeship, and we all congratulated him with the work he has done for Sefton Youth Council, and wish him the best of luck on his new journey! And finally, what has without a shadow of a doubt been my highlight of the year so far, the UKYP Annual Sitting! I was so excited for the whole weekend to take part in workshops, The Big Vote, listen to speakers, the list goes on and on! On the Friday after flying into Exeter, we took part in regional meetings to go through the weekend; had an opening ceremony with Rt Hon John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons; went to The Big Vote fringe meetings; enjoyed MYM briefing and good practice sharing; and had a barbecue and a quiz in the evening (I still believe that the Red Hot Trivia Peppers should have won). Saturday was, again, a jam packed day! We had a House of Commons briefing, another regional meeting, various workshops, an amazing speech by Johnny Chatterton, one to one time with our support workers, and then the biggest part of the weekend - The Big Vote (part 1). The Big Vote was particularly important for me as I was the speaker for Policy Motion number 5 - Gender Equality and Feminism. I am over the moon to say that this motion passed! On a personal note, I cannot thank all those who supported me and voted in favour of this motion enough - I have never had so much support by so many people at one time, I was literally close to tears! The fact that it was near enough a unanimous decision touched my heart, and I can't thank you all enough for what you did. I also want to give a shout out to those who I genuinely believe deserve as much recognition as possible for how great they spoke during the whole of The Big Vote - Ella Marshall, who spoke absolutely brilliantly during the anti-austerity motion, and again in the 2 degrees motion, and was an outstanding speaker for the equality between religions (especially in the media) motion, a truly amazing speaker! I know I have already said how well you did speaking during the weekend, yet it's not like I can't give you too much praise for it, is it? - Ali Draba, who was so passionate about his Tackling Racism in particular Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism motion, which was rightly carried - Francesca Reed, who was so great at speaking for her narrow view of success within society motion to be passed, which it did! - Thomas McEachan, who brought up the controversial topic of anti-austerity, yet kept his cool and spoke with an abundance of passion, ultimately to have his motion passed! - Tom Latham, who displayed so much passion and commitment by sending in a video of his speech on 2 degrees due to being unable to attend, and his motion was passed! - Amber McStravick, who managed to include so many facts and statistics into one minute on an issue that not many people knew about, War on Drugs, and despite the motion falling, it was a great speech nonetheless - Ethan Marriott, whose cool, calm and collected approach allowed him to speak so well about his resits:cost and entrance exams motion, which led to it being passed! - and finally, Kazeem Lukman, who was by far the most energetic speaker of them all, and with his highly memorable phrases during his Smoking Around Schools motion, he managed to

get his motion passed! All of the speakers during The Big Vote did a great job, as well as those who spoke on the floor - you should all be so proud of yourselves! The remainder of the weekend consisted of partying, more workshops, more food, what else could we have asked for? It was so great to have met some amazing people from other regions during this weekend, and I'm sure others will agree, too! Now, it is time for us all to put all of our efforts into Make Your Mark. I know we can do it, I know we can reach and surpass the one million mark - I have faith in you all! Let's show everyone what the UK Youth Parliament can really do, and the impact we can really have!

## Wigan

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### Grace Thompson, 18, Youth Councillor

“You can really only enjoy life when you're extremely busy” - Josephine de La Baume Whether we agree with this statement or not, the summer months are beginning to look very busy for Wigan Youth Cabinet. We hope, however, that the outcome of this busy period will provide valuable results. In November, young people aged 11-18 all over Wigan will vote for Wigan's next two Members of Youth Parliament and their two deputies. The results are announced in January. Kick-starting this process will be 6 training sessions throughout July and August for those young people who are interested in becoming Members of Youth Parliament. At the last election, there were only four candidates. At this election the number is set to be much higher, in part because Wigan Youth Cabinet and the Voice and Engagement team have vigorously promoted the opportunity to become a Member of Youth Parliament in schools across the length and breadth of Wigan Borough. We have also enjoyed a high level of support from senior management. Next week, we are planning to have an event which we hope will become annual. We have invited 20 councillors to attend our Cabinet meeting to give them information on what Wigan Youth Cabinet do, so that they are aware that we represent the views of young people and that those views need to be taken into account by them when making decisions. Many of these councillors will be newly elected, so this is a great opportunity to provide information and get new friends on board. Conversely, we hope that we can be useful to the councillors in terms of keeping them up to date with the views of Wigan's young people and providing Cabinet's assistance wherever possible. As ever, we are grateful as a Cabinet for the wide range of support we get and, at the moment, support is very high. The Voice and Engagement team, Wigan Council, MPs, schools and councillors are but a few of the many groups of people who support and work alongside us to ensure that the views of young people are both heard and respected. It is essential that, in all things, we work together. “Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.” Henry Ford

# South East

## Bracknell Forest

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### **Owen Griffins, 15, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

Last year several members of the Bracknell Forest Youth Council had the privilege to be able to visit our twin town of Leverkusen in Germany, along with another party of youths from Finland. This was a brilliant opportunity to learn more about different cultures and interact with people of similar ages from both Germany and Finland. We were even able to learn more about a youth council type organisation that runs over there.

The positive story is therefore that over the course of this year both the youth of our twin city and Bracknell have managed to keep in touch and in July the Youth Council of Bracknell had the honour to host them over here. Whilst over here they were able to visit a range of cities, went to a theme park (Thorpe Park) and saw a west end show! So not only were we able to keep in touch but were also able to get other local youth clubs from across our area involved. Through doing this we have managed to successfully increase the amount of people involved by just year two and now next year a whole new host of people from across the wider area will have the opportunity to experience an entirely new culture, all of this starting from the Youth Council.

### **Sophie Lockyer, 15, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

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

## Brighton and Hove

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### **Thomas Soud, 17, Procedures Group Representative**

In the South East we have been mainly focused on pushing the Mind the Gap Campaign in order to Map Mental Health Services across the UK and also in signing up schools. Personally, I have been contacting as many MYPs as possible to see how they have been progressing and was delighted to see that the overwhelming majority of LA's were able to submit evidence for Mind the Gap and the South East was able to smash its target of 16% of schools signed up. This was especially apparent as I was helping cover

areas which lacked MYPs such as Wokingham, West Berkshire and Windsor and Maidenhead. Ontop of all of this we have been preparing for the Annual Sitting which was a fantastic event,

## **Buckinghamshire**

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### **Charlotte Tosti, 18, Member of Youth Parliament**

I have been working with the Citizenship and Political Participation of the think tank, Demos, on a report that will be used by the Cabinet Office as a basis to coordinate youth social action projects. Engaging with social action, which can be loosely defined as action taken for the benefit of others, offers a wide variety of benefits to young people. For example, National Citizen Service has reportedly improved levels of compassion, grit, ambition and a will integrate with people from different backgrounds amongst its participants. I am very happy to have assisted Demos in developing convincing arguments to increase government funding for social action, and in producing a strategy to assist young people from less affluent backgrounds to participate in social action, as they are currently very underrepresented in UK social action projects.

### **Kavita Sharma, 18, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

Around this time last year I had just written my PSHE report after years of being complied with young people's views. Who would have thought that 1 year later it would have reached the House of Commons, been presented to headteachers, sent to the secretary of state of education, been presented to politicians and councillors and stimulated some reforms across the county, as well as been published and brought organisations to work with us. Currently the deputy leader of the council has been talking to me about getting the report implemented in more schools and to make more of an impact. I can't believe what an impact it has made but it still isn't enough, campaigning for young people's voices still is something that needs to be continued and done. I am just so glad that in the past year, I can say the report has had some sort of impact, I can happily say young people's voices have been heard in this circumstance.

## **East Sussex**

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### **Harry Elphick, 17, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

My area worked with the other areas of East Sussex to cover the entire county in an combined effort. A list of all the services was compiled and the workload equally distributed by the Wealden MYP Robin Holmes.

### **Robin Holmes, Member of Youth Parliament**

At the beginning of this month the three MYPs for East Sussex attended the Annual Sitting in Exeter, an incredible weekend! One of the most important elements of the weekend was the

deadline for submitting the Mind The Gap research, our work that had mapped the mental health services across the county to reveal where the gaps are for young people's services. Consultations are now taking place on the East Sussex Youth Cabinet to determine what our plans will be for the mental health campaign on a local level over the coming months – we are looking at possibly supporting the delivery of a mental health support group in the Hastings area that will take a non-clinical, informal approach and will be open to 11 – 25 year olds. Charlotte, MYP for Hastings and Bexhill constituency, has been appointed as a steering group member for this. Watch this space!



July has seen exciting preparation for the Big Vote election 2015, the election process for selecting the new East Sussex Youth Cabinet who will run until 2017. We have held three candidate information days in Lewes, Eastbourne and Hastings, which have given candidates the opportunity to get to know one another while filming their candidate videos and asking any questions they may have about life on the cabinet. Present Youth Cabinet members attended to give presentations, lead discussions and tell candidates about what we've been up to for the past couple of years. I was present at the Lewes day and had a great time meeting the group; they all showed huge potential and I can tell the next cabinet is going to be very successful indeed! This year candidates were given the opportunity to make their own videos at home instead if they so wished; quite a few opted to do this and some great films were made, present youth cabinet and youth workers alike feeling it allowed more provision for creativity and expression of personality in the candidates. This year's also seen the highest ever number of young people standing in the Big Vote election, something which is extremely encouraging and promises a great future in youth voice! Bring on Youth Cabinet 2015 – 2017!



# Hampshire

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## **Lucy Page, 16, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

This month has been a really great month for my Youth Parliament work because the pre-registration period for the Make your Mark campaign came to a close. I was very busy in my constituency contacting schools, trying to get as many signed up as possible. After emailing all the schools in Fareham, Gosport and Havant with the help of the MYP for the area, Will, I was very pleased that lots of schools were very interested in getting involved in the campaign. A few schools have also asked for me to run some assemblies for their students to give them more information on other Youth Parliament campaigns as well as the Make your Mark campaign and hopefully inspire them to take part in future campaigns! I believe in total as a team we managed to get 21 schools signed up in Hampshire, this gives us a fantastic opportunity to reach the target number of votes cast! This was a really successful month and has given us a great platform for the campaign to have a positive impact and reach a lot of youth people in the following months. Lucy Page, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament for Fareham Gosport and Havant

## **William Peters, 16, Member of Youth Parliament**

The weekend of 31st Jul – 2nd Aug saw the UKYP Annual Sitting at Exeter University. The weekend included workshops on the campaigns which the Youth Parliament is running, such as – Mind the Gap and – Make Your Mark, allowing us to be more effective in our campaigning. The event also included The Big Vote, where new proposed motions were debated and passed or failed for the manifesto. We also had three guest speakers: The Rt Hon John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons, Jonny Chatterton, Co-founder and executive director of Campaign Bootcamp, and Sian James, an activist and former MP for Swansea East. All three were inspiring, interesting and helpful and really empowered the whole Youth Parliament to work even harder and achieve our goals.

## **Charlotte Ralph, 15, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

As part of my work experience back in June, I was fortunate enough to meet Mims Davies, my local MP. I met with her in the Houses of Parliament where I was taken on a tour and then assisted her with some filing work and organising events. Whilst I was with her, I was able to discuss my role as a Deputy Member of Youth Parliament with her and talk about upcoming events and campaigns within Youth Parliament. She was very interested and was keen to help assist me to raise awareness of campaigns and events. It was a very enjoyable experience and I certainly learnt a lot about her role as an MP and I was fortunate enough to meet many other people in the Houses of Parliament too.

## **Theo Youds, 15, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

On the 30th July I met with an employee of Andover Mind and we talked about how they want to expand to an age range of 13-25 and how they can do that. She wanted to meet up again and speak about setting up a universal counselling service for the Test Valley area schools as some schools only have untrained 1 to 1 chat personnel as supposed to counsellors! We also talked about how there is a project called ugly duckling which allows everybody some life experience. Ugly duckling gives young

people a place to volunteer, do some physical work and learn about meeting deadlines, working in a team and other general life skills. Children who have mental health problems or are unable to concentrate at school or just need a place to go and do some work and gain experience. Ugly duckling takes old furniture, young people refurbish it and then it is sold in the Andover Mind charity shop. Overall, this allows less privileged young people a chance at getting experience ready for going into the working world.

### **Mishca , 14, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

This month, I was busy contacting schools in my area to ask them to sign up to the Make Your Mark scheme in order to reach our local target and contribute to the one million goal. Phonedcalls were usually most effective as emails appeared to be getting ignored sometimes. Additionally, I attended the residential in Exeter where we debated the topics for the manifesto through the Big Vote. It was an exciting process as there were so many different opinions. I then selected the motions I considered most important through an online vote. I learnt a lot of new skills from the residential and am now aware of how to get even more schools signed up in September. It was entertaining and lovely to meet new people and discuss what they're doing in their areas too. Overall, July was a productive month

### **Neil Sahota, 16, Member of Youth Parliament**

This month, I have started on a mental health campaign in addition to 'Mind the Gap'. I have been liaising with local charities/foundations, "celebrities", sports personnel etc in order to produce a high quality campaign with an effective message. The idea of the campaign is to include these "high profile" people offering thier views and support on the topic of mental health, as part of a video. This will potentially be shown around schools during assemblies, sometime within the start of the new school year in order to raise awareness, which is something that I will continue to work on...

## **Isle of Wight**

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### **Will, 16, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

The Isle of Wight signed up five schools to Make Your Mark - most of whom had never heard of it before.

## **Kent**

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

"You can't do anything without an adult" I was told when I was 14 and wanted to change the way that the school council was run, I remember bottling up anger and just smiling and saying ok when actually it was the complete opposite. This month, 4 years after this incident, I arrived at my 2nd annual sitting,

young people everywhere showing that we can take the lead without an adult. In workshops we learnt to contact the right schools for make your mark and reach out to all the young people we could as well as listening to some important motivational activists. The South East did the country proud by putting in effort and looking for how they can contribute to the 1 million! Overall a successful month!

### **Ben Sizer, 16, Member of Youth Parliament**

I have met with schools in the local area to see how they can get involved in Make Your Mark and how schools can benefit! As well as signing up Make Your Mark Champions. I have also discussed with school students what issues affect them the most and how I may try to make a difference. Furthermore I attended the UKYP Annual Sitting at the University of Exeter where I spent 3 days alongside many other MYP's learning and gaining valuable skills to help us not only as individuals but as a MYP!

## **Medway**

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### **Maxine Gachoka, 18, Member of Youth Parliament**

Just before the UKYP Annual Sitting, I was invited to speak at a Rotary Club Meeting in order to explain about my role within UKYP and some of the campaigns which we have undertaken. Following the Annual sitting, I was able to relay all the information concerning the weekend to Rotarians, and in this way effectively increased awareness of the work which UKYP has undertaken in the past, and all the fantastic work we have planned for the future.

### **Pam Agyapong, 17, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

As a team we have discussed ways to promote Make Your Mark in order to give more youth a voice. We have been able to get champions who are willing to reach the schools that we may not be able to. As it's great to have a head start, there is a festival run by our local council at the end of August for the youth that we are hoping we will be able to share the word of Make your Mark and get the youth to have a say. I am looking forward to this campaign, it's going to be awesome :)

### **George Perfect, 15, Youth Councilor**

This month, I was proud to have assisted at our Try angle Awards, I was proud to have met with many senior figures, including Ann Barnes PCC and the Worshipful Mayor of Medway. I was also proud to have met one of the nominees who had sacrificed lots of things in her life, in order to give her child a better future, as well as a 16 year old who saved someone's life.

### **Luke Morgan, 16, Member of Youth Parliament**

On the 17th of July Medway Youth Parliament ran elections for their cabinet positions. During this one

of their MYP's, Luke Morgan, was elected as the vice chair. As well as the local youth parliament has gained a strong core team to help the youth voice vehicle progress and improve its efficiency

## **Milton Keynes**

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### **Ellie Flint, 16, DMYP**

We had a youth council meeting and made excellent progress with our campaign on anti-bullying, including deciding on to focus on LGBT groups. We also had a couple of members attend a full council meeting to discuss votes at 16, which went very well, and overall our council supports the motion. We have also been working on bus prices due to a sudden rise, so have organised meetings with councillors and the bus company

### **Jacob Wilkins, 16, DMYP**

On the 10th of this month I attended the opening of the AYME (Association of Young People with Myalgic Encephalopathy) offices in Newport Pagnell. The condition, I discovered, causes symptoms ranging from intense tiredness to aches and pains as well as difficulties trying to concentrate. Something I found particularly poignant was the emotive speech the CEO of the charity gave, in which she detailed the struggles the sufferers of ME, and their families, face on a day to day basis. Armed with newfound knowledge about a debilitating condition, that 250,000 people suffer from in the UK, I hope to be able to raise awareness for the national charity and people with ME in the future.

### **Amber Saunders, 16, MYP**

I went to a full Milton Keynes Council Meeting as there was a debate on Votes at 16 (with another motion briefly talking about registering young people to vote at 14) and I was given a few minutes to speak. I said: Last year, 88758 young people, from across the UK, out of 876,488 voted for Votes at 16 to be UK Youth Parliament's campaign. Young people from across the country, whether they want to vote at 16 or not, are engaging with politics - in Milton Keynes, 7106 young people took part in this vote. In the UK, it is confusing for young people - at 16 we can drink and smoke but we can't buy alcohol or cigarettes until we are 18. We can drive at 17 and vote at 18. Regardless of whether we are offered to vote at 16, it is so important that young people are given the opportunity to engage with politics further. From primary school we take part in and vote for someone to represent us in Student Council and this is the same in secondary school. However, we aren't offered more in depth lessons in political education, which is where we miss out. PSHE lessons are seen as a joke by my peers, where we aren't given interesting information. Bringing politics and debates into schools could change our education so much. At 14 we make life changing decisions when selecting which GCSEs we'll take, which can change our future. So why not allow us to register to vote, as voting and politics are going to change our futures as well, but on a wider scale. By introducing political education and engaging with us further, we will be one step closer to educating this generation so that they are ready to engage and vote at 16. The motion was passed with around 31 for, 8 against and 3 abstaining. There were some interesting comments from councillors as well with one councillor saying 'If young people are asking, it shows that

they are ready to vote'. I was asked to write a newsletter, which would be sent to schools across Milton Keynes, to inform young people about Youth Cabinet, Youth Parliament and different events across Milton Keynes which involved young people. The newsletter includes monthly updates, starting from March, as well as giving explanations as to what Youth Cabinet and Youth Parliament are. We are planning on having newsletters distributed to schools monthly or termly to keep young people updated on what is happening in their local area.

## Oxfordshire

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### **Aaron Miles, 17, Member of Youth Parliament**

This month has been a very successful one. Meeting the prime minister and asking him a question on young people's involvement in historical sites was one of the most nerve inducing moment of my time as MYP but it was also one of the proudest. The annual sitting on the other hand was the greatest UKYP event I have been to in my two years after being elected. Speaking on autism was an experience like no other. The people were amazing and Thomas was brilliant. In April this year I attended a debate for parliamentary candidates. I was the only elected member in the room so I felt as if I was the outcast. I spoke on mental health and may have annoyed the candidates by saying I'm only there to represent young people.

### **Tara Paxton-Doggett, 13, Member of Youth Parliament**

All MYPs from Oxfordshire had the chance to meet David Cameron at a Magna Carta event, celebrating 800 years since it was first put in place.

## Reading

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### **Adrian Rodriguez, 17, Member of Youth Parliament**

July has been a very busy month! Over the past month, I have been continuing to ask schools to register for Make Your Mark, and I have signed up schools from Reading and even West Berkshire. Every little helps- let's reach that 1 million mark this year! Aside from Make Your Mark, I have been lucky enough to meet 3 important decision makers. Alongside the Slough Member of Youth Parliament, Hamzah Ahmed, we had a meeting with Theresa May- the Home Secretary! Whilst we are not MYPs for Maidenhead, we thought that it was our duty as passionate believers in empowering young people, even beyond our local authorities. Our meeting was productive, and we discussed the government's mental health policy, Make Your Mark and Votes at 16.. Closer to home, I had a meeting with the

Minister for Civil Society, Rob Wilson Reading East MP. The Minister's portfolio includes the government's policy towards young people, therefore he understands the workings of the UK Youth Parliament thoroughly. Rob Wilson is very supportive of the work that we do as an organisation and as the MYP for Reading. I will remain in contact so that I can further my local Reading campaigns and national ones likewise. As part of my work to complete Mind the Gap (a survey of all mental health services across England), I met the new Director of Children's Services, Sylvia Chew. New to her job, Sylvia has some very good ideas on how to improve services in Reading, and has offered her help to get Make Your Mark to schools which have not signed up yet. I look forward to inviting her to a Youth Cabinet meeting and having further discussions on how to improve services.

## Slough

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### **Faheem Anwar, 13, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

A couple of months ago Slough's youth council members decided to do a mental health first aid training course, so we had an understanding of the issues some young people may have, and how to resolve those issues if the young people we are representing ever come to us for help. After the success of the mental health first aid course, it became apparent that a First Aid course would be extremely beneficial. This month, a representative from the British Red Cross came to our community centre and gave our youth council a course on First Aid. We learnt the recovery position, chest compressions, clearing the airway and other physical actions necessary to complete when trying to save someone who is unconscious, as well as looking at how to treat burns, seizures and swallowing harmful substances. In addition to learning physical procedures, we also looked at the prejudice towards helping certain types of people when they need aid, such as the public being more drawn towards helping a man in a suit and tie than a scruffy, dirty man. We discussed why there is discrimination, and did various exercises looking at photos of different people and discussing whether we would help them if we walked past them on the street. The session gave us a lot of information that we can then take to our schools, so the young people we are representing will also be able to learn First Aid, a vital life skill.

### **Yasmin Lloyd, 15, Youth Councillor**

Myself and other youth councillors went to the Guardian in Kings Place, London, to attend the Psychology of Terror Live event. The panel: Tazeen Ahmad(Chair), Rashad Ali, Maajid Nawaz, Abdel Bari Atwan, Nazir Afzal and Robb Leach, explored different forms of radicalisation, extremism and violence lurking around the youth of today. Many questions were raised, of how to tackle radicalisation and how to prevent youth from joining terrorist group- ISIS. In addition, many interesting ideas were raised of how to tackle extremism, and how to prevent the youth of today from growing up to be an extremist. The panel was able to provide us with a insight as to why those may join the side of the Jihadi, and what methods of recruitment the Jihadi may be using (Eg. social media sites). Thanks to the panel, myself and other youth councillors, were able to feedback to the Slough Youth parliament and inform them, as to what we should be looking out for and how to manage the situation.

## West Sussex

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

During July Marvellous the DMYP for Horsham and Mid-Sussex and myself the MP, met with both of our MPs; Sir Nicholas Soames and Jeremy Quinn. The meeting went well and they backed the signing up of schools in the Make Your Mark Campaign and said that they would be emailing out it out to schools. West Sussex as a county also got an amazing 34 schools signed up to MYM, we feel that the 20,000 goal we set our LA is much more achievable!!

# South West

## Bath and North East Somerset

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### Edward Joseph, 18, Member of Youth Parliament

I conducted an indepth workshop to start a youth council. See here: Event: Location: Radstock Youth Hub, Radstock Time: 19:00 - 22:00 Date: 17th August 2015 Radstock Youth Hub in partnership with big local will be hosting a BBQ to bring together local young people. This will be a step towards creating the Radstock Youth Council. At the event, we will have dynamic and engaging workshops to get young people familiar with one another, thinking about their communities, the problems they themselves face and the problems different social groups (Ethnicities, Abilities, Sexualities etc) face too. This will lay the foundations of a youth council. The event will be free to attend, but you must live in Radstock, Westfield, Hayden, Tynning, Writhlington, or Clandown. You must also be aged between 11-19.

Activities: Round of introductions, but cant use the official title of our jobs to describe what we do. We must also state why were here “ 10 Minutes

1. Energize the group:
2. Stand in a circle
3. Explain the dance activity “ Ed will make a dance move walking into the centre of the circle and back. When Ed is back, everyone is to walk into the centre of the circle copying Eds dance move. This will give all participants their 15 seconds of fame and energize the group.
4. This repeats the whole way around the circle, to enable everyone to have their time to shine. Become creative Ask participants to get into groups of 3 or 4. The first person begins telling a story. He or she tells enough of the story to establish some content. That person stops at the end of a sentence. The next person picks up with the words “Yes and,” and then adds new content to the story” maybe 4 or 5 sentences, again ending at the end of a sentence. The next person then picks up the story with “Yes and,” and this process continues on and on around the circle. The important thing is that the players fully accept the content of the story as it has unfolded and build on it. You can play this game for five minutes or so. Think about their local area “ Agree Disagree activity One side of the room is agree, one side disagree. Someone is to scribe answers “ ask questions: I like living in Radstock Why agree? Why Disagree? Why undecided? I would not change anything about where I live Why agree? Why Disagree? Why undecided? I am concerned/worried about something local Why agree? Why Disagree? Why undecided? Lets get them thinking about local services and potential campaigns My school prepares me for later life (this could lead to a campaign pressuring schools e.g. Writhlington to teach a curriculum4life) Why agree? Why Disagree? Why undecided? There are lots of things for young people to do in Radstock Why agree? “ question what they can do Why Disagree? “ What would they like to see available to young people? Why undecided? Drawing a journey we may have around/through Radstock Do on own or in groups and draw a journey you may make on foot through the Radstock area. This could be from your home to Radco, or a trip you regularly make from the park to somewhere else in Radstock. I want you to draw your journey, and what you really like about the journey. Give an example Flower of Power The Radstock Flower of Power is a visual representation of social identity. In the first part of the workshop, participants will define elements of their own social identity within several, given categories. Then, they will assign positions of power to social identities in each category as represented in our society. Thinking about different social groups Role for small group

leaders: SGLs will participate by drawing their own Power Flower and helping to clarify instructions if participants require further explanation. SGLs will lead the second part of the workshop and then start reflection with their small group. Ed to explain before beginning activity, 1. Not always a choice and is sometimes given at birth 2. Above all, concerned with power relations When we talk about social identity, we are then talking about our experience with privilege and disadvantage, dominance and oppression, power and powerlessness. Part 1: Participants of the Radstock pre-youth council event will draw a small circle in the centre of a page. They will then draw seven circles around the centre of the circle " like a flower. Each petal (outside circle) represents a different social circle and different social identity that the participant in the event is part of. It is important to note that many social groups can be included. It is wise to choose the seven following for the Radstock young people: 1.Gender 2.Race 3.Sexual Orientation 4.Class 5.Ability 6.First Language 7.Religion Ed will ask participants to label the flower petals and inside each petal, write in their social identity for each category, e.g. white, black, Asian, Latino, Native American, etc. in the race / ethnicity petal. After they have completed this part, ask participants to stand up and go with their SGLs for the second part of the activity. Part II: SGLs will take their groups and spread out in the available space. In this part of the workshop, students will explore what parts of their identity bestow them with privilege or disadvantage. The intention is to pinpoint power and powerlessness in our multiple social identities. Ask students to draw the outside petals of the Power Flower. Working with their small group, they will fill in these petals with the groups they consider to be dominant or privileged in society for each social identity category. The purpose of this activity is to get the future young councillors to think about the different social groups in the Radstock community. This will begin their thought process about being considerate of the different groups and will start them thinking how they can help those groups.

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

## **Bristol**

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### **Sophie Giltinan, 17, Member of Youth Parliament**

On the 1st of July Neha Mehta and I hosted the Police and Young People Together Conference in Southmead. The programme was started to build and strengthen relationships between local young people and community policing teams by organising various activities and projects. It took place over the last year in four communities: Lawrence Weston, Southmead, Henbury and Lockleaze/Horfield .The aims of the night were to showcase the work of the young people, to look at the differences before and after and to identify good practice. First up was Lawrence Weston. The young people of Lawrence Weston planned and facilitated a community stakeholders meeting to identify the priorities and ideas for joint projects with the police. The PCC youth champion attended, as well as local councillors and police. The young people identified issues and priorities for the area including introducing new ways to report to the police, drugs and alcohol in the community, and bullying and intimidation. The funding was

used to recruit a youth support worker to manage the projects. Next was Lockleaze and Horfield. They have worked in partnership with the police to provide joint trips throughout the summer holidays and Halloween. They have also run workshops on "what is crime?" and different ways to report crime. This led to the young people working with Orchard Theatre to develop a piece of forum theatre on the issues of crime in their community called "3 miles North". After this we heard from Henbury. Police Community Support Officers from Henbury came in to give a talk to all the young people about antisocial behaviour and how and when to report a crime. The PCSOs started attending Friday night sessions which allowed them to start building relationships with the young people. The funding was used to provide joint trips for the young people. Finally, we had Southmead. They chose to run a media project with 8th Sense media looking at the issues in the community and the effect this has on families. The funding also allowed for additional open access sessions at the youth centre and boxing classes. Unfortunately, Sue Mountstevens, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset, couldn't be with us on the night but she did record a speech to thank everybody for their hard work. On Friday 7th myself and Ella Marshall (the other Bristol MYP) had a meeting with Off the Record. Off the Record run various services and projects across Bristol and South Gloucestershire which have been designed with the help of young people to promote and improve mental health and wellbeing. We used the meeting to discuss our Youth Parliament campaign as well as our Bristol City Youth Council campaign. We have found that there are a lot of organisations and campaigns on mental health, a lot of which are very similar. We are looking to bring all of these organisations together to ensure that everyone is working together to prevent confusion and cover all areas. Ella and I had a meeting with Kerry McCarthy, the Labour MP for Bristol East, on the 10th. The aim of the meeting was to find out how we can work together to further our campaigns. We are going to keep one another updated on our campaigns and any issues that involve young people that arise in parliament. Bristol Pride took place on the 11th. Myself and some other members of Bristol City Youth Council took part in the march as well as our youth workers. It was amazing to see such a wide range of people attending, from ambulance crews who brought an ambulance decorated with balloons to George Ferguson, the Mayor of Bristol, who delivered a speech on the stage. Unfortunately, I missed the UKYP Annual Sitting as I was in Kenya. However, Ella stepped in my place to propose my motion for me. Motion 24 was about equality between religions in the media. I believe more must be done to ensure the fair portrayal of all religions. The way the media portrays Islam is unfair and biased. Due to the incredible and passionate speech delivered by Ella, the motion passed. Thank you to Ella and everyone who supported the motion. Luckily it was worth missing the Annual Sitting. Whilst I was in Kenya I did some great work with other students from St Brendan's Sixth Form College in Bristol and Peter Symonds College in Winchester. With the support of the charity Kenya 2020 we stayed in the village of Alara and visited three primary schools to do a 'jigger wash'. Jiggers (*Tunga penetrans*) are small parasites that live in soil and sand, and burrow into exposed skin on the feet often causing pain and irritation. If left untreated dangerous complications can occur including infections, loss of nails, and deformation. As children often walk around bare foot in Kenya many of them suffer with jiggers. As you can imagine, it can cause a lot of distraction in school and can mean some students have to repeat the year. We washed the children's feet with disinfectant and removed the jiggers. Some of the children who had a severe infestation required painkillers. I think the moment that affected me the most was when one of the adults removed a large area of septic flesh from a boy's foot, saving his foot. The boy was then bandaged up and given a new pair of shoes to prevent it happening again.

### **Ebony Clark, 13, Youth Councillor**

This month I have been to a event and lots of meetings this month; I have had a formal meeting a campaign meeting , an all day meeting and I also spoke at healthwatch about young children with disabilities to tell people that people with disabilities shouldn't be treated differently. Ebony Clark

### **Ella Marshall, 16, Member of Youth Parliament**

Towards the beginning of this month I attended Off The Records Rock The Record event and helped out beforehand with the set-up. Off The Record is an amazing mental health organisation, whom we have been in discussion with as part of our local Youth Parliament mental health campaign since being elected. They offer many different forms of support, in addition to useful informative resources and running their own campaign groups. During my research for UK Youth Parliaments #MindTheGap campaign, I also found their website was the most user-friendly and accesible (<http://www.otrbristol.org.uk/>). Rock The Record was a fundraising event and a number of bands performed, it was a great opportunity to meet people and tell them about Youth Parliament! We had a Bristol City Youth Council Campaign meeting this month, where we split into our campaign sub-groups and worked on action plans, as well as designating certain jobs in order to make progress over the summer holidays. Sophie Giltinan and I met with Laura from Off The Record and we presented our mental health campaign ideas, which were well received. We also brainstormed ideas about how we can work together over our term. The week before the deadline for registration, I followed up on all 50 emails I had sent asking schools and youth organisations to sign up to act as polling stations for Make Your Mark. It was frustrating at points because often I had to wait for call backs (which never came) and it was rare that I would get through to the teacher I actually wanted to speak to but it was also encouraging as those I did speak to were extremely enthusiastic about the whole initiative. On the 9th July I met someone from the PSHE co-ordination team here in Bristol, which was extremely useful as they were able to advise me on how to focus our Curriculum for Life campaign. She explained to me that the Education Select Committee in the last parliament had carried out a whole investigation into the quality of PSHE and whether it needs to be compulsory or not - with the overwhelming recommendation being that it should be. Nicky Morgan was supposed to respond to this report at some point in June but has yet to do so. The lady I met made it very clear that in order for all young people to received a good quality of PSHE education, which is necessary for us to make positive choices for ourselves, it must be made compulsory in Parliament as local authorities have no power. On the same day as this meeting, I attended a meeting of the Mentality campaign group, which was founded by young people in partnership with Off The Record. This was a chance for me to talk about our local mental health campaign project (which is still in its early stages but will soon be launched) and ask if they would get involved - which they all seemed very enthusiastic about. After speaking with the Mentality group, I had to dash across town to make it to the Guardian Live event: The Fight for Liberal Britain. This was a hustings event featuring Norman Lamb and Tim Farron as part of the Liberal Democrat Leadership contest. It was an extremely thought-provoking evening and I even got the chance to pose my own question: Where will your party stand on free market capitalism, in light of the 2008 financial crisis, which is widely agreed to have been caused by a lack of bank regulation? Both answered with a firm conviction that banks and businesses must not be permitted to grow so large that they control whole markets. Afterwards, I had lengthy conversations with both Tim Farron and Norman Lamb. I told Norman Lamb of our local mental health project, he agreed to support wherever possible and keep in

touch. Later on in the month, Sophie Giltinan and I met with the Bristol East MP, Kerry McCarthy so we could discuss how we can support each other in having a positive impact for the city. Kerry was very supportive of our campaigns and promised to ensure Youth Parliament priorities remained on the Westminster agenda. She even offered to submit a question to Nicky Morgan to ask her to respond to the Education Select Committees report on PSHE. Since then, I have been working on our Bristol Mind The Gap report, which I will submit at Annual Sitting in a weeks time. Im looking forward to a meeting with the co-chair of the Health and Wellbeing board here in Bristol early tomorrow morning and spending the day filming with Fixers UK for a feature on my political education project, which should be aired in the next couple of weeks. Annual Sitting is this weekend and I cant even begin to put into words how excited I am to meet Members of Youth Parliament from all across the country!

Once again, this month has been extremely busy and progress has been made! Like many other BYC representatives, I have had to fit Youth Parliament/Bristol City Youth Council work around revision and 23 exams. Sophie Giltinan (the other Member of Youth Parliament for Bristol) and I have begun contacting schools to ask them to register as a polling station for Make Your Mark, the annual UK Youth Parliament consultation of 11-18 year olds. This initiative is extremely important as it allows Members of Youth Parliament (as well as local councils and school councils) to gage which issues are of the greatest concern to the young people we represent and thus set the agenda for our House of Commons debate in November. I have found many schools rather unresponsive and it is occasionally taking an email and three phone calls to get through to someone! The UKYP target is to get 1million young people involved a 125,000 people increase on last year. I feel very much that the Department of Education and local authorities should help to distribute resources and publicise Make Your Mark to schools as this would ensure a high turn out and keep adult decision makers tuned in with the issues that are of greatest priority to young people. In addition to contacting schools in Bristol, I have been given responsibility of North Somerset schools as there is no Member of Youth Parliament in the local authority - and I go to school their. My head teacher has been extremely supportive and invited me to present at a conveniently timed meeting for all head teacher's in North Somerset - who were all very enthusiastic about getting involved in Make Your Mark. I hope that if there is a high voter turnout, the local council will facilitate a Member of Youth Parliament in the county over the next year or so! On Wednesday 27th July, myself, Sophie, the Bristol Youth Mayors and a number of the Youth Council presented our manifesto to the Bristol City Council at their annual general meeting. You can watch our presentation and listen to responding comments here (01:59): [http://www.bristol.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast\\_interactive/177052](http://www.bristol.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/177052). It was an incredible experience; we were all extremely pleased with the positive response and the pledges the councillors made afterwards. Whilst speaking, I received an impromptu applause as I mentioned the Our Vote, Our Future campaign (mentioned in my previous Positive Story) and said it was proof that young people are not plagued with political apathy, as often reported. The BYC convention was this month also. We voted to elect our members for the NHS Youth Forum and took part in a variety of workshops. Our PG, Jess, launched the #MindTheGap campaign, which aims to record how accesible mental health services are in each constituency. I've started work on gathering information about services in Bristol. We also participated in a workshop that aimed to uncover and oppose stigma against the LGBTIQ community. As always, it was lovely to see the other South West BYC youth representatives! I met someone who works at Bristol Festival of Ideas this month as the initial step in a new project that I hope to incorporate in our mental health campaign here in Bristol. It's still in it's initial stages so I won't give too much away but I'm very excited about the prospect. On the 20th June, I travelled to London with Bristol People's Assembly and marched from outside the Bank of England to Parliament Square, as one of the estimated 250,000 people who

attended the National March Against Austerity. This was an incredibly empowering experience and I was particularly pleased to have been able to hear Caroline Lucas MP, Jeremy Corbyn MP and Francesca Martinez speak when we assembled at the end of the march. I oppose austerity because I have seen first hand how it impacts upon frontline mental health services and the wellbeing of people. Just two days later, I was invited to the Houses of Parliament for a private tour and lunch with Liam Fox MP. This was my prize for winning the North Somerset Schools Debate this year and it was one of the most awe-inspiring experiences of my life. It was incredible to walk along the very same corridors that great leaders of this country have done for centuries. We were invited to Downing Street also, to have photos taken outside. Eleanor Laing MP joined us for lunch in the Strangers' Lounge also and we spoke about a range of things including the proposal for a British Bill of Human Rights, the EU referendum and Votes at 16. I promised to send both Liam and Eleanor the article I have written, which debunks arguments used often against votes at 16. It has been published by the think tank, Agora, and can be found here: <http://agorans.org/2015/05/31/im-another-myth-put-about-by-pro-europeans/>. I am pleased to have made progress on my political education campaign with Fixers UK also as we have met with them and set a date to meet a creative director. The campaign should consist of 4 short videos explaining various political structures, with the overarching message being one of empowerment. This is due to my belief that young people do care about issues, but feel disenfranchised with the system and unable to make a positive change. I hope to inform them of how easy it is to petition, protest, write to government representatives and campaign. These videos will be released along workshop templates, hopefully in time for local democracy week so that we can send them in to schools and get them participating!

## Cornwall

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### **Saffron, 15, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

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

This month Cameron and I held a meeting in order to email all the schools in our constituency. Only a few made the effort to contact us back; however the majority did not even respond. Cameron did meet up with one member of the senior team at Richard Lander School and I assume it went successful. I only called a few schools, however I thought if I was constantly on the schools that it would put a negative impression on the youth parliament.

## Devon

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### **Olivia, 16, MYP**

This month I went to the Uky annual sitting where 250 members of youth parliament came together for the big vote. On what will be the top ten issues for the make your Mark ballot. I was lucky enough to talk in two of the debates motions being extended support for special needs children which passed and funding for youth projects which had fallen. The weekend was full of make your Mark activities where we got more of a understanding about what other regions were doing for it.

### **Bethany Lee, 15, DMYP**

July has been an extremely busy month for me. Not only have I been contacting schools about Make Your Mark, but I have had two weeks of work experience and plenty of other school-related things on top of Youth Parliament work. Our Devon county meeting on Saturday 4th was very exciting, as we got to meet our new Exeter D/MYPs for the very first time! Over the course of the month, everyone across UKYP has been busy getting schools to sign up for Make Your Mark " as well as this I have been trying to get as many consultation surveys as possible filled in so that I can find out what my constituents think of our local campaigns. On Tuesday 28th I went to a Fixers meeting about our transport campaign. The meeting was very helpful as we now have our final idea and filming dates, and I look forward to seeing how it turns out. I'm sure August will be as jam-packed as July was, and I hope that everyone who attended had a great time at the annual sitting!

### **Ryan Harnell, 15, MYP**

This month I have been ensuring that Young People in my College have had their voice heard in our County Survey on Local Campaigns, which are Transport, Extracurricular Opportunities and Disabilities. I have been to a County Meeting in Exeter this month where I met the new Exeter D/MYP's and aided them getting up to date with our administration. Furthermore at the meeting we revised our obligations to our constituents and the code of conduct. There was no Local Meeting this month due to conflicting Work Experience placements and the usual date we meet. In fact much of my time this month (as last month) was taken up with wrapping up schoolwork, Mocks and my Work Experience which was Amateur Dramatics with Entertainingly Different. I am very much looking forward to the Annual Sitting on Friday and can't wait to see my colleagues again!

### **Tom Burrows, 15, MYP**

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

### **Jack Alderman, 17, Member of Youth Parliament**

In the short time that I've been elected, in contrast to other MYPs, I've done a number of things in the month of July to ensure an efficient start to my time as MYP for Exeter. I exercised my time in a sufficient manner and got to work recruiting schools and colleges in my local area. I also completed numerous surveys in the city centre and spoke to a number of young people about what youth parliament does and how they can make a difference by voting in make your mark.

## **Dorset**

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### **Crystal-Lily, 17, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

This month me and Dorset youth council attended the Tolpuddle festivals and had our own debate tent and I gave my points on why we should lower the voting age to 16 and I had a good response we also did a debate on compulsory voting and so many people took part which helped me also as well understand more views the people have. We also opened the floor in the afternoon for people opinions on how young people protest today to get their views and points across so many people took part and it was great to see people involved and have such an opinion on what was happening. Also this month I had a meeting with my youth participation worker to see how I can take my campaign to the next level so this month was very productive also had a monthly meeting with Dorset youth council and discussed everyone's productivity.

### **Sophie Trott, 13, Youth Councillor**

This month started with the July Dorset youth council meeting. Followed by the Dorset police and crime commissioner youth shadow board meeting. This meeting discussed how encounters and searches can be avoided by the police - many interesting points were made. Finally in July I attended the Tolpuddle festival with Dorset youth council. At this event we ran a number of debates on various subjects including: votes at 16, compulsory voting and how you people protest today. The audience participated hugely in the debates, bringing an interesting perspective.

### **Jack Dunne, 17, Member of Youth Parliament**

This month as an MYP started with a regional meeting. All the MYPs, DMYPs and local Youth Councils met to discuss what we have all been doing since our last meeting and also elect a NHS Youth representative for the south of England. A few weeks later the British Youth Council (BYC) contacted me and told me that I had been elected to do this job. So I am now a member of the NHS England Youth Forum 2015. I went to the Tolpuddle Liberties event to celebrate the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta. This event consisted of members of the TUC and other people gathering around the Martyrs tree in Tolpuddle with a cup of tea provided by the National Trust. A couple of people and myself spoke about what Magna Carta and the Tolpuddle Martyrs did for the people and our democracy. I then spoke about the importance of engagement with young people and democracy, following the lines of how

significant are events such as Tol Puddle and Magna Carta. I spent a weekend with BYC in Kidderminster for the NHS Youth Forum. The residential consisted of many meetings with external and internal groups of our NHS. The group talked about the importance of the NHS for young people and what we could do to engage people in using the NHS and the services that it provides. All the meetings and talks proved really useful, I felt that the people we talked to understood what and who we are and were able to listen to use so much so that they will hopefully take on board what we said and our recommendations. I am now looking forward to my holiday and aid work in Kenya next month and the upcoming political events such as the Tol Puddle Martyrs event and others.

### **Jake Perkins, 15, Youth Councillor**

Though the academic year has slowed down, I have not. The three major event that went on throughout this months. Firstly, the Monthly DYCE meeting; we got updates on the work of our MYP's and others. Also we were visited by a local teacher how was presenting his idea of a local idea league; I help to start to create a dialogue between him and my school in the hope to sign up. I received the expellant news that I have been invited to attend a 'World Heritage Youth Summit' in October, creating a presentation for this should occupy my summer.

I also attend the 'PCC Youth Shadowing Group' at Dorset Police Headquarters; the room was fill of passionate young people. The major discussion revolved around the encounters between police officers and young people in stop and searches, with the main aim to smooth the process and reduce tension. The topic of body cameras, that are soon to be introduce to frontline officers, come up and is secluded for discussion at the next meeting.

The biggest event of this months was the annual 'Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival' outside the village of Tolpuddle. This was a truly amazing experience; as I was opened up to many different political ideologies, I was ignorant to, and I made myself listen and learn. To Youth Debates, headed by BYC trustee, Sam Foulder-Hughes. These debates/discussions incited many interesting conversations about political education in schools and other highly relevant issues. Baroness Janet Royall and Claire Moody MEP, also attended the first of these debates and contributed fantastic points. It was truly a grand day out.

## **Gloucestershire**

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### **Alysha Bodman, 16, Member of Youth Parliament**

July has been a really busy month! I have been constantly contacting schools regarding the Make Your Mark Ballot, researching the mental health services in Stroud and the Cotswolds and much more. I am really proud to have 11 schools and Girlguiding Gloucestershire in my constituency preregistered to Make Your Mark. I couldnt have achieved this success without the support of Neil Carmichael MP and the Stroud and Cotswold councils, who both published my press releases. Moreover, I would like to thank the Stroud News and Journal for publishing my article which promoted Make Your Mark! This ballot is a great opportunity for young people to participate in democracy and have an experience of

voting for issues they feel passionate about and therefore I am very pleased that many young people in Stroud and the Cotswolds will have this opportunity. Throughout this month I have been researching the mental health services available in Stroud and the Cotswolds for the #Mindthegap campaign which aims to highlight the gaps and inconsistencies in the mental health services available for young people. I have been speaking to many young people who have had first-hand experience with the services and have found this very informative and insightful. I made sure that I recorded the results I found in the table provided and handed it in at the annual sitting. Some of the information I found out about the services was really shocking and distressing and I really hope that as a Youth Parliament we can improve the quality of the services for young people so they have a much better experience in the future. On the 4th of July, my fellow South West MYPs and I attended the South West Labour Leadership hustings in Swindon. We were all lucky enough to get selected to attend and listen to all of the candidates standing to be Leader or Deputy Leader of the party. They were questioned about a variety of topics such as mental health, renationalisation of the railways and social housing. We represented the young people of our constituencies and spoke to all of the candidates afterwards about the importance of youth voice and a mixture of subjects which directly affect the young generation. Overall, it was a very eye opening day and it was very enjoyable to hear the different opinions presented in the debate. In addition, I attended the Stroud District Youth Council meeting on the 20th of July. I introduced myself and I told them about all the work I am doing within the constituency. It was very interesting to hear about all the amazing work they are doing to improve Stroud and I really enjoyed it! Members of the SDYC fed back to the group about the progress of their student councils and some members who had been to a 'Men's and Mental Health Conference' in June told the council about what they had found out. We also discussed the issues that we felt were the most important for the PD and PSHE curriculum and this directly related to a Youth Parliament campaign called 'Curriculum For Life'. Oliver Catchpole from the council presented to his 'Arch to Uni Scheme' which aims to enable young people of all backgrounds to attend university open days. Please complete his survey here to help his work: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PNDFJKW>. I attended the Gloucestershire MYP meeting and we discussed our progress and the Annual Sitting which is coming up next week! We have contacted 'Fixers' and hope to do a project with them and the '2gether Trust' to raise awareness about Mental Health. Moreover, we are also really looking forward to launching the 'Make Your Mark' campaign in the new school year! Moreover, I also attended the Department of Education's consultation about the GCSE and A Level Reforms in London! The main issues discussed were whether the new curriculum provides a suitable level of challenge, whether the content reflects what students need to know to progress into further academic/vocational education and whether the content of the qualification is appropriate. It was a very valuable experience and I contributed my opinions about the reform to the rest of the group. I am very glad that the government consulted young people on these changes and are valuing our opinion on matters that directly affect us.

### **Nathan Sexton, 13, Member of Youth Parliament**

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

## Plymouth

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### **Tom Cahill, 17, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

June and July have both been busy months for the team in Plymouth as we've been working on our individual campaigns. I invited the head of the 1000 Club, one of the biggest youth apprenticeship organisations in this area of the South West, along to one of our Youth Cabinet sessions where I had the opportunity to promote the importance of youth employability. This really helped to energise and focus our future work in spearheading the youth employment campaign in Plymouth. Have also been working to get all of the local MPs into Youth Cabinet to attempt to repair MYP-MP relations. But with summer recess approaching fast, these plans had to be shelved for September.

## Poole

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

This month has been another incredibly exciting month! On the 8th of July myself along with the other members of Pooles Childrens and Young Peoples Board held the launch event of our FLIPPED project and website. FLIPPED is a collection of resources for teachers and students to be used within PSHE covering a wide of topics from mental health to discrimination and financial skills. These topics were chosen following consultation of over 800 young people in Poole. The aim of this project is to "flip PSHE on its head by producing interactive, interesting and memorable resources to replace the ineffective, often useless lessons currently being delivered. The best thing about these resources is that they have been developed by young people for young people. The website also has links to various support services and other useful websites for young people to access. We hope to continue to add to the website as time goes on, in line with what young people feel they need to be taught. The launch event was held at the Lighthouse Arts Centre and was attended by a range of adults including many teachers and other professionals and was formally opened by the mayor. Many teachers showed great interest in the project and have agreed to begin to use the resources at the beginning of the new school year in September. On a local level we have also made progress with our bullying priority, having decided to develop and deliver workshops for teachers and students centred specifically on the bully as opposed to those being bullied. Ultimately, we hope that these resources can be added to the FLIPPED website to be used within schools. On a national level, we have also been busy in Poole contacting schools encouraging them to sign up to Youth Parliaments annual consultation entitled "Make Your Mark. Through this consultation young people from all over the country are given the opportunity to have their say on the issues which are most important to them. The top 5 issues go on to be debated in the House of Commons by MYPs in November. Last year we doubled Pooles turnout to over 4,000 young people and we hope to increase this total again this year! Furthermore, on the 3rd of July, as a member of the 2015 Youth Select Committee, I attended the second oral evidence session in Parliament during which we questioned a range of panellists on the current state of young peoples mental health services including the Rt Hon Alistair Burt MP, Minister for Community and Social Care and Sam Gyimah MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Childcare and Education. Following on from this, the

committee is currently in the initial stages of drafting a report for the UK government outlining recommendations to improve young peoples mental health services.

On a national level, I have had an incredibly exciting month as a member of the 2015 Youth Select Committee on young peoples mental health. On the 26th June we held the first of our Oral Evidence Sessions in Parliament, during which we heard from a range of panelists from health services. This provided an invaluable insight into the current state of young peoples mental health services as well as some of the experiences surrounding stigma and bullying which face young people today. This will ultimately help us to produce a report with recommendations for the Government to consider. It was also an amazing opportunity to develop my skills around questioning, reading and analysing information and to gain a greater understanding of the workings of a Select Committee within Parliament. Furthermore, I have also been making progress with my local priorities. With regards to the project around the meaning of success, we have a meeting with Fixers next week to begin the process of bringing the project to life. As a member of Pooles Children and Young Peoples Board, I have been continuing work around the FLIPPED project, through which we have produced 5 lesson plans covering the 5 most important issues to the young people in our area following consultation. These resources have subsequently become an online resource and we have an official launch of the project on the 8th July, where a range of professionals involved in young peoples education and development have been invited to attend.

## Somerset

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### **Kira Lewis, 15, Member of Youth Parliament**

In July, I tried to represent my constituents to decision makers, engage with the community and represent Taunton Deane & West Somerset to the national UK Youth Parliament. I met with my deputy thrice to further out campaign and plan for the future, I was filmed for BBC's Neighbourhood Blues when out engaging with the local community (airing in the upcoming months), attended a South-West Action Group meeting to discuss the future of the group and spoke at Somerset's Local Safeguarding Children's Board meeting. I was also proud to be anchoring my school's first ever girl's tug of war match, which we won, and made me a very proud house captain! I also attended a Regional Youth Work meeting to see how they operate and to offer a young person's perspective and volunteered at RNAS Yeovilton International Air Day, which was a thrilling experience. I also attended a meeting to discuss an integrated sexual clinic in Somerset. I was proud to meet Stella Creasy, who's standing as deputy leader of The Labour Party and discussed engaging young people in politics and my campaign. In July I was also awarded Taunton Learning Partnership's Community Engagement Award, which I was very humbled to win. Somerset also submitted research to the British Youth Council's #MindTheGap campaign, which involved us researching the mental health facilities in our area (including charities, schools and organisations). The 31st of July to 2nd August saw me attend the UK Youth Parliament and British Youth Council's 15th Annual Sitting at the University of Exeter. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience and allowed me to network and represent to Members of Youth Parliament from across the country and the devolved nations. I was proud to speak on a fellow Somerset MYP's motion on youth unemployment and proposed my own motion on allowing young people to make informed choices around New Psychoactive Substances (legal highs), which I am

honoured to say was passed and so added to The British Youth Council's manifesto. The weekend was a fantastic opportunity and I am looking forward to the busy month ahead!

## Swindon

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### Member of Youth Parliament

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the annual sitting due to being away on holiday, so Ellie kindly went in my place. About two weeks ago, I sat with Swindon Borough council in the civic offices to act as a representative of the youth of Swindon. I didn't speak much. Hopefully sometime soon, (Friday sat or Sunday fingers crossed) I will be having a meeting about my campaign. Wilfred.

## Wiltshire

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### James Wilkins, 13, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

On the 7th of July I attended a Local Youth Network meeting and helped to decide whether or not a local youth grant should be given. The grant was for the funding of a youth work apprentice and the final decision resulted in the money being given for this. - James

### Member of Youth Parliament

This month I have been speaking with the police and crime commissioner for my area. I have always attended the Wiltshire assembly and spoken to them about motions for Make Your Mark and also about how to get young people involved in the community. I continued to email schools to get them to sign up for Make Your Mark and am currently waiting for schools to return from summer holidays so that I can start corresponding with them again. I also attended the UKYP annual sitting at Exeter University. Whilst I was there I learnt many new skills to aid me in Make Your Mark. I also met a variety of different MYPs and learnt how they were thinking of getting young people involved in Make Your Mark.

### Chloe Lintern, 17, Member of Youth Parliament

This month we finished signing up schools for Make Your Mark which was a really good turnout for Wiltshire. We have more schools signed up than last year which is a really positive step towards our target this year. I also finalise my campaign plan for my campaign called 'Mirror Mirror' which works to get young people to love who they are and accept who they are. At the end of the month I am attending the Annual sitting where all Member of UK Youth Parliament will come together to debate motions, improve skills and prepare for Make Your Mark 2015.

### **Kieran Mulvaney, 17, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

This month I have been hard at work with UKYP, WAY and Lets think about it. All of them have provided lots of new challenges and especially lets think. With lets think we are starting to prepare for our online media campaign which currently is in the process of being organised and will feature both MPs and people not involved with the campaign in video shorts on why mental health is important to them. With UKYP we are finishing off preparation for MYM and Wiltshire looks to increase on its total from last time. Within WAY there has just been a short change over period and unfortunately I had to miss the last meeting however I plan to go to the next one and hopefully will be able to launch the new campaign then and have the backing of the local youth council and youth parliament. Lets think about it is also fast moving towards 500 likes on Facebook, a range of followers on twitter including Natalie Bennett the leader of the green party. We also have support from Michelle Donelan MP and Johnny Mercer MP, we have alsosent letters to Nicola Sturgeon and other party leaders in hope of their support and we are currently starting to work with back bench MPs such as Melanie Inn MP

# West Midlands

## Dudley

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### **Megan Weaver, 15, Youth Councillor**

I went to the first NHS Youth Forum residential, which was extremely successful. I met new people that I will be working with this year and also got the chance to speak to professionals in various areas of health. The residential opened my eyes to how much impact the NHS Youth Forum can make and I am now excited to continue working with them!

### **Louise pardoe, 14, Youth Councillor**

I have been planning, alongside many other councillors, a small scale festival that will be held in a local youth centre. There will be live music, workshops and plenty of fun for everyone. We've been working so hard on it and it guarantees to be a great day.

# Yorkshire and Humber

## Barnsley

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### Connor Tate, Youth Councillor

#### Lets Grow !

Connor Tate Barnsley Youth Councillor was nominated by the Stairfoot Councillors for the Young Community Contribution Award for Stairfoot which he then won, this award was to recognise a young person who has played an active part in their local community, helping others, taking part in community led projects, and inspiring other young people to get involved.



On the night he was introduced as:

Connor is currently undertaking his second term of office on the Barnsley Youth Council through this work he learned about the Love Where You Live initiative and the Lets Grow Project and identified that his local area would be a great place to set up a project.

Through partnership working with Voluntary Action Barnsley, the councils Park Services, elected members and the Central Area Team his Lets Grow project is now well under way.

A raised bed has been set up with lots of different vegetables growing in it which will be shared at events for the street. Additionally a funding bid has been submitted to sustain the project and make the park area safer.

He has now inspired his fellow youth councillors to get involved in Lets Grow and they have some exciting things planned for the summer.

We are very proud to award the Stairfoot award to; Connor Tate.

# Doncaster

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## **Page Rutherford, Youth Councillor**

I recently met my ward members and youth councillors at my youth centre, the youth centre runs youth surgeries, I got to discuss issues of concern to me about my community especially the gang culture around the estates I was told that investigations and actions to stop this were ongoing We also talked about help to make my mind up about working after I leave school and we were given some ideas how to get advice.

## **Emma Spencer, 17, Member of Youth Parliament**

I was invited to have my say on the Local Plan for future developments in Doncaster. In July I had the opportunity to attend a Local Plan Consultation event that was held at Doncaster College. Doncaster Council is preparing a new Local Plan that will have a big influence on the amount and location of new development across the borough in the period up to 2032. I think it's important that people get involved in this type of consultation because after all whatever is built in the borough will have an impact on people who live in the borough. When I was asked if I wanted to be involved I wasn't really sure what they would want from me and I was nervous, but now I wonder why it was very interesting to hear other people's views and ideas. I think it's important that we build affordable housing, for example in the area where I live it's quite affluent and I don't think I will ever be able to buy my own home where my family live. So the main point I raised was about building flats or small houses for people to buy in affluent areas, instead of always building the big four / five bedroom executive houses. I think young people should have the opportunity to get on the property ladder and live in the areas where they have grown up.

## **Rachel Mungai, 15, Youth Councillor**

On the 29 June I attended a youth surgery in Askern at Shakers Community Café, I hadn't been there before it's such a great building it's like a massive log cabin. Some of the issues that the young people talked about were interesting, the youth surgeries are opportunities for any young person to come and meet with a youth councillor and ward member and talk about their thoughts, views or concerns about their community. One of the things that they asked me to do as a youth councillor was support with a School issue. They said they had to wear full school uniform in hot weather including their School Blazers and as it's been so hot this month they really wanted to be able to take their blazers off. As youth councillors we believe that it's important that young people have the opportunity to have a voice and express their views and we thought this was a reasonable request. So we agreed to support them by writing to the school on their behalf and we asked the school to agree a compromise about wearing School Blazers in hot weather conditions. I hope we get a result!

## **Aysha Ahmed , 18, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

This weekend I attended my final annual sitting at Exeter. It was a wonderful location and somewhere I hadn't been before. I developed my skill in the workshops, during these workshops I reflected on

previous events that the Doncaster Youth Council had held and brainstormed how to improve events to be more inclusive of a diverse audience for future events and consultations. It was unfortunate that our train was delayed and for the second time I missed John Bercow's introduction speech. However I still got to hear speeches made by Johnny Chatterton and Sian James who had both campaigned on different issues retrospectively. These talks were energising because here were two people who were successful in their endeavours, inspiring us / me. The 'Big Vote' was fascinating as usual with many flamboyant speakers and interesting debates spanning from discussions on anti-austerity to votes for 16 and 17 year olds in the EU referendum. The evening entertainment was very fun, with quizzes, film and the annual summer party. By the end of the weekend we all felt motivated for the upcoming Make your Mark consultation but also very tired from all the exciting work and I'm sure there will be many sleepy people on their journeys back.

### **Charlie Lavemai-Goldsbrough, 18, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

Between 31st July and 2nd August I went on my first annual sitting at Exeter University. I was there as Deputy Member of youth parliament for Doncaster standing in for our MYP who was away on holiday. The location was inspiring with the large auditorium giving a real sense of empowerment particularly during the BIG VOTE and other talks. Although we arrived late and missed John Bercow's speech the other speakers more than made up for it as they were inspiring and were real life examples of how we can take action. Perhaps the best part of the annual sitting for me was the BIG VOTE and as this was my first and last one I was honoured to have the chance to speak and be part of something so important in updating the UKYP manifesto. Overall the weekend was enjoyable and inspirational and I felt empowered to make a difference, whilst also feeling welcomed into the Youth Parliament community.

## **North East Lincolnshire**

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### **Oliver Dyson, 20, Youth Councillor**

On the 9th June I went down to London to collect the Ambition Social action project of the year award for the holiday rider. which in three years has saved over £220,000. During the day had a wander round London into St James park. the awards were presented on the London eye in which we had two full circles round.

## **Sheffield**

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### **Abigail Kirk, 13, Youth Councillor**

This month has been stressful but worthwhile with registering my school for make your mark and planning assemblies for all year groups at my school in September. In the assemblies I have planned to talk about how the youth cabinet has changed me as a person, with becoming more confident, and how the youth parliament can change young peoples lives in school, in the future and in our communities. I

think these topics are going to be useful when getting people from my school to vote in make your mark because they will vote more wisely rather than ticking any old box. Following the proposed ban of Novel Psychoactive Substances in the UK, hopefully this will mean that less young people will be killed or injured from consuming legal highs, and also further supports our citywide campaign around this. We feel that it is important that schools have a clear policy on how they support students who carry/ use Novel Psychoactive Substances and this is something we will be looking into further over the coming months. I'm loving my time in the youth cabinet because I have took part in some great opportunities, making me become more independent and confident not just in school but outside, in my community as well. I cant wait to see what will happen next in my role in the youth cabinet!

### **Anne Solademi, 15, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament**

Positive stories July has been great, I have learnt even more than I could imagine in how to develop in time keeping and organizational skills; which I know will be essential life skills for the future. I also developed in confidence as I spoke and interacted with new people. In addition I did my work experience at Sheffield Futures learning different and life enhancing skills I'm definitely sure I will be using in the future, I have not only gained in wisdom and knowledge, but also gained new friends and an understanding of the work that goes into making young peoples lifes better, to give them the opportunity to express themselves and have a voice in society. I can now better value the effort from the people behind the scenes, working to give us chance to create our own world without fear or barriers. They are like superheroes, guiding, supporting and encouraging-Its nice to know someone cares. Well, for the Make your Mark campaign, we as a Youth Cabinet and individually have done a lot, we already have more than half of our schools signed up which is a great achievement. Our chair and support worker have both done a lot also to ensure that all the schools register and join the growing movement. I feel everything is going better than I could imagine. I am preparing to present in assemblies so schools can vote, I am also targeting Madrassahs, Youth clubs, and even primary schools to ensure we reach our goal. I am looking forward to accomplishing my goals. Anne Solademi DMYP 15yrs

# Northern Ireland

## Belfast East

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### Ross McVittie, 18, Member of Youth Parliament

The month of July was busy. However it was very good and nothing negative. On the 8th July I met with my local MLA Sammy Douglas (DUP). I was invited by him to the launch of the annual 12th July Orange Order parade known as Orangefest. We briefly met outside Belfast City Hall to discuss why Make Your Mark was a great opportunity to host with schools and the impact it will have on them. On the 10th July I went along to one of the NI Youth Forum's events called Leading Change. During the meeting myself, Jordan Graham, Sophie Bell, Thomas Chambers, Patrick Corell and Corey Norewood formed a mental health campaign group called REWIND designed to promote awareness of mental health issues amongst young using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube for the NI Youth Forum's AGM meeting in August. From 15th-29th July I was away on holiday to the Republic of Ireland. Whilst I was in Dublin for 3 days I got a tour of Leinster House and Dail Eireann. My guide explained to me how the political system system works. Whilst I was driving through to Tralee and Cork I saw numerous Constituency offices mostly bearing Fine Gael and Sinn Fein I noticed the comparison between the offices in the UK. With my greater understanding of Irish Politics I am writing a letter to Taoiseach Enda Kenny to meet with him and discuss my role as an MYP. From 31st-2nd July we had the Annual Sitting. I had an amazing time at it because I got to speak on proposed motion from one my campaign issues entitled Apprenticeships should pay the living wage. Unfortunately my motion collapsed but I really loved speaking about it and I was very confident in speaking about it in-front of everyone. During the sitting we got to hear 3 famous people speaking to use and expressing their best wishes for us in the future and wishing us well with our campaigns. These were John Bercow MP the Speaker of the House of Commons, Jonny Chaterham the leader of campaign Bootcamp designed to make you be confident in campaigning and Sian James MP a Labour party politician and activist who starred in the film Pride. At the end of it we had a formal 3 course meal dinner and a disco to celebrate having the Annual Sitting. It was amazing meeting everyone from the Kent Residential whom we remembered especially our groups that we had previously. Took loads of photographs to have great memories of everything.

The month of July has been a very exciting and here are the reasons why. 8th July I met with my local MLA Sammy Douglas to discuss the benefits of why Make Your Mark is a great opportunity for schools to have and to hold. We then discussed how cabbages are great to have as an agricultural asset and for long term prosperity. 10th July I went along to one of the NI Youth Forum's Leading Change projects and the project that myself, Jordan Graham, Sophie Bell, Thomas Chambers, Patrick Carroll and Corey Norewood participated in and we entitled our project REWIND. It's a mental health awareness scheme which we are launching at the NI Youth Forum's AGM in August. Subscribe to use via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. 16th July I got a tour of Leinster House and Dail Eireann better known as the Irish Parliament. My guide explained to me how each legislative system worked from the Upper and the Lower House. After getting a better understanding I am writing a letter to Taoiseach Enda Kenny to meet with him to discuss my role as an MYP. 31st-2nd July I attended the Annual Sitting. During my

presence I catches up with my counterparts from Scotland and England see how we were getting along over the past months. I was privileged in being invited to speak at it on a proposed motion about Apprenticeships should pay the living wage Unfortunately the motion collapsed but I still felt proud of speaking up-front. During the sitting we got to hear and see very well known people in the UK. Leader of the House of Commons John Bercow spoke to use on Friday wishing us the very best in our campaigns and congratulating us on attending the Annual Sitting. Campaigner Jonny Chatterham gave us advice on how to confidently campaign on things which your passionate about and on Sunday we heard from Labour MP Sian Janes who was involved in the film Pride. What I really enjoyed at the end of it was the formal dinner which was delicious and the disco which was very energetic. It has been a great pleasure being here and catching up with everyone! Photographs to follow up on Facebook.

## **Belfast North**

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### **Member of Youth Parliament**

This month has clearly been a big one for all us MYPs, similar to the prize winning cabbages we grow homeward bound in Northern Ireland. Recently i had my work experience with the SDLP MLA Alban Maginness. This experience allowed me to increase my political knowledge and to pick up new skills to enhance my campaign. I was able to attend committee meetings and meet a few lovely northern irish political faces. On the friday i was lucky enough to attend the Mater Hospital Community Forum and listen in on the issues being raised allowing me to become aware of the lack of mental health services available for young people. Another amazing experience i was involved in this month was the 2015 annual sitting. It was amazing to take part in such an inspirational event and listen to such fantastic points during the big vote and even getting to speak upon the motion of the pressure of success within youth. I am now ready to push forward for the 1 million mark for the MYM campaign and for Northern ireland to be in for the win!!!!

## **Belfast South**

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

Me and some fellow MYPs Made a social media campaign about mental health called rewind. In this month I went to the annul sitting on the 31st of July. On the first day i attended a make your mark workshop where I learned all about make your mark and how to get as many ballots as possible. On the Saturday i attend some fabulous workshops where they peeled me apart like a cabbage and put me back together with confidants to prepare me for the big dabte. Over the next day we had the big dabte this is where we added to the BYC manifesto. On the Saturday we had are MYP summer party where we had a formal dinner and a disco.

## Belfast West

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### **Amber Mcstravick, 18, Member of Youth Parliament**

At the end of last month, the Northern Ireland team of MYPs were invited to a reception up at Stormont Parliament Buildings with a company called Politics Plus. Without contacting all 108 MLAs in our Assembly, I would not have received contact from this company to secure our funding for the Annual Sitting at Exeter University. At this event, I was asked specifically to speak alongside MLAs about Youth Involvement in Politics and how important the UKYP is to myself and other young people. It was absolutely nerve wrecking but I felt overjoyed afterwards with the strong support from the other NI MYPs. As well as enjoying my summer, I was looking forward to the Annual Sitting at the University of Exeter which is just over, sadly. The experience was overwhelming as I met so many other MYPs from across the UK, discussing campaigns and issues. On Friday, we had an opening ceremony which included John Bercow - Speaker of the House of Commons - speaking about how much he supports the UKYP in the work we do, as well as encouraging and inspiring us to make sure we gain as much as possible from this weekend. Throughout the weekend we also had workshops to help us gain new skills and improve on skills we already had based on a rating we gave ourselves at the Youth Voice Residential in Kent back in April. We also had two other speakers, Johnny Chatterton and Sian James talking to us all about campaigning and political activism, again inspiring and empowering us to work hard on our campaigns. The most important part of the Annual Sitting was The Big Vote which was a debate between all MYPs to vote for or against 32 motions that were put forward to be a possible addition to our Manifesto. My own Manifesto campaign was picked as one of the 32 which meant I had to lead the debate on it - The decriminalisation of drugs and raising awareness that drug addiction is in fact a mental health issue. As I went to speak, I was so nervous standing in front of 300 people ready to debate my motion. Suddenly, I started thinking about cabbages which calmed my mind right down. Despite my motion being passed, I had an amazing time listening to my peers and taking on board what they had to say concerning my campaign. Overall, the weekend was absolutely amazing and I am so saddened that I don't have another chance to go to future Annual Sitings.

## East Antrim

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### **Sophie Bell, 17, Member of Youth Parliament**

Well the Annual Sitting was amazing; 1. An opportunity to represent the thoughts of my constituents - I was able to feed back the opinions of my area in front of all other MYPs. 2. Debating issues that really matter to me - I got to speak on gender equality and feminism which I am so passionate about. 3. Improving my own skills and qualities - the workshops were humdinger!! 4. Meeting new and diverse people from all over the UK and forming friendships. M Thanks to BYC and all the PGs for their efforts.

## East Londonderry

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### Emma McCaughern, Member of Youth Parliament

July has been another busy month as Member of youth parliament for east Londonderry. On the 30th of June I attended a reception at Stormont. This was organised by Politics Plus who secured funding for us to attend Annual Sitting in Exeter. On the 3rd of July I met with my MP Gregory Campbell to discuss my campaign as well as Make your Mark and Votes at 16. On the 31st of July my fellow NI MYPs and I set off for Exeter in England for the UK youth parliament annual sitting. Here I attended workshops where I learnt more about being an effective MYP. We attended an inspirational talk from John Bercow, and afterwards he held a Q&A session. I was lucky enough to ask him a question, which made me feel happier than a gardener with a prize winning cabbage. I also proposed a motion during the big vote on my campaign, the education budget in Northern Ireland.

## Foyle

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### Thomas Chambers, 18, Member of Youth Parliament

This has been a very busy month for me as the Member of Youth Parliament for Foyle with involvement in a range of events including issues such as transport, mental health and youth engagement. Early this month MYPs from NI were invited to a reception in Stormont by Politics Plus to celebrate our work and the fact that we secured the funding to travel to the Annual Sitting. A number of MLAs attended this reception and it gave myself the opportunity to discuss my campaign with my local MLA and Environment Minister, Mark H Durkan. I have also been involved in the regional advisory groups which aimed to seek the input of young people on issues such as small grants and network for youth both of which have the goal of increasing youth engagement throughout NI. A great deal of progress has been made on my campaign for raising mental health awareness such as meetings with local charity, Aware Defeat Depression and the Mayor as well as the officer for Children and Young people in Derry City and Strabane District Council. In addition to this I have been heavily involved in a new campaign called Rewind which is active on a range of social media platforms and seeks to focus on removing the stigma surrounding mental health. Furthermore, my membership of the Translink Youth Forum has ensured that I have heard about the latest work of the transport company. This includes campaigns to make young people aware of methods to save money on public transport through using the Ylink card and informing us of the numerous events that they will be supplying travel to during the Summer. However, the highlight of the month was going to the Annual Sitting when we traveled to South West England passing wonderful landscapes from the rugged coastline we saw on the plane to the small residential cabbage patches visible as we drove through Exeter. The Annual Sitting gave us a chance to prepare for Make Your Mark, develop our skills as an MYP and debate major issues at the Big Vote. Overall it was an interesting, intriguing and fun time as we made new friends, listened to inspirational speakers such as John Bercow and enjoyed the Summer Party. The Annual Sitting has enabled me to feel confident and motivated as we get ready for Make Your Mark and I am determined that this year

we get more young people involved and most importantly that the issues concerning the young people of Foyle are heard.

## **Lagan Valley**

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

At the end of this month and the beginning of August, I had the pleasure of being accompanied by the remaining MYPs from Northern Ireland to Exeter for my second Annual Sitting. This was a fabulous weekend and one I will not forget. I've met some amazing people, got to speak up for Lagan Valley at the Big Vote and listened to some impassioned speeches. I can't wait for the House of Commons sitting and I'm all set for Make Your Mark.

## **Mid Ulster**

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### **Jack Logue, 17, Member of Youth Parliament**

This month I had a conversation with Sandra Overend and in the meeting we discussed cabbages and my campaign! It was great to get talking to Sandra as now I feel more confident in cooking and eating cabbages and more confident in talking about my campaign. I also attended the 2015 Annual Sitting in Exeter where 32 campaigns were debated in the big vote in order to be voted into the UKYP Manifesto. My campaign was successful in this debate and now am one step closer to it becoming a policy.

## **Newry and Armagh**

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### **Gareth Hampton, 16, Member of Youth Parliament**

During this month I have successfully signed up 4 Newry & Armagh schools for Make Your Mark achieving my target. The Northern Ireland MYPs were hosted at a reception by Politics Plus at Stormont to congratulate us on securing the funds to attend the Annual Sitting. The UKYP Annual Sitting with MYPs from all over the UK. I got the chance to speak on votes at 16 and extended support for special needs children. We also attended workshops where we learnt the 'cabbage breakdown' of a good campaign. I am constantly working on plans for my Make Your Mark campaign.

## North Antrim

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### **Niesha, 14, Member of Youth Parliament**

This month has been less busy but still an amazing month, this year I have traveled to Exeter with my fellow NI MYPs for the yearly event the annual sitting. It has been an incredible event and have learned so many new skills, I have gathered help for my campaign and of course Make your mark, I am more confident from hearing everyone else's ideas on how we can achieve a successful MYM event and hit the 1 million target. This event has been incredibly successful fun time, where I have gained so much more knowledge and increase in confidence, especially the best part was the amazing cabbage! Let's make make your mark successful!

## North Down

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

This month the 18 NI MYPS and some other MYPS from across the UK met together in Exeter for the annual sitting. Over the weekend we attended workshops and discussed the make your mark campaign with young people from across the UK. We also debated issues brought up in MYPS manifestos and voted on whether they should be used in the official UKYP manifesto. We also had a formal dinner and disco but there was a distinct lack of cabbage at the dinner. It was a great weekend and I feel motivated to exceed my personal target for the make your mark campaign.

## South Antrim

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### **Jordan Graham, 17, Member of Youth Parliament**

Earlier this month I started a mental health campaign with fellow Youth Representatives from Northern Ireland called REWIND (please follow us: @REWIND\_MH on Twitter and Instagram, REWIND on Facebook), it is a social media based mental health awareness campaign. The official launch will be late August but until then we are building up our online following. The UKYP Annual Sitting was a huge success (I'm writing this positive story on my journey home to Northern Ireland; the land of potatoes and cabbage). We voted on additions and amendments to the UKYP manifesto and I had the opportunity to give a speech in the auditorium. The UK Youth Parliament has really helped me to increase in my confidence and I'm really enjoying my time as an MYP.

## South Down

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

The main event for July 2015 was the UK Youth Parliament's Annual Sitting. I thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of this weekend, and would go so far as to describe no part of it as humdrum. I met with so many MYPs from across the UK, and shared my story with them and learned from their experiences in youth activism. I believe the workshops should have been organised by age and time spent in workshops could have been reduced to allow more time for the Big Vote, as it proved to be the most fulfilling and exciting part of the weekend. It felt great to speak before my fellow MYPs and make my impact upon UKYP policy!

## Strangford

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### **Member of Youth Parliament**

In July I met with the Chief Executive of my Council alongside two councillors and the Director for Community and Wellbeing in my council area. I told them my plans to set up a youth council in my local area and they were very positive and supported the idea. I have been given the go ahead to set up a youth advisory committee who will begin the plans of a youth council and will represent the voice of young people to the council who identified that they were struggling to get young people to speak to them about the new community plan. This is a positive step in the right direction for my campaign. I also met with a local MLA and I updated them on my campaign so far and he said he would support a local youth council. I also asked would he support the Make Your Mark Ballot and he very kindly said he would and he would write to schools and ask them to take part. Another very successful month and I hope August will be just as successful.

## Upper Bann

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### **Abigail Taylor, 18, Member of Youth Parliament**

Throughout this month, we as MYPs in particular the Northern Irish have made an incredible effort to complete school sign ups and try to spread the word of joining as a MYM Champion! Leading on from that, the 2015 Annual Sitting had just ended :(! Workshops on MYM in particular were so so important and helpful in improving our campaigns in the hope and mission on reaching the 1 Million young voices! The food was fantastic, a lot of cabbage though but apart from that very enjoyable! Also, the NI Assembly hosted a reception for all of the local MYPs to congratulate us on securing the funding to make it possible to enjoy such an amazing weekend that has just ended! P.S John Bercow was phenomenal!! A few of the NI MYPs this month met with the SDLP Party Alasdair McDonnell MP on the

campaign for Votes at 16! This was extremely successful as we have been given the opportunity to attend the annual party conference to talk to around 500 people about UKYP!

## West Tyrone

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### **Zara Hemphill , 17, Member of Youth Parliament**

July has been an extremely busy month for me in my role as an MYP for West Tyrone. Since I finished school for the summer holidays and completed all my exams I have had so much more free time to focus on my campaign on Smear testing being lowered to 16 and I've been able to start planning ways to prepare for Make your Mark in order for us to reach the 1 million mark this year. I also had the the most fantastic opportunity to attend the Annual Sitting in Exeter University, this was such an incredible experience as I was able to meet and develop more ideas with such enthusiastic and passionate people in order to benefit us all during make your mark. The big debate was so enjoyable as so many of us contributed our ideas which made such an interesting event, overall the Annual Sitting for me was such a rewarding experience and has helped me to become so motivated and prepared for Make Your Mark and has made me even more determined to smash the target of reaching 1 million.

### **Member of Youth Parliament**

Towards the end of July I along with the other Northern Irish MPs got the opportunity to attend the Annual Sitting at Exeter University. The land of cabbages and of wild meadows struck me as we flew low across Devon in to tiny cluster of huts that made up the sweet-sounding, Exeter International. It was a polished arrival; we got of the flight, collected our baggage and got into a mini-cab, I likened it to the Apprentice but with a clearer and more ethical purpose in mind. We were dropped off into the centre of a leafy Eton-like university, with little clue of where to go. We trundled like a pack of mules up a hill; only to be sent back down. It took a while to recover the shock of English accents and of a residential where the rooms were not consecutive floors of dim light dormitories, but I knew I was truly in my element. Abroad; came from my head, but at home; rang out from my heart. Over the following days, I mingled with those people who one would never see of back in wet (but beautiful) and blustery Fermanagh. We all had a fervour in our bellies, a fervour of representing those who mainstream politicians did not - of representing our young people. I took part in workshops and worked with groups from the North West of England and from Scotland and in the 'Big Debate'. I spoke on both days; the first on the motion regarding the teaching on all sexualities - highlighting the ongoing fight in NI against unrepresentative bigots who wish only to stifle the views of young people in regards to LGBT rights, and on Young People's working rights. It was an opportunity that gave so much, for so few; for so little time. We need Wales! (And all English LAs) As we searched Exeter finding a place to eat on the Sunday night, (after becoming to our luscious home that was the Premier Inn) we knew that our group had the potential to 'hit the million' and will 'hit the million' at Make Your Mark.

# Scotland

## Scottish Borders

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### Youth Representative

I attended the BYC convention in Edinburgh for MYP induction. We also looked at Make Your Mark and ways to deliver the consultation in Scotland. The Scottish Youth Parliament Lead the Way consultation was launched at the end of June and at the convention we looked at ways to engage with young people aged 12-25 across Scotland. I also attended the UKYP annual sitting at the University of Exeter. I spoke to other MYPs on how they plan to deliver Make Your Mark and we also took part in workshops. I learned about SMART plans and also looked at organising activities relating to the Mind the Gap campaign. During the Big Vote at the sitting I participated in the debate on the policy motion on Reducing Teenage Pregnancy - Education Before Procreation. I spoke up with concerns I had with people possibly misunderstanding or misinterpreting what the policy actually meant.

I'm currently looking at ways to deliver MYM and the SYP Lead the Way consultation in my school and local area. I'm also looking to put forward a member's motion for the SYP sitting in October on equal value all sports.

# Support worker's Stories

## East of England

### Hertfordshire

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#### Jasmin, Youth Support Worker

During July, young people from [Herts1125](#) volunteered over 350 hours between them ... a huge achievement that warrants a shout out in Positive Stories 😊

The past month has been incredibly busy for Herts1125 members including the MYPs, and [Who Not What \(Herts LGBT+ strategic group\)](#) with many events and trips to attend alongside distributing and collecting surveys.

Firstly, Who Not What (see picture below) were invited to attend London Pride with Stonewall and participate in the march representing the young LGBT+ community. The group heard from a number of speakers prior to the march and on being given a roll of Stonewall stickers, had a fantastic day covering everyone, whether part of the march or not, with them!

Two members of Herts1125 were then invited to give evidence to the Youth Select Committee. They presented the information from the 2014/2015 Young People's Manifesto that consulted with 908 young people and 236 professionals about mental health services in Herts. It was great to see the evidence collected in Hertfordshire be recognised nationally and have the opportunity to feed into the Youth Select Committees inquiry on mental health services.

The second Herts1125 meeting of the year was held in July, and unlike previous years local Youth Councils and Forums were invited to present the work that young people in their districts are doing. MYPs presented the data that had been collected so far from the Herts1125 consultations and Who Not What were able to share feedback they have received from young LGBT+ people in Herts. This was a great day and being able to share practice and experiences gave many of the young people new ideas to take back to their Youth Council.

Finally, Hertfordshire are absolutely delighted to have won [Stonewall's Equality Index 'Best across five years' award for LGBT support in the county](#). Two Herts1125 members attended the Stonewall Conference for All where they took part in workshops throughout the day and collected the award on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council and Herts for Learning. The day was a bit of an emotional rollercoaster with lots of laughter, tears and a fantastic celebrity panel. The day really showed how far LGBT support has come over the years but also how much work there still is to do in tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

The Hertfordshire team with Elle, founder of Who not What (second left) and Ruth Hunt, Stonewall CEO (centre)



# South East

## Buckinghamshire

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### **Simon Billenness, Support Worker**

**Young Inspectors** The young inspectors have been very active recently giving feedback and idea on Buckinghamshire's Youth Service Pledge. They have been keen to ensure that this can be accessed online but also presented in a way that is accessible to all. Young inspectors have also been supporting the work of Young Civic Futures. The Young Civic Futures programme is about supporting local communities and young people to work together. The team are currently designing a pack that can help young people and adults to engage in joint decision making in their local area. The young inspectors have helped to support the design process and inputted into how to make this accessible and engaging for young people. **UKYP** Preparations are in place to recruit new candidates to stand to elections later this year. Young people have been applying online to attend a training day in September to learn more about youth parliament and what it takes to be a member of youth parliament. **Youth Voice** As a result of our last Youth Voice meeting young people gave their suggestions and ideas about raising awareness on mental health with young people. A working group is now working on designing a poster that can be circulated into school and youth groups. **We Do Care** The Children in Care council - We Do Care have continued to work on their key priorities including improving welcome packs and health checks. Reports have been compiled with the young people comments and ideas to be presented to the lead decision makers in the Autumn.

# West Midlands

## Walsall

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### **Donna Ricketts , Support Worker**

Members of youth parliament carried out a bully debate 41 young people attended from 10 secondary schools in Walsall. the debate was chaired by Cllr Angela Underhill Mayor of Walsall. young people contributed to 4 debates presented by members of youth parliament. the debates were - how can young people challenge bullying and not be a bystander - should Walsall have a cyber bullying campaign - what can be done to make young people see that bullying is a safeguarding issue - should Walsall have an anti bullying peer mentoring campaign. the outcomes of the debate will be used to shape an anti bullying campaign in Walsall lead by UKYP.

# Yorkshire & Humber

## Leeds

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### Deborah Rose, Information Officer

A safety conscious pupil from Leeds who wrote a manifesto to keep people out of danger on railway platforms has seen his hard work rewarded with a mosaic at his local station.

Luke Lazenby was inspired to raise awareness of the dangers of fast moving trains on platforms by writing a manifesto for the Leeds' Children's Mayor competition.

Although he didn't win, 11 year-old Luke, from Bramley St Peter's Church of England Primary School, was so determined to make his idea a success that he and his classmates designed a series of safety posters for Network Rail and Northern Rail some of which were displayed around Leeds station over Christmas, the others are currently on display at Bramley Train Station.



After a visit by Network Rail Community Safety Manager Vicki Beadle, who taught the youngsters about the dangers of trespassing onto the railway, and with the help of Leeds artist Beverley Rhodes and local firms Ceramic International and Beaver Leeds, the pupils designed a mosaic of Leeds most iconic images, including the railway viaduct, the town hall and the Leeds Trinity logo.

The artwork has now gone on display at the station near the ticket barriers.

Luke, whose initial idea was to warn mothers about their pushchairs rolling off the platform and into the path of a train, said: "I didn't think that children like me could make a big difference in the world. I hope that by working with Vicki and Network Rail I have changed how people act around trains and helped keep other children safe."

Lesley Dixon-Dawson, Teacher, School Council co-ordinator, Bramley St Peter's C of E Primary School said: "This just goes to show that from little acorns, big things grow. We try to encourage the children to take an active role in the community and wider world around them and Network Rail and Northern Rail's support this year has enabled our children to become very active citizens, for which we cannot thank them enough."

Vicki Beadle from Network Rail said: "Luke's determination to raise awareness of important safety issues at platforms is wonderful and the passion he has shown for this project has shown was a conscientious young man he is. Railway safety on platforms is an important subject for people of all ages and I am delighted that the mosaic will be seen by the thousands of passengers who use Leeds station every day."

**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>**