



UK Youth Parliament Manifesto

2019/2020



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Foreword

The UK Youth Parliament Manifesto brings together a wide range of issues affecting young people across the United Kingdom.

Each issue starts its' journey at a local level; affecting young people in local authorities, constituencies and communities. Members of Youth Parliament can then propose a motion on behalf of young people in their local areas, showing how they want to see these issues addressed. These motions are then debated by Members of Youth Parliament from all four corners of the country at our Annual Conference, where each motion is voted upon. If the motion passes, it enters the UK Youth Parliament Manifesto as an issue we believe must be tackled to make a positive impact on the lives of young people.

Every issue in our Manifesto has a mandate from young people, but this mandate is further secured by our annual Make Your Mark campaign which allowed over one million young people across the UK to have their say on the issues that matter to them in 2018.

The aim of our Manifesto is to shape the national debate by using the mandate given to the issues to influence local and national decision makers, ensuring those in positions of power are aware of the needs of young people. This includes aiming to influence those who decide on which issues are in the different political parties manifestos.

Each issue in our Manifesto will be marked as either devolved or reserved. This is because decisions that affect things like education, healthcare and transport are made by different groups of people, depending on where you live in the UK. The power to make some decisions is shared between the UK Parliament in Westminster, the Scottish Parliament, and the National Assembly for Wales, the Northern Ireland Assembly and some Mayors in England (Devolved issues). However, other decisions that affect all of the UK can only be made by the UK Parliament in Westminster (Reserved issues).

Our Manifesto demonstrates the issues that are important to young people. It shows decision makers how their decisions affect the lives of young people and makes them aware of the work young people are already doing to address these issues. You can help us achieve this by raising awareness of these issues and supporting our campaigns for youth-led change.

The breadth of issues included in our Manifesto demonstrates that today's generation of young people is far from apathetic about the world in which they live. They are taking a leading role in shaping their world for the future.

Please direct any enquiries regarding our Manifesto or its contents to info@ukyouthparliament.org.uk.

**On behalf of the
UK Youth Parliament Procedures Group**

Our Community

Put an End to Knife Crime (Devolved)

Knife crime is such a prevalent issue in this day and age; too often young people's lives are lost to knife crime and we believe this needs to stop. For far too long, the threat of knife culture has not been addressed by decision makers and this needs to change. We call on the Government to address the knife crime epidemic as much as they address any other epidemic.

We would like to see a significant reduction in knife crime across the UK – through: education in schools and community groups on the harm that these deadly weapons can cause, by providing young people with platforms to engage with the community and by providing them with aspiration and inspirational role models. We call on the Government to put pressure on businesses and platforms that allow people to advertise and glamourize knife crime.

We believe that the current approaches like increased use of stop and search have not addressed the issue. We believe that there are many factors that need to be considered when addressing knife crime, these include: mental and physical health, education, youth services, social media, and community outreach. Based on this we believe knife crime must be categorised as a public health issue. This approach would allow different agencies and services to come together to tackle the issue.

Let's Tackle Homelessness (Devolved)

Youth homelessness is becoming a bigger problem in today's society. We recognise that homelessness includes those who live on the street and those who have no fixed place to call home, and so live in hostels or temporary accommodation. We believe that in order to tackle youth homelessness the Government and councils need to address the issue.

We call on the Government to provide enough funding for charities and organisations, focussed on supporting those who are homeless. We also call on local councils to better provide signposting to services that provide enough support to young people who are at risk of becoming homeless. Every person should have a place to live and the opportunity to live comfortably. Let's make it happen and put a stop to homelessness.

Youth Crime and Gang Culture (Devolved)

The number of people affected by youth crime and gang culture has risen by an insane amount in the first few months of 2018. We believe that young people should not be living in fear of gangs. We believe that young people should not feel trapped in gangs or feel the need to carry weapons to protect themselves. Young people shouldn't be killed on the streets.

Every few weeks, youth crime and gang culture become headline news and then it slowly dissipates back into the streets. Youth crime and gang culture cannot simply continue to be a news item but needs to be continually addressed within society and mitigated by key decision makers. We call on the Government to take greater actions in combatting youth crime and gang culture, we believe this includes greater investments in youth clubs. Further to this, we believe that it is a matter of urgency that we protect police budgets to ensure that the young people of Britain are safe.

Welcome Refugees (Devolved)

Around the world, human rights atrocities mean that the nightmares we do not dare to fathom are the harsh reality for millions of people. For young people just like us around the world, the only hope of rebuilding their lives is settling in the UK. We believe that everyone deserves the right to live without fear of death and persecution. We believe that some politicians, media and members of communities have forgotten this. We believe that refugees are welcome; and should be fully integrated into local communities and we call on local government to allocate more funds to ensure this happens.

Tackling Hate Crime (Reserved)

We believe that hate crime is becoming a bigger issue, and that many young people are falling victim of hate fuelled attacks. To tackle this, we believe the following should happen: young people should be educated on how to keep safe; young people are educated on how to report hate crimes; and decision makers invest in creating safe spaces that promote unity in communities.

More Funding for Sports, the Arts and Other Practical Subjects (Devolved)

We believe that sports and the arts are fundamentally brilliant things. We believe in a time when mental health issues and other physical issues putting strain on the NHS are on the rise, we must find the activities that will have social, emotional and physical benefits.

Increase Social Mobility (Devolved)

Young people from poorer backgrounds across the UK will be less likely to fully pursue their educational potential, less likely to find a stable job in later life, and more likely to develop mental health issues as time goes on. We believe that this shouldn't be the case, and the main concern of any government should be social mobility: improving the lives and opportunities of people in the UK – especially young people – from all backgrounds. We believe that there needs to be a fundamental change in the focus of the UK's spending, the benefits system and our education system.

Promoting Interfaith Tolerance to Reduce Hate Crime (Reserved)

There is a plethora of different religions in the UK but some - including sections within one religion - fail to get along through a lack of understanding and misconceptions. We believe that local faith groups must better promote education, understanding and tolerance of different faiths to reduce hate crime and bring a more harmonious local community.

Youth Councils, Recognition and Connectivity (Devolved)

We believe that young people deserve a say in what impacts them, for example through an efficient and effective youth council, and in order to work towards achieving we believe in:

Recognition: We believe local, regional, national and international authorities should officially recognise their youth councils or have youth councils (apolitical) officially set up, supporting them in the best capacity possible (e.g. by engaging with them through meetings with all parties taking feedback on board).

Connectivity: We believe greater connectivity should be established between youth councils and authorities with all parties meeting on a regular basis (inviting one another), as appropriate, updating one another on their work and providing feedback. We believe that authorities should provide youth councils with enriching opportunities to play a role in understanding and contributing to the process of decision making.

Better Opportunities and Improved Internet Access for Young People in Rural Areas (Devolved)

We believe that young people who live in rural areas have fewer social, cultural and employment opportunities than those in urban areas. We believe that limited access to transport and poor internet connection create barriers to young people in rural areas being able to access opportunities. We call on the Government to do more to improve internet connection in rural areas and to ensure funding is available to enable them to have the same opportunities as young people in urban areas.

Tackle Child Poverty (Devolved)

We believe that child poverty restricts young people's opportunities, and can cause lower standards of performance in schools. Child poverty is an issue that affects over one in four young people in the UK and has a negative impact on their education, opportunities and lives. We believe that no-one should

have a disadvantaged start in life just because of their financial position. We believe that that regardless of how much or how little wealth somebody has, they should still be able to achieve their dreams and aspirations. With the Government's current Anti-Poverty strategy due to expire in 2020, we call upon the Government to develop a new plan to combat poverty, with a strong focus on children and young people. We believe that this new plan should be fully resourced to bring child poverty to an end and to give all young people the opportunity to realise their full potential.

Prevent Bullying (Devolved)

We believe that young people deserve to feel safe and included in their communities, free from bullying and be able to grow and express themselves in positive ways without fear. Bullying affects too many young people in a negative way. It can cause many adverse effects to a victim's wellbeing and physical health. We believe that the Government should introduce measures to combat bullying at every turn to improve the quality of life of those affected and their communities.

Protect the Budget for Libraries (Devolved)

We believe that everybody across the nation should have access to libraries and that they provide young people with a safe place to study in peace and quiet with access to facilities that help deepen knowledge of a particular topic. However, several libraries are at risk of closure. We call on the Government to reinstate funding for libraries as they play a crucial role in educating our young people.

Re-Open Railway Links to Improve Transportation (Devolved)

We believe rail links are so important to connect our towns and villages across the country. In rural parts of the country, many young people struggle to travel around due to lack of transport funding. Opening rail links will enable residents from rural areas to connect with the university towns in the area, provide better connection to get jobs, and allow people to connect with family and friends in an easier fashion. We call on the Government to reinstate the railway links across the country. The example in West Wales, shows how one part of the country is cut off from another because of closed railway links. It will also benefit the environment as train is a more eco-friendly mode of transport in comparison to road and air travel.

Ring Fenced Local Government Funding for Youth Councils (Devolved)

We believe that youth councils play a key role in providing an apolitical environment where the already disenfranchised can debate and decide on policy which affects them. From land use plans to library closures, young people need their views heard loud and clear. Therefore the UK Youth Parliament calls on councils to ring-fence a budget for the provision of directly linked youth councils to ensure youth representation.

Stop Street Harassment (Devolved)

We believe that young people across the country should be able to walk anywhere without feeling any sense of emotional or physical violation. We believe that street harassment is a growing issue and we therefore call on the Government to implement measures to stop this.

Our Democracy

Votes at 16 (Reserved)

We believe that 16 and 17-year-olds should be given the right to vote in all public elections and referenda.

Put a Stop to Filibustering (Reserved)

We believe that filibustering, or ‘talking out’ a debate involves purposefully wasting time by overly complicating or elongating speeches as well as raising completely irrelevant issues to the matter at hand. This means that many bills in Parliament see little to no progress and take an unnecessarily long time to be voted on. We believe that in order for the UK House of Commons to continue to work efficiently there must be reform on the voting process, involving the curtailing of filibustering.

Give Young People From All Backgrounds A Bigger Role In Political Engagement And Decision-Making (Devolved)

We believe it is crucial for young people to have a say on what action is taken and what decisions are made with regards to the future of the country as the decisions made now will affect the lives young people. We believe that it is important for young people to engage with politics and current affairs and be given a platform to speak out on issues pertaining to them. Therefore we call on the Government to ensure young people engage with politics and the world around them. We believe it is important to show young people that speaking out on issues that matter to them can lead to genuine change. Therefore, we call on the Government to create more avenues to engage with and listen to the views of young people and to ensure engagement from young people of all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Support for Young People Engaging In Climate Change Protests (Devolved)

We believe that young people should be empowered to engage in all protests, including those to do with climate change taking into consideration how much of a pressing issue it is presently. We believe that the issue of climate change is a concern for all social classes and so all young people should be allowed to engage. We believe that protesting is a right for anyone living in a democratic society and we support young people who want to partake in such activities. We call on the authorities at schools to consider protesting as an extra-curricular activity and not one that young people may be penalised for because of their engagement during school hours.

Our Education

Valuable Work Experience (Devolved)

We believe that work experience teaches young people skills that they do not learn in school; and that it ensures they are used to the discipline and environment of the workplace. Work experience provides a chance for young people to apply their knowledge and skills outside of the classroom. It also encourages independence and matures young people in so many ways that school can not. We believe these experiences can define young people’s perceptions of their chosen field of work and enable them to make an informed choice about their future.

We believe that the Government should take a lead and work with employers throughout the country to ensure enhanced opportunities for work experience. We ask them to do this by including young people in their plans and funding for this within an industrial strategy looking at future employment and

economic growth. We also call on schools to support young people's desire for work experience by allowing students two weeks of leave to complete it.

Increased Education on Abusive Relationships (Devolved)

We believe that in today's society, young people are entering into relationships at a younger age. It is important that people entering into these relationships are educated on what a healthy relationship is and what to do if the relationship deteriorates and becomes abusive. We believe that this should be part of a structured curriculum for life that should be compulsory in all school.

Teach Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Schools (Devolved)

We believe that sexual orientation and gender identity are key issues in our communities today. Youth are expected to be tolerant and understanding without being educated on things such as the difference between sex and gender. By forcing inquisitive minds to turn to the internet for information, we risk misinforming young minds. We believe this needs to stop and sexual orientation and gender identity should be taught in schools.

Supply More Information, Resources, and Workshops to Aid Post-18 Decisions (Devolved)

We believe that young people need ways to make their decisions as to what they do post-18. Whether they go straight to work, university, do an apprenticeship, or take a gap year - young people need to know if what they have decided is best for them. In an increasingly competitive job market, the decisions that they make by the end of year 12 affect them to no limit and so, as such, young people should have the resources available to make the right decisions.

Introduce an Educational Programme to Teach Children about Learning Disabilities (Devolved)

We believe that there needs to be more provision for children with learning disabilities, they are misunderstood purely because we, as a society, do not understand their different needs. We believe that a fantastically simple way to combat this is to educate all children about what learning disabilities are and the difficulties that children with them can face.

Implement a Fairer Target System in Schools (Devolved)

We believe that schools that use SAT results and computer programmes to set targets must use a fairer system to set targets for students. We believe that students across the nation are falling victim to the unrealistic targets that exist because of this system. Unachievable targets result in crushing amounts of pressure for teachers and students alike and we believe this a contributing factor to the mental health epidemic facing young people across Britain. We should attempt to return to a system in which teachers set their own students target and upload them to the national system themselves. We believe that this would lessen the pressure caused by unachievable targets and make targets specific to the ability and attitude of every individual student. We call on local authorities and the Government to help implement these changes.

Introduce Shared Education in Schools (Devolved)

We believe that Shared Education provides the opportunity for schools to work together in unison to achieve greater learning and educational opportunities, as well as learn and build respect for other young people in their community. Shared Education gives young people and school communities the chance to learn about others' backgrounds and differences as well as make friends, whilst also getting the chance to share resources to create a better learning experience for all. We believe schools across the UK should get the chance to take part in schemes like this to help build better understanding of others within their communities.

Ensuring Our Teachers are Instilling Values and Inspiring Minds (Devolved)

We believe that teachers play an important role in shaping young people for the future; great teachers enable students to feel comfortable in an educational environment, succeed academically and to aspire to greater opportunities. We call on the Government to introduce a teacher training scheme that is more affordable than the current options. We believe that this will encourage more people to enter the teaching profession, more people to complete their course across the UK and could ensure a nationwide standard.

Equality for Apprenticeship Opportunities (Devolved)

In 2017, there was a decrease in the number of people taking up apprenticeships. We believe that more information must be available to young people, so they know of all their options. Apprenticeship fairs - similar to that which UCAS provide - would be extremely useful in helping young people make the correct choice. We believe that different decision makers should bring businesses together and ensure young people have access to all the information they need.

Compulsory CPR Training for All Children of Secondary School Age (Devolved)

Each year over 100,000 people die due to sudden cardiac arrest. Fewer than one in five people who suffer a survivable cardiac arrest receive the life-saving intervention they need from people nearby, according to NHS figures. This can and needs to change. A recent study completed by the British Heart Foundation has proven that immediate CPR from a bystander trebles survival rate for a patient. We believe the Government needs to do more to fund compulsory CPR training for all those of secondary school age. In places such as Norway, where this has been implemented, survival rates are over 50% higher. We believe we need to educate more children to save lives. This includes educating all young people on First Aid and ensuring every school has a defibrillator.

Tackling Sexism in Our Schools (Devolved)

We believe that sexism is a major problem in our society that needs to be tackled. As part of this, we need to tackle sexism within our schools. We believe that many pupils experience sexism in schools, both from staff and from other pupils - this is unacceptable. To tackle this, we believe lessons on respect with regards to gender are needed, and a platform provided for young people to report any instances of sexism. Beyond establishing these lessons and such a platform, a government inquiry could be a next step.

A Curriculum to Prepare Us for Life (Devolved)

We believe that the place of citizenship education and PSHE in the curriculum should be radically overhauled through a youth-led UK-wide review; they are really important for young people's growth and development as they teach vital life skills and can be the first steps to engaging young people in political life. Teaching staff should be specifically trained to a national standard to deliver citizenship education following this review, and students. The review should explore the meaning and scope of "citizenship" along the following lines:

Political education: Young people should be taught the basics of democracy and their rights and roles in society through an impartial political education. There should be more active engagement from local MPs and Councillors, with their local schools, so that young people feel involved in, and understand the political process and understand how the Government and Parliament works from a younger age.

Relationships and Sex (RSE): Every young person across the UK should receive the same high-level standard of relationship and sex education in schools. Lessons should include information on all types of relationships. Young people should get RSE from either teachers qualified in this specific field or health professionals. We encourage third party organisations to deliver relevant sessions in schools and colleges. RSE should have a weekly place in the lesson timetable. RSE needs to include information on both physical and emotional aspects of relationships.

Cultural awareness: The curriculum should aim to promote equality, diversity, and an awareness and understanding of special educational needs. The syllabus should include basic sign language skills.

Community cohesion: The curriculum should encourage young people to make a positive difference within our communities through volunteering.

Finance skills: There needs to be compulsory financial education within the curriculum. This should give young people practical advice on managing their money, for example information on the processes involved in opening bank accounts and applying for a mortgage. This will help students prepare for later life.

Sustainable living: There needs to be a place within the curriculum for young people to learn about how they can live sustainably and adapt their lifestyle in order to conserve natural resources and look after the planet.

Citizenship: Young people should be educated on their legal rights locally, nationally and internationally and on how to access them. We believe there should be some type of assessment as part of the citizenship curriculum.

Raise Awareness and Educate People on the LGBT+ Community (Devolved)

We believe that the LGBT+ community are always on the horizon raising awareness and standing up against hate crime. The community are always busy searching for acceptance and recruiting allies to highlight inclusivity. We believe that in order to tackle this form of hate crime, schemes should be introduced which educate people on the LGBT+ community; we believe this should include an ambassador programme within school communities.

School Based Support to Cope with Exams (Devolved)

We believe that GCSEs, A levels and other exams required for all students to take often lead to stress, and anxiety, for many pupils. The very idea of their future being decided on around 20 exams after 11 years of school is often very daunting for many pupils. We believe that the Government should fund a school-based service, or group, to help students get through these difficult times, as stress free as possible and to protect students' mental health. This could be a counsellor in schools or groups of friends that would meet and have management of a teacher or a similar figure and discuss worries for exams. We believe this could also be teachers who have been specifically trained to deal with stressful circumstances, whatever they may be. Being able to talk to others about these problems would mean students would not have to carry these burdens alone and will be able to have support of others.

Reform The National Curriculum And The Examination Structure To Give Students The Best Chance Possible To Succeed (Devolved)

We believe that the education system should play a key role in empowering young people and giving them hope in their ability to one day to fulfil their vocation.

However, currently we believe that the education system is not allowing young people to flourish and establish their true intelligence and capabilities. We believe that A-Level and GCSE exams should be designed in such a way to give young people the best chance of achieving their full potential.

As it stands, we believe that both the curriculum and the examination structure is not fit for purpose. We believe this results in students feeling anxious and depressed and our young people in recent years have failed to succeed in exams due to the stress that the education system has inflicted on young people. The reforms to the GCSE and A-level examinations have made it near on impossible for young people to achieve their potential due to complexity of the curriculum. Therefore, we call on the Government to reform the current GCSE and A-Level structure to give students the best possible chance to succeed. We also believe that the Government should end GCSE tiering or provide assistance support for those in lower tiers. Finally, we also believe that this reform should include the re-introduction of coursework for all GCSEs to provide a level playing ground for all students.

Abolish University Fees And Provide More Financial Support For UK Students (Reserved)

We believe that young people are the future generation and if we invest in them now, the whole society can reap benefits from that in the long run. We believe that we should not risk the long-term future of our country by making University education affordable for the select few, and avoid the risk of alienating many by charging extortionate tuition fees.

Many young people are under a lot of stress as they enter higher education as, maintenance loans are too low to cover accommodation and other living costs. We believe that all young people across the UK should be able to afford, and have access to higher education should they wish to pursue it, regardless of the background they come from. We believe that the current cost of university in the UK is too expensive and the amount of financial support provided is not sufficient. This also disproportionately affects young people whose disabilities prevent them from working. We call on the Government to abolish tuition fees and increase financial support in the form of maintenance loans in order to level the playing field for all young people entering higher education whatever career path they choose to follow. We want the Government to introduce measures to ensure that higher education is accessible to all young people no matter what background they come from.

Fairer and Equal Education And Raise Awareness Against Racism And Xenophobia (Devolved)

We believe that we need a fairer and equal education system which is more inclusive. Education should be informative for young people. We need to be going out into the world prepared and with further knowledge of other cultures and lives. We believe that students should feel safe and equal in schools; they should have the right to learn freely without worrying about prejudice from those they place their trust in. We believe that students should be taught that racism and xenophobia have no place in schools. We call on schools to introduce assemblies that include lessons about the history of the different races and cultures and they should also provide a platform for young people to report instances of oppression they have experienced.

Ensure That Our Schools Are Sensitive To and Aware Of Environmental Developments (Devolved)

We believe that children from as young as primary school age should be aware of issues pertaining to the environment such as climate change, how to reduce their carbon footprint and renewable energy, especially in this day and age. We call on the Government to introduce compulsory education into schools on how students can reduce their carbon footprint. We also call on the Government to introduce alternative, renewable energy sources and the selling of non-plastics in school canteens, to get young people into the habit of looking after the environment. We believe every child should know how to minimise their effect on the environment. The easiest way to tackle climate change through young people is by small, everyday decisions and this education will inform those decisions and should start right at the early stage of their schooling.

Improve The Quality Of Sex Education In Schools (Devolved)

We believe the good quality sex education is the most efficient way to reduce stigma and make healthcare more accessible for young people. We believe that poor quality sex education is a national issue that needs to be addressed. Due to poor quality sexual education in schools, many young people are unaware help available to them, and the problem continues to escalate. Improving the quality of sex education in schools will help raise awareness of the services available, and reduce the stigma attached to sexual health. Young people aged 15-24 are the most likely to be diagnosed with STIs. We believe that it is with proper sex education in schools that we can help to reduce the stigma surrounding sexual health as well as provide young people with the information and help they require. We also believe that education on sexual violence should be conducted in an appropriate approach towards different age groups, from primary to secondary education, to ensure that no one is left out of the discussion. We therefore call on the Government to ensure that schools improve the quality of sex education provided.

Provide Regular Counselling For Students And Consistent Pastoral Care For All Following Bereavements (Devolved)

We believe that young people across the UK should be supported consistently when being reintegrated into their place of education following bereavement. Pastoral care has often been inconsistent meaning some young people are not receiving the amount of support they require. According to Child Bereavement UK, a parent of a child under 18 dies every 22 minutes in the UK, which equates to approximately 111 children being bereaved of a parent each day. We call on the Government to ensure that educational pastoral care is maintained at a consistent level across the UK to ensure that all young people are being supported in reintegration in education following a death, and that support is always available to those after.

Educate Secondary School Students On The Trade Union Movement (Devolved)

The UK Youth Parliament believes that all young people should leave secondary school having received education on the Trade Union Movement, workers rights and their influence.

Provide Extra Funding Support For Students With Special Educational Needs (SEND) - (Devolved)

We believe that students with special educational needs should have access to the right amount of support to help them. We believe that all young people deserve support and that the Government needs to do more to make sure that these crucial services are not cut off. Young people with SEND and their families deserve services with enough funding, to support them in their daily lives, both inside and outside of education

Protect Funding for schools (Devolved)

We believe that schools are the building blocks to success during a young person's life. We believe that in order for that success to be maximised, schools need adequate funding from the Government. We believe that schools require the necessary funding in order to continue to provide quality education and opportunities to make their students more independent and confident. Although school funding exists we believe that schools aren't getting the funds they deserve. Therefore, we call on the Government to invest more into schools to help our young people succeed.

Protect our Schools Budgets from Damaging Cuts (Devolved)

The national funding formula for schools proposes to reduce, per pupil spending by 6 per-cent in half of primary and secondary schools. This could lead to secondary schools having to lose six teachers. As a result, students could be faced with bigger class sizes and a reduction in courses. Because of this, quality of education will suffer - opportunities will fall in a system that is meant to promote social mobility and allow us to achieve our full potential. We believe that the Government should reverse these cuts and instead increase per pupil funding to give every young person an equal chance to succeed.

Our Employment

Tackling Youth Unemployment (Devolved)

We believe that youth unemployment has been escalating and for many communities, is a serious problem as it has damaging effects on our economy and communities. We believe that the Government should and need to do more to prepare young people for job skills and facilitating applications.

Equal Pay for Equal Work (Reserved)

Young people today are unfairly discriminated against when applying for jobs. Employers are often unwilling to pay a fair wage for reasonable hours, because of a stigma that we are "incapable" of doing as good a job as an adult. We believe that young people are just as hard-working and determined as their adult peers; one could even argue that they are more determined than older workers, as they work to save up for a life beyond high school and living at home rather than out of pure necessity. In the case of households where the parents are disabled or otherwise unable to work full-time, young people are faced with the unending pressure of trying to be the main breadwinner on a wage of just £4.20 an hour and are often excluded from accessing benefits. We call on the Government and employers to ensure young people receive the same wage as their adult counterparts, for the same work.

Work Experience Hubs for 11-18-year olds (Devolved)

Work experience gives young people the opportunity to develop themselves, hobbies and potential career paths. However, knowing where to gain work experience can be a challenge; we believe that there needs to be investment in creating online spaces which help young people find work experience.

Our Environment

Reduce Single Use Plastic (Devolved)

The planet gives us the resources and environment we need to survive, it is time that we, as a generation, take responsibility to ensure that our planet has the resources to accommodate not only our generation but generations to come. We believe that plastic pollution kills wildlife, damages our health, and destroys the beautiful surroundings of Britain. We want to address two specific issues with this. Firstly, we believe that plastic pollution in our rivers becomes plastic pollution in our oceans. By 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the sea. Secondly, we believe single use plastic for catering purposes in schools and youth clubs is negatively impacting our environment. We believe that, by making small changes and by providing alternative initiatives, we can turn this around. We believe that local governments and communities should do more to understand, reduce; and recycle single-use plastics, such as plastic straws and bottles in schools, shops, and homes in order to preserve the planet for the next generation.

Protect the Environment (Devolved)

We believe that in order to preserve this world for the next generation, we have a moral responsibility to protect it from the affects of Climate Change. Climate change is a problem than will affect young people more than any other generation. We believe that young people are the ones who have to live with the world long after the older generations are gone; and that right now they are not protecting the environment in the way that is necessary for young people and the next generation. We call on the Government to ban the fracking and mining of fossil fuels and to look towards carbon neutral alternatives.

Insuring EU Grants and Subsidies for Farming and Fishing Families Post-Brexit (Reserved)

Farming and fishing are important issues that need to be addressed as we prepare for life after exiting the European Union. The North of Ireland, which makes up 3% of the agricultural output of the UK, receives 10% of the EU's farm subsidies for the entirety of the UK.

We believe that Members of Parliament should support giving legal coverage for these EU subsidies and grants, such as the Viable Farm payments. We believe that these are pivotal for so many farmers in the UK today, and certainly for the future generations of young people looking to get into agriculture.

Stop Litter from polluting our country (Devolved)

We believe that our beloved natural spaces around the country are spaces that will be cherished for generations upon generations and they have provided numerous young people with time to think and somewhere to feel comfortable and relaxed. We believe that litter is suffocating our planet and it is becoming an increasingly bigger problem. This is an issue because we believe that young people should have the pleasure of being in their own community, without litter being scattered everywhere. Litter is our main priority, and the solution needs to be sustainable. We call on the Government to do much more to protect our natural spaces and preserve them. We believe that our environment must be taken care of by our actions and that we must do more to preserve our environment.

Invest in a national Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure network (Reserved)

We believe that as human beings we all have the right to life and we will be denied this if action is not taken with regards to our environment. We believe that investment in a national electric car charging infrastructure will be a very effective way to address this.

Electric vehicles are an essential part of any strategy to cut greenhouse gas emissions and protect ourselves from the harmful effects of climate change. We believe it would help to overcome certain issues, persuading consumers to make more environmentally friendly choices which will help all of us in the future. A national EV charging infrastructure would give consumers confidence in EVs and so we therefore call on the Government to introduce this. We believe replacing conventional petrol and diesel cars with EVs is an essential step in any strategy to tackle climate change.

Introduce Safe Cycle Lanes In Our Cities (Devolved)

We believe that it is becoming increasingly important to use more environmentally modes of transport in a day and age that climate change is an issue. We believe that young people should be able to cycle safely and freely. In an area like Canterbury with several schools and universities, there is a growing cycling population. Cycle lanes will need to be added in the future as populations grow and cars take up more and more room. We believe it is important, especially in areas where the roads are walked along by school children on a daily basis, as it creates safety for both parties.

As our population increases, we call on the Government to introduce cycle lanes in cities across the country. Cycle lanes must be added or improved upon in cities to help young people travel safely and independently.

Improve Water Safety In Communities Across The Country (Devolved)

We believe that water safety should be a priority for all communities across the country. Halton for instance, has been subject to issues of water safety over the past year. We call upon the local authorities to introduce more safety around in local ponds in areas across the country, to ensure everyone in their local communities are safe.

Tackle Food Waste In Schools (Devolved)

We believe that food waste in schools needs to be reduced and managed in order to save unnecessary spending and most importantly, help mitigate climate change. We believe it is important to start this revolution in schools, to show investment in our own futures. We believe that a huge percentage of food waste could be avoided if we enforce alternate solutions, such as: having school meals cooked to order or improving the appreciation of school meals. We call on schools to recycle their existing food waste as compost or made into biofuel.

Reduce Air Pollution (Devolved)

We believe that nature can offer great benefits to both our physical and mental well-being. However, with air pollution in our country at the moment, a serious threat is being posed towards our health. We

believe that the Government need to start setting stricter air pollution guidelines and work to ensure that all clean air targets are met.

Increase Recycling To Save Our Planet (Devolved)

We believe that as citizens we should be doing everything we can to ensure the state of our environment does not decline. We believe that recycling is one of the easiest ways of doing this, and it requires little effort or skill. We only need to supply the facilities; the people will use them. We believe we should be doing everything possible to try to combat any harm to our environment and uphold the world that sustains us. We believe that individuals, as well as authorities, need to make a stand against climate change, and one way that we can do this is through recycling. We call on the Government to introduce more recycling schemes to help save our environment and consequentially our world.

Convert To 50% Renewable Energy Sources To Prevent A Climate Catastrophe (Reserved)

With our current climate crisis, we believe that we must take responsibility for our planet and it's future. We are calling on the Government to ensure that we convert to 50% renewable energy within the next couple of years. With an impending climate crisis, we believe that change should be made to our energy production in order to decrease the amount of non-renewable energy resources to less than 50% of our total consumption in the UK. This can be replaced by wind, solar, geothermal, hydroelectric and other energy sources that are sustainable and renewable. We believe that climate change is a huge issue of this century and we must tackle it before it is too late.

Our Health

All Schools Should Have At Least One Defibrillator (Devolved)

Defibrillators (AED's) increase the chances of survival after a cardiac arrest by up to 90% if used in the first minute with the chances decreasing 7% per minute. The average response time for an ambulance is approximately 8 minutes; therefore not having access to a defibrillator quickly could be the difference between life and death. However, schools are not obliged to have one despite them being so important. We believe the Government should do more to support schools getting one or simply provide them.

Call for Legalisation of Cannabis on Medicinal Grounds (Reserved)

We believe that cannabis is a harmless plant that many young people are using for treatment of epilepsy, cancer, PTSD and many other conditions to just get by whilst having to risk being sent to prison. This is wrong. We believe that there must be an end of Cannabis prohibition by removing Cannabis from being a class A drug and legalising it for medicinal purposes. We believe that Cannabis can help and patients of all ages. We believe that young people should be educated on this to increase their awareness of the medicinal benefits of Cannabis.

Mental Health (Devolved)

We believe the UK Government should increase provision of mental health services for young people and improve the existing facilities by making them accessible, free of charge and age appropriate. Young people with mental health conditions should receive treatment in mental health services that work exclusively with young people. We believe mental health education should be updated and made compulsory in our curriculum. This should provide information about common clinical conditions including depression and challenge stereotypes and taboos surrounding mental health issues. Young people should be consulted on how this should be done.

Make the Invisible Visible (Devolved)

Many people suffer from debilitating illnesses and conditions, yet to the outside world appear completely fine. Living with conditions such as: epilepsy, autism and diabetes, can be an incredibly isolating. We believe that with increased awareness and visibility, we can change this and ensure that people do not feel alone.

Address The Effects That Social Media Can Have On Mental Health And The Strive For Perfection (Devolved)

We believe that social media is a powerful tool in today's society. We also believe that there is a clear and concerning link between the use of social media and the mental health of young people; increased use of social media and easy accessibility of its worrying content is contributing to bad mental health amongst young people. This includes the perception of there being a specific accepted body type, or certain notions of masculinity; and even some using it as a means of cyber bullying. We believe that all of these are detrimental to the mental health of young people. A prominent example is the suicide of 14-year-old Molly Russell. Therefore, the UK Youth Parliament considers it vital to take action against social media's negative effects on young people. We call on the Government to launch campaigns across the UK to educate society about the benefits and disadvantages of social media and the importance of young people gaining security and self-acceptance within themselves.

Also, we believe that social media platforms must take up the responsibility of ensuring harmful content glamorizing self-harm and suicide and promoting the development of mental health issues be taken down immediately and more work should be done to discourage their spread and make them unavailable entirely. Social media platforms must also take responsibility for keeping content safe.

Tackle Drug And Alcohol Abuse (Devolved)

We believe that all young people aged 11 and upwards should be educated on the risks and facts of alcohol and drug abuse. We believe the misuse of drugs and alcohol amongst young people is dangerous, not only to those involved in it but also to those around them.

We believe that more action must be taken towards mitigating the effects of drug and alcohol misuse in those that we represent to ensure that we are all entitled to a healthy and safe life. We call on the Government to introduce measures to tackle this issue across the country. We would like to make support services known to all young people across the country to ensure there is support available and there shouldn't be any fear to go and ask for help. We would like to educate young people to make them see the risks and to prevent them from getting in the situation in the first place.

Better Access To Social Workers For Children In Care (Devolved)

We believe that social workers should be easily accessible to Children in care. We believe that children in care should know the name of their social worker, how to contact them and be informed if their social worker is on leave or off sick and be given the name of the social worker who is covering for them. In recent times, children in care have been losing trust in their social workers and the care system, because of social worker changes. We believe that the Government should put measures in place to give children in care better access to their social workers and any further support to ensure they do not face any barriers to achieving their full potential.

End Hygiene Poverty (Reserved)

We believe that all young people should be able to feel clean and presentable when going to school, work, or meeting friends and families. Although hygiene may be something that some take for granted, those living in poverty are not able to access everyday necessities which we believe is unfair. We believe that hygiene poverty can have such a massive impact on one's life. Not being able to make yourself presentable for school or work, when meeting with friends, when going out - not only has a physical effect on your health, but also a mental affect. It can be embarrassing, humiliating and lead to problems such as isolation and depression. This is why we must work to tackle hygiene poverty. We

believe all young people should have the right to access hygiene products regardless of financial status. This is why we believe the Government should provide funding to help those in dire need of hygiene products.

Support Charter for Tobacco-Free Generation (Devolved)

The UK Youth Parliament supports ASH Scotland's 'Charter for a Tobacco-Free Generation', which aims to achieve a 5% or lower adult smoking rate in both Scotland and the UK by 2034"

Autism Acceptance (Devolved)

We believe that people with autism need to be understood and accepted and that the notion of autism needs to go beyond awareness raising. We believe that autism should not be seen as a disease, but just the way a person is. We believe that certain terms that are associated with the autistic community are harmful to them. We therefore call on the Government to introduce measures to give autistic people the support they need and also help others to recognise them as normal people and not inferior to the rest of society. We want to promote a country that accepts everyone for who they are.

The Introduction Of A Mental Health Board In Schools (Devolved)

We believe that every school across the country should have a board of young people to help promote support of mental health in their region. We believe this is incredibly important as lots of young people are unaware of services and how to get support on issues they may be struggling with. We believe that setting up a group to help teach young people on mental health and the support they can access is vital and having a regional group could help as it would be easy to communicate different ideas and actions one place might have. We call on all schools to introduce this support network.

Our Justice

Why Preventative Measures Against Child Sexual Exploitation Need to be Taught in Schools (Devolved)

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is happening in cities all around the UK right now. We believe that the Government should better implement preventative measures, such as teaching young people how not to put themselves in a vulnerable position; and create open spaces for young people to discuss CSE and its impact so that we can prevent further devastation in areas where it is happening such as Rochdale. We call on decision makers to tackle CSE by raising awareness on how young people could unknowingly become victims; the places they can go to get help; and going into schools to shed light on methods used by perpetrators to exploit young people. We believe this will bring about real change.

Criminalise Conversion Therapy (Reserved)

We believe that Conversion Therapy is a blatant act of homophobia and transphobia against the LGBT+ community, as well as being detrimental to the mental health and wellbeing of LGBT+ young people, yet it still happens around the country. We believe that If carried out more publicly, it would be considered to be a hate crime, or at the least, abuse. Conversion therapy in the UK, although frowned upon, is not illegal, and is not in itself a criminal act. 30 years on from Section 28 of the Local Government Act, we must continue to push for equality, and we must continue to push for the protection of LGBT+ youth.

Make The United Nations Convention on the Right of The Child (UNCRC) Statutory Law (Reserved)

We believe that the convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC) is the cornerstone for children's rights across the world. Although it has been ratified in the UK, it has not yet been adopted into law. We believe by adopting this into law, youth representation and consideration would become a legal requirement and will also ensure that legally, many of the other 54 rights become statutory. We call on the UK Government to adopt the UNCRC into statutory law so that the Government will be legally required to follow the 54 articles of the UNCRC, including mandatory representation and consultation of young people. Wales have taken the lead on this and it has proven to be a great success. We believe the rest of the UK should follow. By making the UNCRC statutory law, we will be ensuring the voices of young people are heard.

Our Services

Support Youth Services (Devolved)

Youth Services help many young people identify their social and development needs. However, Councils are under extreme pressure to implement cuts to certain services, and unfortunately youth services seem to be one of the hardest hit. We believe that better financial support and security needs to be given to local youth services. Therefore, we call on Government and Local Authorities to, at minimum, legally protect a minimal level of provision for the development of young people. This includes statutory funding, regular reviews on youth services and creating a gold standard for delivery of youth services.

End Period Poverty (Devolved)

We believe that menstrual products are an essential item, and we believe that they should be accessible to all who need them. On average, women spend thousands of pounds on sanitary products during their lifetime. The high cost of these products, increased by the fact that they are subject to VAT (as they are considered a luxury item), means that many people cannot afford to buy the menstrual products they need. For young people, this can affect their daily lives, their school attendance and their ability to engage in activities.

We call on the Government and the NHS to provide free menstrual products to young people under the age of 18; and to make them more accessible for all who need them. This will allow everyone to fulfil their potential without having to worry about the costs of these essential products, and make our society a fairer, happier and healthier place.

Stop the Increased Centralisation of Health Services (Devolved)

All young people should have access to health services for their physical and mental health, irrespective of where they live or the time of day. The increased centralisation of these healthcare services means that for many people living in rural areas, receiving support and treatment is impossible due to expensive travel costs and huge waiting lists. We believe that restrictive opening hours limit how young people access important health services; young people should be able to access privately and confidentially, without having to seek absence from school. We believe that the Government should do more to counteract such unfair centralisation of healthcare services and increase provisions of mental and physical health services for those living in rural areas, and to ensure opening hours suit young people.

Parity of Esteem between Mental Healthcare and Physical Healthcare (Devolved)

Current research highlights that half of all people with lifelong mental health problems have experienced their first symptoms by the age of 14. Without access to mental health support, it can come as little surprise that problems continue, and in many cases deteriorate. By age 18, research estimates it as at 75%. However, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) receive approximately 8% of Adult Mental Health Services budget. Due to this, there are shortages in CAMHS, (1/2 of posts are

vacant in some trusts) but more importantly, some Trusts lack a CAMHS team, which are adequately staffed with the full variety of professionals and therapists. We believe that this is unacceptable and. This negatively affects outcomes and means that occasionally young people are admitted to an Out of Area Hospital, when they could be adequately treated in the Community at a lower cost.

Support for Young Carers (Devolved)

Young carers have to spend a lot of their time caring for their loved ones and so, they often miss out on opportunities to engage in activities that could benefit them. We believe that the Government should invest more funding to help support young carers. We also believe that schools and organisations should work together more effectively, to ensure that the needs of young carers are addressed, and that they are supported to participate the best they can.

Our Transport

Renationalise Public Transportation (Reserved)

The UK Youth Parliament believes that public transport is an essential service for young people. Buses and trains, outside of London, are overpriced and often late. Moreover, over one billion pounds a year is estimated to be wasted by public transport firms (BBC), enough to reduce ticket prices by 20%. We call the Government to intervene through renationalisation. The government should view public transport as a necessity, as opposed to a big business cash cow, which will result in central Government reinvesting profits, rather than dividend payments (highest approximately £200m a year) (The Conversation) and obscene wages. Instead of this, we can reinvest this money so that public transport receives the investment it is so desperately needs.

Furthermore, most UK public transport is already, de facto, nationalised by other governments. For instance, MTR is owned by the Hong Kong Government and the Netherlands control ScotRail, Greater Anglia and Merseyrail (The Guardian). It is a national disgrace that British railway travellers pay the highest fares in Europe, while the profits are gained by other state rail companies and reinvested in their networks. This is why we have to put up with an epidemic of overcrowding and a severe lack of investment. The UK Youth Parliament demands that central Government ends these injustices by immediately beginning the renationalisation of public transport.

The Age of Transport Transition (Devolved)

We encourage the use of electric bikes or 'electrically assisted pedal cycles' (EAPCs). We believe that this reduces the inherent negative environmental impact gained from travelling and reduces congestion by allowing for a significant increase in the vehicle concentration per metre squared. We believe that in the future, we must slowly but surely move away from the use of petrochemicals and the evolution of this transition must start early with young people.

Make Public Transport Cheaper, Better and Accessible for All (Devolved)

We believe there needs to be cheaper, subsidised public transport for young people who are in full time education or under the age of eighteen. These young people should not pay more than half of the adult fare for buses.

We believe that rail fares in the UK are too expensive and we should improve competitiveness in the rail system in order to make the system work more efficiently and drive fares down. The ticketing system for rail travel across the UK is among the most expensive in Europe and the most confusing; we believe that the fares system should be standardised across the country.

We believe a national code of practice for public transport should be introduced to ensure consistency in the cleanliness, frequency, reliability, and treatment of young people, across the UK. We believe that there should be more rigorous punctuality targets for public transport operators who provide train and bus services and that systems need to be put in place to penalise, scrutinise and challenge transport companies who consistently fail to meet their targets.

We believe that there should be better transport links between rural communities and that the local authorities and the UK Government should look into providing community transport for rural areas that currently have little or no public transport services. We believe that this would encourage more socialising between those areas and help alleviate isolation.

We believe that public transport providers need to ensure that young people with disabilities can access their services by providing fully accessible vehicles and adequate space for wheelchair users, raising staff awareness of the needs of young people with disabilities - both visible and invisible disabilities, and providing travel at a reduce cost for support workers.

Our World

Ensuring Future British Participation in Erasmus (Reserved)

We believe that British involvement in the European Union student exchange programme, Erasmus, shouldn't be risked in Brexit negotiations. Erasmus allows young people to explore new cultures, enrich their education and gain new experiences. We believe it's important to maintain link with our European neighbours, even after Brexit.