



**Bristol City Youth Council
UK Youth Parliament
Bristol Youth Mayors
Manifesto Campaigns 2015 – 2017
Revised 11/02/2016**



**Introduction from Bristol City Youth Council Chair
Sophie Giltinan**

February 2015 marked a huge democratic achievement for Bristol's young people: a record number of 10,379 voters participated in the election of the new Bristol City Youth Council. This turnout shows just how eager the youth of Bristol are to be a part of the democratic system, and to have a say in decisions that affect them. This is why Bristol City Youth Council, consisting of 28 constituency representatives and 5 Equalities Groups representatives, shall be working hard throughout their term of office to put forward the views of young people all around Bristol.

This manifesto document is our first step on that journey. In it, we outline our key priorities for our up-and-coming term in office, presenting all that we wish to achieve during our term. Our priorities fell into five main categories:

- **Health and wellbeing**
- **Futures**
- **Equalities**
- **Transport**
- **Neighbourhoods**

Unfortunately, we have neither the time nor the resources to focus on issues from all of these categories, and we have therefore selected our top three priorities from them. However, the Youth Council still contains representatives from all of these subgroups, who will become the main contacts for issues regarding the campaigns.

Also, contained in this updated manifesto document are the priorities of our four new United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP) representatives, and our two new Youth Mayors. One of our first actions during our mid-term conference was to re-elect these six positions of responsibility, and they provide important links to other Youth Councils across the country, as well as to key political figures. They hold separate priorities to the Bristol City Youth Council; however the Council supports these priorities.

This updated version of our manifesto is the result of much careful work during the mid-term conference, and is an accurate reflection of the issues that young people across Bristol feel need to be focused on. The Youth Council is confident that this updated manifesto better reflect our aims and provide challenging, yet more achievable, targets. Hopefully, with the cooperation of other organisations and decision-makers, we can make the changes promised in this document, and make Bristol a better place for young people.

**Sophie Giltinan
Chairperson
Bristol City Youth Council 2016-2017**

About the Manifesto

Over their term of office, the Bristol City Youth Council will work hard to achieve change in a number of areas that affect young people across the city. As we do this we will seek to further embed young people at the heart of democracy in Bristol. This city can be proud of how far it has come regarding young people's involvement, but it still needs to continue to push forward to become a standard bearer for the rest of the United Kingdom and Europe.

The priorities featured in this manifesto originated from a number of different sources:

- Campaigns that members of the Bristol City Youth Council stood for
- Priorities identified at Area Youth Forums across the city
- Mayoral priorities
- UK Youth Parliament priorities
- Equality group priorities

Bristol City Youth Council has assessed all of the campaigns, and has prioritised them in the following order:

- 1 Physical and mental health and wellbeing
- 2 Volunteering opportunities for young people in their communities
- 3 Practical work experience and careers advice
- 4 Making education accessible to all young people
- 5 Transport

As well as focusing on the above priorities, Bristol City Youth Council has also committed to supporting the equality forums in the city. Although the equality forums will lead these campaigns, Bristol City Youth Council will campaign on their behalf in the following areas:

- Tackling Islamophobia
- Providing more activities for young carers
- Amplifying the voice of Children in Care
- Supporting the young LGBTQ community
- Raising awareness of the needs of disabled young people

Our Priorities

1. Health and Wellbeing

The aim of this campaign is to gain equal recognition for both the mental and physical health of young people around Bristol. We believe that mental wellbeing isn't openly discussed, leading to stigma and often ignorance around the topic. Services for dealing with mental health issues are usually only accessible once significant concerns have been raised. We need to be **proactive**, rather than **reactive** when dealing with mental health. We need to see more early intervention and a greater emphasis on equipping young people with the skills

necessary to ensure positive mental health. The Bristol Safeguarding board and the Bristol City Council's commissioning team prioritise this campaign also.

Campaign targets:

- De-stigmatise mental health issues, and promote discussion within schools.
- Encourage professionals to equip young people with the skills needed to manage their mental health.
- Create and circulate posters around the theme of 'Healthy Body, Healthy Mind', to promote the importance of positive mental and physical health.
- Work in partnership with health organisations such as CAMHS, Off the Record, and Young Healthwatch to raise the profile and increase the sphere of influence of this campaign.
- Support the Freedom of Mind Festival and collaborate to run a Healthy Body, Healthy Mind event.

2. Transport Group

In the first year we arranged a meeting with first to discuss our manifesto and transport problems young people face and also attended Green Capital events such as the Bristol Blue Whale launch and the Green Youth Day.

In our meeting with first we felt that they were supportive of our ideas and it was good that we could arrange a time to meet with them. However we found communication with First particularly difficult as it was hard to arrange further meetings with them and also take our ideas further. Also because we did not prioritise certain issues and did not have a clear goal in mind. Therefore by changing our name to the 'Transport Group' we feel this will enable us as well as young people to recognise our clear goal.

Our manifesto is as follows:

- We want **interactive digital displays** at key bus stops on key bus routes to improve communication to passengers. We want to show the exact location of busses on route and predict an **accurate** time of arrival. These trackers will be on a **schematic map**, which will clearly indicate the exact location of the bus.
- We also want to arrange more meetings with first and become a focus group to make it easier for young people to talk to us but also make it easier to communicate with First.

We only have 2 main priorities because we want to make this a realistic goal.

3. Volunteering in local communities

Neighbourhoods Updated Manifesto

The youth council feels that young people need to be offered more opportunities to take an active role within their communities. We strongly believe that this will help and strengthen communities across Bristol, whilst improving the image of young people. These opportunities will also give young people the chance to learn new social skills that will be useful to them in the future.

We have set ourselves a clear plan from now until our end of term in office as youth council members. We hope to gain an understanding of young people's neighbourhoods; what's going on, what's not and make this acknowledgement known to the young people within, therefore hoping to ensure a positive and beneficial change. We plan to do this by:

Campaign targets:

- Making sure neighbourhood partnership meetings are wider spread to all eligible ages, in order for them to become more "young people friendly". Thus, improving the youth area forums.
- Ensuring councillors talk with young people before making decisions regarding Bristol's youth community – all decisions are balanced and accurate to fit the demand.
- Ensuring that young people are aware of volunteering opportunities within their communities, if not we, The Youth Council will create links with possible volunteering opportunities developing as well as present ones. If young people have ideas for their communities, then we would like to be able to facilitate these with possible funding promised.

We would also like to join the neighbourhood partnership citywide event at the end of our term in office. To celebrate the achievements by young people, present the positive change that has been done by young people within their neighbourhoods with The Youth Council facilitating.

In our first year as BCYC members we have produced a PowerPoint for school to use in assemblies explaining about Neighbourhood partnerships we are hoping to spread these to schools in the South, East Central and North Bristol regions targeted. Hoping that a wider acknowledgement of the current ongoing work from The Youth Council is known and how possibly young people can get involved in the positive beneficial change we hope to make across Bristol.

UK Youth Parliament

Bristol UK Youth Parliament campaigns:

National Youth Parliament priorities:

- Mental Health
- Tackling racism and religious discrimination

1. Tackling racism and religious discrimination

Following over 95,000 young people voting tackling racism and racial discrimination as a priority issue; and Members of Youth Parliament voting to make this the national campaign during the 2015 House of Commons Sitting, the UK Youth Parliament will be working in their communities to reduce racism and racial discrimination. 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.

Why is this important?

There has been an increase in race and religion related hate crimes across all the nations in the UK apart from Scotland; but young people agreed that 1 victim of this type of hate crime is one too many.

England and Wales race and religion related hate crimes in 2014-2015:

- 42,930 Race related hate crimes reported – 15% increase from the year before.
- 3,254 Religion related hate crimes reported – 43% increase from the year before.
- (*Source: Home Office*)

Northern Ireland related race and religion related incidents and hate crimes in 2014-2015:

- 2,277 race related incidents and crimes reported – 36% increase from the year before.
- 80 religion related crimes and incidents reported – 116% increase from the year before.
- (*Source: Police Service of Northern Ireland*)

Scotland race and religion related hate crimes in 2014-2015:

- 3,785 race related hate crimes reported – 9% decrease compared to the year before.
- 569 religiously aggravated crimes reported – 4% decrease from year before.
- (*Source: Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service*)

2. Improving access to Mental Health support and education

Mental Health has been raised as a local, regional and national priority, a true indication of how much needs to be done to improve societal understanding of what mental health is, and also to foster positive mental wellbeing.

- We will be working in partnership with organisations like CAMHS, Off The Record and Young Healthwatch to distribute resources to schools and youth centres, as well as fundraising.
- Bristol Youth Parliament members will use our Curriculum For Life campaign to ensure that schools facilitate insightful and proactive discussion concerning mental wellbeing.
- We aim to host an event that will raise money and promote positive mental health, in addition to tackling the stigma surrounding the issue.

South West Youth Parliament manifesto:

- Curriculum for Life
- Mental Health
- Work Experience and Careers Advice
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Curriculum for Life

We believe that every young person deserves to be equipped with the knowledge to make positive choices for themselves. Our Curriculum For Life campaign revolves around encouraging schools to incorporate these 5 essential topics into their core syllabus:

- Politics
- Personal finance
- Sex and relationships
- Drugs
- Mental health

- We will work with schools, colleges and youth centres to ensure that the young people of Bristol have access to impartial information and advice surrounding these issues.
- We will formulate resources (videos/posters) that can be used as a stimulus for discussion.
- We will work with the Bristol City Council to ensure that young people are consulted when decisions are made about guidelines for PSHE lesson content.
- It is our aim to ensure that **every** secondary school in Bristol is committed to teaching a Curriculum For Life by the end of our two year term.
- We champion a Curriculum For Life becoming compulsory on a national scale.

Bristol Youth Mayors

The Bristol Youth Mayors, Theo and Elise, were elected from the Youth Council body in February 2016. They have created a different manifesto to tackle the issues raised from the Futures campaign, which looks to improve the prospect lives of young people through education.

Amongst being involved with the Youth Councils manifesto, we have decided to prioritise and still incorporate issues raised from the Futures campaign, with the help of Mayor. During our time in office we would like to improve **Work Experience** and **Careers Advice** for students. We strongly believe that currently this is one of the areas substantially lacking in the education sector due to the shortage of work experience placements and insufficient tailored advice needed to match individual aspirations. Education is a topic we are both very passionate about, either having experienced the struggles first hand or known people who have often had difficulty. As Bristol has recently adopted the status as a Learning City, we thought it a prime opportunity to base our manifesto around education, as it will help us get the recognition and support needed. Aided and inspired by the Learning City Partnership Board we have created this manifesto as Youth Mayors.

Campaign targets:

- Challenge companies and organisations to offer more tailored work experience to young people around Bristol.
- Expose our peers to alternative vocational paths, in terms of their future for example apprenticeships.
- Do this by inviting more companies to set up careers fairs in schools to advertise their career and give advice to young people.
- Encourage schools to hire the necessary position of a careers advisor who will advise students, help them gain experience and act as a contact point to connect young people and companies/organisations.
- Create a network to connect 15-18 year old students to professionals so that they can get sufficient advice and necessary contact details for work experience to ensure they are making the right choices for the future.

Emerging Priorities

Bristol City Youth Council will respond to emerging issues over their term in office, as they occur. Issues may emerge if decision makers from the Bristol City Council, other organisations or young people wish to consult with us, or raise any concerns.

Conclusion from the Bristol City Youth Council Chair

Now that you are familiar with the priorities of the Bristol City Youth Council, we hope that you can support us in our endeavour to achieve these aims. If you feel you can support us in any way, or want to get involved in our campaigns, please contact us. Any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the manifesto or the Youth Council as a body, can be directed to the contacts below.

I thank you for reading our manifesto, and hope that it has proved the determination of Bristol's young people to have their voices heard and to change our city for the better.

**Sophie Giltinan
Chairperson
Bristol City Youth Council 2016-2017**

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