



Young People's Union

Issue 1: March 2020

Child Friendly City: Youth Steering Group

This is our first newsletter and we would like to say hello to all young people living, learning or working in Newcastle.

What is the Young People's Union?

We want Newcastle to be an even friendlier place for children to grow up. If you are aged between 11–18 years, why not come along to our group to talk about how you can get involved in our Child Friendly Cities and Communities activity.

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to have their voices heard. Our group of young people want to make sure that those voices are heard, and action is taken.

Our group is open to anyone who lives, learns or works in Newcastle. You must be aged between 11-18 years. We meet twice a month at the Civic Centre at 5pm and snacks are provided. Currently meetings have been postponed due to COVID-19.

Let us know if you would like to attend by emailing Childfriendlycity@newcastle.gov.uk



Our goals

We make plans and do what we agree to do.

We organise ourselves.

We make sure everyone feels welcome when they come to our meetings.

We design events, activities and surveys.

We work together with young people, adults and organisations.

We discuss and share ideas.

We ask questions on behalf of others.

We are positive and help change how people view children's rights.

We learn new skills to help us achieve our goals.

We take our role seriously.

“Our meetings are fun, interactive and we make decisions about important issues for young people who live in the City”. – Tessy, UKYP

Our Actions and Activity



We have designed a survey for all young people in the City. We want to know if you make the decisions about things that are important to you. You could help by completing our survey. Part of being a child friendly city is having places for young people to express themselves. Whether that be through getting involved in community, sports or creative arts etc, youth groups are important in making Newcastle a better place. We have made a survey to see how many young people still attend youth groups and if they do, whether they feel involved in leading what they do. The best people who can orchestrate the perfect groups for young people are young people themselves. We are currently working to spread the survey to as many young people as possible, so we get an accurate overview of youth activities in the city, and whether they truly give the youth a voice. Article written by Liyanah Riyaz



Making plans for Women in politics event. The young people's union is passionately working towards this year's women in politics event. We have big plans for a venue, speakers (including the voices of young people in Newcastle), and a variety of event activities, to both inspire and motivate young people-especially women, to become involved in politics. We hope that the event will be fun and interesting for everyone attending. Article written by Fiona Patterson



We learn new skills and most recently have become Dementia Friends. We want the City to be friendly and welcoming to everyone who lives here. We have more training planned for the future.



We have responsibility for the Child Friendly City Communication Badge. The communication portfolio focusses mainly on events, social media, and promoting children's rights. One of the most exciting sections of this portfolio is organising and attending events, especially organising our booth at Newcastle Pride. There is a lot of planning to do before the event but the payoff, is amazing. We always talk to young people at the annual event and ask them to share their views. In the past, we have had a Pride flag with questions attached for anyone that stopped by to answer. This was a great success and was really fun for everyone involved as it was to interactive. Some members of the group also went on the official Pride March and had a fun time there, too. Other parts of the communication involve writing letters, organising surveys, influence prioritises, share information is shared and taking part in bigger group activities to help engage young people's in decision-making. Working in communication is a fabulous way to improve your writing and team working skills. Article written by Imogen Golding-Douglass.

Complete our [survey](#) to help us understand how young people make decisions about their local youth groups.

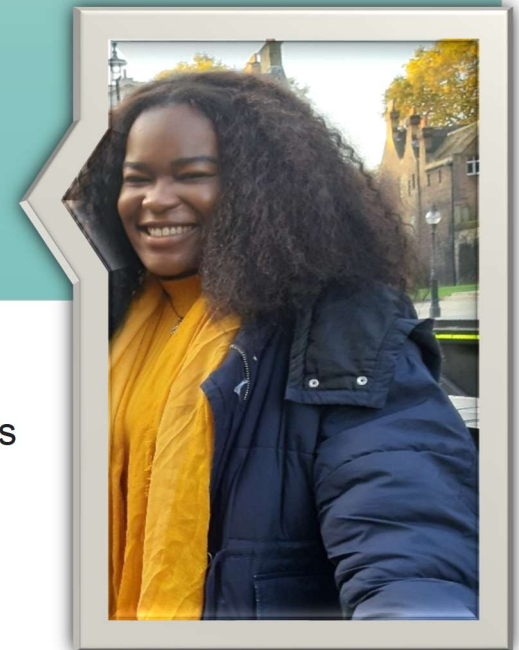
We raise awareness and act on what children and young people tell us is important to them. We debate and campaign on behalf of others in the City.

Tessy Idemudia, aged 17 years says, “We allow 16-year olds to apply for the British Army, Royal Navy, and Royal Air Force, work full-time if you have left school, change their name by deed poll and many more. But vote? That’s absurd, you say. They’re still kids. They’ll just follow their parents’ decisions. They can’t get their heads out of their phones long enough to pay attention to politics.

But lowering the voting age to 16 is not absurd. It’s a completely necessary reform to improve our democracy, engage more young people in politics and influence key decisions that affect their lives on a day to day basis. This means that many of their concerns are dismissed despite the fact many young people will engage when given an authentic opportunity.

Preventing 16 & 17 year olds from expressing political views gives the impression that our views aren’t valid and that we’re not real citizens – contributing to the youth disconnection. Voting determines what the upcoming four years would be like for all the individuals in the country, young people will not remain young people forever, soon they will be people. People that will have to live with the decision’s adults have made before them – without having any input.

If you do not believe in votes @ 16 – you don’t believe in democracy.”



British Youth Council say “We are working to launch a Votes at 16 Campaign targeted towards next year’s local elections. We will be highlighting the inequality faced by young people in England and Northern Ireland who don’t have the same voting rights as their peers in Scotland and Wales and asking for increased devolution so that Local Authorities can decide their own voting age”. (March, 2020: <https://www.byc.org.uk/>)

Did you know you can register to vote from the age of 16 years? It’s important that you support our Votes at 16 campaign by registering. <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/local-government/elections-and-voting/voting>

Co-operation
and
Leadership

Why you should attend Newcastle Young People's Union? by Monica Siddique aged 12 years.

I've been going to Newcastle Young People's Union for a couple of months now, and honestly, I'm not ashamed that it's one of the things I'm most proud of and I don't think I'll ever regret giving in to my parents' persuasion for me to attend. My first time there, I was very intimidated by everything: being the youngest (I was eleven years old at my first meeting) person there, all these new faces, how professional everything is and probably the fact that my first meeting happened to be in the Banqueting Hall of the Civic Centre with its massive chandeliers! But, after a few minutes of being there, the people were so welcoming and friendly, I was starting to speak up, and even made a few points myself. I think this is a great opportunity to anyone and everyone who wants their voice heard in Newcastle, even if you are generally a quiet person like myself. All types of people are at the group, and everyone there is accepting of who you are, no matter what. The people here will support you. I don't think there will be a day where I think 'Oh, well that wasn't worth my time' when it comes to this group, even if I'm terrified of the huge, grand venues sometimes (but trust me, you always feel important in those comfy leather chairs). I think that Newcastle Young People's Union is a place for **everyone**.



A chance to win a £25.00 gift voucher

Young People have worked hard to come up with a name for the group and now they are asking young people across the city to help us design a logo. Liyanah Riyaz says “We are hosting a competition to create a logo that will be used on all our leaflets, social media, posters and presentations. This logo will represent the whole group for a long time, and we want it to be designed by the youth of Newcastle. There are so many talented artists all over the city and we want our group to be fully youth lead, down to the details like the logo. This competition gives teenagers something to do, as well as giving them a chance to think- what does Newcastle mean to you? In addition, there is a £25 Eldon Square gift voucher to be won!”



- Anyone between 11-18 can submit a design for the logo. It should be what you

think Newcastle is and celebrate the youth within it.

- The group wants to spread awareness that our city is aiming to become even more welcoming and safe for under 18's and this logo should reflect that.
- Think about what does Newcastle mean to you and how do you think the youth of Newcastle should be represented?
- The logo should include the words '**Young People's Union**' and optionally the motto '**child friendly steering group**'.
- Font should be legible and should be able to be seen from a distance.
- Your logo must be on a word document.

To find out more information about our Child Friendly City program visit <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/our-city/unicef-child-friendly-city/unicef-child-friendly-city>

Your design should be emailed to childfriendlycity@newcastle.gov.uk or posted to Louise Cameron, Newcastle City Council, Newcastle Civic Centre Block 4, Floor 3, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8QH. Entries must be received by Wednesday 1st July, 2020.



Useful information

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-teenagers-can-protect-their-mental-health-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://sanctuaryforfamilies.org/safety-planning-covid19/>

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/childrens-guide-to-coronavirus/>