

**Media release**

[insert date of release], for immediate release

**Member of Youth Parliament for [insert area] launch campaign against racism and religious discrimination**

[Name, X-years-old] Member of Youth Parliament for [area] is joining almost 300 elected Members of Youth Parliament in launching a year-long campaign to combat racism and religious discrimination, particularly against people who are Muslim and Jewish. Today’s National Day of Action will see Members of Youth Parliament call on politicians and schools to join their campaign ‘Don’t Hate, Educate!’ in their strive to ‘help young people speak out’ about racism and religious discrimination.

[Insert para with a bit more detail about the young person here, including school/college, when they were elected etc].

Over the next year, UK Youth Parliament will campaign to challenge negative attitudes around race and religion; work with others to educate their communities in order to tackle ignorance around race and religion; and promote integration in their communities. The campaign starts following the Make Your Mark ballot which took place in the autumn of 2015 seeing the issue become one of the top five with 95,000 young people nominating it as their most important issue and then the subsequent vote by Members of Youth Parliament in House of Commons to make this their national campaign in November 2015.

[Name, X-years-old], Member of Youth Parliament for [area] said: “[You can include a short quote from the MYP here – with reference to the new campaign]”

The issue is thought to have come out as one of the top issues for young people in the Make Your Mark following increases in race and religion related hate crimes between 2014 and 2015. In England and Wales the Home Office reported there were 42,930 race related hate crimes (representing a 15% increase from the year before) and 3,254 religion related hate crimes (43% increase from the year before). Similarly in Northern Ireland, 2,277 race related incidents and crimes were reported showing a 36% increase from the year before. 80 religion related crimes and incidents were also reported showing an increase of 116% from the year before according to Police Service of Northern Ireland. The only exception in this trend has been in Scotland where the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service reported there was a 9% decrease race related hate crimes and a 4% decrease religiously aggravated crimes.

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**Media contacts**

**Local authority**

For interviews requests with the Member of Youth Parliament contact [insert local authority press contact details here]

**UK Youth Parliament**

For more information about the debate (including requests to attend), or to find out more about the UK Youth Parliament, contact Rhammel Afflick, Communications and Media Officer at the British Youth Council: rhammel.afflick@byc.org.uk / 0207 250 8376 / 07985 260 337

**Notes to Editors**

1. The UK Youth Parliament House of Commons debate took place on 13 November 2015. The debate started at 11.00am with an introduction and welcome from the Speaker of the House of Commons Rt. Hon John Bercow MP, who will also be chairing the debate. The debate finished at 4.00pm, and was broadcast live on BBC Parliament, BBC Democracy Live and recorded in Hansard.
2. The UK Youth Parliament’s ‘Make Your Mark’ ballot was open to all young people aged 11-18 in the UK, and took place between 12th August 2013 until 9th October 2013. Ballot papers were delivered to local authorities, schools, and youth clubs across the UK, and young people could also cast their vote online. A record 968,091 young people voted in the ballot.
3. The UK Youth Parliament gives young people a voice on issues that matter to them. It is made up of over 300 Members who are elected by their peers to represent young people across the UK. They work to ensure that the voices of young people are heard at a national, regional and local level. For more information about the UK Youth Parliament visit: <http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/>