

The role of Deputy Members of Youth Parliament

British Youth Council

The British Youth Council (BYC) as an organisation supports and recognises the contribution of all young volunteers who give their time to be youth representatives in their local areas, whether they are Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs), Deputy Members of Youth Parliament (DMYPs), Youth Councillors, Young Mayors, Children in Care council members, Youth Forum members or any other youth representative role.

We recognise the support that DMYPs give to MYPs and Local Authorities who choose to have them, there are many examples across the country where this model works well and we expect this to continue to be the case. It is for this reason we have provided this briefing to help clarify the role.

Opportunities to be part of the British Youth Council

There are a number of opportunities within the British Youth Council which are open to DMYPs. The **Youth Voice Leadership Development Programme** has courses open to youth representatives and we expect Local Authorities who have them will bring their DMYPs, where they will receive training and skills to set them up for the year ahead.

Since 2011, we have run British Youth Council **Conventions** three times a year in locations across England. Local Authorities have an allocation of youth representatives that they are allowed to bring, who can come from any youth representative role and we encourage DMYPs to attend to get the training and support to network with others and build on their existing skills to become more effective youth representatives.

We recognise that the national **Make Your Mark campaign** would not be the success that it is without the hard work and passion of young people across the UK, not only MYPs, but Deputy Members of Youth Parliament who will be celebrated alongside others at the Make Your Mark awards and reception.

When creating the **UK Youth Parliament campaign actions** it has always been important to the Procedures Group (the elected steering group for the programme), that all young people can get involved in the campaign and the actions, not just MYPs, as they recognise that we are stronger together, and together we have more of an impact.

When UK Youth Parliament started

In 2001, when UK Youth Parliament first started most Local Authorities didn't have effective youth councils/parliaments linking into local decision making, or into the

wider youth population. So, many LAs decided to have DMYPs to help share the work load. Around this time more LAs set up and developed the youth councils/parliaments we know today. This led to a range of different models of support for MYPs.

UK Youth Parliament: the national programme

Since 2011, BYC has been commissioned by Government to provide a support service to Local Authority youth voice vehicles (including youth forums/councils/mayors/UK Youth Parliament) and to manage the UK Youth Parliament opportunities and provide support to elected MYPs. The two national UK Youth Parliament events, the Annual Sitting and House of Commons sitting, are for elected Members of Youth Parliament only.

Where an MYP is unable to attend either of the two national events above, the constituency may choose to send a young person to deputise for them. This young person must be selected from the local youth voice vehicle (e.g. the Youth Council). Any person deputising for an MYP is bound by the code of conduct for MYPs as they are fulfilling that role for that event. When speaking at these events they should refer to themselves as deputising for an MYP.

Within the UK Youth Parliament as a national programme and the two national events outlined above, there isn't a designated role for DMYPs, and the programme the British Youth Council inherited in 2011 was never set up with this role in mind. The UK Youth Parliament handbook given to BYC to reflects this. The Procedures Book has been written and updated by consecutive elected Procedures Groups over the past 5 years, and any changes over this time have been made to ensure the UK Youth Parliament is **fair, democratic** and **youth-led**. The Procedures Group are supported to make decisions which are in the best interests of the national programme, taking into account the different experiences across Local Authorities and regions/nations.

With that in mind it is important to note that:

- Many Local Authorities and some nations don't have DMYPs at all. This instantly means any national role for DMYPs would be unfair for those who choose not to have them as they would be underrepresented.
- In the majority of cases, though not all, individuals do not stand to be a DMYP, they stand to be a MYP and if they are not elected, they become a DMYP. This means that these DMYPs are not directly elected representatives.
- The number of MYPs is based on the youth population in each LA. The number of DMYPs has been decided by each LA individually, so the number of DMYPs each LA has varies and aren't necessarily based on the youth population.



- For example, some Local Authorities elect their allocation of MYPs, and all candidates who are not successful in this election become their DMYPs. This could be one or two, or twenty.

This does not mean that DMYPs (where they exist) are not passionate young people who can make a difference, and it does not detract from the work that they do in promoting Youth Voice in their local communities, and in some cases on a regional or national platform through programmes other than the UK Youth Parliament (for example Youthforia in the North West), as decided by the Local Authority. We expect this to continue, at the choice of Local Authorities who continue to run the UK Youth Parliament programme.

It does mean that consecutive Procedures Groups have worked hard to ensure that DMYPs are not unfairly set up for opportunities within the national UK Youth Parliament programme that don't exist, and that those Local Authorities who don't have DMYPs are not unfairly affected or underrepresented.