

youth

citizenship commission



## Making the connection

Building youth citizenship in the UK

Final report of the Youth Citizenship Commission  
June 2009





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This report is also available at the Youth Citizenship Commission's website:

[www.ycc.uk.net](http://www.ycc.uk.net)

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## FOREWORD

The Youth Citizenship Commission was created in 2008, based upon an idea first aired in the 2007 *Governance of Britain* Green Paper. As a Commission, we were faced with exciting but challenging tasks. Firstly, to define what citizenship means to young people. Secondly to increase young people's participation in politics and promote active citizenship, reflecting the communication preferences of young people. Thirdly, to lead a consultation on whether the voting age should be lowered to 16. The outcome of that consultation is published in a separate report.

The Commission – comprising members drawn from very different age ranges and life experiences – undertook these tasks because we feel it is of the utmost importance that young people play a full part as citizens within our society and political system. We wanted to help young people – often unfairly demonised or erroneously labelled apathetic – develop as active and vibrant young citizens, engaged in the democratic process and assisting their communities.

The Commission examined an exhaustive amount of evidence. We undertook quantitative survey evidence of young people and engaged in extensive qualitative discussions with teenagers from a very wide range of backgrounds and from across the UK. The Commission was anxious to hear the authentic voices of youth from across the social spectrum.

On behalf of the Commissioners, I want to thank all those who helped facilitate our evidence gathering. Most obviously, I am grateful to all the young people who provided detailed views to the Commission. Several adult groups also participated in the activities organised by our commissioned researchers, 2CV. I also wish to thank EdComs for undertaking a comprehensive literature review, Jigsaw for their data gathering and Kindred for their PR work.

A vast range of interested organisations, too numerous to mention here, made submissions to the Commission, or gave time to be interviewed. The Commission's tasks were smoothed by the admirable facilitation of the Secretariat from the Democratic Engagement Branch based within the Ministry of Justice.

Our proposals are based upon three key principles; the need to empower young citizens; a duty to connect with young people to facilitate citizenship opportunities and a need to change the way in which some decision-making institutions operate. We offer recommendations in the areas of the delivery of citizenship education; youth representation; methods of institutional engagement with young people; improved information on opportunities for young citizens and comprehensive long-term auditing of youth engagement procedures.

We believe that these proposals are realistic and firmly grounded in the evidence we have gathered. Indeed we have included case studies in the report. The detailed findings on which we have based our proposals can be found on the Commission's website at [www.ycc.uk.net](http://www.ycc.uk.net)

In reaching our conclusions, we were cognisant of the very difficult current financial situation and our prescriptions are deliberately inexpensive. The Commission's deliberations were finalised against a backdrop of parliamentary 'expenses scandals' which threatened to further undermine public confidence in traditional political institutions. Our recommendations do not constitute panaceas for difficult issues, but they represent important and viable contributions to the social and political wellbeing of young people and to the overall health of our democracy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Tonge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'J' and a distinct 'T'.

Jonathan Tonge

**Chair  
Youth Citizenship Commission**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. We were asked to:
  - Examine what citizenship means to young people
  - Consider how to increase young people's participation in politics; the development of citizenship amongst disadvantaged groups; how active citizenship can be promoted through volunteering and community engagement; and how the political systems can reflect the communication preferences of young people, and
  - Lead a consultation with young people on whether the voting age should be lowered to 16.

### Principles and messages to government

2. We have developed suggested principles for future youth citizenship activities and have used these principles as a basis for analysing some of the Government's recent youth citizenship announcements. We found a significant amount of activity, funding and opportunities for young people. These need to be better co-ordinated through stronger and more focused governance arrangements at national and local level to deliver better value. They need to be more clearly communicated, and have young people involved in the design, in order to reach a wider range of young people. These messages to government include the suggestion that there is a lead minister heading a ministerial committee responsible for citizenship (for all citizens, although with a special focus on young people).
3. Our findings and sixteen recommendations are organised into three themes, as outlined in the following paragraphs.

### Theme One: Empowered citizenship

4. People of all ages do not identify with the concept of citizenship. Citizenship learning and experience needs to be embedded from a young age. Citizenship education should have a greater focus on political literacy. It should include practical experience in order to support classroom learning and give young people the encouragement and knowledge to allow them to participate later in life.

### Theme One Recommendations

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Recommendation One	The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families and the devolved administrations should ensure that the delivery of citizenship education is consistent and effective.
Recommendation Two	The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the devolved administrations should establish a universal

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	system of strong, supported School and Class Councils working collaboratively.
Recommendation Three	Schools should have student representatives on the governing body.
Recommendation Four	Youth voice: National, regional and local public bodies should commit to holding at least two issues-based youth advisory panels per year composed entirely of representative samples of young people.
Recommendation Five	Parliament should sponsor and fund the UK Youth Parliament on a sustainable basis.
Recommendation Six	Government should encourage youth volunteering and also explore whether a compulsory programme of civic service for young people might be worthwhile.

## Theme Two: Connecting with young people

5. Young people are not apathetic. However, the majority are not engaged with traditional politics as they do not feel empowered to do so, lack the information to do so or do not believe they can make a difference. The majority of young people do not believe that politicians and decision-makers care about what they think.
6. Young people have different communication habits, spaces and social networking preferences to adults and can be put off by formal processes and languages. Friends and close family have the greatest influence on young people.

### Theme Two Recommendations

Recommendation Seven	Schools should have a duty to ensure that all eligible pupils are offered supported opportunities to register to vote at school.
Recommendation Eight	The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the devolved administrations should direct schools to be available for use as polling stations and promote the benefits of them remaining open.
Recommendation Nine	The Secretary of State for Justice should pilot and evaluate the use of relevant technology (mobile, email, social networks etc) to remind people to vote on polling day.



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Recommendation Ten    The Cabinet Office should establish a New Media Taskforce to set out good practice on the best online methods to engage with young people who seek to be involved in citizenship activities.

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### Theme Three: Changing the way decision-makers and institutions work

7.    Many young people don't know how government, particularly at a local level works and how it benefits the local community – but they want to help. There are no co-ordinated governance arrangements, national framework of opportunities, comprehensive UK coverage or transparent links between initiatives for different groups of young people. Government initiatives are not well known or understood.
  
8.    Institutions, politicians, and decision-makers need to consider what they can do to make politics and citizenship activities more appealing to young people (and everybody else). They need to reach out in a planned and active way, and be prepared to listen and respond to young people's views. We are pleased to note the current proposals to require local authorities to promote democratic arrangements<sup>1</sup> and the opportunity for people to get involved, to all members of the community including those currently under-represented, such as young people.

### Theme Three Recommendations

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Recommendation Eleven	The Government should introduce an equality impact assessment criterion to consider the impact of new policies on young people.
Recommendation Twelve	Nominated government departments should appoint annual scrutiny panels composed of young people to advise on specific issues.
Recommendation Thirteen	Communities and Local Government, Department for Children, Schools and Families, Ministry of Justice and the Office of the Third Sector should track long-term progress on the refreshed aims of youth citizenship annually through representative surveys.
Recommendation Fourteen	As part of the wider work on promoting engagement in democratic processes all local authorities should develop a clear strategy for co-ordinating and promoting youth citizenship opportunities for young people.

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to the passing of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill, is currently being considered by Parliament, see development process at <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/200809/localdemocracyeconomicdevelopmentandconstruction.html>

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Recommendation Fifteen	The Government should facilitate the Third Sector to develop a single, well-recognised award for young people involved in citizenship activities.
Recommendation Sixteen	The Government should facilitate and deliver a way to provide comparative information on, and communication channels for, elected representatives within constituencies.

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## SETTING THE SCENE

*“Citizenship is not about where we are from, but where we live and belong and [it] gives us an identity.”<sup>2</sup>*

9. Many young people give their time to promote change and improve our local environments and they seek to inspire others to do the same. We know that a large number of young citizens are involved in informal political activities such as debates, protests, boycotts and community building. Many young people want to make their community a better place for everyone. To these activities, young people bring creativity, energy, enthusiasm and commitment. Where there are good frameworks for these qualities to flourish, young people have much to contribute. Yet young people are less likely to be interested or participate in formal politics or exercise their democratic rights. Just over one third of 18-24 year olds voted in the 2005 general election – a drop of 31% from the 1997 election<sup>3</sup>.

### **What do we mean by *citizenship*?**

When we say *citizenship* we mean both a person’s membership in a political community and the rights, privileges and responsibilities associated with that.

For the YCC, citizenship includes the activities that individuals undertake for the benefit of their community. This includes activities like political engagement, public service, volunteering and participation.

10. There are real opportunities to recognise and harness the creativity, energy, enthusiasm and commitment of young people towards additional informal activities. This can also open the way into their participation in more formal action which would give them a greater voice. It is vitally important that young people are involved in politics, so they can share ideas, contribute to change and build skills and attitudes that are important in future life.

### **What do we mean by *youth*?**

Our remit focused on young people aged 11-19 but our research and engagement included young people up to 25.

*“Bring it to everyone’s attention how important politics is and how it affects EVERYONE, so we all might as well have our say.”<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Quote from YCC engagement with young people (group meetings).

<sup>3</sup> House of Commons Research Papers 01/54 and 05/33.

<sup>4</sup> Quote from HeadsUp (2009) *Are young people allergic to politics? Report on YCC debate*. Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

11. A number of studies have shown that younger citizens are not apathetic, but instead are involved in activities which are not necessarily measured by more traditional studies of political engagement<sup>5</sup>. As noted in these studies and the 2008 Goldsmith report on citizenship<sup>6</sup>, citizens are now politically active in new ways and the challenge is to connect these activities to formal politics.
12. We have consulted widely in our work and have been encouraged by what is already going on in this area, the activities young people are involved in and the desire of many to implement change in attitudes and actions. We have also found some challenging issues. Our recommendations acknowledge those challenges and suggest ways to address them.
13. The Government has invested substantial attention and resources in programmes which seek to engage young people, help them develop in their citizenship and to give them a voice. In places, there are excellent examples of where these interventions are having really positive effects. In others, wide-ranging initiatives and approaches operate in isolation, and better co-ordination across departments and commitment by local authorities could improve their reach and effectiveness.
14. We see a disconnection between what most young people feel they need, what they perceive is available to them and how they feel treated by decision-makers. We see a need for greater connectivity across government in this area and better “tuning in” to young people’s preferences and motivations. If decision-makers change their activities and behaviours and create more genuine connections between young people and community, voluntary and political activity, there will be benefits for everyone.

*“I think it would be a good idea to have Citizenship centres in each community. Somewhere anyone could go to get access to all this stuff... helping you get into your community or just helping young people get funding for stuff would be something these centres could focus on.”<sup>7</sup>*

15. We also note that effective citizenship can have benefits for citizens of all ages – not only young people. We recognise that the wider population shares many of the attitudes and beliefs that were expressed by young people during our research. Lord Goldsmith was asked to conduct a review of citizenship, looking at both legal aspects and other issues including civic participation and social responsibility. The report, *Citizenship: Our Common Bond*, released in 2008, shared many similar themes to our findings. This is why some of our recommendations suggest intergenerational activities to ensure that

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<sup>5</sup> O’Toole, T. *et.al.* (2003) Tuning out or left out? Participation and non-participation among young people. *Contemporary Politics* (9).

Hansard Society (2009) *Audit of Political Engagement* 6. London: Hansard Society.

<sup>6</sup> Lord Goldsmith QC (2008) *Citizenship: Our Common Bond*. Report to the Prime Minister. Available at: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/docs/citizenship-report-full.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Quote from 2CV (2009) *Youth Engagement – deliberative research* report. Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

citizenship activity becomes a matter of pride and a cause for celebration in the wider community.

*“Pride can empower and strengthen communities.”<sup>8</sup>*

16. Our work relates to other workstreams. Of particular interest is current discussion regarding the Green Paper *Rights and responsibilities: developing our constitutional framework*<sup>9</sup>. The paper explores the idea of drawing our rights and responsibilities together in one place, such as in a Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, so they are easily accessible and understood. It suggests a range of subjects that might be covered by such a Bill, including equality, good administration, children's well-being, healthcare, criminal justice, victims' rights and the environment.
17. We expect that some of our recommendations may influence this work and vice versa. That is, once that consultation is completed there will be the opportunity to identify synergies between the two pieces of work.

*Whilst most aspects of the report have UK-wide relevance, the Commission recognises that there are particular aspects where the distinctiveness of youth activity and structures (e.g. regarding governing bodies in Scottish schools) will need localised forms of implementation according to structures pertaining to a particular country.*

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<sup>8</sup> Quote from YCC engagement with young people (group meetings).

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Justice (2009) *Rights and responsibilities: developing our constitutional framework*. Available at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/docs/rights-responsibilities.pdf>

# THE YOUTH CITIZENSHIP COMMISSION

## What is the Youth Citizenship Commission?

18. The creation of the Youth Citizenship Commission (YCC) was announced in the 2007 *Governance of Britain* Green Paper.<sup>10</sup> The paper highlighted the importance of engaging young people as citizens so they are able to take an active part in society. We were asked to:
- Examine what citizenship means to young people
  - Consider how to increase young people's participation in politics; the development of citizenship amongst disadvantaged groups; how active citizenship can be promoted through volunteering and community engagement; and how the political systems can reflect the communication preferences of young people, and
  - Lead a consultation with young people on whether the voting age should be lowered to 16. The outcome of that consultation and our recommendations are contained in a separate report.
19. While our remit focuses on young people aged 11-19, our research and engagement involved young people up to 25, and older people. Our consultation on the voting age also sought opinions and evidence from the wider public.

## Who is the Youth Citizenship Commission?

20. In Spring 2008, Bridget Prentice, MP, the minister responsible for Youth Engagement, appointed 13 Commissioners to the YCC, with Professor Jonathan Tonge as Chair. We come from different backgrounds, bringing a range of knowledge and experience to the Commission's work. We include young people, academics and teachers as well as representatives from the media, sport, culture, community and corporate fields. A brief biography of each of us can be found in Appendix 2.
21. We also set up two groups to provide a youth perspective, and knowledge and experience from the third sector, researchers and government. The groups are:
- a Youth Advisory Board; a diverse group of young people with varied involvement in community and political activities; and
  - an Experts Group; a range of youth organisation workers, youth advocates and academics.
22. These groups met several times to contribute their ideas, experience and knowledge and to 'reality check' our emerging findings and conclusions. Further details on the members of these groups can be found in Appendix 3.

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<sup>10</sup> *Governance of Britain* Green Paper (2007) Available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm71/7170/7170.pdf>

## What has the Youth Citizenship Commission done?

23. We have gathered evidence on youth engagement using different methods and sources. The findings of these research and engagement projects are published as annexes to this report, and they are discussed later in the report. Our publications are listed below. All are available from our website [www.ycc.uk.net](http://www.ycc.uk.net)
- *Youth Engagement – a literature review*
  - *Youth Engagement – deliberative research*
  - *Are Young People Allergic to Politics?*  
Report on the HeadsUp debate on youth citizenship issues
  - *Old Enough to Make a Mark? Should the voting age be lowered to 16?*  
Consultation document
  - *Old Enough to Make a Mark? Should the voting age be lowered to 16?*  
Summary of submissions
  - *Old Enough to Make a Mark? Should the voting age be lowered to 16?*  
Commission response to submissions
  - *Democratic Engagement and Participation – segmenting the 11–25s.*
24. The Commission gathered evidence in the following ways (a timetable of these activities can be found at Appendix 4).

### **Asking young people**

- **In groups** – we spoke to young people from different parts of the UK who are involved in third sector organisations, youth engagement and community groups
- **Online poll** – on the YCC website, we asked whether citizenship education at primary level should be made compulsory (70% said yes)
- **Online debate** – HeadsUp hosted a debate on issues around young people, citizenship and politics, which received a record number of contributions (304 from 171 users)
- **Youth Advisory Board** – we created this board to help us identify the key issues for young people, make suggestions for change and evaluate ideas and youth engagement initiatives
- **Research** – representative samples of young people were key contributors to two of the YCC's three research projects, aimed at identifying who participates and how; why or why not; and what could be done to improve youth engagement. These are outlined below.

### **Asking stakeholders**

- **Submissions** – at the start of this work, we wrote to over 250 stakeholders asking for submissions of evidence, research and experience relating to young people, politics and engagement
- **In groups** – we arranged for stakeholders including youth organisations, charities, local and national government, academics and faith groups to

meet in groups and discuss practical initiatives, how to evaluate initiatives, the key issues, lessons and areas for improvement

- **Individually** – throughout this process, we met with key stakeholders individually to discuss the issues, their experience and the evidence they have gathered on how to engage young people.

### **Conducting research**

- **Literature review** – we commissioned a review of key literature and youth engagement initiatives. This research began by looking at the evidence available and asking some experts to assist in identifying which pieces would be most relevant to the YCC and would have the most robust findings. A shortlist of 60 was reviewed in depth and some important conclusions drawn
- **Deliberative research** – we also commissioned a multi-staged research project involving young people from different UK locations, and adults who influence young people's views and behaviours in terms of politics and active citizenship
- **Segmentation research** – 1100 young people were interviewed about their attitudes to politics and participation, understanding, and the activities that they undertake or in which they might participate.

### **Road testing the recommendations**

- **Stakeholder meetings** – in the later stages of our work we held meetings with stakeholders and with the Youth Advisory Board and Experts Group to discuss and refine our draft findings and proposed recommendations. We used these opportunities to ensure that our recommendations were appropriately focussed and realistic.

### **Votes at 16 consultation**

25. One part of our remit was to lead a consultation with young people on whether the voting age should be lowered to 16. The consultation paper *Old enough to make a mark? Should the voting age be lowered to 16?* was published in October 2008. The consultation closed on 20 January 2009 and 509 responses were received from 489 organisations, politicians and the general public, including young people. A summary of consultation responses was published on 15 April 2009 and is available on the YCC website [www.ycc.uk.net](http://www.ycc.uk.net)
26. Our response to the submissions received has been published alongside this report and is also available on the YCC website.



## FINDINGS

27. Through our research and engagement programmes we have investigated ways to improve and embed young people's understanding of citizenship, and create linkages between citizenship activities and political processes. A key aspect of this is examining opportunities for citizenship for young people from minority and disadvantaged groups, as many initiatives can be viewed as exclusive or are not widely known about.
28. We place great importance on encouraging young people to participate in voluntary and other community-based activities, to provide positive experiences, skills, confidence and potentially as a stepping stone to more 'political' activity. It is vital that organisations and decision-makers tap into young people's communication preferences and recognise that accessible people and information are key to encouraging participation. Our research has aimed to identify barriers *to* and drivers *of* participation, and pin down why young people do or do not participate, to advise on how to better target youth engagement initiatives.
29. Some strong themes emerged from the engagement and research activities. These have shaped and informed our recommendations.

### **Who are we talking about? Profiling young people and participation**


30. Our literature review and deliberative research identified that young people have different attitudes and beliefs both from adults and from each other. We commissioned Jigsaw Research to create a robust segmentation of 11-25 years olds in terms of their level of engagement/participation in the democratic process. One benefit of this project is that once we know the target audience, youth engagement strategies and interventions can be more effectively targeted and delivered. The segmentation was based on young people's involvement in formal and informal processes and included their general attitudes, behaviours and beliefs.
31. 1100 face-to-face interviews were conducted in respondents' homes. Respondents were asked a series of questions and their subsequent responses to these questions were used to develop a segmentation of 11-25 year olds. The full report has been published as a separate document and is available on the YCC website<sup>11</sup>. A summary of the segmentation follows.

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<sup>11</sup> Jigsaw Research (2009) *Democratic Engagement and Participation – segmenting the 11-25s*. London: Jigsaw Research. Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

**Summary of Segmentation**

 <p><b>22% of young people</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Least faith that politicians care about, understand or take notice of people like them</li> <li>• Least trusting of politicians to make the right choices for people like them</li> <li>• Less likely to feel that people in authority are interested in ideas/what they think</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most likely to feel they understand how local and national decisions are made and can influence them; likely to want to influence local and national decisions</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Least likely to feel voting is a good way to influence decisions made about national and local issues</li> </ul>
 <p>Willing but disconnected</p> <p><b>15% of young people</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little faith that politicians care about, understand or take notice of people like them</li> <li>• Little trust in politicians to make the right choices for people like them</li> <li>• Least likely to feel that people in authority are interested in ideas/what they think</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most likely to want to influence local and national decisions; do not feel they understand how local and national decisions are made or can influence them</li> <li>• Most likely to want to get involved in local and political activities and most motivated by idea of getting something back</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support voting as a good way to influence decisions made about national and local issues</li> </ul>
 <p>Voting is enough</p> <p><b>25% of young people</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not particularly cynical about politicians</li> <li>• Most likely to feel that people in authority are interested in their ideas/what they think</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Least likely to want to influence local and national decisions; least likely to feel they understand how local and national decisions are made or can influence them</li> <li>• Least likely to want to get involved in local and political activities and not motivated by idea of getting something back</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most likely to support voting as important and good way to influence decisions made about national and local issues</li> </ul>

 <p>Trusting and non-engaged</p> <p><b>30% of young people</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most likely to think that politicians care about, understand the needs of and take notice of people like them</li> <li>• Most likely to feel that people in authority are interested in ideas/what they think</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likely to feel they can influence how local and national decisions are made but not interested in doing so</li> <li>• Unlikely to want to get involved in local and political activities and not motivated by idea of getting something back</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Least likely to see voting as important and a good way to influence decisions made about national and local issues</li> </ul>

32. In addition to the main segments detailed above, the research also identified a small separate segment made up of young people from across the ‘savvy, cynical’ and ‘willing but disconnected’ segments.

 <p>Positively politically engaged</p> <p><b>Represent about 5% of the 11-25 year old youth population</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empowered: Want to influence local and national decision-making, feel they can influence local and national decision-making</li> <li>• Engaged; Want to get involved in local and political activities and motivated by idea of getting something back</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See voting as important and as a good way to influence decisions made about national and local issues</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still highly cynical about politicians</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit across the savvy, cynical and willing but disconnected segments</li> </ul>

33. Key findings from this study and the rest of our research are discussed in the following section.

**Theme One: Empowered citizenship**

34. People of all ages do not identify with the concept of citizenship. Citizenship learning and, more importantly *experience* needs to be imbedded from a young age. Real value needs to be placed on the pride associated with to citizenship in order for people to feel a sense of identity, and ownership of their roles as citizens. Most often, citizenship is associated with “national identity” or limited to belonging in the most formal sense, such as being born

a UK citizen or being granted citizenship, rather than being an active member of a community.

35. There is no current regular means of tracking levels of understanding and behaviours of young people relating to citizenship. Nor is there a common understanding of what “participation” is – it is sometimes linked to politics, which is seen negatively by many young people (and adults). Negative associations with politics exist because of its complexity, perceived lack of appeal/relevance, and personal negative experiences.

#### **Citizenship education in the UK**

Citizenship education has been a compulsory part of the school curriculum for all 11-16 year olds in England since 2002, and a non-statutory part of the primary curriculum since 2000. In Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, different approaches to teaching citizenship operate:

- In Wales, citizenship is not a distinct subject and is usually delivered through the Personal and Social Education Framework
- In Scotland, citizenship is taught primarily as a cross-curricular or whole school theme
- In Northern Ireland, 'local and global citizenship' has been a statutory subject in secondary schools since 2007.

Citizenship education ensures young people become informed citizens and develops their skills of participation and responsible action. Since the introduction of citizenship education, real progress has been made. OFSTED reports show that provision in schools is improving year on year and in 2007 over 90,000 students in England took the short course GCSE in Citizenship Studies.

We recognise that the NFER's longitudinal study of citizenship education is significant, and its interim findings have been considered. Given that the study will report in 2010 it would be premature to comment in detail on citizenship education. However we believe that increased funding for training of specialist citizenship teachers is important as the subject continues to grow in popularity. Some of YCC's recommendations can be linked into citizenship education teaching.

#### **Sources:**

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/index.cfm>

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/>

36. Young people's experience of citizenship education is mixed. The impact of citizenship education appears low, given that 65% of 11 to 13 year olds and 45% of 14 to 15 year olds involved in our segmentation research stated that they were not aware they had received statutory citizenship education in school. This stark result may be affected by the delivery of citizenship education under other names. However, the finding does raise questions about how citizenship education is perceived or delivered. In addition, whilst it is still embedding, there is inconsistency in the delivery of citizenship education and the value placed on it. Many schools don't have specialist teachers, nor have they developed a 'citizenship ethos'. That said, we do

recognise that there has been an improvement in the delivery of citizenship education and many schools display a commitment to ongoing improvement.

37. Political literacy<sup>12</sup> is an important part of citizenship education but tends to receive less care and attention than it should. Political literacy levels are not high in the general public and this is even more pronounced amongst young people. As discussed earlier, many young people feel that they don't know enough about political processes to vote, or register to vote. Only 40 % of young people in the segmentation study felt they understood how decisions are made about local or national issues. Furthermore because they don't understand politics, it isn't interesting to them.

*"If there were lessons in Citizenship based specifically on politics, it would increase our understanding of it."*<sup>13</sup>

38. Despite the figures regarding understanding and influence, and the worryingly low turnout figures among young people at recent elections, 77% of young people felt it is important to vote. 70% saw voting as a good way to influence national and local issues although only 27% thought they knew who they would vote for.
39. Young people want practical experience of citizenship to be the major part of their citizenship education— research has shown that this supports classroom learning. Young people who have had a positive experience of active citizenship are more likely to participate again, and in different activities. Practical experience should occur in school and in the community.
40. As indicated by our deliberative research, in some instances, schools are perceived as becoming more isolated from their communities, and the connections between schools and communities for students leaving school appear to be weak. This is despite government policies and funds committed to this area<sup>14</sup>. We believe that this is an example of where initiatives may require additional effort to publicise them to the wider community.
41. Some stakeholders and young people felt that citizenship education should be introduced at primary level, when children are generally more engaged with family and community and therefore potentially more receptive. Making citizenship education a compulsory GCSE subject was also suggested. However we believe that the issues around inconsistency, practical elements and funding should be addressed first.

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<sup>12</sup> Political literacy is a set of abilities considered necessary for citizens to participate in a society's government. This includes an individual's knowledge of political processes and how government works – parliamentary structures and processes, how to register, how to vote, how to contact an MP and so on. It also includes an understanding of the important issues facing society and the critical thinking skills to evaluate different points of view.

<sup>13</sup> Quote from HeadsUp (2009) *Are young people allergic to politics? Report on YCC debate*. Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/extendedschools/>

42. YCC recognises that further education and training also contribute to enabling people to be active citizens. In particular, further education colleges are more likely to have students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Key areas in the development of active citizens include:
- post-16 citizenship providing knowledge and skills to be engaged and active citizens; citizenship education is often offered as part of tutorial programme
  - providing English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) training to assist each person to be actively involved in their community
  - Offender learning: enabling prisoners to continue learning started in custody; gain skills and avoid the risks of further criminal activity
  - Community Cohesion: building connections between diverse groups, awareness of shared values and programmes to breakdown segregation
  - opportunities for participation, leadership and volunteering, in particular roles within the student body and learner voice programmes.

## Theme Two: Connecting with young people

*“What I find boring is not the actual issues but the way they are dealt with.”<sup>15</sup>*

43. Our research has revealed that young people are not apathetic; however the majority are not engaged with (and are commonly uninterested in) ‘traditional’ politics. There is a widely held view that decision-makers do not consider young people’s issues or views, even when they ask for them. Often young people feel stereotyped by negative media coverage.

*“We see politicians like they are in the media and the politicians see all young people like we are in the media.”<sup>16</sup>*

44. Many young people do not participate in formal politics because they don’t feel empowered to make a difference. There are a number of reasons why:
- they feel they don’t have enough information or understanding of political parties and how to vote or register to vote
  - they lack information on opportunities to get involved in political or community activity, take part in consultation, or take action to address their concerns
  - they don’t see any point in participating, because they don’t think it will make a difference.

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<sup>15</sup> Quote from YCC engagement with young people (group meetings).

<sup>16</sup> Quote from 2CV (2009) *Youth Engagement – deliberative research* report. Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

*“You can be really active but what’s the point if it doesn’t change anything?”<sup>17</sup>*

45. Some young people are engaged and do participate, and more would if they knew how or believed that they could have an impact. Through this work we have found that young people care about particular issues including:
- having good job prospects
  - having good doctors and hospitals
  - having good schools and colleges
  - people being treated fairly.
46. However, often young people feel that politicians and decision-makers don't take them or their concerns seriously, and that engagement is token or a PR exercise. Only 23 percent of young people in our segmentation study believed that politicians cared about people like them or understand what people like them want. Even fewer (19 %) felt that politicians take notice of what young people think or can be trusted to make the right choices for young people.
47. We believe this presents a challenge to make political processes at a local and national level more accessible and for the individually elected representatives to make themselves accessible and approachable. Individuals then need to make a commitment to listen to and act on what they hear from young people.

*“If they are going to come and talk to us then they really need to be ready for what we have to say.”<sup>18</sup>*

48. Many young people feel that decisions about rules and facilities for young people are made to restrict, not enable them. An issue that many feel strongly about is having spaces to socialise, be creative, and play sport in, and they want to direct how these spaces are used. The overwhelming majority of young people believe that there should be a way to give young people a voice. They want more information on policies affecting young people and for decision-makers to focus on practical, tangible outcomes.
49. Closing down spaces for young people, or moving them on, displaces problems rather than solves them. Civic public (non-commercial) space open to and used by all is essential for a healthy, connected society. We believe that our findings reinforce the need for the Government's *myplace* programme to establish facilities for young people.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Quote from 2CV (2009) *Youth Engagement – deliberative research report*. Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

<sup>18</sup> As above

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/aiminghigh/myplace/>

*“If you hang by the shops then someone moves you on. If you hang in the bus station then someone moves you on.”<sup>20</sup>*

50. Young people often have different communication habits, spaces and social networking preferences to adults – for example, three quarters of young people use social networking sites. Some young people are put off by the formal language and processes associated with politics, and see these as designed by and for adults. Many adults echo the concerns regarding language and process.

**Case Study – v – using language to shift perception**

v decided that one way to tackle the stereotypes and misconceptions around ‘volunteering’ (seen as ‘geeky’, ‘boring’ and ‘middle class’ by a high proportion of young people) was to change the terminology of volunteering – a word that a majority of young people find off-putting. A campaign; ‘Favours’ was created to communicate that volunteering is as simple as doing a favour. According to research conducted by v in 2008, 80% of 16-25s say they’ve done a favour for someone that was neither a friend or family member but only 37% say they have ever done any volunteering.

Simple campaigns using favours terminology which resonated with 16-25s brought to life the idea of Favours. Along with using the friendlier and approachable favours terminology the organization relaunched vinspired.com using brightly coloured, hyper real imagery showing characters that depict certain passion areas for volunteers.

The Favours campaigns needed to change the perception of youth volunteering, help secure media coverage that would reach 16-25s and create new and unique volunteering opportunities. v identified two platforms that would both appeal and really help engage young people: Fashion – a ‘scene’ young people are in to, and Festive – at a time of ‘goodwill to all men’

The two Favours campaigns provided innovative volunteering opportunities for young people, included those who were new to volunteering. (More about these campaigns is available on v’s website, vinspired.com)

The Favours campaigns generated

- 2,859 unique volunteering opportunities.
- 409 pieces of coverage appeared in media ranging from Metro to Vogue and Sky News to BBC Online.
- 16,500 acts of goodwill were inspired by the vinspired.com Advent Calendar
- 8,470 people clicked ‘tell me more’ on Favour suggestions
- 1,075 new profiles were created at vinspired.com
- 170% increase in visits to Vinspired.com throughout Festive

**Source: v**

*“The way they talk, the words they use, I don’t understand any of it. It all sounds so old fashioned and means nothing to me.”<sup>21</sup>*

51. Certain negative peer pressure and views about young people, who do participate, can be a barrier to participation.

<sup>20</sup> Quote from 2CV (2009) *Youth Engagement – deliberative research* report. Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*



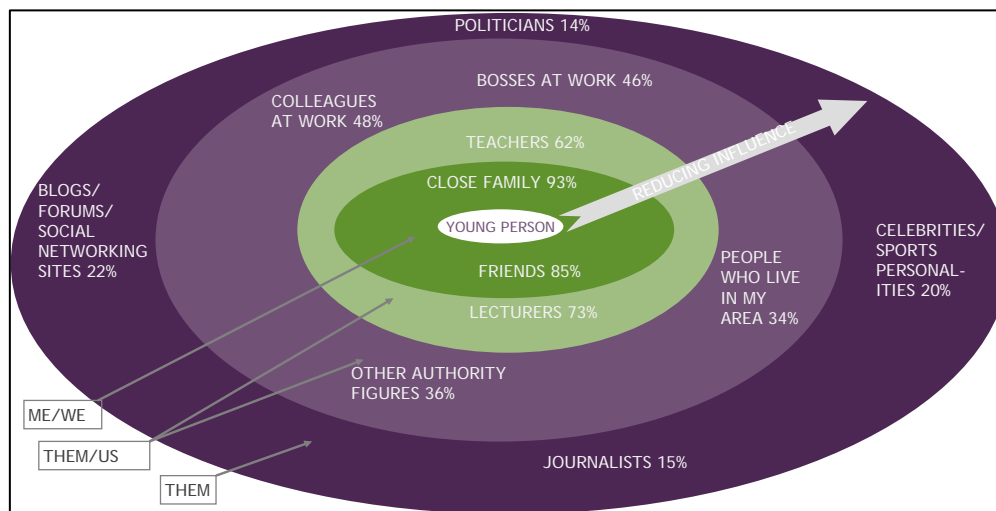
*“I don’t want to be involved in politics because I don’t want to be labelled that way.”<sup>22</sup>*

52. There remains a lack of knowledge on volunteering opportunities and how to access these opportunities. As a result of this, volunteering opportunities can be seen as unexciting and unrewarding – when in fact there are a wide range of options, particularly for young people.

*“The only holdback is that the kind of volunteer work around isn’t really interesting to most people...there aren’t that many choices to pick from.”<sup>23</sup>*

53. Youth culture is complex, fast-moving, dense and not homogeneous – there is a constant drive to be different. It is important not to make assumptions.
54. Young people have preferences on who influences them and who does not; they look to their family and immediate peer groups for a sense of belonging. Our segmentation research produced circles of influence for young people. Of note is the high level of influence that family, friends, lecturers and teachers have on young people, which we see as an opportunity. A potential area of concern is the low level of influence of politicians.

### Circles of influence<sup>24</sup>



<sup>22</sup> As above

<sup>23</sup> Quote from HeadsUp (2009) *Are young people allergic to politics? Report on YCC debate*. Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

<sup>24</sup> Jigsaw Research (2009) *Democratic Engagement and Participation – segmenting the 11-25s*. London: Jigsaw Research. Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

55. There is a perception that changes in behaviour and practice intended to protect young people have disrupted patterns of interactions between young people and adults in their communities and increased the distance between them. Parents do remain a strong influence in terms of their voting habits and attitudes to politics; however this can be negative as well as positive and parental attitudes can add to a young person's distrust of politics.
56. Some young people do not have positive adult influences. Similarly adults who don't have children or whose children have left home may not have the opportunity to connect with young people. As a result these adults' attitudes are often shaped by what they see or read. This combined with a lack of interaction between young people and adults, and negative media coverage of young people creates a mutual mistrust. This causes the groups of 'adults' and 'young people' to become isolated and the sense of unity, connectivity and belonging are lost.

*“Adults all just assume that we're up to no good and are there to cause trouble. It's like they think we're dangerous or going to get out stealing or something. It's not true but everyone seems to think it. You're guilty before you've even done anything.”<sup>25</sup>*

57. Many young people (particularly from disadvantaged groups) have negative views and experiences of government or local authorities. In particular they see them as inflexible and ineffective, as enforcers of rules who treat young people as a problem, rather than treating them as assets and being responsive to their needs and views.
58. Opportunities need to appeal to people's varied needs and preferences – some well-established engagement initiatives are unappealing to many and viewed as elitist, undemocratic or unrepresentative. Initiatives also need to target people of all ages – parents are a major influence in attitudes to politics and voting.

### **Theme Three: Changing the way decision-makers and institutions work**

59. Many young people don't know how government, particularly at a local level works and how it benefits the local community – but they want to help. There are no co-ordinated governance arrangements, national framework of opportunities, comprehensive UK coverage or transparent links between initiatives for different groups of young people - and initiatives are not well known or understood.

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<sup>25</sup> Quote from 2CV (2009) *Youth Engagement – deliberative research report*. Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

*“I just think that we are a bit frustrated because we don’t get a say in what our country is like. If young people had a chance to have their say then maybe they would start to like politics a bit more.”<sup>26</sup>*

60. Often, young people are not involved in the design of initiatives as much as they could be, nor given full responsibility (with support) for delivery – though there are some excellent youth-driven initiatives. Cross-generational activities (including with family members) are important as part of the mix. These initiatives can develop skills, challenge assumptions and stereotypes for both young and older people.
61. Youth engagement initiatives can struggle to find funding and the source of funding may not be apparent. Start up funding may be easier to access, but given the difficulty in measuring the effectiveness of these initiatives, it can be hard to show impact (which is often intangible such as improved trust in political systems) and therefore to secure sustainable funding. Of the evaluation that does exist, there is too much off-putting paperwork on monitoring inputs and reporting.
62. Given the gaps in measuring impact, it is not clear whether the distribution of resources fairly reflects and covers the diversity and needs of all groups (including the disengaged).
63. Institutions, politicians, and decision-makers need to consider what they can do to make politics and citizenship activities more appealing to young people (and everybody else). They need to reach out in a planned and active way, and be prepared to listen and respond to young people’s views.

*“My voice won’t make a difference, politicians think young people are childish and unrealistic.”<sup>27</sup>*

64. Improving engagement with young people might involve changes in consultation and decision-making processes incorporating a statutory obligation to consider young people’s needs; changing communication methods and styles to demystify politics; or changing behaviours. A commitment to genuine engagement is essential, as young people identify negative experiences of engagement or democratic processes as a key demotivating factor.

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<sup>26</sup> Quote from HeadsUp (2009) *Are young people allergic to politics? Report on YCC debate*. Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

<sup>27</sup> Quote from YCC engagement with young people (group meetings).

## MAKING THE CONNECTION: SUGGESTED PRINCIPLES FOR YOUTH CITIZENSHIP ACTIVITIES

65. As a result of our research and findings we have developed a set of principles on which our recommendations have been based. These are the priorities that we believe should underlie future decisions on youth citizenship.
66. **Initiatives should be based on a strategic and sustainable approach to youth engagement with clear and measurable aims** (that young people understand and agree) to deliver raised awareness and civic understanding, improved skills, better representation, local impact and better motivation for young people to continue to be engaged.
67. **Young people should be in leading roles** for agenda-setting, design, promotion, incentives for recruitment, delivery and evaluation of appealing initiatives, supported by adults and sharing the lead in whole society issues. The emphasis should be on learning through experience.
68. **Non-engaged and first-time participants should be the priority**, but targeted efforts should be made to offer all young people activities, which match their needs and preferences.
69. **Activities should promote a “whole society” approach**, mixing young people from different backgrounds and areas (including those in education, work and unemployed) together with intergenerational opportunities where negotiating and working together with other generations helps build valuable transferable skills.
70. **Feedback should be provided** so that young people are aware of the outcome of their contribution.
71. **The contributions of young people should be personally recognised and celebrated** in ways which they find worthwhile.
72. **The benefits of youth citizenship activities should be publicised** and promoted through case studies, personal stories within the local and wider communities, possibly, making use of young people to help combat negative media coverage of young people and in reaching out to disengaged young people.
73. **Long-term and sustainable funding models are needed** which fairly balance resource allocation across the different groups of young people and different locations.

## COMMENTARY ON RECENT INITIATIVES

74. One of the key messages that we have taken from the segmentation study is that there is a wide spectrum of levels of engagement and this presents a challenge for programme design. To us it appears that many of the initiatives launched by the Government are designed to increase participation but are targeted at the positively politically engaged segment which accounts for only 5% of young people.
75. Initiatives need to target those who indicated they would be willing to be involved if they knew how but at the same time also encourage the positively politically engaged<sup>28</sup>. During our engagement with young people we found that something as simple as the name of an initiative can put young people off. Young people should have a say in what initiatives are called. There is also some work to do to restore faith in politicians and make the political process overall more accessible to young people.
76. The Government has numerous youth engagement initiatives, many of which have only begun or been announced in the last few months of our work. We believe that each of these initiatives has merit, but would be more effective if they were part of a coherent strategy and planned, co-ordinated and delivered against the principles we have developed. By taking a more co-ordinated approach to youth-focussed government initiatives and more appropriately targeting initiatives, the Government may well find opportunities to streamline effort and therefore save money.
77. In this section we identify some of these initiatives and outline how they fit in with our key messages, segments and principles.

### ***Compulsory civic service proposals***

78. In the last few months of our work, a number of proposals for compulsory youth service have been offered by politicians and other commentators<sup>29</sup>.
79. We believe it is important to note that during the course of our work stakeholders did not raise compulsory service as a possible solution or recommendation, nor was the consideration of compulsory civic or citizen youth service specifically identified within the remit of the YCC. However political and public opinion suggests support for its introduction,<sup>30</sup> therefore it is appropriate for us to comment on recent proposals offered.

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<sup>28</sup> As noted in our principles, non-engaged and first time participants should be the priority however we note the importance of not alienating or excluding anyone.

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.conservatives.com/~media/Files/Green%20Papers/Welfare\\_Policy\\_Paper.ashx?dl=true](http://www.conservatives.com/~media/Files/Green%20Papers/Welfare_Policy_Paper.ashx?dl=true) - 2008-09-24 and,

[http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/article\\_details.php?id=10625](http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/article_details.php?id=10625)

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.yougov.com/frontpage/home>

80. Each proposal acknowledges that young people are already active citizens and many also volunteer. However, there is a push towards the development of a universal programme to foster a sense of belonging and community which also address public concerns about the discipline of young people and their preparedness to meet the responsibilities of citizenship. We have identified a number of issues associated with compulsory youth citizenship programmes which we recommend should be addressed:
- the proposals can conflate volunteering and citizenship - volunteering is explicitly non-paid, non-compulsory and does not necessarily promote democratic citizenship
  - the idea of 'paid' service is problematic as it suggests that citizenship can only be effective and meaningful if financial rewards are offered
  - a prolonged period of compulsory service might be unpopular with many, potentially seen as restricting the political, economic and social rights of younger citizens.
81. Key questions to be addressed:
- what are the implications for those under the age of 19 who are already in employment?
  - would compulsory programmes restrict employment opportunities for young people who are most vulnerable and can least afford to have a reduced income or take time off work?
  - will some view such service as merely providing state services on the cheap?
  - would such programmes be egalitarian in their compulsion? Compulsory programmes have proven problematic in many countries because those with access to resources and/or influence have found ever more sophisticated ways of avoiding service. There is a great danger that compulsory programmes simply become short-hand for a 'Poor Corp'.
  - what are the potential repercussions for those who deliberately avoid service without good reason or who do not meet the full requirements of such programmes?
  - how would this be funded?
82. More broadly, it is unclear how compulsory programmes would mesh with established volunteering activities. An exclusive focus on young people could have implications for long-term volunteering strategies, restricting funding and access for others in society. There is little to suggest that the third sector at present has the capacity to provide enough opportunities to meet the demand of compulsory programmes regardless of their length.
83. Attention must be given to ensuring that choice and quality of opportunities are equitable and universal across the UK as a whole. Failure to define challenging and positive experiences for all could have significant implications as public resentment grows at the cost, contribution and effectiveness of such programmes. There is significant risk that young people will increasingly view compulsory service as at best a 'necessary evil' and at worse some form of civic penal servitude.

84. The YCC thus welcomes and endorses the debate on civic service and agrees that it has much to offer but feels duty-bound to highlight the potential practical difficulties not yet fully addressed in recent proposals. Compulsory programmes are not a panacea to concerns about youth citizenship and can only be effective if they contribute to a comprehensive approach to embedding the hopes and aspirations of young people within a vibrant and progressive democracy.
85. We would suggest that those designing compulsory programmes should be mindful of the implications for developing a coherent and inclusive approach to understanding and engendering citizenship. The development of sustainable citizenship must emphasise the distinct but interdependent life-long relationships of civil and civic action within local communities.
86. We think, that provided this careful analysis and design takes place (with input from young people) and sufficient funding is available, compulsory programmes could play a valuable role in extending both the practical experience and understanding of citizenship. However, it is vital that such proposals are grounded in building positive relationships between young people and society as a whole, which encourage volunteering and participation in local and national democracy. Programmes must be beneficial to both the individual and the community. We believe that there is significant public debate to be had regarding the specific design of any compulsory programme.
87. We believe that compulsion should not play a part beyond the age of 19. Indeed, the transition from compulsory participation to a capacity for voluntary participation needs careful handling, so that these programmes would act as a springboard, not a switch off.

***Department for Children, Schools and Families initiatives: Generations Together, Inspiring Communities, Community Service***

88. In April 2009 a £5.5 million government programme was launched to fund intergenerational community projects that bring older and younger people together<sup>31</sup>. The programme aims to challenge negative stereotypes on both sides caused partly by changing family patterns and living arrangements. The money will fund 12 intergenerational projects across the country where young and older people can engage with each other on equal terms, break down barriers and challenge negative stereotypes.
89. The Government has called on local authorities, in partnership with their local voluntary organisations, to apply for the funding to develop intergenerational projects across the country. Suggested benefits of this programme include:
- providing young people with positive role models who will encourage, support and advise them

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<sup>31</sup> [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn\\_id=2009\\_0076](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2009_0076)

- improving the negative perception of young people, by giving older people the opportunity to see that the vast majority of young people are law-abiding, respectful and talented individuals
  - giving older people the chance to keep their minds and bodies active and therefore improve their general health and well-being
  - increasing community cohesion by helping people of different ages and backgrounds better understand each other, appreciate their similarities, respect their differences and feel part of the same community
  - increasing the opportunities and making it easier for all people to get involved in volunteering projects in their communities
  - supporting some of the most vulnerable young and older people in society by giving them the opportunity to experience new activities, improve their confidence and increase the support they may not get at home.
90. Also in April 2009 the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) released details of the Inspiring Communities Initiative<sup>32</sup>. Funding will be made available to up to 15 neighbourhoods (comprising between 5,000 and 10,000 residents) who will receive up to £450,000 and expert help over the next 2 years to design and deliver projects and activities that will:
- break the cycle of generational underachievement by broadening young people's horizons and experiences— this could include volunteering programmes, youth-led projects, visits to university campuses, theatres and museums, support for young people to undertake work experience placements
  - provide advice and inspiration to young people about the routes they can take into training, work experience, employment, further and higher education
  - raise parents' aspirations and self-confidence so that they can support their children to make the most of opportunities available to them
  - draw on the talents of the whole community and beyond in order to expand social networks. For example by twinning with communities from different parts of the county or country, or encouraging local people to make a "community pledge" to support and encourage local kids.
91. The latest announcement is of a package of funding to encourage community service among 16 to 19 year olds. The Community Service programme will launch in September 2009 and supports the Government's aim that all young people will, in time, undertake at least 50 hours of community service by the time they are 19<sup>33</sup>. The Government will work with local authorities, schools and the voluntary sector and young people to achieve this goal.
92. A two-year funding programme for the Community Service programme was also announced in April, and will aim to provide:

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<sup>32</sup> [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn\\_id=2009\\_0073](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2009_0073)  
<http://www.hmg.gov.uk/newopportunities.aspx>

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news\\_releases/2009/090424\\_dcsf.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2009/090424_dcsf.aspx)



- places for 20,000 young school leavers to undertake fulltime community service through a dedicated Entry to Employment programme, commencing in September 2009. Funding of £64m/£64m is available in the 09/10 and 10/11 academic years
  - a set of intensive pilots in 5 local areas and reaching up to 14,000 young people aged between 14 and 16 to test ways of significantly increasing the proportions of young people participating in community service. These pilots would start in the next academic year, with funding of £2m in 09/10 and £5m in 10/11
  - A package of support for all schools to provide community service opportunities for pupils aged 14-16 building on the foundations of citizenship education, with funding of £11m over the two years<sup>34</sup>.
93. Provided that young people are involved in leading roles we believe that these programmes are an appropriate way to promote a whole society approach to citizenship activities. It is also encouraging to see that the target population will include all of the segments identified in our research.
94. We recommend that the activities that result from this funding should be monitored and evaluated so that the impact can be measured and the results publicised widely in order to encourage other similar activities. As with any programme with time-bound funding, we have concerns about the sustainability of any activities which result and would encourage DCSF to consider longer term funding where activities are particularly successful.

***National Body for Youth Leadership - Department for Children, Schools and Families***

95. Following the publication of Aiming High, the Government's ten-year youth strategy, published in July 2007, the DCSF published *Young People: Leading Change*, in February 2008. This was an interim statement on its plans for investing in youth leadership, in which it announced that the National Body for Youth Leadership (NBYL) would have a budget of £6.26m to March 2011. In February 2009, it was announced that the National Youth Agency, supported by British Youth Council, Changemakers, Citizenship Foundation, Prince's Trust, UK Youth Parliament and The Young Foundation would deliver the NBYL<sup>35</sup>.
96. These organisations are working together to increase the quality, quantity and diversity of opportunities for young people (aged 13 to 19) as leaders of change in their communities.
97. The NBYL will focus on young people in the 13-19 age group. There will be a strong focus on encouraging and supporting under-represented young people

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn\\_id=2009\\_0083](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2009_0083)

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.nbyl.org.uk/work.php>

to benefit from the opportunities offered by the NBYL and over 2,000 youth leadership opportunities will be created by March 2011. The NBYL will also develop and build capacity and capability of the whole youth leadership sector – supporting local authorities, government departments, national youth organisations and local councils for voluntary youth service. The NBYL will also play an important role in providing challenge and support to government and public services to help them to provide young people with meaningful opportunities to influence policy and strategy.

98. We are impressed with the range of opportunities listed in the NBYL's work programme. The NBYL has developed a strong work programme which reflects the principles that we have developed. Again, the NBYL has funding until 2011 and we would encourage the DCSF to evaluate each part of the programme and look to longer term funding for the most successful initiatives. What is particularly encouraging is that NBYL work is being led and undertaken by a range of youth organisations and that the range of activities should appeal to a wide audience.

#### **NBYL work programme**

- Fellowship programme
- Young leaders campaign
- Local Leaders Shadowing Programme
- Ministerial Shadowing Programme
- Youth leadership opportunities
  - Apprenticeships
  - Internships
  - Youth Scrutiny Group
- Promoting leadership in education
- Global leadership in practice and opportunities
- Pathways

**Source:** <http://www.nbyl.org.uk/work.php>

#### ***Young Mayors – Communities and Local Government***

99. In March 2009 Communities and Local Government announced an expansion of the Young Mayors concept<sup>36</sup>. The Elected Mayors represent young people aged between 11 and 18 years old, giving them a voice to influence decisions made by their local council. They also have a budget to spend on initiatives that will benefit young people in their area. Funding of £2 million was announced to encourage at least 20 new Young Mayors around the country who will have the ability to influence council policies that matter to young people.
100. Currently there are 12 Young Mayors across the country. Their elections have attracted over 100,000 young people. In Lewisham, voter turnout for the

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/1172711>

election of the Young Mayor was nearly 50 percent - compared to 43 percent turnout in Lewisham and Greenwich for the London mayor elections<sup>37</sup>.

101. We have considered the Young Mayors scheme against the set of principles we developed as a result of our research and consultation. The concept has been successful in a handful of cases and, on occasion, has elicited reasonably good election turnouts. On balance, however, we consider it to be targeting the positively politically engaged segment rather than those who are non-engaged. The programme also has a strong focus on individuals rather than peer groups. During our consultation process, discussions regarding the Young Mayors concept brought a negative reaction from a number of young people as it was seen as tokenistic, ineffective and not involving people beyond the individual mayor. There were also concerns that the Young Mayor may be vulnerable to use as a showcase, rather than an agent of change.
102. There are clear benefits to young people in them participating in a democratic process at a young age. However, we believe for the Young Mayor programme to be successful it needs to complement initiatives which are wider reaching and involve more young people – such as youth panels and advisory boards.

#### **Young Mayor Achievements**

- The first Young Mayor of Lewisham raised £12,500 funding which was match-funded enabling him to spend £37,000 in total across a number of projects including initiating workshops for 800 young people looking at how they could keep safe when out and about.
- The Young Mayor of Lewisham has also worked with local health groups on a project looking at teenage pregnancy and sexual health issues.
- In Tower Hamlets the young mayor successfully applied for funding to develop local youth centres particularly focusing on improving their accessibility.
- Successive Young Mayors in Newham are helping shape the Olympic legacy. They have been involved in the design and accessibility to young people of the Aquatics Centre and leisure pool.
- The Young Mayor in Newham organised and hosted a citizenship ceremony to celebrate and welcome British citizens as part of Local Democracy week. The week focused on encouraging more young people to get involved in the democratic process.

**Source:** <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/1172711>

#### ***UK Youth Parliament – Department for Children, Schools and Families***

103. The UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) was launched at the House of Commons in July 1999, and held its first sitting in February 2001 in London. There are currently over 500 elected MYPs (Members of Youth Parliament) and Deputy MYPs. UKYP elections take place each year, in every part of the UK. Any young person aged 11-18 can stand or vote in UKYP elections. In the past

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/1172711>

two years over 550,000 young people have voted in UKYP elections. Once elected, MYPs work with their MPs, councillors, school and youth councils and peer group members on the issues of greatest concern to their constituents.

104. UKYP also brings together its MYPs at a regional level, to organise campaigns, projects and events and identify common issues of concern. UKYP then, where possible, links to the regional government offices, assemblies and development agencies to ensure young people's views are being heard and acted upon.
105. UKYP is a charity. Core funding is provided by DCSF with additional funding for specific events and projects coming from other government departments, local authorities and other organisations. In 2007/08 contributions were received from the Ministry of Justice, DEFRA, the Department of Transport, the Metropolitan Police Authority, the Children's Workforce Development Council and v<sup>38</sup>.
106. An obvious criticism of the UKYP model is that it is set up for individuals and can tend to attract the positively politically engaged. That said, UKYP has existed for a decade, operates across the country and is a well functioning organisation with links to other organisations. UKYP also takes a proactive approach to involving disadvantaged young people. In March 2009 MPs voted to allow members of the UKYP to hold a meeting on the floor of the House of Commons – an indication of the high level support for the organisation.

### ***Young Advisors – Communities and Local Government and Department for Children, Schools and Families***

107. The Young Advisors initiative was developed within Communities and Local Government in 2005 to empower young people to have an influence on decision-making and services in their communities. Young Advisors are young people aged between 15 and 21, who show community leaders and decision-makers how to engage young people in community life, regeneration and renewal. Young Advisors advise local authorities, housing associations and other local partners on what it is like for a young person to live, work, learn and play in their neighbourhood. They are paid on a sessional basis.
108. Young Advisors:
  - help organisations 'youth proof' their practices, policies, strategies and commissioning
  - represent young people, making sure their thoughts and feelings are considered in decisions that affect them
  - work both locally and nationally to share good practice and learn from others

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/>

- engage directly with other young people to get them involved in neighbourhood improvements.
109. The Young Advisors scheme puts young people in leading roles, provides support, resources and recognises their contribution. As with the Young Mayors programme, this is on an individual basis and we believe this scheme would be more likely to attract the positively politically engaged segment. While we support the concept of this scheme we believe it could be more appropriately targeted to specifically encourage those young people who would not usually participate. Our recommendations Four and Eleven draw on the concept of Young Advisors but we believe our recommendations are more likely to attract a wider range of young people and therefore be more representative and effective.

#### **Young Advisor Achievements**

Across the country, Young Advisors have:

- Worked with the police in Southwark to improve how stop and search is conducted in their area. Their inputs are now used in police training
- In Middlesbrough, developed a training resource which is now used in induction training with Government Office staff to demonstrate the importance of involving young people
- Worked with architects in Hull, to plan and design a Youth Facility building
- Advised CLG on taking forward the recommendations from the REACH report - an independent report to Government on raising the aspirations and attainment for black boys and young black men
- Regularly attended DCSF stakeholder groups on the implementation of the 10 year youth strategy

#### **Sources:**

<http://www.youngadvisors.org.uk/>

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/communityempowerment/whatweare/youngadvisors/>

### ***Youth Councils***

110. Youth councils are a mechanism used by some councils and parishes across the country to give young people an opportunity to voice their concerns, participate in local government and be empowered to take action to improve their local community<sup>39</sup>.
111. According to the National Association for Local Councils, Youth Councils also enable Local Councils to:
- truly represent the whole of the community they live in
  - become more vibrant, modern and dynamic

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.nalc.gov.uk/Toolkits/Create\\_a\\_Youth\\_Council/Create\\_a\\_youth\\_council.aspx](http://www.nalc.gov.uk/Toolkits/Create_a_Youth_Council/Create_a_youth_council.aspx)

- encourage young people to vote and become councillors when they are old enough, and
  - improve services for young people.
112. Youth Councils also enable the local community to:
- become safer and more sustainable
  - become more vibrant and progressive, and
  - improve services and be more representative.
113. Where they are well resourced and supported, Youth Councils can offer young people a realistic experience of democracy in action. We believe that the more successful Youth Councils will have close links with the UKYP representative and the Young Mayor, where one exists.

#### **British Youth Council**

The British Youth Council (BYC) is the national youth council. The BYC connects with its community of member organisations and network of Local Youth Councils, to empower youth to have a say and be heard. BYC runs training workshops, creates volunteering opportunities and builds campaigns which give everyone aged 25 and under a chance to make a positive contribution to society both in the UK and other countries. BYC also links to the network of Local Youth Councils across the UK to share ideas, skills and information.

BYC's current funding includes contributions from the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Department for International Development, the Big Lottery Fund, the Heritage Lottery Fund, British Council, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, v (the youth volunteering charity) and the Cabinet Office (as a national strategic partner for youth volunteering).

**Source:**

[http://www.nalc.gov.uk/Toolkits/Create\\_a\\_Youth\\_Council/Create\\_a\\_youth\\_council.aspx](http://www.nalc.gov.uk/Toolkits/Create_a_Youth_Council/Create_a_youth_council.aspx)

## KEY MESSAGES FOR GOVERNMENT

114. The **governance of citizenship**, nationally and locally needs to become more focused, connected and transparent with named individuals for all key roles from ministerial level to the grassroots. Joint decision-making, partnership and consultative arrangements need to be put into place within public bodies as well as the voluntary and private sector (including businesses as employers of young people). Most important of all, young people should have a real say at all levels.
115. The starting point should be for the Prime Minister to nominate **a lead minister heading a ministerial committee, to deliver a Public Service Agreement, supported by key partner departments with supporting departmental strategic objectives for citizenship (for all citizens, although with a special focus on young people)**. We recognise that a number of targets and programmes already contribute to building citizenship, but we believe that we need a sharper and co-ordinated focus on developing strong and effective citizens and government that is responsive to them. Parliament and other representative bodies also need to have clarity about what part they should play in association with this lead from government, whilst the private and third sector should be welcomed to share in this enterprise too, preferably as full partners.
116. The total package of **funding of youth citizenship initiatives needs to be transparent**, planned, co-ordinated and evaluated as a whole to deliver sustainable and effective (proven) experiential programmes which meet the diverse needs of young people. At the same time, management of these programmes should be delegated to organisations that ensure young people take the lead.
117. **The broad aims of youth citizenship should be set nationally and its impact measured** in similarly broad terms (avoiding heavy-handed process measurement). The things to look for are:
- substantial, but realistic and achievable change (systemic, institutional and behavioural)
  - visible and experiential change at the community level
  - engaging peer groups rather than focussing on programmes which result in significant responsibility being given to individuals
  - making citizenship a 'lived experience' not a theoretical debate
  - providing and facilitating the conditions for engagement (reaching out, not waiting for them to come to you)
  - communicating what young people can do to engage
  - making young people feel chosen, needed and special
  - providing feedback to young people so they know what change resulted from their input

- where appropriate, adapting systems and institutions to meet the needs of young people rather than always expecting young people to fit into what already exists
  - commitment to long-term change. Sustainable programmes creating a long-lasting sense of citizenship.
118. **Youth citizenship opportunities in support of these aims should as far as possible be designed and delivered by young people** recruited on a sustainable and rolling basis with negotiated delegated budgets and authority, supported by expert adults. The range of opportunities available at a local level should allow young people to express their individual approaches to citizenship and cater for the full diversity of preferences and backgrounds of all young people. There needs to be scope for young people to *add* to the agenda.
119. Youth citizenship opportunities should **be clearly based on input from young people and collectively promoted to young people on a local basis**, with young people owning this process. These packages should play an important part in the delivery of citizenship education.
120. The **main effort and resource should be directed at building up the individual experience of sustained citizenship by every young person**. Although representative models have a part to play in youth citizenship, they need to develop more transparent connections and responsiveness with their constituencies, decision-makers and other representative models to improve their credibility with young people. It's worth exploring an alternative model of nominating independent, credible champions of young people to mediate between them and decision-makers (typically young people with work experience and knowledge of how things work). The scale and quality of individual experience must be at the forefront.
121. **Some young people (and adults) can find traditional political, representative and governmental processes, language and behaviours off-putting**. The different issues that create this perception need to be reviewed by each institution together with young people with a view to keeping what is needed, but removing unhelpful cultural barriers. This could be a long haul, but each step on this path would help pull down the division between young people and their engagement with politics.
122. There are many sources of direction, guidance and advice about how politicians and government might and should reach out and engage with young people. The reality is a mixed picture on the ground. **Government should consider how best to incentivise and promote good practice by frontline youth staff and public bodies** and also offer targeted support to those who need more help in engaging.
123. The bridges between youth and adult citizenship and ways to strengthen citizenship across all sectors of society need attention. **Pathways from civil to civic engagement and from youth citizenship into adult citizenship**



**are important to ensure that the investment in and the commitment of young people has a longer-term impact.** Effective youth citizenship can also encourage adults to take part, and support from adults can motivate young people. Cross-generational working can also be a rewarding experience. There should not be an exclusive focus on young people in order to make active citizenship a normal, positive part of life for everyone.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Theme One: Empowered citizenship

**Recommendation One:** *The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families and the devolved administrations should ensure that the delivery of citizenship education is consistent and effective.*

124. We believe that citizenship education is vitally important, as it is the single biggest government investment in youth citizenship. The curriculum for citizenship education in England has been reviewed several times and we did not scrutinise it further. Nonetheless, the issues of piecemeal delivery and incoherence, (of the content and aims of citizenship education), were raised by many of the young people we met. Efforts need to be made to improve the consistent and effective delivery of citizenship education.
125. Schools decide how to provide citizenship in their curriculum to meet the requirements of the set programmes of study. In places, citizenship education is done well, in others it is not. We believe that key ingredients for successful delivery include:
- a supply of trained and motivated specialist teachers for each school
  - a supportive head teacher and school environment
  - practical experience for the students, and
  - good links with the local community.
126. We recommend the development of delivery plans to secure these success factors for each school. If students have a positive, practical experience of this education where it is done with them rather than to them, it is more likely they will retain what they have learned and use it to influence others in a positive way. We also support citizenship education for all and endorse the proposal of the Goldsmith Review to extend this to primary education.

**Recommendation Two: *The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the devolved administrations should establish a universal system of strong, supported School and Class Councils working collaboratively.***

127. There are a number of ways to create a culture of democracy within schools. Our recommendation highlights two options, but we recognise that there are more good methods available. We also recognise that there are schools who do this well and recommend that DCSF takes the opportunity to commend well performing schools for their efforts in this area. We see a chance for more schools to embrace learner voice opportunities. Learner voice is about empowering learners by providing appropriate ways of listening to their concerns, interests and needs in order to develop educational experiences better suited to those individuals<sup>40</sup>.

**Case Study – School Council Standard, School Councils UK**

***Vision***

All schools working towards a widely recognised standard of what an effective school council is:

- It genuinely involves the whole school community;
- It addresses issues of real concern to the student body;
- Good school council practice is embedded in the school's ethos.

***What are we looking for in schools?***

- Practice – That the school council is identifying issues, coming up with solutions, carrying them out and evaluating them.
- Profile – That the whole school community is aware of how the school council works and feels that it can get involved.
- Policy – That the school has policies on pupil participation and a school council constitution. These should be accessible to the whole school community. They should include clear boundaries and responsibilities for students and staff that facilitate regular and fair involvement by all.

**Source: <http://www.schoolcouncilstandard.org>**

128. Similar to the citizenship education example, School and Class Councils do exist, but delivery and implementation is inconsistent. Over 90 per cent of schools have school councils although not all of these have class councils. School Councils UK have developed a campaign called School Council Standard. The campaign is to raise the expectations amongst educators, students and policy-makers of what school councils could and should be. It seeks to establish a set of agreed, underlying principles and provide support and inspiration for schools to achieve them.
129. Established school councils should be encouraged to work together collaboratively on wider community issues through the school cluster arrangements (mixing younger and older pupils where possible) and also to work with representative structures in other educational institutions and the community and voluntary sectors. The Government should support the

<sup>40</sup> FutureLab ( 2006) *Learner voice – a handbook from FutureLab* available at [http://www.futurelab.org.uk/resources/documents/handbooks/learner\\_voice.pdf](http://www.futurelab.org.uk/resources/documents/handbooks/learner_voice.pdf)

development of standards for school councils, which would help achieve the desired outcomes of schools councils by bringing in underpinning principles for effectiveness.

130. The Department issued statutory guidance in 2008 entitled "Working Together - Giving Children and Young People A Say" designed to help schools:
  - organise and offer children and young people opportunities to develop their skills as active citizens; and
  - organise a variety of approaches of involving children and young people.
131. The guidance outlines how governing bodies could seek pupils' views and engage them in strategic decision-making.
132. We know that 99 per cent of schools have pupil voice activity and 95 per cent have a student council<sup>41</sup>. We are also aware that the DCSF has proposed to update its guidance to schools using real examples of imaginative and varied practice that has produced benefits for the whole school community.
133. The English Secondary Students' Association (ESSA) is run by students, for students aged 11 to 19 years old. It is directly involved in consultations with young people. As such its knowledge, experience and expertise should be maximised when seeking to enhance the role of the student voice and make it genuinely effective.

#### **Case Study – Citizens juries in schools - ESSA**

The English Secondary Students' Association (ESSA) represents the views of students to decision-makers and also supports students to become more involved in decision-making in their own school or college. ESSA, supported by the Ministry of Justice, has trialled Citizens' Juries in schools and worked with Ipsos MORI, a research company that designs and runs Citizens' Juries. ESSA believes Citizens' Juries can be a powerful way to involve students in decision-making, and has developed a guidance pack on running a Citizens' Jury in a school.

In ESSA's model of Citizens' Juries in school or college (unlike some Citizens' Juries in other contexts) the Jury does not aim to represent everyone affected by the decision, just the students. Teachers, parents, governors, support staff, or the local authority may also have interests and views about the issue that decision-makers will need to consider. The Jury will need to take into account these other groups when deciding which policies are realistic and fair.

**Source:**

<http://www.studentvoice.co.uk/assets/Citizens%20Juries%20Toolkit.pdf>

134. The young person's voice also needs to be interpreted as wider than the school/class council. Students who may not belong to their school/class council can and ought to be able to still have their say - whether it be concerned with learning, the running of the school, curriculum evaluation,

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<sup>41</sup> Institute of Education study in student councils, September 2007

community activities or extra-curricular provision. This requires the development of an organisational culture of democratic inclusion.

135. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service Post-16 Citizenship Support Programme includes a wide range of organisations who exemplify good practice (verified in external evaluations) in terms of the young person's voice. This good practice should be further encouraged and the lessons learnt disseminated widely.
136. DCSF should build on this work and in particular ensure that each school has:
  - strong democratic structures and cultures, including councils and student representatives
  - allocated budget to councils, preferably with a degree of student control, and
  - support in terms of trained teachers, sufficient and regular time slots and head teacher attention.
137. Further education colleges should also be encouraged to provide continuation and development of the enhanced citizenship skills inculcated in schools.

**Recommendation Three: Schools should have student representatives on the governing body.**

138. As a further strengthening of democracy within schools, we recommend that schools have student representatives on their governing bodies. The election of individuals is an opportunity for the student body to participate in a democratic process and is a way to develop the idea that democracy is an important part of citizenship in the UK. Involving young people at the highest level of school decision-making is a clear indication from schools that the student voice is valued and appreciated.
139. We recognise that there may be specific issues of confidentiality or sensitivity within a school governing body from which students may, of necessity, be excluded, but we do not believe that such issues are of sufficient magnitude or regularity as to entirely omit students from constructive decision-making forums.
140. While both council and student representative arrangements would be an important delivery mechanism for citizenship education and provide a good foundation for adult democratic participation, the Government should support the development of the student voice in its widest sense. Ultimately this will further encourage democratic participation, and have a genuine impact in the community for young people.

**Case Study – Student representatives on Boards of Trustees, New Zealand**

In New Zealand, the Board of Trustees is a group of elected people who are responsible for the governance, control and management of the school. In simple terms, the Board of Trustees is in charge of running the school and making any major decisions.

Boards are made up of the principal, a staff representative, parent representatives, co-opted trustees and a student (in secondary schools). Trustees are elected by parents and staff members. At schools which cater for Year 9 – 13 students, students elect their student representative to the board.

Any student enrolled full time in Year 9 and above, under the age of 20, is eligible to stand for election and vote in the school election for a student representative. Student trustees have equal standing, voice, accountabilities and vote as other board members, but they can not be the board chairperson (neither can the principal nor staff trustee).

**Sources:**

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz>

<http://www.nzsta.org.nz/>

**Recommendation Four: *Youth voice: National, regional and local public bodies should commit to holding at least two issues-based youth advisory panels per year composed entirely of representative samples of young people.***

141. This concept is intended to give the considered voice of young people a real say and visible representation in decision-making. Such a programme, giving young people a voice, should be a valued part of a wider youth engagement strategy. It should be embedded in annual consultation processes and allow the opportunity for young people to gather together for one or two days to consider evidence, question witnesses and debate wide-ranging issues as well as issues directly associated with “youth”. This mechanism would guarantee a fully representative voice for young people in public bodies, and would sit alongside other engagement mechanisms based on election, appointment or voluntary contribution.

**Case Study –Youth Citizens Panel – Lewisham Council**

The Young Citizens' Panel is a group of approximately 300 young people that the Council, Young Mayor, health service, police, colleges and others work alongside to address issues affecting young people in Lewisham.

The panel gives youth the chance to inform the decision-making process within the council and other partner organisations.

**Source:** <http://www.lewisham.gov.uk>

142. When an issue reaches consultation stage a youth panel should be convened. Decision-makers would need to personally listen to and respond to the group both initially and when decisions are taken to publicise the impact that the youth voice had on decision-making. Panels would be best convened during school holidays and involve youth organisations in the recruitment of a representative sample of young people. Participants would also need to be adequately compensated for their time.
143. We are aware that panels comprised of young people, or people of mixed ages are currently used. Their effectiveness is entirely reliant on the consulting authority's commitment to fully consider the recommendations made.
144. DCSF has a Children and Youth Board composed of a representative sample of children and young people aged 8-18. Since its establishment the CYB has been instrumental in shaping the Department's thinking and designing of services for children. The Board has been involved in a range of policy areas including the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, Youth Matters, Education and Skills White Paper, Guidance for schools on Disability Discrimination Act 2005, improving school behaviour. The Children and Youth Board provide an important channel through which the Department seeks young people's views

on policies and provides the opportunity to better tailor and implement policy to the needs of children and young people themselves.

145. As an example, in 2006 the Government set up the volunteer National Learner Panel to provide decision-makers with learner perspective on issues affecting those in further education. The Panel has contributed to policy development by DCSF, Ofsted and the Learning and Skills Council, amongst others, and reported on the impact of this work<sup>42</sup>. This year a new panel for 14-19 year old learners will be established and will sit alongside the current panel<sup>43</sup>.
146. In the local authority context, the Councillors Commission in 2007 recommended that local authorities should be required to engage meaningfully with young people, including in consultation processes<sup>44</sup>. Adopting the youth voice concept would also address that recommendation.

#### **Case Study – Highland Youth Voice**

Highland Youth Voice is an elected body of young people drawn from every area of the Highlands.

The first elections were held in October 2000. It's 70-100 members are elected through secondary schools (either 2 or 3 members per school, depending on the school roll) and the local area Youth Forums, of which there are 8 and they have 4 representatives each.

The young people have a wide range of opportunities to 'have their say' and are also involved in taking forward their own agenda and tackling issues that are important to them.

The Highland Youth Voice website was developed in conjunction with young people. It provides young people with information and ways to make themselves heard, and aims to connect young people with decision-makers or representatives. It also hosts forums

**Source:**

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/livinghere/youngpeople/highlandyouthvoice/>

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<sup>42</sup> h

<sup>43</sup> [http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/Shapinglearning/DG\\_068290](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/Shapinglearning/DG_068290)

<sup>44</sup> Councillor's Commission (2007) *Representing the Future – report of the Councillor's Commission* available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/583990.pdf>



### **Case Study – Funky Dragon**

Funky Dragon is a national organisation that covers all of Wales. Its aim is to give children and young people the opportunity to get their voices heard on issues that affect them and to be involved in decision making at local and national levels, including the Welsh Assembly Government.

Funky Dragon aims to promote the rights of children and young people to participate in decisions that affect them and encourage active citizenship in Wales at local and national levels.

Young people have been involved in setting up the organisation since the beginning and this has continued to be central to its development. Funky Dragon's Grand Council is made up of a total of 100 young people (aged 11-25) from across Wales. Members of the Grand Council represent the views of youth clubs, schools, social services, local charities and school councils, amongst others. 12 Co-options are elected once the rest of the Grand Council is in place. These spaces enable gaps to be filled to ensure broad representation.

The Funky Dragon website provides youth-friendly information which includes the ultimate guide to participation throughout Wales, current and relevant Welsh news stories, information on the 22 youth forums throughout Wales, information on current campaigns throughout Wales and the UK. It hosts youth forums and links to useful websites with news and other youth engagement information.

**Source:** <http://www.funkydragon.org/index.asp>

**Recommendation Five: Parliament should sponsor and fund the UK Youth Parliament on a sustainable basis.**

147. As outlined in the commentary on government initiatives section, UKYP is a charity and relies on funding from a number of sources. UKYP's funding would be more logical and sustainable if sourced directly from Parliamentary funds, rather than by a few government departments, local authorities and organisations where funding is uncertain and related to organisational objectives. Currently coverage of UKYP activities outside England is problematic as DCSF is the prime source of funding and can only cover English activities. These issues would be solved if Parliament was to sponsor and fund UKYP on a sustainable basis to work across the UK, rather than this being seen to be the responsibility of various government departments and local authorities.

**Case Study – UK Youth Parliament**

UKYP is a clear example that young people from all walks of society are interested in politics, and given the opportunity to engage, will do so. In 2006, 53% of UKYP's MYPs were female and 47% were male, 2% had disabilities and 21% were from black and minority ethnic groups (compared to 8% of the total population, using 2001 census statistics). These figures are in contrast to the widely held belief that politics is dominated by white, middle class males.

**Source:** <http://www.ukyp.org.uk/>

148. Together, Parliament and UKYP should agree a budget and a memorandum of understanding about UKYP's role, responsibilities, links with other youth organisations and accountability to young people, with agreed annual objectives. This should include engaging systematic representation from regional Youth Parliament forums. We note that other youth organisations might feel that the UKYP position is privileged. However, throughout our research we have found UKYP to be the only organisation with a clear case for Parliamentary funding. We also believe there is scope for more to be done to make UKYP play more of a partnership role with other youth organisations.
149. In addition to securing more certain funding, this proposal would more formally align UKYP and parliamentary educational and participatory objectives. The proposal would also build closer relationships between UKYP and Parliament. UKYP would also benefit from greater independence from government, where currently the organisation might feel constrained in campaigning against a funding organisation's policy. Devolved legislatures might like to consider similar sustainable arrangements for their youth representative shadow bodies.

**Recommendation Six:        *Government should encourage youth volunteering and also explore whether a compulsory programme of civic service for young people might be worthwhile.***

150. A youth civic service programme could emphasise the distinct but interdependent life-long connections between civil and civic participation, engaging explicitly with issues of active citizenship, volunteering and democracy. The development of sustainable citizenship is best located within local communities. A project-driven model would encourage young people to assert a level of ownership and offer genuine opportunities for personal and group investment in their own schools and communities. Young people would choose from a range of opportunities during this period including:
- devising and implementing school and community-based projects
  - contributing to existing long-term school and community programmes
  - working with third sector stakeholders
  - working with local and national elected bodies and representatives.
151. The youth civic service programme could end with a citizenship ceremony which is attended by local and national politicians and other members of the community (which could be hosted at the school or town hall). This ceremony would involve:
- presentations of young citizens' projects
  - registering on the electoral roll
  - a nationally-recognised citizenship award.
152. We would also recommend that the Local Government Association consider moving the 'Local Democracy Week' from its current date in autumn to link with the youth civic service programme. This would allow for explicit links between participation and young people to be publicly recognised and celebrated.
153. A youth civic service programme might not require major additional investment as schools, local authorities and third sector stakeholders would be able to collaborate in developing structures to administer local provision. The proposed scheme could provide opportunities for youth services within local authorities and volunteering organisations to build relationships which encourage sustainable life-long citizenship. Locally-based supervision would be able to manage such programmes in a knowledgeable and responsive manner, overseeing existing opportunities and providing support for new initiatives. The programme would not offer a residential element, but incentives could be offered for participants including free travel, access to local amenities, and education or training vouchers.

## Theme Two: Connecting with young people

**Recommendation Seven:** *Schools should have a duty to ensure that all eligible pupils are offered supported opportunities to register to vote at school.*

154. Schools play an important part in young people's lives and we think that all schools should have a duty to ensure that all eligible pupils are offered supported opportunities to register to vote at school, as an integral part of schools' responsibilities for building citizenship in young people.
155. The registration rates of young people are well behind that of the population at large. In Northern Ireland in 2008 an estimated 34% of 18-24 year olds failed to provide their details (unlike Great Britain, Northern Ireland uses individual registration.) In 2000, the estimated non-registered rates of 16-18 year olds was 28% (young people need to register at this age, although eligibility to vote is 18). For 18-24 year olds, the rate was 16%. This compares with an overall estimated rate of non-registration of 8-9%.
156. The Government is working towards a phased move to individual registration and away from registration by household. Should this happen, registering at school would provide young people with easy and direct access to the political process. Registration at school also offers a practical link to citizenship education, which we have identified as being vitally important.

**Recommendation Eight: *The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the devolved administrations should direct schools to be available for use as polling stations and promote the benefits of them remaining open.***

157. We recommend that DCSF and devolved administrations should direct schools to be available as polling stations and promote the benefits of them remaining open. This would enable young people to see democracy at work, vote if they are eligible and the school can bring related teaching to bear. This would also help link the school to the community - an issue that was raised during our research.
158. The designation of polling stations is the responsibility of the local Returning Officer in accordance with electoral law. Local authorities decide the polling stations for their respective areas in liaison with the Returning Officers (and other persons with expertise in areas such as disabled access). The Returning Officer can use all schools and public rooms free of charge.
159. While there is no legislative requirement that a school be closed when used on polling day, it is apparent that a large number of headteachers choose to close their schools when the school is used in this way due to health & safety and security concerns. We believe that these concerns could be alleviated by DCSF and the devolved administrations working with the Association of Electoral Administrators to issue a guidance document for schools on these matters, so that students see democracy in action.

**Recommendation Nine: *The Secretary of State for Justice should pilot and evaluate the use of relevant technology (mobile, email, social networks etc) to remind people to vote on polling day.***

160. Our research has shown that youth culture is complex and fast-moving, as are their technology preferences. It is commonplace for services to use text messages to remind clients of appointments (e.g. hairdressers, dentists etc). We believe that this recommendation is a reasonably simple way to increase awareness of polling day and would benefit all ages, not just youth. The message sent out need not be complex, but rather a reminder it is polling day and providing the postcode of the nearest polling station. This process would need to adapt as technology and its usage changes.
161. Effective contact through this technology would require the voluntary collection of electors' preferred form of contact in the annual registration process. This also ties into the current Government intention to move from household to individual registration. Currently only one contact per household can be provided. If the change was made, individual details could be collected.
162. The key objective of any pilot should be to evaluate the cost-effectiveness in terms of whether any investment increased voter turnout, as well as the impact on electoral fraud.

**Recommendation Ten:** *The Cabinet Office should establish a New Media Taskforce to set out good practice on the best online methods to engage with young people who seek to be involved in citizenship activities.*

**Case study – Youth work and Social Networking, National Youth Agency**

A 2008 study funded by the National Youth Agency drew upon evidence from literature, a survey of 120 youth work managers and practitioners, and a series of focus groups. The report found that online social networking has the potential to bridge divides, encourage creativity and create opportunities for learning, collaboration and innovation.

The report suggested that:

- online social networking opens up new opportunities for youth work
- social networking creates new spaces where young people may be at risk and need to be protected, and equipped to respond to and navigate risk.
- there is a need to recognise that there are gaps in access to technology in many youth work settings.
- youth work can engage with online social networking and that in this age of social technology – where technology is about connections between people, not between grey boxes.

**Source:**

<http://www.nya.org.uk/information/111564/youthworkandsocialnetworking/>

163. As indicated by our research, young people embrace technology and use online methods for engaging with each other. Many young people expect to be able to do what they need to do online. This presents a real opportunity for the Government to establish a taskforce of young people and youth agencies with experience in this area to develop principles for online means for engagement. This type of work is best delivered by the third sector as they have both the skills and the independence to do this well and to be trusted by the public.
164. Many young people have indicated a desire to know more about opportunities both in their local community and nationally, the funding available for projects and proposals and how to link with other like-minded people. Information on the internet needs to be designed by young people and for young people and provide an interface with existing spaces such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and YouTube.
165. When recommending online methods, we note that it is an ever-changing world, technology changes quickly and there are already many websites in existence, some of which are more successful than others. We recommend that the investigation and development process should include:
- a stocktake of existing sites
  - investigation of how to link to existing social media
  - at a minimum, consultation with young people beyond those on the taskforce

- consideration of offline support and how to translate online engagement into actions, and consideration of marketing and how to drive traffic to opportunities.
166. The investigation should also draw on existing research into online behaviours, such as the Office of Communications' 2008 social networking study<sup>45</sup> and the 2009 Reform and Ipsos-MORI study<sup>46</sup>.
167. While the focus is on young people we do not recommend that be the sole focus. We believe that the internet could provide a way to create communities of citizens of different ages working towards a common goal. The *Power of Information Taskforce Report*<sup>47</sup> shows that the Government has a commitment to using ICT to enable better public service delivery. We endorse proposals contained in this report, particularly in relation to innovating and co-creating with citizens online. The work in that report provides an excellent starting point for the New Media Taskforce.
168. This recommendation can also support Recommendation 14 regarding local authorities building on existing opportunities and structures to either enhance or establish local structures and plans for youth to engage with their wider community. The internet could provide the appropriate way for local authorities to promote their information.

#### **Case study - The Young Active Citizens hub, Envision**

The *Young Active Citizens Hub* is being developed by Envision. This website seeks to bring together all the young people across the country working to make a difference in their communities. It will be a space for young people to share their plans and experiences, gather information about different issues, seek out advice on how to influence decision-making, blog and chat with each other, and find out about financial support for their ideas.

Young people will have their own space on the website (like a MySpace page) where they post information about their citizenship project/action/campaign, store documents, videos and create galleries in their media area. Users will also be able to post their documents for review on the team blog. This enables users to share their activities, best practice and also post request notifications to any other individuals or teams tackling that theme.

Envision is aware that many young people are using social networking sites on a regular basis. Therefore the site will have links to these other sites, to capture the students who are using sites such as Twitter and Facebook either for their projects or for the ability to post YouTube & Vimeo videos, Flickr galleries and links to their social networking pages.

**Source:** <http://www.envision.org.uk/>

<sup>45</sup> Ofcom (2008) *Social networking –A quantitative and qualitative research report into attitudes, behaviours and use* available at [http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media\\_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/socialnetworking/report.pdf](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/socialnetworking/report.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> Reform and Ipsos-MORI (2009) *A New Reality: Government and the ipod generation*. Available at [http://www.reform.co.uk/anewrealitygovernmentandtheipodgeneration\\_308.php](http://www.reform.co.uk/anewrealitygovernmentandtheipodgeneration_308.php)

<sup>47</sup> [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/reports/power\\_of\\_information.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/reports/power_of_information.aspx)



### Theme Three: Changing the way decision-makers and institutions work

***Recommendation Eleven: The Government should introduce an equality impact assessment criterion to consider the impact of new policies on young people.***

169. Most public sector organisations are bound by the statutory legislative equalities duties in the Race Relations (Amendment Act) 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006. Organisations must consider how their policies, services, functions and decisions impact on people in respect to these factors.
170. Age is a key factor and its non-statutory based guidance on this aspect encourages public bodies to consider the needs of children, young people and older people.
171. Councils are statutorily required to conduct Equality Impact Assessments to identify the potential impact of policies, services and functions on its residents and staff. These assessments can help staff provide and deliver excellent services to residents by making sure that these reflect the needs of the community. It is the individual council's responsibility to develop the policy however guidelines and communities of practice exist.
172. As announced in the Queen's Speech in December 2008, the Government Equalities Office is currently drafting the Equality Bill which is expected to have a first reading in late 2009. The Bill places a new equality duty on public authorities to tackle discrimination and promote equality for age. The Bill will contain a new streamlined Equality Duty to replace the race, disability, and gender duties, which will also cover age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, and religion or belief. We support this Bill and recommend that the Government continues to push the importance of assessing the impacts of policies on young people.

**Recommendation Twelve: Nominated government departments should appoint annual scrutiny panels composed of young people to advise on specific issues.**

173. Government departments develop policies and undertake a broad range of activities that impact on young people. By acknowledging this and providing youth with a direct influence on decision-making, departments will show that their processes are accessible and open to the views and influence of young people. These panels would be used both at the policy development phase and during legislation development. While the youth voice panels from recommendation four are short-term, one-off deliberative seminars, the scrutiny panels would exist for the duration of a particular piece of work and be called together regularly.

**Case study - Supporting young people in local and national democracy, Communities and Local Government (CLG)**

CLG have set up a panel of 9 young people, recruited from the national pool of Young Advisors, to act as advisors to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The advisors give a young person's perspective as policies are developed and implemented. The panel members range in age from 15 to 20 years.

Two of the panel act as main youth advisors and meet on a monthly basis while the full panel meet with her on a quarterly basis. Topics discussed include the housing offer for young people, climate change and the impact on community cohesion in the current economic climate.

The panel has also met with the Minister for the Olympics and the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.'

**Source: Communities and Local Government**

174. This might have particular relevance for departments such as DCSF, Communities and Local Government and Justice as the segmentation study identified that young people are interested in issues such as having good job prospects, having good schools and colleges and people being treated fairly. The development of this programme should include consultation with youth agencies to ensure that a resulting structure can be used by various agencies for a long time. Attention must also be given to providing the young people involved with support and mechanisms to engage with other young people.
175. Some questions for the design process include:
- how young people would be selected
  - how long they would serve
  - how they would work
  - how they would be supported
  - how they would relate to the department and ministers
  - how they would be compensated and recognised, and
  - how they would connect with young people more widely (for example using social networking sites).

176. As discussed in our findings, feedback is crucial for those young people involved in engagement activities to feel their input is valued and considered. These scrutiny panels should be entitled to a formal response to their input.

**Recommendation Thirteen: Communities and Local Government, Department for Children, Schools and Families, Ministry of Justice and the Office of the Third Sector should track long-term progress on the refreshed aims of youth citizenship annually through representative surveys.**

177. Tracking progress is an integral part of a co-ordinated approach to youth citizenship. Without it, we won't know if we are successful. This does not need to be a difficult process if government departments build on existing surveys of adult citizenship behaviours, as well as commission qualitative research where underlying trends need deeper exploration.
178. Two examples of existing surveys are the Citizenship Survey and the Audit of Political Engagement, as outlined in the case study. Extending these surveys to include younger people<sup>48</sup> could add additional administrative and design costs. Nonetheless, we believe that this is appropriate and the associated costs are far less than creating a separate survey. We understand that DCSF and the Office of the Third Sector are interested in knowing more about youth attitudes to citizenship and how to arrange for booster samples to the Citizenship Survey. The idea of surveying younger people is also not a new one, as the Home Office recently announced that the British Crime Survey<sup>49</sup> will now include those aged 10 and over.

**Case study – National surveys**

The Citizenship Survey, conducted by Communities and Local Government, is a household survey covering a representative core sample of almost 10,000 adults in England and Wales each year. There is also a minority ethnic boost sample of 5,000 to ensure that the views of these groups are robustly represented. The survey asks about a range of issues including views about the local area, community cohesion, racial and religious prejudice and discrimination, values, interaction/mixing, political efficacy, civic engagement, volunteering and charitable giving. The data is collected through a face-to-face interview.

**Source:**

**[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/citizenshipsurveyq3200809](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/citizenshipsurveyq3200809)**

The Audit of Political Engagement is an annual measure of the British public's political knowledge and engagement. Each Audit measures the nature and extent of political engagement and reveals where views have changed - and where they remain constant. The most recent Audit includes a focus on political participation and citizenship. The data are also collected through face-to-face interview. The latest sample size was 983.

**Source: <http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/blogs/publications/pages/audit-of-political-engagement-6.aspx>**

<sup>48</sup> The Citizenship survey currently includes those aged 16 and above. The Audit of Political Engagement includes those 18 and above.

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/bcs1.html>

179. In terms of appropriate questions and a starting point for comparison, the YCC/Jigsaw segmentation research discussed in the findings section is an excellent reference point.
180. Just as important is the further exploration of any issues that become apparent from the surveys. Where surveys identify trends that require further research, departments should commission qualitative research to gain greater insight into underlying causes. This additional research would assist government to develop programmes to effectively address these causes.
181. It is encouraging to see that some form of tracking participation and active citizenship has begun. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Volunteering England and Involve have recently undertaken a 2.5 year project researching participation. *Pathways through participation* will look at how and why people get involved, and how this may change over their life times.

**Case study – Local Democracy Campaign, Local Government Association**

The Local Democracy Campaign encourages councils to try to engage young people in local politics. The Campaign's website includes case studies and best practice examples. The Campaign has also produced guides, listed below.

- Sending the councillor back to school - for councillors and councils.
- Getting the most out of your council chamber - for councillors and councils.
- Bringing democracy to the classroom - a wide range of lesson ideas for citizenship teachers.
- Introducing young people to local politics for those working with young people outside school

**Source:** <http://localdemocracy.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelid=1>

***Recommendation Fourteen: As part of the wider work on promoting engagement in democratic processes, all local authorities should develop a clear strategy for co-ordinating and promoting youth citizenship opportunities for young people.***

182. We acknowledge that there is an enormous amount of work going on in the youth citizenship area, and that a wide range of agencies are working to enhance opportunities for young people. What are apparently missing are local structures or plans that tie these together and note where there are opportunities for further work. Where these structures and plans do exist there appears to be a disconnection between them and the young people they seek to assist.
183. Our research found that many young people have indicated that they would be more involved if they knew how to be. Local authorities are in a unique position to rectify this, given their proximity to young people who need to be contacted.
184. Councils also have a statutory responsibility to secure access for young people to a range of positive activities to do in their spare time<sup>50</sup>. In order to fulfil this requirement we believe that local authorities need to harness existing opportunities and put into place local structures and plans that involve young people directly. Again, we are not recommending that local authorities 'reinvent the wheel' but rather conduct a stocktake, bring relevant agencies together, promote the opportunities that do exist to young people and support the development of new programmes which address the specific needs of youth in their local areas.
185. A possible delivery mechanism for this is the Children's Trust Board structure. Children's Trust Boards consist of the local authority, health, police, schools and other services. These groups work together to agree and deliver a Children & Young Peoples' Plan with responsibility for improving the safety and well-being of all children and young people in the area.
186. The local arrangements we are recommending should make full use of all the relevant national and local opportunities and organisations and lead to awards where appropriate.
187. We believe that taking forward this recommendation would be an important part of local authorities' response to meet their new responsibility to promote democracy in their community<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup> Education and Inspections Act 2006

<sup>51</sup>[1] Subject to the passing of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill, currently being considered by Parliament. See development process at <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/200809/localdemocracyeconomicdevelopmentandconstruction.html>

### **Case Study: The Participation Network**

- In 2007, the Children and Young People's Unit of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) demonstrated government commitment to promoting children and young people's participation, and allocated funding to form The Participation Network. The work of The Participation Network focuses on developing the capacity of statutory agencies, local government and government departments in Northern Ireland to fulfil their duties to effectively engage children and young people in public decision making.

Achievements from the Participation Network's first year included:

- Building a membership of 47 organisations and groups
- Meeting with over 20 government departments, local government and public authorities to discuss the participation of children and young people in public decision making
- Held a successful launch which was attended by over 60 people including 6 Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Junior Ministers with responsibility for children and young people
- Developed two training modules in exploring WHY and HOW children and young people can be involved in public decision making
- Trained over 60 public authority representatives in Module 1 & 2 (by the end of March 2008)
- Developed a website and other resources to support public authorities, local government and government departments in including children and young people in public decision making.

**Source:** <http://www.participationnetwork.org/>

**Recommendation Fifteen: *The Government should facilitate the Third Sector to develop a single, well-recognised award for young people involved in citizenship activities***

188. As detailed in our findings, recognition and celebration are important components of youth engagement activities. The contributions of young people should be personally recognised and celebrated and the benefits of youth citizenship activities should be publicised. We believe that there is scope for organisations to co-operate on moving towards a single, well-recognised award for citizenship effort and achievement.
189. Many organisations already have their own certificates or awards. However, we recommend efforts to develop a nationally recognised achievement standard or award which young people know that the general public and future employers will understand and value.
190. The development of such an award should build on existing award development and involve a cross section of youth organisations, such as the consortium established to deliver the National Body for Youth Leadership programme. Young people should also be involved so that the resulting award is equally valued by young people.

**Case study – Hear by Right, Participation Works**

Participation Works is made up of six national children's and young people's charities that have developed a programme of activities and resources on participation.

The National Youth Agency's (NYA) key contribution was to develop the Hear by Right participation standards framework. Hear by Right is based on seven standards: strategies, structures, systems, staff, skills and knowledge, style of leadership, and shared values. Each standard has seven indicators. For each standard, organisations are given indicators by which they can assess their progress in relation to the involvement of young people and be able to assess whether they are at the emerging, established or advanced stage with reference to active involvement.

Participation Works encourages organisations to use Hear by Right to assess the levels of participation in an organisation and create a strategic plan for improvement.

Hear by Right is widely used in the Third Sector and the standards have been piloted with a number of Local Authorities.

**Source:** <http://hbr.nya.org.uk/>



### **Case study – Diana Award**

The Diana Award recognizes young people who have made an outstanding and selfless contribution to their communities and demonstrated the qualities associated with Diana Princess of Wales – compassion and a commitment to improving the lives of others.

The Award identifies positive role models that challenge existing stereotypes of young people, and gives them recognition at a time when their life choices are still to be made. There are three separate awards that young people can be nominated for:

- The Diana Award. for individuals aged 12-18 who make a sustained, selfless contribution to their community, and who demonstrate exceptional personal qualities.
- The Diana Anti-Bullying Award. for those aged 5-18 who have tackled bullying in their schools and communities is open to both individuals and groups of young people.
- The Diana Certificate of Excellence. for groups of young people aged 12-18 who have worked together to make a selfless contribution to their communities.

Receipt of the Award holds enormous prestige for its recipients and the Diana Award have seen first-hand the life-changing impact the Award has on those that receive it. It has proven to give them the inspiration, confidence and support to carry on giving back to their communities. It is open to young people of all abilities, circumstances and cultures throughout society.

Over 25,000 young people have received a Diana Award.

**Source: The Diana Award**

**Recommendation Sixteen:**

***The Government should facilitate and deliver a way to provide comparative information on, and communication channels for, elected representatives within constituencies.***

191. Our research has shown that many young people do not know how to have their say or where to go to find out how to have their say or engage with formal political processes. There is also a general negativity towards elected representatives – both at a national and local level – although this diminished with greater contact.
192. The Councillors Commission, in its 2007 report, also identified this issue. It recommended that Councils be more proactive in disseminating information on how local governance works, what councillors do and generally raising interest in local democracy<sup>52</sup>. We encourage the government to consider this recommendation alongside the relevant recommendations from the Councillors Commission report.
193. A website (possibly an expansion of an existing one) providing comparative information on elected representatives is one way to raise the profile of formal political processes. The comparative information should be complemented by content that goes beyond contact details and Parliamentary records to providing information on the role and the performance of representatives within their constituencies (from parish councillor to MEP).
194. The website could also publicise items such as surgeries, meetings, visits, case work statistics and provide an entry point for contacting representatives. It could also showcase good practice, such as the Hansard Society's *Elected Representatives in Schools* series<sup>53</sup> and the Houses of Parliament's *Parliamentary Outreach Service*<sup>54</sup> and provide citizen feedback. Ideally there would also be a special emphasis on working with schools and youth interest. We believe that the Third Sector is best placed to scope and host such a website in terms of its skills base and public trust (although some government funding would be necessary).

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<sup>52</sup> Councillor's Commission (2007) *Representing the Future – report of the Councillor's Commission* available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/583990.pdf>. Particularly recommendation one and two.

<sup>53</sup> [http://hansardsociety.org.uk/blogs/citizenship\\_education/archive/2007/09/28/Helping-schools-to-develop-better-links-with-their-elected-representatives.aspx](http://hansardsociety.org.uk/blogs/citizenship_education/archive/2007/09/28/Helping-schools-to-develop-better-links-with-their-elected-representatives.aspx).

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.parliament.uk/getinvolved/outreach.cfm>

**Case study - They Work for You, MySociety**

TheyWorkForYou is a website run by MySociety which is itself a project of UK Citizens Online Democracy, a registered charity. The site was built by volunteers who thought it should be easy for people to keep tabs on their elected MPs and Unelected Peers and comment on what goes on in Parliament.

These volunteers aimed to fix the problem of most people not knowing the name of their MP, nor their constituency, let alone what their MP does or says in their name.

**Source:** <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/>

## WHERE TO FROM HERE

195. We are fully aware of the challenges that our recommendations pose in a difficult and uncertain financial environment; where reductions, rather than increases, in resources are more likely to be on the agenda. Questions may be asked as to how we can prioritise this work over other concerns, such as ensuring job security for workers and investing in housing, education and healthcare. Our answer is that the Government already invests substantial money in youth engagement and developing citizenship is a key requirement in a healthy democracy. We believe that we can get better value for money by adopting the principles, key messages and recommendations set out in this report.
196. To do so may not require an increase in overall expenditure in this field but rather a redirection of existing funding and resources to ensure a more co-ordinated, inclusive and effective approach. Inevitably, some existing measures may be weighed in the balance and could be discontinued. This redirection could result in savings for the Government in the long term as greater co-ordination and communication reduces duplication of effort and increases impact. We have provided information to assist the Government to make better funding choices for youth engagement initiatives.
197. There is real value in the ongoing investment in building youth citizenship in order to create a strong society. Our lasting impression of this work is that there is strong enthusiasm and commitment to developing youth citizenship. The challenge is to continue to encourage this, make the necessary changes, empower people to take part and celebrate the achievements of those involved.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 - Reference documents

Below is a list of documents and resources which have either been published by the YCC or used to inform the YCC's work.

Benton, T., Cleaver, E., Featherstone, G., Kerr, D., Lopes, J. and Whitby, K. (2008) *Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS): Sixth Annual Report. Young People's Civic Participation In and Beyond School: Attitudes, Intentions and Influences* (DCSF Research Report 052). London: DCSF.

Available at <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/pdfs/downloadable/CELS6threport-DCSFpublication.pdf>

NFER presented to the YCC on 23 January 2009

Hansard Society (2009) *Audit of Political Engagement 6* London: Hansard Society

Livity Youth Media <http://www.live-magazine.co.uk/>

Livity presented to the YCC on 24 November 2008

Lord Goldsmith QC (2008) *Citizenship: Our Common Bond. Report to the Prime Minister.*

Available at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/docs/citizenship-report-full.pdf>

Parfitt, A (2007) BBC/ *Radio One research into teenagers*

<http://www.digitalspy.co.uk/radio/a65566/weekend-spy-teenage-kicks.html>

Andy presented to the YCC on 24 November 2008

Reform and Ipsos-MORI (2009) *A New Reality: Government and the IPOD generation.*

Available at

[http://www.reform.co.uk/anewrealitygovernmentandtheipodgeneration\\_308.php](http://www.reform.co.uk/anewrealitygovernmentandtheipodgeneration_308.php)

Weller, S. (2009) *Teenagers Citizenship Education and Experiences* – a briefing document for the Youth Citizenship Commission.

Youth Citizenship Commission (2008) *Old Enough to Make a Mark? Should the voting age be lowered to 16?* Consultation document.

Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

Youth Citizenship Commission (2009) *Old Enough to Make a Mark? Should the voting age be lowered to 16?* Summary findings.

Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

Youth Citizenship Commission (2009) *Old Enough to Make a Mark? Should the voting age be lowered to 16?* Commission response.

Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

*Youth Citizenship Commission reports, prepared on behalf of the Commission:*

2CV (2009) *Youth Engagement – deliberative research.*

Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

EdComs (2008) *Youth Engagement – a literature review.*

Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

HeadsUp (2009) *Are young people allergic to politics?* Report on HeadsUp YCC debate.

Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

Jigsaw Research (2009) *Democratic Engagement and Participation – segmenting the 11-25s.*

Available at <http://www.ycc.uk.net>

## **APPENDIX 2 - Youth Citizenship Commissioners**

### ***Jonathan Tonge, Chair***

Jonathan Tonge is Professor of Politics at the University of Liverpool. He is Chair of the Youth Citizenship Commission and President of the Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom, the representative organisation for Politics academics and the second largest national political science association in the world, with over 1750 members.

Professor Tonge has written extensively on various aspects of British and Irish politics, publishing 14 books and dozens of journal articles and book chapters. He has co-edited studies of the last three general elections, published by Manchester University Press and Palgrave Press and is co-editing a study of the 2010 contest for *Parliamentary Affairs* and Oxford University Press. A regular television and radio broadcaster, Jon sits on the editorial boards of *Parliamentary Affairs*, *Politics Review* and *Irish Political Studies*.

### ***Philip Cowley, Vice Chair***

Philip Cowley is Professor of Parliamentary Government at the University of Nottingham. He is convenor of the Political Studies Association's specialist group on elections, public opinion and parties, and he runs the website [www.revols.co.uk](http://www.revols.co.uk).

### ***Ray Auvray***

Ray Auvray is Prospects' Executive Chairman, having led the Prospects Group since its establishment in 1995. He has successfully grown the Group to a national organisation with a turnover of £52 million, employing 1,100 staff and 400 consultants delivering a wide range of youth education, training and employment services.

Ray is a graduate of Reading University and undertook further studies at the University of East London, commencing his career in teaching before moving into local authority administration. For eleven years, Ray headed the London Borough of Havering Careers Service. Ray understands the Local Authority perspective well, having served for a number of years as a Basildon District Councillor, Essex County Councillor, was a member of Essex Police Authority and was twice a parliamentary candidate. Ray has served on a number of national Careers Service advisory bodies and is also a Board Director of a number of companies and has other business interests.

### ***Justin Cole***

Justin Cole was the 2007/08 Young Mayor for Lewisham. He is 17 years old. His message to other young people on the issues that matter to them in Lewisham is - "Young people are very concerned about crime. Underachievement is also a problem, especially amongst young Afro-Caribbean males. I have been working on the Black People's achievement programme, which looks at why young black men underachieve. I am concerned about youth violence and crime, the gradual erosion of societal and family values, the state of our schools and the inadequacy of recreational opportunities for young people."

### ***Victoria Collin***

Victoria is an active member of the Claim Your Voice advisory group and often finds herself travelling around England promoting the project to young people. Victoria is studying towards a BA Youth & Community degree, something that she is really proud of. Victoria volunteers with Chester-le-Street's young homeless project and delivers workshops in schools to raise awareness of youth homelessness to schoolchildren. Victoria planned and delivered a one-day event for young people in Sunderland to offer them the opportunity to meet with local decision-makers to discuss issues close to young people's hearts.

Victoria strongly believes that young people and young adults don't get the recognition they deserve for the good work they do (the majority of which is voluntary).

### ***Richard Demby***

Richard is a teacher at Whalley Range 11-18 High School, a girls' school in inner city Manchester, coordinating the citizenship and PSHE provision across key stages 3, 4 & 5. He also works part-time as a freelance consultant in post-16 citizenship, predominantly for the Learning & Skills Network (LSN) Post-16 Citizenship Support Programme. The LSN (formerly the LSDA) ran a very successful post-16 citizenship development programme for 5 years. The LSN now runs a series of regional training events which Richard manages and coordinates in the North West.

Richard has also worked as the subject tutor on the "Teach First" teacher trainee programme at Manchester University as the citizenship subject tutor. He has also been a guest lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University, having worked with both the citizenship trainees, and with practising teachers as part of their Continuing Professional Development (CPD). He is currently collaborating with the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester, on a project integrating drama and citizenship, focusing on Conflict and Conflict resolution, working with young people themselves and providing CPD for staff.

### ***Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson***

Britain's greatest ever paralympic athlete, Tanni Grey-Thompson crowned a magnificent career with two gold medals at the 2004 Athens Paralympics. It took her remarkable medal haul over 16 years and five Paralympic Games to 11 gold, 3 silver and a bronze.

Born with spina bifida and needing to use a wheelchair from the age of seven, Tanni began wheelchair racing at 13. At 17 she started her competitive career. As well as her Paralympic success, she won the London Wheelchair Marathon in 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2001 and 2002, when she competed just three months after giving birth to daughter Carys. Tanni's enthusiasm and determination has made her an international sporting hero and increased the public's awareness of Paralympic sports.

Away from the track, she has played an active role in administration. She is the Vice-President of the Women's Sports Foundation, a member of the United Kingdom



Sports Council, a patron of the British Sports Trust and she was a member of the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games Organising Committee. In 2003 Tanni was awarded the Freedom of the City of Cardiff. In 2005 she was created 'Dame' Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE for her services to sport.

### ***Robyn Keeble***

Robyn is one of the three young Commissioners and also sits on the Commission's Youth Advisory Board. She was part of various young people's panels in her local area, and with the help of a local organisation founded a young persons consultancy. As a young consultant, she works with youth practitioners to develop their services in light of an initiative that encourages mentoring support. Robyn is passionate about equipping organisations to engage and support young people in new ways, and mentors a number of young people herself.

### ***Anne Longfield***

Anne Longfield has worked extensively in the arena of policy and services for children, young people and families for almost 25 years. Chief Executive of 4Children for the last 14 years, Anne has played a leading role in influencing both thinking and delivery of support for young people and wider communities. Under her leadership, 4Children has become a major charity for change for children and young people shaping and delivering solutions nationally and locally.

Anne has argued and campaigned strongly for the needs of young people and has written and been involved in numerous policy campaigns, papers and publications. Anne has held a number of Advisor roles to Government including a period in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit at the Cabinet Office. Anne received an OBE in recognition of her contribution to young people in the millennium honours. She has a 16-year-old son.

### ***Andrew Mycock***

Dr. Andrew Mycock is Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Huddersfield. His key research and teaching interests focus on post-imperial citizenship and national identity, particularly in the UK and the Russian Federation, and the impact of citizenship and history education programmes on young people. He is a founding member of the Academy for the Study of Britishness based at Huddersfield and co-convenor of the Political Studies Association's specialist group on Britishness. He regularly contributes to public debate in local, regional and national media, and is also involved in a number of youth projects in West Yorkshire.

### ***Hazel Rees***

Hazel is a recently qualified teacher working just outside Brighton. She is the Brighton and Hove Young Teacher's Officer for the National Union of Teachers (NUT), and is the NUT's delegate on the Trade Union Congress (TUC) Young Member's Forum. This forum is made up of young worker representatives (aged 26 and under) from affiliated trade unions, and she was recently elected Vice Chair of the Forum.

Hazel teaches Year 4 and has recently finished her first year of teaching. She specialises in global citizenship and has visited community schools in Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi. She has a BSc in Psychology from the University of Leeds, and has researched the barriers that disabled children experience in the UK's school system. She loves teaching, and is really looking forward to her second year; in fact she loves it so much she runs to work!

### ***Miranda Sawyer***

Miranda Sawyer started her career at Smash Hits, before moving on to Select Magazine where she won the PPA Magazine Writer of the Year Award in 1993, the youngest person ever to do so. A contracted feature writer for The Observer for over fifteen years, she is the paper's radio critic and writes the lead column for the Observer Music Monthly. Miranda has made several documentaries for Channel 4, including one on the age of consent. She is a regular on Newsnight Review and The Culture Show, was on the judging panel for the 2007 Turner Prize and is a member of the Tate Members' Council. Her first book, Park And Ride, was published by Little, Brown, & Company in 1999, and has been reprinted in paperback several times since.

### ***Wes Streeting***

Wes Streeting is President of the National Union of Students, a full-time elected position responsible for representing more than 7 million students and 600 students' unions across the Further and Higher Education sectors. He was elected to the post in April 2008 with a convincing majority, having previously served for two years as the union's Vice-President for Education. Wes read history at Selwyn College, Cambridge and was President of Cambridge University Students' Union from 2004-5 before being elected to the NUS National Executive Committee as a non-portfolio member for 2005-6.

Wes has a strong interest in education policy, particularly on widening participation, and has held a number of positions within the higher education sector, notably membership of the 'Burgess Group' on measuring and recording student achievement. He was a non-executive director of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education from 2006 to 2008 and has been a non-executive director of the Higher Education Academy since 2006. He continues to serve on the Higher Education sector delivery partnership steering group on Higher Education admissions reform.

Wes is a non-executive director of Endsleigh Insurance Ltd. as well as the NUS' trading arm NUS Services Ltd and he is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

## **APPENDIX 3 - Advisory Group members**

### ***Youth Advisory Board***

- Denise Asare - Envision
- Steven Cheung - Envision
- Zezi Ifore – former co-presenter of Big Brother's Little Brother
- Awais Javid (AJ) - The Prince's Trust
- Jellyellie - teen author and entrepreneur
- Robyn Keeble – Commissioner
- Zara Quli – Envision
- Chloe Williams - Diana Award recipient

### ***Experts Group***

- Saghir Alam - Masjid and Educational Institution
- Tom Burke - Participation Works, Children's Rights Alliance for England
- Dr Dina Kiwan - Birkberk University
- Lindsay Martin – YMCA England
- Jamie Thomas - Russell Commission/ Red Foundation
- Maggie Turner - Diana Award
- Rachel Urquhart - Envision

## APPENDIX 4 – Timeline

Timeline			
Date	Key milestone	Ongoing activities	
Jul 07	Governance of Britain Green Paper released. <sup>55</sup>		
Feb 08	Commission established. Professor Jonathan Tonge appointed Chair.	Appointment of 13 commissioners.	
Jun 08	Letters sent to 250 stakeholders asking for submissions of evidence, research and experience relating to young people.		
Jul 08	EdComs commissioned to undertake a literature review. 2CV commissioned to begin deliberative research.		
Aug 08	Kindred <sup>56</sup> commissioned to undertake PR/media. YCC Chair wrote to all parliamentarians outlining the YCC's work and mandate.	Consultation meetings with stakeholders.	Consultation meetings with youth groups.
Sept 08	<i>Youth Engagement – a literature review</i> published.	Deliberative research undertaken.	Consultation on <i>Old enough to make a mark? Should the voting age be lowered to 16?</i>
Oct 08	<i>Old enough to make a mark? Should the voting age be lowered to 16?</i> Consultation paper released.		
Nov 08	Appointment of the members for the Experts group and the Youth Advisory board.		
Dec 08	Jigsaw commissioned to begin segmentation research.		
Jan 09	<i>Youth Engagement – Deliberative Research</i> published <i>Are Young People Allergic to Politics?</i> report published.	Segmentation research undertaken.	
Feb 09	YCC residential workshop to discuss proposed recommendations.		
Mar 09		Consultation meetings with various stakeholders, including young people to discuss the key findings and proposed recommendations.	
Apr 09	<i>Old enough to make a mark? Should the voting age be lowered to 16?</i> Summary findings report released.		
Jun 09	<i>Democratic Engagement and Participation – segmenting the 11-25s</i> report published. <i>Old enough to make a mark? Should the voting age be lowered to 16?</i> YCC response report released. <i>Making the connection – building youth citizenship in the UK.</i> YCC final report released.		

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm71/7170/7170.asp>

<sup>56</sup> In 2009 PR consultancy Geronimo, which the YCC commissioned in 2008 and advertising agency Mustoes merged. The new agency is known as Kindred.

## APPENDIX 5 – Stakeholders

Below is a list of stakeholders who made submissions to the YCC or attended consultation meetings.

Andrew Russell- Manchester University	Lord Ramsbottom
Andy Parfitt	Lord Tebbit
Ashford Youth Forum	Masjid and Educational Institute
Association of Citizenship Teachers	Mayor of Newham
Association of Electoral Administrators	Mediatrust
Barnardos	mySociety
Baroness Fookes of Plymouth	National Foundation for Educational Research
Baroness Greengross OBE	National Youth Agency
BBC School Report	NCH-'the children's charity'
Bill Etherington	NFP Synergy
Bob Russell	Oxfam
British Youth Council	Participation Works
Catch21	Prince's Trust
Celia Barlow	Professor John Lloyd
Changemakers	Professor Paul Whiteley
Children's Rights Alliance for England	PSHE Association
CitizED Citizenship & Teacher Education	Red Foundation
Citizenship Foundation	Roberta Blackman-Woods
Citizenship Survey	RSA
Commission on Cohesion and Integration	Schools Council UK
Community Service Volunteers	Scout Association
David Howarth MP	Sir Patrick Cormack MP
DEA	Toynbee Hall
Diana Award	Trades Union Congress
Dr Ben Kisby	True Tube
Dr James Sloam	UK Youth Parliament
Dr Matthew Flinders	United Synagogue Agency for Jewish Education
Dr Rhys Andrews	University and College Union
Electoral Commission	V
Electoral Reform Society	Volunteering England
Envision	Votes at 16 Coalition
Gap Advice	West Midlands Faith Forum
Hansard Society	Wrigley
Institute for Citizenship	YMCA England
Involve	Young Mayor of Lewisham team
John Denham MP	Young Mayors
John Street	Young People Now and MORI
Learning and Skills Network	Youth Access
Livity	Youth Advisors Portsmouth
Local Government Association	Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
London Youth Crime Prevention Board	Youth Net
Lord Christopher	YWCA





