



Hammersmith and Fulham Youth Council

Manifesto

2015-2016

What is the H&F Youth Council?

We are an elected group of youth representatives (aged 13-19)¹, who live, go to school in, or are looked after by Hammersmith and Fulham. We are a 'voice' for young people in the borough, and develop a range of methods to get their views and present them to decision makers. We also give our opinion on policies, activities and services and are involved in the recruitment of Children's Services staff.

Every year Youth Council Members, decide whether to stand as a candidate in borough wide UK Youth Parliament Elections. The Member of Youth Parliament and Deputy (Elected in March 2015), lead the Youth Council and represent the views of young people of Hammersmith and Fulham at a regional and national level.

Our aims:

- To ensure that young people have a 'voice' that is listened to by decision makers and can contribute to the decisions that affect them.
- To represent ALL of the young people in the borough.
- To ensure that young people are well informed about the opportunities, activities and services available to them

Our values:

We believe in:

- **Fair Representation:** (young residents should have equal access to information and opportunities to be involved in local decision making).
- **Honesty and openness:** (we won't always be able to change things, but need to clearly explain why if we can't)

¹ Youth Council Members have been elected by their peers to represent their schools, colleges and community projects.

- **Understanding of local issues:** (we want to develop a good understanding of local issues and the concerns of young people so that we can help them to the best of our ability).
- **Best start in life for every young person:** (We want to ensure positive outcomes and lots of opportunities for young people in our borough. We want them to be ready for the world of work and independence and be easily able to access support when they need it).
- **A positive image of young people:** (We want to create a better image and challenge the negative stereotypes of young people).

What does the Youth Council do?

- We meet every fortnight² to catch up and plan our projects.
- Set the agenda, chair and minute take our own meetings.
- Design ways to get young people's views (consultation events, films, facebook, questionnaires) and feed them back to decision makers.
- Scrutinise and give our opinion on services, activities and information for young people.
- Promote opportunities and services to other young people.
- Research and campaign on issues that affect young people locally and nationally.
- Help interview and select professionals to work with young people.

What young people are telling us:

Every year, the elected MYP leads the 'Make Your Mark' consultation to identify the top issues for young people in the borough. The top issues identified locally become the focus for the Youth Council and the top

² Alternate Tuesday Evenings from 5-7pm at Hammersmith Town Hall

issues identified nationally, are debated in the House of Commons by all MYP's from across the UK.

3015 questionnaires were completed by young people in LBHF in October 2014. The top 4 issues were:

- 1) Living wage at work (516 votes)
- 2) Giving young people a voice in improving communities (436)
- 3) Mental health (408)
- 4) Work experience (357)

These issues will be the focus for our manifesto.

The following issues are also important to us:

- Young people being ready for work and independence.
- Ensuring that young people are well informed of opportunities and services available to them and that they are what young people want and need.
- Increasing political awareness amongst young people.

What do we want to achieve?

1. Encourage local employers to adopt the Living Wage.

We will:

- Find out the views of local young people on the living wage.
- Research and identify employers that adopt the living wage and promote this to young people.
- Work alongside Councillors and relevant decision makers to highlight the importance of the living wage and encourage more employers to adopt it, to raise the standard of living for local young people.

2. Give young people a voice in improving their community.

We will:

- Try to be a 'voice' for ALL young people, not just those that attend forums, ensuring that we are listening to and representing them in the best way that we can.
- Be more visible- get out and speak to young people on the streets, at community venues and through targeted services.
- Use social media and online resources more effectively to consult and communicate with young people.
- Help redesign the youth pages of the LBHF website.
- Produce an online newsletter and have regular blogs from the Youth Council.
- Develop an outreach programme- visiting schools and youth projects throughout the borough.
- Work with Councillors and decision makers to ensure that young people are actively involved in council decision making and consultations.

3. Reduce stigma and improve access to mental health services for young people.

We will:

- Work alongside a Councillor led task force and local services to help increase the availability of local information in relation to young people's mental health and well-being and access to mental health services.
- Help reduce the stigma around mental health so that young people can access the support they need.

4. Support young people to be ready for work and independence.

We will:

- Research the careers advice that is available and opportunities for young people to do work experience in the borough.
- Find out how effective young people think this is and identify possible areas for improvement.
- Identify and promote opportunities for young people to learn life skills (including budgeting, financial management, cookery, applying for jobs and interview skills etc.).

5. Increase political awareness and understanding amongst young people.

We will:

- Work Electoral Services and relevant youth organisations, to increase young people's understanding and awareness of local and national politics in a way that is fun, engaging and meaningful to them.

Ensure that young people are informed about and can access activities and services available to them in the borough

We will:

- Research the recreational activities and opportunities available to young people in the borough (including sports and performing arts) and ensure they are what young people want and need.
- Ensure that young people know how to and are able to easily access advice and support if they need it.

How to work with the Youth Council

We have developed an application form for those wishing to consult with us, to support you to think through the practicalities of the consultation, including being clear on the purpose, how the feedback will be used and how you will feedback the impact of young people's involvement and so on. We can then decide whether or not we are interested and want to be involved. (See the attached application)



Application to consult
with the Youth Council

For more information about the Youth Council and UK Youth Parliament:
See the 'H&F Youth Involved' facebook page

www.lbhf.gov.uk/youthinvolvement

www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk