Youth Elections Guide

A guide for support workers planning and running Local Authority, school, parish, and community youth elections.
Published as part of the British Youth Council’s Youth Voice programme working with the Department for Education (DfE) to provide a support service for youth participation. The Youth Voice programme aims to support young people’s voice and involvement in decision making at a local and national level.
Introduction

Over the past decade, there has been an increase in the number of youth councils, parish councils, youth assemblies, forums, parliaments and cabinets. Increasingly, these youth representative roles are being supported by youth elections.

Youth elections offer young people the chance to develop new skills, be elected by their peers and see what it is to be a part of democracy in action. Young people tell us that running in an election helps them understand what it means to be a leader for their community and sets them up to be the best they can be in the role they are elected into.

Wherever possible, we recommend that youth elections mirror the equivalent adult election. This encourages young people to think about voting in adult elections and gives them a chance to experience the process before their 18th birthday. There will undoubtedly have to be some modifications made to make sure the process is youth friendly. This way young people will get a real flavour for standing as a candidate, voting and being successful or unsuccessful on election results night!

“The young people get to vote. It’s democracy, it’s empowerment and we are getting about 40% turnout and that’s going up.” (London Borough of Newham Officer)
Background

Why run them?
Youth elections can be the starting point for a youth representative role. This could be as a School, Parish or Youth Councillor. The scope for running any youth election is dependent on: your area, the reason you are running elections and resources and staff time available to you.

Youth elections will give young people a real idea of what running in an adult election feels like. From submitting their candidacy to recruiting a campaign team, taking part in a hustings event or going class to class with their manifesto, youth elections give young people real power and provide opportunities for self-development.

The citizenship and personal social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculums encourage young people to think about being active citizens. They promote awareness among young people about their rights in society. This is more than promoting decision making by young people about things that affect them (Article 12, United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child). Youth elections support them to make an educated and informed choice about who to vote for and why. They learn vital key skills which will help them understand their democratic rights in the community in which they live.

What’s in it for young people?

• **Power and influence** – an elected youth representative raises the profile of issues that matter to young people, and influences community opinion formers.

• **Getting their voices heard** – youth representative schemes ensure that young people are more informed and involved in community decision making. They can see that they are being listened to and that their concerns are being acted on.

• **Understanding and development** – young people gain new skills and develop valuable experiences. Representation promotes the understanding of local democracy and political processes, and it can also be a lot of fun!

• **Positive representation** – young people can represent their peers to the media, countering negative stereotypes and promoting positive images.

• **New skills** – confidence, campaigning, public speaking, running consultations and political education are a few of many skills youth representatives say they learn when taking part in an election.

• **Principles of youth elections** – young people learn about what a real election is: free, fair, transparent, accountable and accessible for all.
What’s in it for youth organisations?

- **Informing policy and decision makers** – a youth representative helps elected members, local officers and the community understand the issues that affect young people, as well as their needs and opinions.

- **Developing civic identity** – voting and standing in an election at a young age can become a lifelong habit that leads to greater participation in the democratic process and wider civic society.

- **Increasing legitimacy** – youth representatives provide a voice for a section of the population that often goes unheard. Youth representation lends credence and focus to the work they undertake with adult policy and decision makers.

- **Improving services** – youth representation acts as a catalyst to strengthen local accountability and improve services for young people; making them responsive, user driven and cutting costs long term.

- **Fulfilling statutory duties** – communities have a duty to inform, consult and involve people in the running of community services, as well as a duty to promote democracy - particularly to young people.
Principles of youth elections

Free:
Youth elections should be free to take part and vote in.
Youth representatives are not the same as adult representatives. Adult representatives are often paid for their work or have a thorough expenses policy to support them in their role.
Most youth representative candidates will still be in education, training or employment. It is vital that their out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed from standing as a candidate to being elected as a youth representative. Out-of-pocket expenses could be related to travel, phone, calendars and other appropriate costs.
Some organisations help candidates campaign by producing template campaign posters, wristbands, t-shirts and other merchandise. Some organisations give youth candidates a budget to spend on their campaign and others offer publicity support through local press and school magazine articles.
We recommend that organisations keep an eye on candidates’ campaign expenditure. If one candidate spends money on their campaign, this is unfair to other candidates who don’t have such a disposable income.

Fair:
The purpose of any election, whether for adults or young people, is that it is fair. The process from standing as a candidate to the election itself must not favour one individual or a particular group of young people.
If a youth election is deemed to be unfair, young people can lose faith in the programme you are trying to set up, and also in democracy as a whole. At every stage youth elections must be transparent, accountable and accessible for all.
An unfair election may have any of the following attributes:

• **Lack of open political debate or an uninformed electorate** – examples could include having young people vote just on photos of young people or where one candidate’s manifesto isn’t published or they didn’t attend a hustings event.

• **Unfair rules** – for example a rule that favours or positively discriminate towards candidates standing for election.

• **Interference with campaigns** – where those ‘in power’ show preference to one candidate by mentioning them on social media sites or in speeches.
• **Tampering with the election mechanism** – examples could include having candidates count their own ballot papers or supporting a voting system that actively supports the area they are campaigning in.

**Regular:**
Regular elections help raise the profile of the youth representative role, but they also allow the role to have an end point. This could be where the young person moves onto a more significant or specialist role or stands for re-election. Young people are busy with exams, applying for jobs, university or college. They tell us that as a youth representative, they are happy to stand for a one or two-year term, but anything longer than that is difficult to conceptualise.

**Transparent and accountable:**
The aims of running a youth election are often: developing young people's skills, propping up community engagement schemes and giving young people power and influence over decisions that affect them.

If a youth election isn’t transparent, simply put, the youth election process fails. We would highly recommend a secret ballot election system be used, which limits intimidation and reflects adult voting processes.

It is vital to engage with all stakeholders. Stakeholders could be the candidates, their parents, schools, adult councillors and decision makers. Every stakeholder must be able to see how the election is run and challenge it appropriately should they wish to. When planning your youth election, think about who is accountable for the election process and the youth representative role that is being elected into.

**Free from Party Politics:**
A youth election is broader than the adult party political system. The point is to encourage young people to be active citizens in their communities, not to support the youth wings of political parties. Young people will have a lot of time to find their political affiliation preference, but where parish, school and youth council elections are concerned, they remain party political free.

We encourage young people to stand on a series of campaigns about things they would like to see changed or even stay the same in their area. For example, they could stand on a campaign to encourage road safety awareness in their primary school or to change the job description of school nurses. They could stand to increase recycling in their youth centre or to reduce gun and knife crime on their housing estate. Some campaigns focus on improving local parks and increasing access to leisure centres for young people with disabilities. By standing on a campaign or manifesto, young people will be able to measure change after their role has finished. These changes are often tangible to their community and allow them to see the progress they have made in their role.
Accessible:
Every young person should be able to stand as a candidate and vote in a youth election. You may have to develop criteria. For example:

• How old do you have to be to stand as a candidate? Some of the tasks associated with the role may not be appropriate to a younger audience.

• How long are the terms of office? If they are too long, this will automatically exclude young people wanting to go abroad for a year or go to University.

• When are the elections? Do they run over GCSE or A-level time? If so, this would automatically exclude 16, 17 and 18 year olds.
Unfortunately, youth representation schemes don’t run themselves. A good adult support worker is needed, and depending on the size and work remit of your scheme, you may need two!

An area that some organisations find challenging is the accuracy of a young person’s position. It is essential that when they meet with adult decision makers they are able to put facts and statistics behind their voices. This can be done by speaking to other young people on a regular basis, utilising social media and being involved in key meetings and events being led and run by other young people.

Some youth representatives have their own budget which they can spend on implementing their campaigns. It is essential that accountability for that budget is explained to them and the overall responsibility for the expenditure is clearly outlined. Problems can occur when a youth representative makes an uninformed decision. To prevent this, a good fundraising, expenses and volunteering policy should be written in collaboration with candidates and key stakeholders.

To get young people thinking about running an election, standing as a candidate or to further their knowledge, there are some good online tools:

- **Dem games** is a collection of fun citizenship games including: Captain Campaign, Councillor Quest II and Money Manager. [http://demgames.org/](http://demgames.org/)

- **Democracy 2** is a political strategy and simulation game. The game simulates the motivations, loyalties and desires of everyone in the country. [www.positech.co.uk/democracy2/](http://www.positech.co.uk/democracy2/)

- **Campaign Game** is a politically-themed turn-based tactical combat game. You choose a candidate, pick your staff, and literally fight it out with the opposition – slinging mud, launching attack adverts, and holding rallies to capture states and earn funds. [www.kongregate.com/games/thup/campaign-game](http://www.kongregate.com/games/thup/campaign-game)

- The **Democracy Cookbook** has lots of fun games and activities to help train young people, raise awareness and support the overall election process. It can be ordered for free from [www.dopolitics.co.uk](http://www.dopolitics.co.uk).

Youth representatives have told us that the best way to make politics engaging is to make it fun, interactive and tangible to them.

You may want to invite Councillors and MPs to talk about their experiences when running for elections, show young people around the Council chamber or Board Room and perhaps even run a mock Council meeting.
Voting systems

When researching about holding an election, you will hear lots about first past the post elections, ranked voting, approval voting and supplementary voting systems.

Supplementary Vote
Under the Supplementary Vote, voters express a first and second choice of candidate only. If no candidate receives an absolute majority of first choice votes, all but the two leading candidates are eliminated and the votes of those eliminated are redistributed according to their second choice votes to determine the winner. The Supplementary Vote is currently used in all elections for directly-elected mayors in England, including the Mayor of London.

First past the post
First past the post voting refers to an election won by the candidate(s) with the most votes. The winning candidate does not necessarily receive an absolute majority of all votes cast. This method is usually used to elect Members of Youth Parliament.

Rated votes
Voters give a score to each option; the allowable scores could be numeric (e.g. 1, 2, 3 or 4) or grades (e.g. A, B, or C).
Rated ballots can be used for ranked voting methods, as long as the ranked method allows tied rankings. Some ranked methods assume that all the rankings on a ballot are distinct, but many voters would be likely to give multiple candidates the same rating on a rated ballot.
In range voting, voters give numeric ratings to each option, and the option with the highest total or average score wins.

Approval voting
An approval voting ballot does not require ranking or exclusivity. Each voter may vote for (or ‘approve’ of) as many of the candidates as the voter wishes. The winner is the candidate receiving the most votes. Each voter may vote for any combination of candidates and may give each candidate at most one vote.
Two tiers

For the purpose of this guide, we have split the next section into two tiers:

1. School, parish, and community youth elections
2. Local Authority youth elections and youth council elections

School, parish and community youth elections are usually run on a smaller scale compared to Local Authority youth elections. The mechanisms and methodology are slightly different as well as the budget, responsibility and timeline.
Cash

Running a youth election can cost as much or as little as you have in the bank! To make your election look professional, a little bit of cash could be spent on printing the manifestos or producing posters that advertise the date, location and time of an election. However, a fair and transparent election can be run for free:

- Candidates write their manifestos which are put onto a PowerPoint presentation which is then looped and played on school displays.
- Manifestos can be printed and posted on school notice boards or put into parish newsletters.
- Social media groups and pages can be set up to support candidates as well as inform the electorate of the reasons they are standing and offer more information on the organisation.

Most of the resources go into staff time; planning and delivering the election.

Election methodology

School or parish and youth council elections can be run simply at an existing scheduled meeting. You must give young people notice that you are hosting the election and send them a description of the role being elected to. Give young people enough time and equal amounts of support to prepare a short speech. Then, ask them to deliver their speech at the assigned meeting and ask people attending that meeting to vote after briefing them on the election, the process of the role being elected to and how votes are counted. Informing your electorate is just as important as informing the candidates.

If you want to be a bit more high tech, you could run your elections online. The following are sites that run online elections at varying costs and system requirements:

- www.democracy.com
- www.mi-voice.com
- www.simplyvoting.com
- www.gloversure.co.uk/sms_vote
**Stakeholders – how to find them and get them engaged**

Even for a small election, it is important to let people know what you are doing. This helps support the election process, raise the profile of the youth representative and encourages others to challenge and improve the process constructively. You may want to think about speaking to the adult equivalent position, for example, Chair of the Parish Council or Headteacher. Ask them who was involved in their recruitment or election and how it worked. This can then help you build your election process and make it relevant to both young people and adults.

Make sure you speak to a group of enthusiastic young people who may have been part of a previous youth representative scheme or want to help you build a new one. They can advise you on how young people want to hear about the opportunity and how to make the process youth friendly.

**Young people – how to find them and get them engaged**

This really depends on the youth representative scheme you are trying to build. If it is a parish youth council, then you may want to think about utilising existing networks. If the position is for a school council, you may want to write to parents, put up posters in the school, use the school website or run a school assembly.

If you are struggling, the British Youth Council run a Putting Your Point Across recruitment training course for exactly this problem. Contact the Training team at training@byc.org.uk or call 0845 458 1489.
### Possible problems and solutions

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<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution</th>
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<tr>
<td>No one votes</td>
<td>If you publicise your elections well and work closely with partners, this won’t be a problem. Don’t forget to remind your candidates to vote (they can vote for themselves). It is up to them to get as many votes as possible for their candidacy. We have seen that election turnout numbers increase year on year as more young people and stakeholders hear about them and want to take part in them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There's a tie</td>
<td>This is where it’s important to get your voting process right. If more than two people are tied you may want to have a run off. This is where the top candidates are asked to present for a set time on why you should vote for them. This can be problematic if you have an even number of voters. If two candidates are tied we would recommend flipping a coin.</td>
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<td>Only one candidate stands for election</td>
<td>We would advise that if this is the case something hasn’t gone quite to plan and you may need to rethink and restart your election process. You can’t host an election with only one candidate. However, you may want to extend the application deadline, visit key stakeholders or run an emergency meeting with your steering group. A few things might have gone wrong including: wrong time of year, young people haven’t heard about the elections or the role isn’t very appealing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The youth representative post is changed at the last minute</td>
<td>Again, if the election process is clear, this shouldn’t happen. At the start of this process, a role description and objectives should have been agreed and signed off. This is what a young person is running on. If the change is a big one, you may have to hold an emergency meeting with the candidates and ask if they still want to stand given the changes. You will also have to inform the electorate of the changes so that they can make an informed choice of who they are voting for and why.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A candidate who was interested in taking part drops out after everything has gone to print</td>
<td>If this is a small election, we would encourage you to reprint the relevant material to make it clearer for voters. However, if it is too late, don’t panic! When people come to vote, put up a sign that explains the changes and also inform them verbally.Any votes for the candidate that has dropped out won’t be counted. They don’t need to know the reason why someone has pulled out, just that they have.</td>
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<td>Lack of commitment from partners</td>
<td>An election will run well if every stakeholder has ownership of the project from the start to the bitter end! Hold regular meetings, send weekly project updates and ensure that they are given the opportunity to challenge and evaluate the process at the end of the elections project. This will help them feed into making it better for future years. Maybe write a sales pitch for each stakeholder outlining what’s in it for them.</td>
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<td>Shortage of time</td>
<td>A good election is a well planned one. There are lots of elements to think about: candidates, stakeholders, publicity, process etc. If you run out of time, don’t be afraid to ask for help. Most areas will have lists of volunteers that are there to help when needed, find your list and use it.</td>
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Local Authority elections

Understanding why you are running them

When youth elections were set up originally, the Department for Education advised that they should mirror adult council elections wherever possible. For many reasons, this may not be possible within your Local Authority or youth organisation. Budgets, political involvement and resources may create barriers to running your youth election exactly the same as the adult election or the way you want it to run. However, agreeing the aims of elections is critical.

Aims could include:

- Supporting local democracy.
- Developing young people’s skills.
- Electing a Member of Youth Parliament.
- Electing a youth leader who has accountability to their electorate.
- Giving young people a chance to take part in an election process.
- Giving young people a voice and power to influence decisions that affect them.

Election methodology

Running a large youth election is exactly the same as running a large project. There are lots of people to engage with, lots of things to do and lots of strict deadlines to stick to! Adult elections cost tens of thousands of pounds, and it is unlikely that you will have the same support for a youth election. The method you use for your youth election will depend on your budget and resources available to you. Unlike parish and school council elections, you won’t be able to run these on a post-it. However, there is lots of advice, hints and tips to help you.

Here are some examples of how organisations have run elections:

1. **Online voting** – for smaller budgets.
2. **Paper ballot voting** – for bigger budgets.
3. **Postal ballot voting** – for young people who don’t go to school/youth centres in the Local Authority or for young people unable to make voting day.
4. **SMS voting** – for medium budgets. This is a basic form of voting where you simply send in an SMS message to the system with an identifier in the text, which describes which person you are voting for. The system then counts the number of votes for each individual option, and calculates which one received the most votes.
To whittle down the candidates, some Local Authorities hold preliminary elections. This will add extra cost to your elections, but will ensure that there aren’t 50 candidates on the ballot paper.

To make an electoral register, Local Authorities have told us that they use the school register. This can be problematic where the majority of young people are schooled out of borough. Making an electoral register is time consuming and schools and academies can be reluctant to release their registers, however, it does support a fair and democratic election by proving that a young person has only voted once.

**Voting system**

We strongly recommend that you speak to electoral services in your Local Authority. They will be able to tell you what voting system they use. The advantage of doing the same is that it allows adult elected representatives understand the youth election process more easily. It has also usually been approved by various committees and boards and will be easier to implement.

**Stakeholders – how to find them and get them engaged**

Form a small steering group of enthusiastic young people, staff and elected members (or the adult equivalent elected position) to work with while the initial ground work is being done. Handing a “pre-made” youth election scheme over to young people will not work, key stakeholders need to be involved from day one, have ownership and feel empowered to take the scheme forward.

The following is an idea of services that are involved in Local Authority steering groups already:

- Democratic Services or Membership Services
- Electoral Services
- Communications and Public Relations
- Children’s Services
- Schools
- Integrated Youth Support Services
- Adult consultation and engagement

**Young people – how to find them and get them engaged**

To start your election process, it is a good idea to have a group of young people attend the steering group. They will be able to give you an idea of what young people are thinking and potentially be ambassadors for your election. Local Authorities have told us that by having young people promote the elections in school assemblies, youth centres and meetings, other young people are more likely to listen.

There are three stages to an election that might need publicity:
1. Asking candidates to stand for election
2. Election date and how to vote
3. Announcement of election results

By advertising the process from start to finish, young people will be able to see how their vote or candidacy influenced the youth elections. Think about utilising social media, bus poster sites, BBM broadcast messages, short films, signatures on the end of emails, SMS messages, screen savers in public spaces, local newspapers and radio stations. If you get the message out there using as many different forms of media as possible, young people will then spread the word for you.

**Possible problems and solutions**

Elections, small or large, are very similar to run. The following list contains additional problems associated with larger elections.

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<td>Schools won’t engage</td>
<td>If you encourage each school to put forward at least one candidate, their participation in the process will be much easier. The problem is when they put forward more than one candidate. If this happens, it is likely that the vote at that school or centre will be split and they are less likely to have a candidate from that school win the election. As long as they know this, then you are in the clear! If a school doesn’t have a candidate standing you will have to offer even more support. Link the elections to the Citizenship or Personal, Social Health Education (PSHE) curriculum. Make the candidacy and voting process as easy as possible. No school is the same. Some schools will want more involvement than others; some will want you to run it completely for them. If you can be flexible, it does help. The most important thing is to establish a baseline offer to schools – something that they will all get if they sign up to the election process. Some Local Authorities ask schools and larger youth organisations to sign an elections contract outlining where the ballot boxes will go, what happens and when. This can help with holding them to account on the day. The better engaged these larger groups are, the higher the turnout will be. Try and build strong relationships with key individuals before the election process starts. This can be with the Head of 6th form, Citizenship or School Council leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There’s a tie</td>
<td>If you run the elections using supplementary or first past the post voting systems this won’t happen (see page 10 for more details).</td>
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</table>
| **The youth representative post is changed at the last minute** | Again, if the election process is clear, this shouldn’t happen. At the start of this process, a role description and agreed objectives should have been agreed and signed off. This is what a young person is running on. If the change is a big one, you should hold an emergency meeting with the candidates and ask them if they still want to stand given the changes. If they don’t they should be allowed to drop out of the election.

You will have to inform the electorate of the changes. This is so that they can make an informed choice of who they are voting for and why. |
| **A candidate who was interested in taking part drops out after everything has gone to print** | This, unfortunately, does happen. The only way to try and stop this from happening is to work closely with the candidates throughout the process. You might want to think of offering activities from the date of their nomination to election day. Activities could include: hustings, training and manifesto polishing days.

If someone does drop out after the ballot papers have gone to print, you will have to inform the people at the polling station of the change. This could be by providing them with a written brief, clear signage and a verbal briefing. Any votes for the candidate who has dropped out won’t be counted.

We have heard horror stories of members of staff going through 10,000 ballot papers and crossing out an individual by hand. As long as voters are told clearly and simply when they pick up their ballot paper or told by members of staff this will be fine. The alternative is to put sticky labels over the candidate name.

The electorate does not need to know why the candidate is not standing. |
| **Candidate drops out weeks after an election** | Establish clear election rules beforehand. If the elected representative drops out fairly quickly after the election the position should be offered to the candidate in second place. You don’t need to hold another election!

If an elected representative drops out 6 months after an election, you may need to think about whether it is worth replacing that post. It is possible to hold an internal election within your youth participation structure to fill the space. |
| **Small budget** | To run a high tech and professional election will require a big budget. If you don’t have one, think about holding the election online, utilising social media for increased publicity or asking organisations that run elections regularly for support.

If you have enough time, you could fundraise or find a local sponsor. Promise to put their logo on all of the election material and state how many young people will see it; you should be able to find a local business that would be interested. |
Case studies

- For their Young Mayor Elections, Lewisham film their candidates’ manifestos as well as publishing a booklet. 
  http://youtu.be/nKxlg8jJyg4
- The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham have created a video to raise awareness of their Local Authority elections.
  http://youtu.be/IRF0PoLM4
- Oldham has done something similar to advertise their Youth Council.
  http://youtu.be/mD-mHcyGQYo
- Newham have their own Young Mayor website.
  http://newham.gov.uk/youngmayor/
- ‘I’m a Councillor get me out of here’ events are a good way of raising the profile of democracy. Here’s what Guildford did at their event:
  http://youtu.be/aCQH0HNqDO8
London Borough of Tower Hamlets stakeholder election timeline

**Week commencing 2 July**
- Headteacher’s bulletin announcing the start of the election process (asking for nomination of key contact within schools)

**Week commencing 7 September**
- Letters and emails sent to youth and voluntary projects and briefings to Youth Workers in Charge (asking for nomination of key contact within centres)
- Headteacher’s Bulletin announcing: nomination period opening and requests to host events for the Young Mayors to speak to young people about local democracy and the Young Mayor Scheme

**Week commencing 28 September**
- 1st phase toolkit (focusing on nominations) sent to schools (with a letter from Director and Mayor supporting local democracy and the nomination period)
- 1st phase toolkit sent to youth projects and made available from amp.uk.net
- Young Mayors to meet Children’s Commissioner in 11 MILLION Day listening tour to discuss issues for local young people

**Week commencing 5 October**
- Young Mayor nominations open
- Applications for postal votes open (until November 30)
- Headteacher’s bulletin announcing opening of nomination period
- Targeted advertising to year 6 and young people schooled at home/ NEET young people
- Article in East End Life focusing on Local Democracy Week and announcing opening of nomination period

**Week commencing 12 October**
- Young Mayors Roadshow Monday – Thursday
- School Council Conference - Friday
- MP debate – Saturday - TBC

**Week commencing 19 October**
- Article in East End Life with a write-up of Local Democracy Week and a reminder of nomination period closing

**Week commencing 2 November**
- Headteacher’s Bulletin reminding schools of nomination deadline

**Week commencing 16 November**
- Young Mayor nominations close and candidates confirmed
- Briefing event for candidates (Saturday 21 November) including tour of Council Chamber and expected duties of the Young Mayor
- Event to finalise and film candidates’ manifestos (Sunday 22 November)

**Week commencing 23 November**
- Headteacher’s Bulletin announcing candidates
- Candidates announced on amp website
- Canvassing begins!

**Week commencing 30 November**
- Postal vote applications close
- Deadline for school election contract to be returned with confirmation on ballot station location on election day

**Week commencing 8 December**
- Chase of schools and centres who have not
Week commencing 15 December
- Double-page spread in East End Life introducing all nominees
- Preliminary Elections - TBC

Week commencing 4 January
- Four hustings events organised in Idea Stores across the borough
- Young Mayor Radio Show counting down to election day
- Staff briefing for elections two weeks
- E-articles in local press announcing elections period
- Deadline for all postal votes to be returned

Week commencing 11 January
- Young Mayor Radio Show counting down to election day
- ‘Early bird’ voting in IDEA stores (Monday 11, Wednesday 13 and Friday 15 January 7pm-10pm)
- E-articles in local press announcing elections

Week commencing 18 January
- Electoral Services arrange delivery of polling equipment to schools (Tuesday 19 January)
- Election Day in schools (Wednesday 20 January), supported by Electoral, Democratic and Youth and Community Services (London Borough of Tower Hamlets)
- Vote count (Thursday 21 January, 10am – 3pm) and Young Mayor Inauguration event (6pm – 8pm Council Chamber)
- Electoral Services arrange collection of polling equipment from schools (Thursday 21 January)
- Letter sent to schools and youth projects

(Friday 22 January) announcing election results and thanking them for participating
- E-articles in local press announcing election results

Week commencing 19 January
- Headteacher’s Bulletin announcing election results and thanking schools for participating
- Front page news and article in East End Life announcing election results

Dates for Young Mayor Diaries:
- Meetings with leads on the following: Partnership Board, Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership Group, Police Community Safety Board, Lead Member for Children’s Services, Kevan Collins, Mary Durkin, Dinar Hossain
- Training in key skills residential
- Handover from outgoing Young Mayors
- Weekly support meetings

Key
Blue text = Communications lead
Maroon text = Electoral Services lead
Red text = Milestones
Black text = Youth and Community Services lead
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

✗ 2 elections are running at the same time; for West Sussex Youth Cabinet and for UK Youth Parliament.

✗ To stand as a candidate, students fill out a candidate form and write a short statement.

✗ Posters need to be displayed around campus and candidate forms given to students interested.

✗ Elections are open to all young people.

Candidates

All young people in West Sussex are entitled to stand as candidates for the Youth Cabinet and for the UK Youth Parliament. There are 24 constituencies for the Youth Cabinet, each with 2 places on the Cabinet. Examples of Youth Cabinet constituencies are ‘Crawley South West’ and ‘Bognor & Felpham’.

There are 4 constituencies for UK Youth Parliament that each have 1 place on UK Youth Parliament. These are much larger areas than the Youth Cabinet constituencies, for example ‘Crawley and East Grinstead’ and ‘Chichester and West Arun’.

To stand as a candidate in either or both elections, young people must fill out a candidate form including a short statement to say why they should be elected. When young people come to vote they will be able to read all the candidates statements and make their choice online.

When a young person submits a candidate form we will send them a ‘candidate pack’, explaining more about the elections, the Youth Cabinet and tips on running election campaigns. We will send you candidate posters that need to be displayed around your campus, plus you will also have candidate forms to be distributed to those interested in standing in the elections.

Voting process

The elections are held by online ballot at www.yourspacewestsussex.co.uk.

To vote young people need a Voter Code Card with a Voter Code. In February we will be sending you ‘Voting packs’ containing 30 Voter Code Cards and information for teachers facilitating the elections in their classes.

We will send you as many packs as you need for tutor groups / IT classes / Citizenship classes.
Electronic voting
What you need to know:

• To vote students need a Unique Voter Code
• Voter Cards will be sent in ‘Voter Packs’ of 30 cards with instructions.
• Voting is between 1 – 30 March 2012
• Students can use their Voter Code to access the voting site: www.yourspacewestsussex.co.uk
• Elections Posters need to be displayed for maximum publicity

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

✗ One Voter Card = One Vote
✗ To prevent multiple voting, teachers should collect all voter cards back in at the end of a voting lesson
✗ All Voter Code Cards can be recycled after the elections to limit its environmental impact

Paper ballots
What you need to know:

• Individual paper ballot, where students vote by placing a cross against a name. Can be done in tutor group or in a lesson. Needs a teacher to collect them in and tally results.
• Tutor group paper ballot, where tutors get a pack of manifesto posters to display and students vote either by placing a sticker on the manifesto of their choice, or hands up.

If you would prefer a paper ballot, we can help you organise a tutor group system of elections which teachers can manage as a group voting exercise, or give individual ballot papers to students.

We will also be sending out posters to promote the elections around your campus.

The voting period is the whole of March 2012.

Elections Security and Environmental impact

Every Voter Code Card equals one vote. To ensure that students do not obtain multiple cards it is very important that teachers recover all unused Voter Code Cards at the end of a voting lesson.

For this reason we advise that Voter Cards are distributed in lessons with clear instructions for use. This enables learning about democracy.

We are committed to making the elections as environmentally friendly as possible. By running the elections in designated lessons, teachers can collect both unused and used Voter Code Cards to be recycled.
Acknowledgements

About BYC

The British Youth Council is the National Youth Council of the UK. A youth-led charity, we empower young people aged 25 and under to influence and inform the decisions that affect their lives. We support young people to get involved in their communities and democracy locally, nationally and internationally, making a difference as volunteers, campaigners, decision-makers and leaders.

Serving our membership
BYC is made up of more than 230 member organisations who support our common vision for young people. Members elect our Board, determine our policies and prioritise our campaigns. They also act as the link between BYC and millions of individuals within the membership of our members.

www.byc.org.uk/members

Youth-led networks
BYC runs a number of youth-led networks and programmes - including the UK Youth Parliament, Young Mayor Network, Local Youth Council Network, National Scrutiny Group and Youth Select Committee - which encourage young people to get involved in democracy and campaign to bring about change.

www.byc.org.uk/uk-work

Campaigning and consulting
BYC seeks to represent the views of young people and our members to stakeholders and decision makers at a local, national and international level. This work is based on the rolling BYC Manifesto which outlines our beliefs and aspirations.

www.byc.org.uk/campaigns

Training and recognition
Our training programmes empower young people with the skills, knowledge and confidence to bring about change. We also recognise young people who have made a significant contribution to their community through our high-profile award schemes.

www.byc.org.uk/training-services

International work
Through our international youth participation young people learn about global issues and connect and share with other young people around the world. They are able to take part in discussions and influence decisions made at an international level.

www.byc.org.uk/international
To find out more, please contact BYC:
E: mail@byc.org.uk
W: www.byc.org.uk
Facebook: British Youth Council
Twitter: bycLIVE

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