

Youth Cabinet: Terms of Reference for the youth members

Background

The Youth Cabinet ensure that young people of Bury are given a voice on any issue that affects them and as laid out in The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Article 12 (Respect for the views of the child): "When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account".

Positive for Youth was published in Feb 2012. This document highlights the statutory obligation for Local Authorities to have young people involved in influencing decisions, having a pivotal role in the offer of high quality services.

The Children's Trust is committed to a culture of participation, so that listening and responding to children and young people becomes an integral part of everyday practice.

Who are the youth members of the Bury Youth Cabinet?

The youth representatives in the Youth Cabinet include the three members of Youth Parliament. All the young people have expressed a willingness and commitment to be involved in Youth Cabinet's activities in representing the voice of young people in Bury. Some of the young people represent their school or student councils or specific groups e.g. Children in Care Council, Young Carers, Streetwise. All young people are aged between 11 and 25 years, and live or study in Bury.

What does the Youth Cabinet do?

Their role is to represent young people's interests, views and concerns at meetings and events with councillors and representatives from the Bury Children's Trust Board. As well as this, they work on projects which aim to improve situations and solve problems that affect young people

The Youth Cabinet acts as a voice for the views and opinions of young people across Bury. It does this by:

- Identifying what young people think about various issues, what they feel is important and what they would like to see done.
- Informing young people of the different services, groups and opportunities available to them.
- Involving young people in decisions that affect them and in the development of services and activities that exist for them
- Influencing others to encourage them to listen to young people and respond to their needs and wishes.
- Campaigning on important issues to try to bring about change or improvements for the benefit of young people.

- Promoting positive images of young people and highlighting the contribution they make to the community.
- Supporting young people to be happy, healthy and safe and help them to achieve their full potential and have fun.

Principles

Youth Cabinet members have the responsibility to uphold the following ethos and principles:

- Bury Youth Cabinet does not represent any party political view.
- The members have a duty towards the young people they represent.
- Every young person has the right to have his/her view heard and listened to by Youth Cabinet.
- Youth members should respect and listen to the views of others, challenging discrimination and promoting equal opportunities.
- Bury Youth Cabinet is a safe zone where young people feel free to be able to express their own opinions.

Expectations

- It is important that Youth Cabinet members take their role and duty seriously when representing the Youth Cabinet.
- They must attend cabinet meetings and support as many other meetings and events as possible.
- They must maintain contact with other Youth Cabinet members and the Youth Participation Worker via Youth Cabinet Facebook and responding to emails, texts, telephone calls and letters.

Roles within Youth Cabinet

- Chair and Deputy Chair: Annual elections are carried out to decide upon these roles. The Chair is in control of the meeting, facilitating discussions, enabling all young people and adults to have an opportunity to give their view. The Chair ensures that all agenda items are fully discussed, keeping an eye on time constraints, with the Chair remaining impartial in all round table discussions.
- UK Youth Member of Parliament and Deputies: Borough wide elections take place every second year where the UK Youth MP and 2 Deputies are chosen. The Youth MP and Deputies are the link between Youthforia, the North West Youth Forum and the Youth Cabinet. This representation ensures that Bury are fully informed about campaigns, activities and events across the region for the promotion of positive change to improve the life experiences of young people.
- Leadership Committee: Membership is made up of the Chair, UKYMP and Deputies and approximately 5 other young people who are interested and committed in taking a leading role. Meetings take place in between the Youth Cabinet dates and focus on agenda items, specific projects and consultations and overall plans for the Youth Cabinet.

- Young people representing specific groups, namely; School / Student Councils, youth organisations, Children in Care Council, Young Carers, Youth Disability Group. The expectation would be that these young people would be the communication link between the group they represent and the Youth Cabinet.

Youth Cabinet: 2013-2014 Specific role, purpose and responsibilities

This was agreed by Youth Cabinet on 17 April 2013 and reviewed by the Leadership Committee on 15 May 2013

What is the purpose of the Youth Cabinet?

- To discuss issues and put forward young people's views to councillors.
- To be used as a consultation forum on decisions affecting young people.
- To create a network for young people to voice and share their ideas.
- To campaign - making Bury better.
- To address issues, debate and take action e.g. The Walking Rainbow.
- To provide a voice for young people, improve representation and a new perspective on ideas.
- Improving lives of young people.
- To have a relationship with the Children's Trust Board
- To have wide representation of young people across Bury, including all schools and youth organisations

What is the role of the young person participating?

- To campaign
- Get involved
- To decide on practical solutions for change
- To tackle issues
- To feedback discussions and ideas to other organisations, including school and student councils
- To be involved in consultations
- To contribute ideas and use their own voice
- To represent others' views
- To have a relationship with the Children's Trust
- To have one or more young people dedicated to specific areas of work / projects

Who should decide on what is discussed and how it should run?

- The Chair
- Members of Youth Cabinet
- Leadership/ planning committee.
- Young people who are very committed to Youth Cabinet

What should happen in the meetings?

- Discussions and debates.
- Organising events
- Promotions
- Training for young people

Other ideas...

- Link with other Youth Cabinets from other areas
- Have a yearly social event
- Debating teams
- Have a Youth Cabinet bank account – apply for funding
- Fund raising
- Link with Township Forum young people