



2022 - 2024

UK YOUTH PARLIAMENT

MANIFESTO



The biggest annual referendum
of teenagers in the UK

MakeYourMark

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Education and Learning

1. A Curriculum for Life

For too long, the UK's education system has been about exam preparation and not about real-life support for our future. We believe that young people should be well equipped with knowledge and experience allowing them to make informed and honest career choices. As well as this, practical skills, political knowledge and financial advice should be a greater part of the curriculum, so that young people are guaranteed a comprehensive understanding of the world around them, and how to navigate it through adulthood.

The UK is rapidly approaching a period of economic crisis, due to factors such as COVID-19 recovery and the war in Ukraine pushing inflation up to a 40 year high of 9%. This means that people are struggling to pay their bills, rent, food costs and mortgage payments. 51% of young people say money worries are making them feel anxious about their future, taking a toll on their mental health.

The PSHE curriculum should be significantly revised to be more relevant and to include emotional literacy resources. PSHE is vital in preparing young people for life, however topics fundamental in becoming well-rounded adults are barely covered, if not ignored. There should be a broader list of topics to be taught in all UK schools, and teaching staff should be trained to deliver this reformed curriculum to a standard that is consistent nationwide. A national evaluation of the PSHE curriculum by young people would determine the changes that should be made, however they would likely include the following:

- **Cultural Awareness:** Currently, due to the Eurocentric nature of the UK curriculum, education about broader world history and cultures beside that of British are extremely limited. This means many students have their heritage and culture ignored – our curriculum should be decolonised, and help students to view Britishness from an ethnically diverse and anti-racist perspective.
- **Social cohesion:** Young people must be educated in detail on topics such as microaggressions, hate crime and discrimination, and equipped with the tools to actively combat these in everyday life. We suggest government funding for schools so that workshops and training sessions by third party organisations can be regularly provided.
- **Mental Health Support:** It is crucial that our curriculum includes coping strategies for mental health challenges, makes information on where people can receive help clear and easy to access, and celebrates learning that isn't associated with attainment. Schools must have a strong open door policy for students and run open discussions as a class or in small groups to destigmatise and open up the conversation around mental health.
- **Sustainable Living:** Students must be educated on how they can live in an environmentally friendly way, and taught financially accessible ways of modifying their lifestyles to protect the planet. Activism and other political movements surrounding this topic should be taught, so that students can understand the urgency of the climate crisis.
- **Awareness of SEN:** Our curriculum should give students a deeper understanding of special educational needs. Neurodiversity should be more actively discussed in schools, with basic Makaton skills included within the syllabus, so that young people go into the workplace with a better appreciation of Neurodiversity.
- **Political Education:** Our curriculum should teach students about our democratic political system, and our rights within society through neutral political education. Young people should be taught about the different roles within governments, the stances of different

parties, different political movements and the voting process. Involvement from local councillors and MPs could be incorporated, so young people understand our political system and feel equipped to vote when they turn 18.

- Financial Management: There must be more extensive financial education included within the PSHE curriculum, a crucial topic for young people to understand. This should include information on budgeting, saving, investing in the stock market, tax, how to set up a bank account and how to apply for a mortgage, helping to prepare young people for independent adult life and building a solid base of good financial habits. This is particularly important given the increasing number of debt traps such as Klarna Pay.

Bias in PSHE curriculums is a problem in many schools. Schools pick and choose what topics they would like to speak up about and raise awareness for. Schools also pick and choose what incidents they would like to take action on. This is the root of most problems in schools; it demotivates those involved and is what usually causes bad behaviour. Every UK school needs a set guidance from the government made by students on what to include in PSHE curriculums and how to deal with incidents in school such as hate crimes, racism, homophobia or any sort of discrimination in schools. We need a school curriculum designed and created by students for students, to ensure everyone is getting the most out of their education and to make school enjoyable for everyone.

2. Anti-Discrimination Education

We believe that in order for our children and the future generations to live in world with less racism, homophobia and any other prejudice, we are obliged to teach them about anti-discrimination and teach them the consequences of online hate crimes, as the technological era we live in is making it a lot easier for people to commit crimes and somehow get away with it. Equality is important to ensure that we embrace our diversity and that we are all treated without any kind of discrimination or prejudice. It is about ensuring that we work together for the common goal of equality. For a more equal society, we need to start fighting injustice, hate and inequality at a young age.

We call upon the government to:

- ensure that the basic human right of equality is achieved
- ensure that all young people can feel empowered and be able to participate in decisions that will affect their lives.
- implement teachings regarding equality and ensure that every young person is able to identify the importance of equality
- develop a POC (people of colour) youth led strategy to encourage racial literacy training for teachers and local authorities to provide the resources necessary for educational institutions to become anti-racist
- put a stop to discrimination, racism, homophobia, transphobia and all other aspects that are not part of a future where everyone is equal
- do more to help end gender inequality.

3. Healthy Relationship Education

There is a lack of consistent education in schools on relationships. In a time when we are seeing an increase in domestic violence, including coercive control, it is clear that this stems from a lack of such teaching from a young age. As people who want to protect our generations and spread awareness of coercive and controlling behaviour as a more significant side of domestic abuse, we

as a collective have to collaborate and show that coercive controlling behaviour is not something to be kept under the radar and has to be spoken up about.

Coercive and controlling behaviour is actually one of the primary forms of domestic abuse. Still, it is not taken as seriously as it is more physiological than physical abuse but known to be more toxic; CCB was only reported 9% of the time compared to the 34,000 cases on the National census in 2021. Many people don't even know it is a form of abuse.

If we wish to see a change in societal values, and a decrease in violence in relationships whether this be working relationships, romantic relationships or even friendships we must be teaching this from the youngest possible age. This should also include up-to date teaching on not just heterosexual relationships but also on the LQBTQ+ community.

We call on the Secretary of State for Education Nadhim Zahwai and Minister for School Standards Robin Walker to develop a branch dedicated to improving sex and relationship education, which would work with the UK Youth Parliament to develop programmes with local stakeholders and youth councils.

4. Free Education

Many young students are unable to access the education they find necessary for their future career goals. It is important that young people have equal and fair opportunities in progressing throughout life and towards their goals and careers. Many are put under the pressure of applying to universities in order to gain the qualifications needed for their ideal job roles, yet many are afraid or anxious to apply due to the cost of university courses, accommodations, travel and equipment.

This has both disincentivised working class students from attending university and those with degrees from getting higher paying jobs as they will have to pay their debt back. We should be encouraging not discouraging success. Also the financial pressure of these fees plus accommodation costs and maintenance (EMA has been cut back) means many students are struggling. This has led to a worsening mental health and students taking a job reducing their focus on their subject decreasing the quality of their education.

The government continues to express how many key jobs are low on workers and new recruits, yet continue to charge young people to learn the skills and knowledge needed to apply for these 'key' jobs. We are provided with scholarships and the opportunity to take out loans and grants, but it is still a large amount of money which young people are expected to pay back after graduation.

Government research has demonstrated that having a degree has a radical effect on the net present value of the life cycle of incomes, and in 2020, the employment rate for graduates was 12% higher than that of non-graduates. Data from 2012 and 2013, when university fees stood at a maximum of £9000 per year, show that just 23% of those eligible for free school meals at the age of 15 entered higher education by the age of 19, compared to 40% of those ineligible. This is evidence that socioeconomic status remains a barrier to higher education for British young people, with studies also suggesting that many of those from low income backgrounds continue to view university as elitist and inaccessible.

We call on the Government to abolish higher education tuition fees and make higher education equally accessible for all British young people.

5. Uniform

Students often feel trapped and forced into conformity by schools and punished for not complying with the harsh rules they enforce. Many young people feel that there is unjust enforcement and strictness in schools while they have non-inclusive uniform policies – for example, non-binary students still have to wear 'girls' or 'boys' uniform, requiring them to conform to a pre-conceptualised gender stereotype.

Teachers will sexualise young girls into changing the way they look to fit their ideal perceptions of "the perfect female student." The rules are very deep-rooted in sexism. Not letting their male students wear school skirts to school and not letting them wear make-up enforces the idea that boys should be more masculine and not able to be perceived as feminine.

Non-binary inclusive school uniform should be a fundamental right for every student in our educational system. Every student should be able to wear the uniform they feel comfortable in. We call on the government to legislate that every educational setting in the UK should have a non-binary inclusive uniform policy.

6. A Diverse Curriculum

We believe the education system needs to be reformed to give young people a better understanding of world history and world culture. While learning British history and literature is essential in the curriculum, widening younger minds will lead to a better society of openness and acceptance. Diversity in education is the greatest tool in breaking down intolerance and ignorance when it comes to race, gender, etc; especially in History and English. By doing this younger children and teenagers will have an extensive knowledge of the world that will not just be through the lens of the westernised narrative.

Only 11% of GCSE modules studied referred to the presence of Black people in British history and 49% of black students believe that "racism is deeply embedded in schooling". The national curriculum brought by the Government states, "how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world." While this is vital to a child's education, the majority of the history curriculum is centred around impacts of Britain. It is compulsory for at least one study of a significant society or issue in world history and its interconnections with other world developments [for example, Mughal India 1526-1857; China's Qing dynasty 1644-1911]. However, this is not enough and this lack of diversity can be damaging to a student's perspective on the world.

We call on the government to:

- acknowledge these inequalities and change the curriculum to be less Eurocentric and give young people a true view of the world around them rather than the morphed view of British superiority
- improve the curriculum by modernising the westernised narrative with the subjects of History and English

7. Invisible Disabilities

Every child should feel supported, welcome and appreciated, especially as education plays a crucial role in child development. However teachers feel overwhelmed by the lack of training and resources provided to help them adequately support young people with invisible disabilities in the mainstream school system.

1 in 100 children in the UK have autism. Often young people are unaware of how wonderfully unique children with autism are and don't properly understand the condition. This can lead to the unfair exclusion and often incidents of bullying towards young people with Autism. Every young person deserves a welcoming, inclusive education despite the challenges they face in life. Every school child deserves to know how to respect those around them, every school child deserves to understand what makes us unique and different and how to treat those with different abilities. No more can we sit and watch the stories, hear the trauma that young people go through simply because of a lack of education and understanding. We need mandatory autism training, we need mandatory autism teaching and we need it urgently.

Autism Training should be an essential part of teacher training and that every teacher should have the skills and ability to work with children with autism in an inclusive and appropriate manner. I also believe that children should be educated about Autism as a lack of understanding can lead to incidents of bullying and exclusion.

We call on the Government to:

- Make Autism Training mandatory for teachers.
- Incorporate Autism awareness into the LLW curriculum and/or school assemblies.
- Review the support currently available for teachers and ensure that teachers approach difficult situations in a way that is both beneficial for the student and teacher.

8. Tackling Racism and Hate Crimes

We believe that it is of utmost importance for young people to grow up in an environment where they feel safe and can be nurtured to thrive, and that respect and equality for all is a basic human right. In 2019, 60.5% of a research group consisting of young people aged 11-16 admitted being the targets of hate crimes – both in-person and online. Since then, little progress has been made and many are still left feeling lonely, inadequate, and depressed. We believe that there is a major gap in sufficient aid for those suffering from hate crimes, especially amongst children and young people who may be afraid to speak up or unsure of where to get help. A report conducted by the UKs Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities in 2021, states how 69% of Black respondents saw “a lot” of prejudice against Black people. This is a damning figure that can be combated by teaching children from a young age the value and importance of other cultures, while simultaneously teaching that any form of discrimination is unacceptable.

We appeal to the government to:

- Raise awareness in educational institutes across the nation about the nature and effects of hate crimes, as well as tackling the deep-rooted causes of prejudice in our society.
- Develop and launch a child-friendly permanent support service to specifically target children and young people who've been victims to hate crimes and provide them with the help they require. (An example would be the National Hate Crime Report and Support Centre Wales, although their contract ended in March last year and only catered for the parents/carers of affected youth).

9. Education for Life / Post 16

We believe that all young people have the right to post-16 high quality educational support. In order to broaden our generation's future opportunities, alternative post-16 routes should be made more accessible. We need to provide young people with more life skills that will prepare them for the working world.

Post pandemic, many of our youth have faced rising pressures to go into employment, and this has been exacerbated by the inflation rate, which has risen to 7% in Manchester for example. Furthermore, 12,000 universal credit claimants throughout 2020-2022 were 16-24 year olds, which clearly illustrates the negative impact of people not earning the living wage- especially on young people. We can benefit from more exposure to routes such as apprenticeships, in order to encourage young people to be able to deal with the increased pressure of needing to catapult themselves into work; they shouldn't have to follow a "linear path" of secondary, college, or university.

Our idea of post-16 support includes: increasing awareness, access to opportunities, advice to complementary subjects and careers as well as employment links. We think this issue is important because while there are many disparities in terms of ability across schools, there is also a geographical disparity, which limits their future opportunities. A study undertaken by Career Map, showed that 89% of previous students, aged 18-21, had no idea what options were available to them when completing their A-Levels/college course.

We call on the Government to:

- develop the education sector in order to de-stigmatise pathways that differ from the typical routine that is drilled into each of us- this can be done by collaborating with independent companies to have them go to schools themselves to encourage children to undertake these routes.
- create more of a level playing field of opportunities for young people to progress, no matter their socioeconomic background, gender, ethnic background and more.
- create structured programmes and reforming teacher training centred around post-16 education.

10. Education and Poverty

In order for our generation to be healthy and happy, we have a responsibility to improve education and learning. People who lack education have trouble getting ahead in life, have worse health and are poorer than the well-educated. Major effects of lack of education include: poor health, lack of a voice, shorter lifespan, unemployment, exploitation and gender inequality.

In order to improve our education and learning we can make education easier for families who suffer from poverty. Many families struggle buying things such as uniforms and school supplies which are no longer provided upon entering Secondary school. On average parents spend over £120 on back to school items for their children. Revision resources and tutoring on top of that is not easily accessible to many people and their education can suffer as a result.

Children's education often suffers as a result of the financial situation, this further reinforces the cycle in which poverty stricken families are more susceptible to fall into. Many of these children are forced to take care of younger siblings while their parents are at work long hours to provide money for essentials such as bills and food.

School children who have these housing and financial issues have a disadvantage, therefore, to give them an equal opportunity schools should raise awareness and campaign for them to be provided with stationary, textbooks and any other necessary resources.

We believe the Government should provide:

- Free online services which can be accessed by young people, these services would allow people to study while still staying and helping out their parents with younger siblings.
- More opportunities for students with disadvantaged backgrounds to get into grammar schools so they can get a good education without paying for private schools.

- Clear improvement to the education system through ensuring that school is more engaging for students.
- Funding for a tutoring service which could provide Exam board specific revision for students in financial difficulties.

11. Tackling Bullying

During the COVID-19 pandemic, children have been isolated from friends and family, and have faced a lot of issues. One of these has been peer pressure, leading to increased bullying which people think is "cool", or a "joke".

In particular, the bullying of SEND affected children and the lack of training for teaching staff to deal with it is concerning. It stops children from fulfilling the potential embedded within us all, and it affects their growth as a whole.

We call on the Government to:

- Provide SEND Training for staff
- Increase awareness amongst the general population when it comes to identifying a child who is having issues socially or is being bullied

12. History Education in Northern Ireland

We believe the History Curriculum neglects to teach children key and important topics. The current History Curriculum lack diversity, representation and functionality. Whilst schools repeatedly teach children about Ancient Egypt, the Victorian era and both World Wars- they leave out key and relevant parts of history. Most children in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK leave education with little to no knowledge on their own history, leaving young people confused, misinformed and most importantly held ransom in the past that our schools fail to teach us about. Whilst brutal world wars are deemed "appropriate" to teach, topics such as colonialism, civil rights movements and The Troubles are seen as being controversial or sensitive. Northern Irish students and students across the whole of the UK are led blindly into their future due to our education system's inability to teach us of our own history. Whilst many students are fully aware of how the Egyptians built pyramids, the native Americans build tepees and the Victorians built schools- they are completely unaware of how our own countries built our past, present and future. A vast majority of students know nothing about the Downing Street Agreement, Direct Rule or even The Troubles, and many never will. Whilst we can joke that we learned more about our History on TV than we did in schools, we need to call for change. No longer can we allow students to go into the future not knowing about their past. No longer can leave students misinformed and misdirected. No longer can we be ignorant towards our history. How are students to have a bright, prosperous future, when they know nothing about their past? Very few schools in the UK teach students about crucial parts of their history such as The Troubles. The few schools that do teach these topics, only teach them at GCSE level meaning a majority of students leave secondary education with little to no knowledge of their own history. Every student has the right to be taught about their country's past in order to ensure they are adequately prepared for their future. Often students are left to their own resources, and frequently learn more about their history by watching TV than they do in school.

We are calling on the government to review the history curriculum and ensure that topics such as The Troubles is taught to every student. We are calling on the government to provide resources for students to learn more about their history and ensure they are properly prepared for their future.

13. School Funding Cuts

Minimise school funding cuts and equip schools for the future with the funding necessary.

We believe that in order for young people to become confident and mature members of society, their schools should be able to deliver the best possible experience for them, starting with schools being equipped with the necessary funding.

As of December 2021, just in England, 73% of schools still lose out because of Government cuts, meaning that per-pupil funding continues to fall, and is not maintained with previous Government administration's levels, leaving young people's schools to make tough decisions to cut extra-curricular opportunities, and minimise a child's well-rounded development.

We welcome the Government's recent cash boost for mainstream education, with the core schools budget rising by £4 billion this year, or 5% per pupil in real terms, but this is just the start; we want to see the Government commit to raising levels back to 2009-2010, and beyond, to keep up with the growing demands of the young people of our country.

14. Sex Education in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland there is a lack of sexual education especially around sexual identity and its impacts on society. This deeply affects young people as our education can often lead to issues at home.

A Terrence Higgins Trusts survey of young people found 1 in 7 DIDNT receive sexual education and the current education is already inefficient. RCN found that over 137,000 children across the U.K. have missed school due to period poverty. This issue could be raised through a redevelopment of the personal development subject.

A U.K. wide reform of the education service, this would receive support from the Education Authority who have held numerous stakeholder events on various issues. The UKYP could achieve change by pressuring the GOVT to create a branch dedicated to sexual education and making the public aware of its benefits.

15. Religious Dietary Requirements

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that all educational institutions should accommodate for the religious dietary requirements of their staff and students.

16. School Curriculum Decisions

We would like to involve students in decision making about curriculum in their schools to try and improve the education in the UK and to involve the students to choose what they want to study. This will also help people deal with mental health as the students will become more involved to their subject of choice and their studies.

An example of this proposal is when a GCSE student chooses History as one of their 3 subjects, the Cold War is a compulsory topic they have to learn, and schools select a second topic.

We believe students should be given an opportunity to vote for their second topic, rather than the school.

WE believe this will create more interest towards the subject, make the students more involved with their chosen subject and most especially will make the students get prepared for choosing their courses within the degrees within their university. Also, it would give the opportunity for students to develop the skills to choose what they find the most applicable to them and to their liking.

This is a democratic and efficient way to create a more engaged and diverse curriculum within school and beyond.

Vote to say what matters to you the most! Be You! Be the Youth! And make the change!

17. Data Literacy

The Government invests a substantial amount in data. Earlier this year, a budget of £25 billion was allocated to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) for the coming several fiscal years - a non-departmental public body responsible for much of the research and development that supports our country. The organisation itself offers a "Gateway to Research", a virtual portal that grants public access to its past endeavours; however, while the platform offers a comprehensive view of the UKRI's projects, rifling through its archives with the intent of gaining clarity is a specialist task, and ergo one that would prove to be a dilemma for broader society, whose everyday lives are influenced by data-driven legislation.

This also prevents young people from grasping how data affects their trajectory in life, convoluting essential facets of life such as education, climate justice, and the electoral system; consequently, they will be rendered incapable of exercising the liberties basic citizenship grants. To summarise the Open Data Institute's recent report, data literacy is often regarded in application to the workforce and the further development of the country, rather than "their benefits to the individual". In order for the national picture of fortitude to be truly conveyed to "the individual", the force of data must be concisely related to them. In order to achieve this, every one of our young people must have the ability to ethically and objectively manoeuvre data - as a vehicle for comprehending currency and taxation, to examine the candidates for upcoming elections, for methods to save the waning earth and other autonomies in democracy. As the representative of Cheltenham and Tewkesbury, I believe that data literacy is imperative for young people to mobilise and express themselves in society.

Data influences all facets of British life, especially for the younger generation. To understand the bigger picture our leaders speak of, we must first understand data. First of all, education. By apportioning necessary resources (in provisions and faculty) for comprehensive schools and thus elevating their social repute, underprivileged students can achieve social mobility. Statistics have shown that low-income areas have the tendency to garner generally unfavourable reputations and faculties of insubordinate quality; since teaching is a quality-based field, the teacher's dissent for such a fluctuating environment is not out of the ordinary. Education is a potential ticket to uprooting to high-opportunity areas; without reform for schooling based on data, intergenerational poverty can never be mitigated. Furthermore, for health, poor medical conditions could easily pass from one individual to another, as low-opportunity areas are more prone to attracting contagions. Explicit adjustments to the healthcare plan with quantitative research will curb this problem, for once and for all. An instance is a public surgery. Additionally, according to Prof. Prabal De's research on population demographics and general malfeasances, crime is a systemically static element particularly in low-opportunity areas. A person can also be policed due to extrinsic perceptions of their age, sex, gender and race. For decision-making authorities, neglecting this issue in low-opportunity areas is as easy as replicating it directly; if the public remains uninformed on this issue, no change will take place. Moreover, without local economic growth (not the intervention of skilled residents outside the locality), civic infrastructure of subpar

quality will never cease to exist. In an income-based sense, boosting local employment trumps attracting external talent, for business or for work. All in all, public access to and comprehension of data is essentially the key to taking charge of one's future.

We call on the Government to integrate a compulsory, uniform curriculum for data literacy - the interpretation of data and confidence in using it - in all of the UK's schools. For example, transparent stratagems like the Opportunity Atlas pinpoint the root causes of intergenerational immobility in an area, thus providing an effective vehicle that can be used in conjunction with teachings on public policy to combat our country's present meritocratic caveats. The highly interactive and visual medium, devised by econometricians precisely to complement the making of legislation, features a non-partisan outlook on wealth distribution; designed with the belief that empirical data cuts across party lines, political bias - conscious or subconscious - with this independent model. By including these devices into education, I trust that social mobility will be one step away from its present exclusive form. Data should work for the people.

18. Democratic Schools

We have for years been experiencing the detrimental effects of an outdated and ineffective education system.

Schools are not fit for the 21st century, they have been designed to encourage obedience and discipline. These traits will not create the inventive, free thinking leaders that we need to lead us through problems like climate change, wealth inequality, and increasing levels of bigotry.

Schools are also inherently authoritarian, teachers and staff hold essentially unrestricted power over students school experience, favouring their methods over their pupils ideal way of learning. This also leads to a neglect and inability to truly listen to, and act on the problems of the most important group in a school, the students themselves.

We call on the government and the secretary of education to reform schools, to be more democratic, with students having direct input to the running of a school, with weekly or monthly meetings to vote on and decide school policy.

We also call on the Government and Secretary of education to redesign the curriculum, to emphasise students choice in their method of learning, and create a system of learning that contributes to a more open minded and free thinking world.

We believe these reforms will create a better school environment, In 2013, Ofsted investigated a democratically run school, Sands school, no part of the school received less than a 'good' rating, with many 'outstanding' features also found. Ofsted also reported pupil achievements were "a consequence of the democratic structure" and the inspector noted the students behaviour was impressive, adding that "lessons took place in an atmosphere of mutual respect." An Israeli study into democratic schools also found that the drop of in scientific interests common among students in regular schools, did not occur in democratic institutions. Another study of 12 democratic schools in the UK by a former school inspector found that democratic learning increased students willingness to learn and self esteem.

It is clear a better form of education exists, and we thank you for taking the time to read this, we hope you consider our request, and apologise for the length of it.

Several democratic schools already exist in the UK, such as Sands school, previously mentioned in this statement, however, they are small, and typically hard to access for the majority of students.

We want to see these schools become the standard for schooling in the United Kingdom, we would ask the government to increase subsidies and funding significantly for democratic schools, and provide incentives for their proliferation.

We would also call on the Secretary of Education, to form a panel of students, teachers, and parents, with a majority being students, to advise on and assist in the update of the curriculum for the 21st century, with an emphasis on students choice in methods of learning, and encouragement of independent problem solving.

We demand that the British Youth Council organise campaigns on this issue, surveying young people for their thoughts, meeting with politicians or representatives of the department of education, and encouraging schools to reform as democratic.

19. Breaking the chain: Knife Crime

Knife crime, the 2 words that are constantly in the limelight of the news, in the year ending March 2021 there were 41,000 offences involving knives and sharp objects according to the UK Parliament, a scary statistic. The majority of us know someone affected or even killed by the blade of a knife.

We can no longer go on ignoring this burden, so we propose a plan to approach this issue in a new way, a plan run by young people-for young people. We want for one knife amnesty bin to be given to each town in our borough. Still, a simple bin isn't the solution to this problem we also need education from a new perspective, instead of just hurling scary statistics and statements at students and expecting them to listen, we want to give them ways they can break the chain of knife crime: a new view on PSHE lessons, valuable resources and information, real-life stories from real-life people. We want to propose that each high school has a police officer once a week so that if someone has worries or concerns about themselves or a peer, they have a trained expert to confide in. we call on the Government to offer funding to local councils to implement this plan as it is vital, we know that the Government has this funding, this would be a small price to pay if it ensures the future of the generation of tomorrow.

20. LGBTQ+ in Education

Despite the progress we have made with LGBTQ+ rights, many people are killed and suffer hate crimes every year just because of their sexuality or gender identity and this is partially due to a lack of education on LGBTQ+ issues. Actions to prevent this can come from many people, for example the youth with promoting to peers, and teachers educating students and governments acting to protect LGBTQ+ people and their rights.

Many young people are influenced by peers and stereotypes this can negatively affect LGBTQ+ young people as they may feel as though they are not normal and isolated and therefore uncomfortable to be themselves due to a lack of education also peers can be dragged into the ideologies that being LGBTQ+ is uncool and this can create bullying which In later life can encourage anti-LGBTQ+ ideologies and lead to hate crimes or violence against the LGBTQ+ community which can be detrimental. Also subconscious language can really affect LGBTQ+ people without the speaker realising due to heteronormativity. Youth Councils can create an LGBTQ+ pack like in Southend-on-Sea, to give to schools, school nurses, social workers and many others to help prevent subconscious language which can affect the LGBTQ+ community.

21. Exam Standards

We believe that the current GCSE and A Level exam system which currently exists throughout the UK is not fit for purpose. As with the current system, students aren't all to show their full academic potential and skill sets and thus this is detrimental to our generation. Furthermore the current system is not accessible and inclusive for all, as students who have special educational needs struggle to access the course curriculum and exam access arrangements.

What we are calling on the government (devolved) to do?

- Introduce an equal amount of coursework e.g. 50% of overall assessment into every GCSE and A Level course to enable all students to achieve and perform to their best ability and this will also prepare students for further and higher education
- Introduce a center determined grading system similar to 2021, where schools set the tests and the exam boards set specifications and carry out inspections that ensure marking and assessing is being carried out fairly, this would allow access arrangements to be more flexible and more easily granted to SEND students who need it.
- Ensure all exam subjects specifications are accessible to all.

Some young people perform better in exam, while others perform better through coursework and the current GCSE/A level exam favours purely exam subjects which disadvantages those young people who perform better through coursework. This limits students potential in education and thus not all students achieve what they are capable of. i.e. Male students perform better than female students in wholly examined GCSE specifications and also in GCSE specifications where there is a greater level of control in the coursework. Female students tend to have better outcomes than males where internally set, internally marked coursework is included (Ofqual).

Furthermore students who take exam subjects containing coursework develop research, time management and independent working skills. Which prepares them for higher or further education i.e. college or university. These skills are also needed for the world of work and as such purely exam students are put at a disadvantage.

SEND students are particularly effected by the current A level and GCSE system as these students may not be able to access the courses curriculum fully due to disability i.e. visual impairment and furthermore access arrangements for exams can be challenging for students with disabilities to receive. These factors have led to a massive attainment gap, 18.4% of non disabled students have GCSEs as their highest qualification compared to 23.2% of disabled students.

This attainment gap between disabled and non disabled students is further evident by 21.8% of disabled people had a degree in 2019 compared with 38.0% of non-disabled people. I would like there to be a review into the exam system which would get feedback from all groups of students i.e. disabled and ethnic minorities etc. but also a review into the problems which have come to light over the last few years in terms of handling of exams during covid.

22. Nutrition

There should be an improvement in the nutritional value, portion size and cost of meals for students who are in education. This is a rather prominent issue within constituencies like Rochdale and the surrounding areas, with diet and nutrition being one of the main factors which affects students mental health. Many students within the local area agree with this issue and support it. They agree that the portion sizes are too small and that students pay far too much money for these meals, and that they are unhealthy. My proposition is that educational institutions should

have the nutritional content of their meals assessed, and if the statistics do not meet a certain standard then changes must be made.

23. Phones in Schools

Schools are banning phones like an epidemic, even though we used modern technology like phones to connect to online school. History will reflect that we were on the right side, the UK Youth Parliament were on the right side of the phones in school argument.

Not all schools allow phones onto site and this poses many problems for the students who commute to school by themselves. Reflecting on the current situation on safety when out alone, this needs to be addressed urgently for ALL students for their safety.

Over 60% of jobs in the future will include a form of modern technology like phones. When schools say they prepare YOU for the future, they don't because phones are the future. Not to forget, the teachers don't even follow the rule about phones so why is it one rule for them and one rule for us

We encourage all secondary schools to add phone zones to OUR schools.

24. British Sign Language

The Scottish Youth Parliament calls on the Scottish Government to provide additional funding to increase the supply of qualified British Sign Language (BSL) teachers and tutors, ensuring that schools across Scotland can provide the language as a subject option for all students.

25. Reading for Pleasure

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that the Scottish Government has a responsibility to do more to encourage reading for pleasure, especially amongst young people, and calls on them to take action on this issue.

Environment Policy

26. Animal Welfare

The majority of animal welfare legislation is based on the Animal Welfare Act 2006. In a post legislative assessment on this act by the SoS of environment, food and rural affairs three issues were highlighted; Enforcement of the Act, introduction of secondary legislation and more needs to be done to raise public awareness.

This policy motion would be able to deal with these issues as well as resolving the issues of mutilation, abandonment, unnecessary suffering, homelessness, the excessive selective breeding of animals, and construction noises impacting the presence of wildlife. Many of the aforementioned issues were raised in the post legislative assessment but are yet to be sorted.

These laws affect everyone, especially those with a domestic pet or a society that depends on animal products. A YouGov survey taken on 22nd - 23rd of February 2022 showed that 63% believed the Government should increase its level of action on animal protection.

This policy motion asks for a dedicated group of young social leaders and professionals to liaise, and find a clear legislative solution to this problem.

27. Plastic Waste

The uppermost and most paramount issue of our generation is climate change. By 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish, and the lack of action to target the largest emitters on the global, and local, stage will only hasten the trajectory to climate ruin. Primary and Secondary schools within England throw away around 258,300 tonnes of waste per year. Many schools serve drinks and snacks in single-use plastic packaging which often doesn't get recycled. Fast fashion is also a growing issue throughout the country and is becoming a main contributor to excessive waste.

At this moment in time, the climate crisis is now at the 'code red' stage of its development, and the proposals outlined at COP26 did not go far enough to addressing material and effective enough change to safeguard at-risk habitats, islands and civilisations. Locally, the government's over-investment with oil companies, and the continued use of single-use plastics undermine the slogan: 'Build Back Greener'. If we are to be the vector for a paradigm shift in how this country deals with the climate crisis at home and abroad, we will have harnessed our propensity, as the next generation, to foster long-lasting change.

We call on the Government to:

- Dispense of single-use plastics by 2030, proscribe fracking in the United Kingdom and to create a 'Carbon Emissions Tax' in the next Budget.
- Urge all schools and government services to reduce their use of plastic packaging by over 95% by 2025, which can be done easily in the catering sector through alternative serving methods such as reusable cups and paper packaging for snacks.

28. The Climate Crisis

Climate change is the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century. It is affecting all of us and will impact every generation. According to a BBC investigation, many young people have their daily lives affected by climate change and many young people feel neglected and disappointed by the lack of help from adults and politicians. Over 45% of young people questioned said that feelings about climate change affected their daily lives. And over half thought that humanity is doomed.

Young people are obliged to put our trust into those in power, leading to climate anxiety and feelings of betrayal towards government bodies. Unless solutions are put in place soon, we will see the long term implications of physical and mental health from the effects of climate change. Although young people are not responsible for climate change, we will receive the greatest burden of the impacts because we are the last generation to slow global warming. This makes it difficult to put trust into older generations and governments, who play a huge role in the climate crisis. With the UK being an island nation, we are massively at risk from these effects which are due to take place when our generation will be building families and working in industries which will be affected. A study from 2021 found that 59% of young people suffer from climate anxiety with a majority believing that the government isn't taking the necessary action.

We believe that young people in the UK and the rest of the world deserve education in how climate change can be prevented.

We turn towards the government to:

- give young people hope by making a change. It's the little things that count like lowering public transport prices (to encourage cleaner transport) and raising awareness to some adults oblivious to how climate change will have an impact on our future
- add a new topic to the school curriculum: how to be environmentally friendly. This includes learning about renewable energy, reducing food and plastic waste, growing your own food and the impacts all these initiatives can have. These young people could then encourage their parents or carers to make a change. By doing this, we are improving two issues at once, climate change and young peoples mental health.
- adopt strategies that will help our physical and mental health as well as help the battle against climate change like using cars less and taking an active effort against high carbon producing areas in life. Buying local food will tackle food miles as well as help local businesses succeed there are so many other strategies that can help our local businesses as well as the climate
- Install more solar panels in communal areas and on new builds as it's better for the environment
- Pursue constructive policies to reduce emissions.
- Create more clubs for young people that are free to allow everyone to be included. Improved mental health facilities post covid. This may include sports clubs or social groups. Providing solar panel grants for schools for example.
- Standardise free compost bins and collection all over the UK.
- Promote policies that seek to mitigate the worst effects of climate change.
- introduce youth-led climate action groups around the UK to better assess how young people in different areas will be impacted by climate change and to create more youth-centric policy.

Young, old and those not even born yet will feel the impact of climate change for years to come, we must act now. As a body we must join together with other groups to have a united front on the fight to tackle climate change. Only together and united can we make a real difference.

29. Recycling and Waste Management

Climate change and global warming affects everyone in the UK. 81% of 8-15 year olds in the UK want to participate more in helping the environment. We believe that young people can be supported in positively impacting their environment; and these actions will benefit all parts of the UK and the Earth.

One of the ways young people can contribute to a positive impact is through recycling. However, there is an overwhelming difference in what local authorities waste collections recycle around the UK. For example, in East Hampshire you cannot recycle yoghurt pots, but in Oxfordshire you can. As well as this, only a few areas, such as Carlisle are able to recycle crisp packets. This means that not all recyclable waste is recyclable across the UK. This has led to recycling collection points in supermarkets, which can cause fly tipping.

Also, nationally, 23,500 tonnes of rubbish a year are wasted at music festivals. Most of this rubbish goes straight to landfill, which is evermore pressing as climate change becomes a bigger and bigger issue as time goes on. This means recycling is often not done properly and rubbish which could be recycled isn't - as litter picking is done at the very end of a festival, instead of being a conscious process throughout a festival.

Therefore we call on the Government to:

- Do more to encourage people to recycle, for example ensuring all recyclables are picked up by local waste collection.
- Develop a youth-led strategy to protect the environment and promote household composting across all areas of the United Kingdom.
- Create a national recycling standard so that local authorities recycle the same waste and so that all recyclables are collected from the same point.

30. Lough Neagh

Return Lough Neagh to local communities from the Shaftesbury estate. The objectives of this move would be to promote local jobs in tourism and promote the reintroduction of ecosystems. This proposal would require a long term financial commitment from the Stormont executive as well as local authorities.

For this proposal to succeed it would be vital for multiple agencies to work together to promote local communities and for the survival of the unique wildlife around Lough Neagh.

31. Rewilding

Rewilding is something that can be enacted on personal, local, national, international and industry levels. UK's flying insects have declined by 60% in 20 years. In Puerto Rico, a 98% fall in ground insects over 35 years was recorded. The repercussions this will have for the planet's ecosystems are catastrophic. At a national and industry level, I would like to pursue rewilding under solar farm panels based on Agrovoltaic research by Lancaster University. Devon has many existing solar farms and is likely to have many more. These can be used to increase bees and other pollinators and help mitigate insect decline.

32. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Climate change is affecting our generation. Many young people have brought up this issue by protesting but the adults won't do much. Reuse, Reduce, Recycle should be implemented on a wider scale and for this we need government support.

We only have one Earth and it is our job to protect it, but all we are doing is making it worse. Science has repeatedly told us that the impacts of letting temperatures rise beyond 1.5 degrees will be devastating by 2050.

COP26 summit main agenda was to meet and urgently put action points to implement the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Promises were made and they must be kept. Two hundred countries got together to tackle climate change. Emissions reductions was widely discussed and agreed. The target is to reach emission zero and for now, 2030 emissions reductions targets with clean cars.

We should therefore reduce the use of cars when going to school by walking, cycling and using the bus or tube. The government should provide free transport passes for all school aged children to enable that. This will dramatically reduce the emission of CO2 as morning and afternoon traffic is mainly due to the school run.

We are also requesting the government to implement better infrastructure to improve transports in general.

33. Growing Fresh and Local

The environment is unquestionably one of the biggest, if not the biggest issue of our time. There is a need for good policy to confront this head on, as well as go hand in hand to reduce other policies - such as the ongoing cost of living crisis.

My policy delivers on all of this and more. Put simply, it is subsidising the cost of growing your own fruits and vegetables. However, at a deeper level, this will help alleviate the burden on the cost of living for consumers; while incentivising young people to connect with nature and derive real, tangible output and satisfaction from growing your own vegetables, and creating a new stream for companies to be more ethically minded and buy vegetables from, as well as eating fresh, local food from the earth.

There are 3 main ways this policy aims to take action to promote growing vegetables:

- **Subsidising and Incentivising Buying Seeds:** Subsidising the cost of buying seeds from seed producers, and incentivising people to buy and plant the seeds through increased advertising, means people will be attracted to the idea of being able to grow their own food. By incentivising seed costs, people will be able to get more value from seeds and understand the food process from earth to table. It is scientifically proven that eating fresh food improves your long term health of both your body and your wallet (saving the costs of medicine and treatment in later life). In addition, the satisfaction and joy of actually growing your own vegetables is a great psychological booster and motivator. For young people specifically, it would be a great way to engage love of nature and connected learning, and get fellow young people off their devices.
- **Buying Back and Increasing Food Security:** Through seeds offering better value, people will be able to buy more than they need. This excess consumption could be donated to a local food bank or sold back to a local supermarket, providing fresh vegetables for others who don't have the space or the time or resources to grow their own vegetables. Ideally, the supermarkets would sell less 'perfectly formed' vegetables at a lower price (as they do now), helping even more people get access to fresh, quality, home grown fruits and vegetables. Through providing vegetables that you grow on your own, this means you have more money to spend on other things and would help to alleviate the cost of living crisis, reduce inflation and goes hand in hand with new ways of ethically eating and saving the planet from climate change. It would also help to boost incomes through selling back to supermarkets, and for supermarkets to diversify the choices and amount of vegetables they stock to prioritise fresh food. The total overall output is an increase in food security and young people's mindfulness and happiness.
- **Composting and Recycling schemes:** Finally, if you don't want to or cannot manage to offload excess vegetables, or some are rotten, composting them will recycle vegetables and give them a new lease of life as soil for a new patch of vegetables to grow. This should start of a virtuous cycle of growth to promote growing your own vegetables.

In short, this policy delivers on healthy eating, alleviating the cost of living and high inflation, boosting mental health and wellbeing, increasing food security, creates new streams of commerce while helping the less fortunate and most importantly, protects the environment creating a virtuous cycle of fresh, home grown fruits and vegetables.

34. Banking investments into fossil fuels

The Scottish Youth Parliament calls upon legislators to require banks operating in the UK to publish annual reports setting out their investment into fossil fuels, and outlining their future sustainability strategies, in order to increase environmental transparency among banks, tackle 'greenwashing' and properly inform consumers of their bank's climate impact.

35. A Circular Economy

We must properly tackle the climate crisis, and advocate for further change. The clock is ticking, we must begin to make truly decisive action now. The price of inaction is catastrophic; ecosystems already under a delicate chain of interdependence would collapse; more dangerous and extreme weather events creating chaos; droughts ripping us of essential food supplies; rising sea levels engulfing cities and towns; the list is endless; consequences drastic.

As we recover from the COVID-19 Pandemic, this is the perfect time to act; to illustrate a greener chapter in the boundless book of humankind. It is too late to trial various methods, we must begin to implement drastic solutions.

It is time for the government to implement one of the key tools we have, and accelerate the move to a circular economy. We have adopted the destructive model of take-make-dispose, where we needlessly waste precious natural resources. We continually create mounting pressure on the earth to give, give, give, and meet our ever increasing demand for stuff. Instead of us trying to close the circularity gap, it has actually got worse. It is time to reinstate hope among our population, time to secure long-term prosperity, time to look to the future with hope and time to move to a circular economy.

The circular economy is the future of sustainability, and our world. This circular model takes inspiration from nature. In nature, organisms grow, die and their nutrients are safely returned to the soil. Then, these valuable nutrients go into other growing organisms so they can use them, and the whole cycle repeats again. It works, meaning life has existed for approximately 3.8bn years. The important thing to take from this is: Nature has no landfill. Nothing in the continuous cycle of life is wasted, and absolutely everything is put to use.

So, why don't we take inspiration from this circular model into our global economy? In the Global Economy, we wasted a staggering 92 Gigatonnes of resources in 2020. Also, rather than closing this circularity gap, it has increased from us being 9.1% circular in 2018 to 8.6% in 2020. This highlights the urgency of our situation, and we are on the completely wrong trajectory. The ubiquitous waste we produce means that land is ripped away from wildlife for landfill, our air is polluted with potent greenhouse gases such as methane and carbon dioxide most importantly, we waste our finite supply of resources.

If we can implement the circular economy, we can build a sustainable world for many generations to come. We may ask: How can our waste build capital? How can we continue to cycle our valuable resources the best we possibly can? How can we prolong the life of resources as much as possible? And, how can we eventually eradicate waste? The answer to these questions is simple: accelerate our move to the circular economy. If we wish to adhere to the terms of the Paris Agreement of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, we must do so now; to ensure the sustainable and healthy development of future generations.

So, we are calling for the government to introduce a package to place the necessary infrastructure, funding and regulations in place to accelerate our move to a circular economy. Additionally, the UK should be a role model for other countries to follow in the move towards a sustainable circular economy, as well as promoting the circular economy back at home. If the government acts quickly, it will increase our chances of meeting the 1.5°C Paris Agreement, and ensure a generation of healthy and prosperous young people.

36. Protect Nature

We believe that in order to preserve our planet for the next generation, we must use nature as a tool to repair the Earth's broken climate. The conservation of green spaces is essential, as plants and trees remove carbon from the air and reduce the impacts of climate change, acting as natural climate solutions.

Currently, humans are destroying nature at alarming rates. In 2021, 5250 hectares of UK natural forests were cut down, and global governments spend 1000 times more on global fossil fuel subsidies than on natural climate solutions.

In order to protect our natural climate solutions and prevent climate breakdown, we call on the government to:

- Stop funding fossil fuel extraction (mining/fracking) and look towards carbon neutral alternatives such as solar and wind energy.
- Ban the destruction of natural forest and wildlife for any purpose in order to protect nature
- Increase funding for nature conservation and restoration efforts

The Climate Crisis is the most urgent issue faced by humans, and is a threat to everyone. We must act now.

37. Green Spaces

We believe that in order for our generation to be healthy and happy, the government has a responsibility to preserve green spaces and to make them safe and inviting for young people.

The results from the 2022 #makeyourmark ballot demonstrated that the number one issue that young people are most concerned about was health and well-being, with a total of 93,023 votes. Preserving green spaces would support this result because a growing body of research suggests that maintaining regular contact with nature is beneficial for a range of health and well-being outcomes in young people. A government review in 2020, however, indicated that the health benefits of green spaces are dependent upon people's feeling of safety within them. It is for this reason why we call on the government to act, in order to make green spaces both available and safe for young people.

We call on the government to ensure that every local council deploys environmental wardens who are responsible for preserving and maintaining green spaces that are both safe and engaging for young people.

38. Green Transport

We believe that in order to thwart climate change the government must invest heavily in our transport infrastructure including our trains, and our buses. Statistics from the Department of Transport show that the average CO2 emissions per car in the UK is 139.8g/km, whereas the average CO2 emissions per bus in the UK is 89g/km. Considering that the maximum capacity of a bus is way higher than a car, we can safely say that buses are more environmentally friendly than cars. Trains emit way less, with data from the Office of Rail and Road showing that average CO2 emissions is 35.2g/km.

However, the population of the UK aren't being incentivised to take these more environmentally friendly options, with data from the Department of Transport suggesting that over 800 billion passenger kilometres being made by car. This is in contrast to the 90 billion passenger kilometres being made by trains and under 50 billion passenger kilometres being made by buses.

We believe that the general population should be incentivised to take these more environmentally friendly options in order to lessen the impacts of climate change, which a BBC survey said that 60% of young people are worried about.

We call on the government, local and national, to subsidise bus and train fares so public transport is more accessible, and to prioritise transit oriented development to reduce the current dependence on driving. We would also like to re-open train lines axed during the Beeching cuts, and re-open the 3000 bus lines cut in the past decade. These re-openings should also be on more frequent schedules to ensure that it is desirable to the public.

Equality Policy

39. Promoting Diversity

Discrimination: People all over the world are faced with a variety of discrimination from ageism - sexism, xenophobia, racism and more. This has a huge effect on people's lives and mental health so we must try to get rid of it. The people of the future (young people) should try to tackle these things and bring them to a light and abolish them. Teaching our generation that 'our differences do not separate us from each other' can help promote diversity and acceptance.

In 2017 about 13.8% of the UK population was from a minority ethnic background with London having 40% of its population from BAME (Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic) background. In March 2021, UK schools recorded more than 60,000 racial incidents in 5 years. I believe in order to lower or even eradicate this large statistic, young people need to learn about each other, where they come from, their cultures and upbringings etc.

In some areas, there is more ethnic diversity, for example in Oldham, where 77.5% of residents are white and there is a significant south asian community (Pakistani, Bangladeshi & Indian) which is rising. However, there are less minorities living in areas such as Saddleworth. This means that there may be a bit of a "culture shock" leading to racist remarks (which has lead to many minorities receiving racist or xenophobic remarks). In addition to this, the Chinese community (who are a really small minority) may have experienced a lot of xenophobia due to the coronavirus, and ignorance of people causing xenophobic remarks.

We believe that:

- There should be social media accounts (like Instagram and twitter) dedicated to educating people on the matter.
- Schools should set up a more safer place where people can confide when there is discrimination happening.
- Schools and local groups should organise campaigns and marches to lobby the government to change some discriminatory laws (like conversion therapy on trans people).
- Schools should teach the topic of diversity such as Black History and this should be implemented into the UK school curriculum.
- UKYP should collaborate with the Ministry of Culture to enable more chances for young people with unique backgrounds to feel more appreciated within British society.

40. LGBTQ+ Inclusivity

Acceptance is a very major aspect of a child or young person's life, be it them being accepted for being athletic, smart, or acceptance for what makes them them, be it their skin colour, religious beliefs, gender identity, sexual orientation, sex, health conditions or other such thing.

This impacts young people massively. In some schools, being any form of LGBTQ+ means relentless bullying. In 2021, there were 114,958 hate crimes reported in the UK, and the majority of them were toward LGBTQ+ people. In schools, these figures are rapidly rising. A recent study showed that half of transgender teenaged males who were involved, had made an attempt on their own life, 29.9% of transfemales, and 41.8% of non-binary.

Many people believe this is due to the lack of help and support for transgender people, especially teens, with many educational facilities doing next to nothing to support the students in this situation. More education and support is needed around LGBTQIA+ issues, to reduce the risks and stop bullying.

We call for:

- Schools, academic trusts, such as the AET, to enforce help and rules against the bullying of transgender pupils.
- Helplines such as Childline to do more to help teens and young people who are in unhealthy home environments, just because of who they identify as.
- The creation of a national group of different LGBTQ+ school groups that amplify the voices of LGBTQ+ young people.
- Schools to share their experiences and how they have helped LGBTQ+ people, to stop these hate crimes/bullying happening.
- Inclusive LGBTQ+ conferences in local areas/nationwide so people can share their successes.

41. Young Refugees

The UK receives about 38,000 refugees a year, about 49% of which are children and young people. These young people come from around 40 different countries each with their own conflict or war. They come to the UK and other parts of Europe with hopes of securing a better future for themselves and their families, they come to the UK seeking inviolability expecting their lives to ameliorate. Only to be met with even more maltreatment throughout their journey and arrival at the UK leaving them more vulnerable than ever before. These young people risk their own lives in so many cases just to be able to live life with the rights they deserve, some of the basic rights we have but are too oblivious to realize that millions of human beings like ourselves are deprived around the world.

Refugees often pass through many different countries to get to the UK where they undergo many forms of torture and ill treatment, for example in Libya black refugees trying to pass through the country are kept as slaves and made to work in abominable conditions, often when they are eventually released or manage to escape they are merely alive yet they stay resilient and determined to continue their journey to safety. Unfortunately an innumerable amount do not make it and their families back home are left heartbroken and full of regret. Many of those who do make it end up never being able to see or hear from their families back home and fall into depression. Refugees are often ignored or denied entry into the UK and deported back to the country they are seeking asylum from. Some refugees already have family living in the UK who are constantly distressed and find themselves unable to contact family back home, they are not sure whether their families are dead or alive. Young refugees are like any other young person, they have

dreams that they aspire to achieve however due to circumstances in their home countries they are unable to pursue those dreams. A total of around 94000 children and young people die yearly due to war and conflicts which averages out to about 30 every day. Article 6 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child states that “all children/young people deserve the right to life, governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.” Young people in countries with wars and conflict are the most vulnerable and are affected the most by the conflicts, they live in constant fear not knowing what their fates or their families fates will be. Many are left homeless and displaced fending for themselves and very often the oldest has to step up as a parent figure and care for the younger siblings whilst trying to balance their studies and personal lives.

Countless young people living in warzones are orphaned at young ages and will never know what it is like to have a mother or father figure. They are left suffering from all types of mental disorders and trauma, refugees deserve a right to have their mental health catered for too. Families are torn apart and they are denied normal lives all because the people in power decided there was going to be conflict.

One of the main reasons young people seek asylum after ensuring their safety is education. Article 22 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child states that “children/young people who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children/young people born in that country.” Article 28 states that “All children/young people have a right to primary education which should be free, young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education they are capable of.” Therefore all young people under the age of 18 who arrive at the UK expecting a better education free from missiles and gunshots to support them in accomplishing their dreams should not be denied entry or an education. There is so much hidden talent amongst young refugees which I believe should be explored and given a chance to blossom. In many ways allowing young refugees to get an education will also benefit the UK economy in the long run as some of these young people go on to do astonishing things. Young refugees also deserve the right to live a happy family life, and should be able to live peacefully knowing their families are safe and protected. Article 10 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child states that “Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that the parents and children can stay in contact, or get back together as a family” The government should ensure that there is a set scheme in place that helps reunite displaced young people with their families in a safe and protected manner. All young people have the right to safety.

Wars are never the liability of a country's citizens it is always the people in power, and we cannot deny the fact that the UK leaders hold a lot of responsibility for many of the currently active conflicts, therefore the UK government should be held accountable one way or another and the best way to do that is by supporting those displaced by the many conflicts. In my opinion and I'm sure the opinion of many others, the UK government spends lots of money on unnecessary things that will not benefit anyone but themselves. Supporting young refugees and asylum seekers and ensuring their safety should be one of the main responsibilities of the government. The scheme recently put in place to support Ukrainian asylum seekers has proved rather successful and is a scheme that has helped many Ukrainians seek shelter and safety, however refugees from all over the world have been seeking asylum in the UK for years only to be denied entry, arrested or in some cases killed. The government should work towards putting in place more schemes to support young refugees from around the world live life with the rights they are entitled to.

42. Nightlife Safety for Women

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that stationing patrols of plainclothes police officers in bars and clubs at night will not prevent instances of sexual violence and is detrimental for women's safety; and therefore calls on the Scottish and UK Governments to ensure Scotland's nightlife remains safe and free from undercover police.

43. Support 16 Days of Action to End Violence Against Women

The Scottish Youth Parliament supports the annual '16 Days of Action to End Violence Against Women' campaign, and echoes their call for the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence against women.

44. Support services for survivors of sexual harassment

UK law has prohibited sexual harassment in the workplace for decades, yet testimony collections such as the "Everyone's Invited" movement show that this behaviour is rife in UK schools.

Resources have been produced across the country since "rape culture" in schools made media headlines in 2021, in order to support improvements to safeguarding policies: yet, the absence of co-production with students in this research has led many to feel that nothing has changed.

Schools are now being called on to assume that sexual harassment does take place between their students: We ask that schools hold workshops and focus groups with pupils to investigate the roots of sexual harassment in their own environment, using the information gathered to co-produce effective preventative policies and review their efficacy on an ongoing basis.

45. Stand with Uyghurs

The Scottish Youth Parliament calls on the UK and Scottish Governments to stand with the Uyghur peoples of China, by taking an active stance against the mass targeted surveillance and genocide to which they have been subjected.

46. Minority Language Rights

In Northern Ireland Irish speakers are denied the same rights as other people in the U.K. Irish is banned from courts, has no official position in law and is constantly put on the political backburner. Various campaign groups have formed to support Irish speakers.

47. Religiously-Motivated Discrimination

The Scottish Youth Parliament is concerned by the rise in religiously motivated discrimination and violence in Scotland, and calls on the Scottish Government and other authorities to review the curriculum to ensure that young people are able to identify all forms of religious discrimination and their own cultural biases, and to raise awareness of organisations which exist to support young people in religious minorities.

48. Disability Equality Legislation

There should be robust disability equality legislation (UNCRPD) in the UK and Northern Ireland (devolved) to give young people with disabilities the same opportunities as their peers.

Disabled young people across the UK and especially in NI ability to participate fully in society is being limited through both the equality Act 2010 in the UK and the Disability Discrimination Act

1995 in Northern Ireland. Opportunities i.e. getting jobs and accessibility of venues and public services are limited for disabled young people.

With the current legislation (Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Equality Act 2010), disabled young people don't have the same opportunities that most young people take for granted. Such as getting jobs, RNIB states that only 1/4 of people with visual impairment are employed. Generally overall disabled people in the UK were less than half of disabled adults were in employment (47.6%), compared with almost 80% of the non-disabled adult population, and the gap between these groups has widened since 2010/11.

Furthermore public services aren't always accessible such as cinemas lacking subtitles and audio description for hearing and visually impaired people. This limits disabled young people's participation in the community and social life, difficulties accessing public services in 2012-14 this was 45.3% for disabled people compared with 31.7% for non-disabled people.

This essentially makes disabled young people second class citizens which is unacceptable.

We call on the government to:

- Implement the UNCRPD into law in the UK including Northern Ireland (devolved) which they ratified in 2009. This would give disabled young people equality across all areas of society.
- Provide grants for businesses to make premises and services accessible.

49. Protest and Peaceful Assembly

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes the right to participate in peaceful assembly and protest is a fundamental human right, and therefore calls on the Scottish and UK Governments to ensure citizens are able to exercise this right freely, without risk of harm from violent police intervention.

50. Transport Fares and Inequality

We believe to be able to move towards equality, opportunity and inclusion needs to be prioritised. 96% of young people think public transport is too expensive with public transport fares increasing across the country by 51% making it inaccessible to use public travel. Resulting in those from a low socio-economic background to be at a transport disadvantage resulting in social exclusion and lack in decision making, opportunity and access to essential public services. Thus, we are calling upon the government to place a cap on public transport fares across the country to try and close the gap in social mobility.

51. UK Complicity in Human Rights Abuses

The Scottish Youth Parliament is concerned that the UK may be complicit in human rights abuses through its sale of arms and therefore calls on the UK Government to ban the sale and supply of arms in cases where there is a risk that they may be used to further oppression.

52. Freedom of Individuality

Freedom of Individuality in schools. The freedom to accessorise how you wish, funding and encouragement of inclusive extra-curricular programs and identity-accommodating facilities such as some bathrooms being gender-neutral. UKYP can work with Department for Education to encourage this nationwide and work with teachers to make it a reality in all schools.

Students are sometimes sent home due to dyed hair or pierced ears, actually removed from classes for expressing themselves. We don't need to be prepared for an adult world when we are the ones who will make that world. This is not a suggestion to abolish school uniform but regards accessories; to remove ridiculous restrictions on self-expression in order to make the school environment less robotic.

Re extra curriculars, too many schools aren't able/willing to accommodate creativity and that's something that needs to be solved through distribution of funding, and establishing cost-effective ways of running sports, music and art engagements.

Re facilities, school must be a safe space for everyone and in so many places it isn't. Teachers must be educated on gender-neutral language, there must be some gender-neutral toilets but still some single-gender toilets to maintain safe spaces for women, and appropriate measures must be taken to combat homophobic and transphobic bullying, working from the roots upwards.

53. Legislative change to protect victims of revenge porn

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that there should be legislative change to ensure that victims of revenge porn do not lose their jobs as a result of their private, sexually explicit content being shared without their consent.

54. Condemning Immigration Raids

The Scottish Youth Parliament condemns the use of unannounced raids on immigrants in Scotland, especially dawn raids; opposes the Home Office's continued use of these practices; and expresses support for groups such as the No Evictions Network for raising awareness of these practices and their efforts in mobilising resistance against them.

55. Employment Gap

The Scottish Youth Parliament has significant concerns about the employment gap for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people living in Scotland, in particular those who belong to multiple minority groups, and calls on the Scottish Government and other employers to review and update recruitment practices and human resources guidelines to encourage career retention and progression for these individuals.

Health and Wellbeing

56. Mental Health Services

Mental health is at the centre of our lives: it affects how we think, feel and act. And with this being said, it is very disappointing as we find that many young people believe the current support for mental health is poor and inadequate. We are certain in believing that for young people to be happy, healthy and safe we have a duty to ensure education and mental health are adequate. Without this, mental health and poor education will continue to be key issues for young people and be the downfall to their happiness.

Mental health can develop from an extremely young age, which can make it more long lasting. Why is this the case? Why are children and young people continuing to suffer from this, when it is something that can be prevented, or at least helped? Many young people have experienced things such as long waiting lists of up to six months and little to no resources is not acceptable leaving

many young people vulnerable at times of need. They also have hardships in trying to raise concerns to local leaders or decision makers, with not many opportunities or access for raising these concerns.

We have seen nearly two thirds of people who say they have experienced mental health problems and they are one of the main causes of the overall disease burden worldwide. Furthermore; currently in the UK, 1 in 6 young people have a mental illness and this is too many to go unnoticed. This comes to show just how essential it is to tackle mental health issues. And research shows that 83% of young people with mental health issues have agreed the pandemic has worsened their state. In addition, studies found suicide to be the leading cause of death for people between the ages of 5-34 in the year 2019.

Young people have identified schools as being a central role in supporting and acting as a central provision for young people to get mental health and wellbeing support. In 2020, in secondary aged children it was found that 17.6% were identified with a probable (likely) mental disorder. Many young people have mentioned that despite spending a lot of their time in school, they still fail to educate and offer essential support that young people need to get through tough times and situations regarding mental health. A third of children in England and Wales reported they feel the school system is inadequate and nearly a quarter of 11-16 year olds, and nearly half of 17-19 year olds (46.8%), reported that they have self-harmed or attempted suicide at some point in their lives , showing just how severe mental health problems can be on children and young people. Young people have put a particular emphasis on the service CAMHS having potential to interact and help millions of young across the country. Roughly 40% of young people have hidden disabilities so there's a high chance we can make the government see how vital CAMHS is for our young people. Below is a list of seven key recommendations to improve mental health for children and young people.

- Want government to increase as well as provide improved services and community support to help people who are struggling with mental health. There needs to be safe spaces that are more engaging and inviting. Having more services for children and young people means that there will likely be less burden in these services as young people progress into adulthood.
- Accessibility has also proven to be an important factor. Young people propose that the government make more active efforts in making services accessible to all children and young people experiencing mental health problems
- Want the government to provide early interventions to educate and inhibit the progression of mental health problems that may occur in young people's lives.
- Young people need specific and targeted support and education that addresses the plain and simple fact that emotional wellbeing is vital to our happiness and enables us to have the tools to succeed.
- Dedicated local councillors to focus on the mental health of children and young people
- The government needs to provide sufficient and increase funding for CAMHS and other adolescent mental health services. Exploring new sustainable ways of collecting funds to put towards mental health services can be a great option.
- There should be more co-production opportunities where young people can work with school and decision makers to create useful resources and available and accessible services that all young people can trust, rely on and use.

57. Mental Health In Schools

We firmly believe that the current system in which schools and teachers address mental wellbeing and health is inefficient and ineffective, therefore having an adverse impact on young people. Schools and education have a massive impact on the lives of young people, and so it must be the

place that efficiently protects people from threats like bad mental wellbeing. The current format in our schools leads to pupils feeling panicked, isolated and not safe in the current environment. In schools, education on mental health often fails to address the core issues. Furthermore, within schools the notion of "it'll be fine" is increasingly common and does not allow for young people to get the basic help they really need.

According to a survey completed by Minds, almost 7 in ten young people (out of 2,870) reported being absent from school due to their mental health. Some of them reported that their mental health had been treated as bad behaviour. We believe that the school environment needs to be more inclusive of the idea of "Mental Health". Students should not be disproportionately affected when it comes to their education just because their school kept the focus on grades over wellbeing. Moreover, evidence from the mental health journal States of Minds, demonstrates how young people feel that the exam system and standardised assessment is a key underpinning factor influencing the findings of successive Good Childhood Reports. These reports state that young peoples' satisfaction with life and with education has gradually declined since 2009, and why subjective happiness is lower in England than in other nations, again showing the need for an improved educational system.

We want the government to :-

- Reform the way schools across the country deal with the Mental Health crisis, in order to create a happier and more inclusive environment in and outside of the education system.
- Provide funding for schools to allow 40% of staff members to complete the Mental Health First Aid course and to invite mental health professionals to teach students about mental health every school year, as the everyday schoolteacher is unfortunately not fully equipped to do so
- Give support to main educators in the UK, to effectively promote and teach students more about mental health & well-being, physical well-being as well as forming meaningful connections, building strong friendships and connecting and socialising with others.

58. Mental Health Education

Lockdown was a time where not only the mental health levels of young people has deteriorated due to the isolation, but the year of education around mental health which they should have received during this time has not been taught. In order to try and change this, I believe that the UK youth council should campaign to try and change this in order to make up for this missed education. And in some cases although the education element might be there, more needs to be done to increase the accessibility of education around mental and physical well-being. Young people find the current education out there to be not engaging, relevant or interesting for young people.

Young people have also highlighted the stigma that still exists surrounding mental health and believe more needs to be done within education to improve this. We believe that breaking down the negative stigma surrounding mental health, especially in teenagers, will help younger people to have the courage to reach out and receive the help they need. In this modern climate, particularly after the pandemic, teenagers feel isolated from the lack of opportunities and socialising for nearly two years. This strain on their life can make teenagers anxious, paranoid and depressed. This could lead to harmful thoughts or actions either inflicted on themselves or others.

Many young people experience mental health struggles due to the various pressures of being a young person and developing. For example, exam pressure, social media pressures, and much more. Surveys such as the BeeWell survey and other surveys have found that young people are not getting enough sleep or doing enough exercise. For example, they are not looking after their mental

and physical health because the education, ideas and services given to them are unhelpful when undergoing these pressures.

We believe the government should:-

- make changes to the citizenship curriculum in order to incorporate more mental health based education, by allowing students off timetable lessons to become better educated around how to aid those who are struggling.
- needs to make provisions in educating the general public better to look for the signs of mental illness and improve the help available in the communities which will lead to more security with teenagers when vocalising their struggles with mental health.
- The government should provide support to schools and local authorities to provide effective support or access to support for young people. There should be a reform of the PSHE Curriculum, with a strong focus on mental health and wellbeing.
- More research is proposed to find out key causes of mental health and what needs to be done with and for young people to live a more prosperous life and improve outcomes contributing to tickling mental health problems.
- schools and providers for mental and physical well-being services should give more awareness around their service and what is out there for young people to access.
- to increase the roll-out of prevention methods, specifically using the school curriculum as a vehicle for such. This also includes creating more support networks for those at higher risks of developing mental health issues such as LGBTQIA+ children whilst also creating services that can be easily accessed by all.

59. Mental Health Funding

Youth Mental Health is such a broad topic that affects so many factors within the lives of millions of adolescent teenagers between the ages of 10 and 19 across the country and we believe that the government must do something about it. This is a problem as many people are at a crisis point and are unable to gain the support they need from the NHS (who are overwhelmed with the number of cases).

Studies suggest that funding directed towards tackling youth mental health issues has been cut by 70% in just 10 years, it is outrageous that our next generation is not being taken care of to the standard they deserve. Youth mental health does not just affect someone's mind, it branches into their social life, physical wellbeing and so much more. Without the correct funding and investments in areas that matter such as schools, nhs, and free access to green spaces, then these problems will be harder to tackle. And moreover tackling mental health allows to also simultaneously tackle other issues such as climate change, as some people have what psychologists call 'climate anxiety'.

We will call on the government to :-

- develop a youth-led funding strategy to protect young people from the effects of poor mental health, and to develop mental health services and make them more easily available for those who need it. I will also call on local politicians and local youth councils to take action for their constituents.
- Fund an co-production operation lead by multiple MYP's that also have similar goals in mind, where together we would campaign for an action to take place where areas that have higher rates of youth mental health issues are prioritised to have more youth centres, support staff and youth workers that can work together as a united force to help tackle the issues that affect young people's mental health.
- needs to review funding into mental health support within schools to ensure anyone at any point can have access to help.

- Increase mental health funding and investment into clinical therapists in schools.
- Increase free access to green spaces

60. Youth Voice In Mental Health

Mental Health - Over the past three years the UK has been facing a greater mental health crisis than ever before: Young people confined to their homes have found it more difficult than ever to understand their own mental health and seek advice and help. While mental health services are available, they are often not suited to people's specific needs, overloaded with requests or are unknown to young people. Additionally the covid-19 has heightened young people's mental health making young people experience more worry and anxiety from the lack of engagement with friends and family.

Local youth voice councils can work with existing and developing services to provide a better view of what young people need and how funding can be spent most effectively. Councils can also develop their own training using their own resources. We ask that local councils across the country should take this up as one of their main focuses if they haven't already.

61. Mental Health Stigma

Young people have shown their worry for the mental health stigma and shown that they feel the need of more support. South Ribble youth council and are working to raise awareness around stigmas and to help prevent them. We are hopefully partnering with kooth to spread the awareness that no one should feel guilt due to their gender, race or sexuality etc. Many young people have said that over their time in education they faced issues with stigma associated with either disabilities or other uncontrollable factors, and the fact that it hindered them throughout their time in education. We feel that increased awareness of bullying due to these factors is a key point in trying to help the next generation reach the potential that all young children have.

Also, increasing staff member awareness, as well as training on how to help children with SEND needs would help to combat this issue, and make places of education a safer place for children with SEND needs.

62. Knife Crime

Knife crime has continued to be a massive issue in London and across many other areas of the UK. For example Hounslow is among the top 20 most dangerous boroughs in London according to crime rate. Serious Knife Crime Offences have increased by 61 offences from 2019 to 2020. Furthermore, Year ending March 2021, the government reported 18,553 disposals given for possession of a knife or sharp object (considered as offensive weapon). This is very worrying because 19 percent of the offenders were aged from 10-17 years old. This also ties in with mental health. The rise in stabbing is terrifying and more must be done now to address this and other violent crimes.

In certain areas knife crime summits have been held, but we believe more needs to be done other than speaking to select schools and one group of young people does not provide a comprehensive look at the cause and solution on how to protect young people from knife crime. Events that allow these meaningful conversations to take place regarding issues as such need to happen more frequently and are accessible for all young people to take part in.

The issue for young people is that our voices are not heard. Having a seat at the knife crime summit table would mean decision-makers can incorporate the perspective of people who are actually witnesses so more effective solutions can be found.

We propose that :-

- Knife crime and mental health charities such as the ADAM Foundation, should go into schools and youth clubs to educate young people around the dangers of carrying a knife.
- There should be co-production between the Police services and the NHS should talk to young people in schools/youth clubs and host programmes for them to participate in to learn more about knife crime.
- Youth become more involved in the decision making of how to deal with knife crime by opening up opportunities to contribute to plans with decision makers.
- Greater use of technologies such as metal detectors in public places
- On calling the government to develop and fund an age-appropriate programme delivered in school settings targeting this issue
- We are also requesting for better treatment and post-trauma support for victims (including their families) of knife crime.

63. Spiking

Spiking protection: Stats show that in a event of 100 people 12 people will be spiked stats also show that only 7.2% opt to seek medical help to reverse effects of the drug or take HIV preventive methods. We believe there should be a place near enough to go by foot where any one no questions asked can receive support after being spiked. Local community hospitals and GP's need to take action.

In December 2021, the Commons Home Affairs Committee quoted a YouGov poll which found that one in nine women and one in seventeen men in the UK said they have been the victim of drink spiking. There should be better and more successful regulations provided to ensure that drink spiking is more easily avoidable and all perpetrators are prosecuted for spiking and are further deterred by an increased probability that they will be caught. Moreover, we believe that spiking tester kits should be mandatory for all premises carrying a licence to serve alcohol, whereby a customer who suspects that their drink may have been spiked can ask staff to test it for them. If the test reveals that the drink has been spiked, the police should be alerted and the drink should then be used in an investigation. Staff on these premises should be additionally trained on how to deal with a victim of spiking, and notices should be displayed somewhere visible on the premises to inform customers how they should deal with a (suspected) spiking incident.

64. Young Carers

Young people in our council believe that raising awareness on what being a young carer is and how to help them is vital. This issue is important as many young people unfortunately are unaware of what a young carer is and what information is available for them to utilise and access in order to gain assistance and support. Many find out through teachers in school but there just is not enough that know about it. Local charities such as Surrey young carers around the country work to assist young carers but again there is little awareness about these charities and what services and support they can offer. We aim to raise awareness on the help that is out there and what a young carer actually is and share where those in need can get more information. The best way to do this is to start an awareness campaign to make sure that more people know what a young carer is.

65. Sexual Harrassment

Sexual harrassment has been an issue young people across different areas of the country have been experiencing in high numbers. Tackling sexual harassment on streets and public transport has particularly be seen as a pressing issue. Young people in Oldham for example feel unsafe on our public transport network and streets, especially in town centre. For instance, on the Metrolink (our tramway for Greater Manchester), people have been complaining and feeling unsafe on the tram and not just young people, but also expanding to adults especially at night.

In addition to this, people feel unsafe on the streets, especially in the town centre so much, that they use the tram to go to neighbouring town Rochdale or the city (Manchester) which is shown by people saying they want to leave Oldham and find the tram not to be helpful in Oldham. Parents of young people as well as young people feel more comfortable sending their children / going to Manchester (in particular) since it has less ASB but also people are less likely to be a bystander and help if anything goes wrong, creating an environment of safety in Manchester (even at night), unlike in Oldham.

Moreover, schools are failing in their duty of care to their students by not adequately dealing with cases of sexual harassment and assault, to the point where the majority of female students do not report instances of sexual violence because they know it will not be dealt with properly. Furthermore, the normalisation of sexual harassment and assault within schools and the surrounding area speaks to the appalling lack of education around the issue (for both male and female students) and leaves people not aware of what sexual harassment is, let alone how to stop it. In addition to this, in the meagre education afforded to us, harassment and violence against LGBTQ+ people is overlooked, even though harassing someone based on their sexual identity is still classed as sexual harassment. Schools need to do more to competently deal with cases of sexual violence, but need more support in providing an education for young people, therefore, the council and wider government need to be held to account for their failings, and put things right.

66. Care Leavers

There are currently over 43,000 care leavers in the UK aged 19-21 and as voices for young people, we should make sure they are supported properly as they have unique circumstances which make them particularly vulnerable to mental health issues. Seeing as the most pressing issue for young people, as highlighted in the 2022 Make your Mark survey, was mental health, supporting those most vulnerable in society is incredibly important in keeping our pledge to support all young people. We call on the government to introduce a funding scheme dedicated to supporting care leavers and those currently in care via their local councils, helping to resolve mental health issues and teach fundamental jobs and life skills to set them up for life outside of care.

67. Vaping

The issue of underage vaping, especially in a school environment, should be dealt with. Vaping itself endangers the users when they inhale chemicals into the lungs. It also endangers others particularly with asthma and other underlying health conditions with the same effects it has on the users. And while most of the long-term effects that vaping has on people's health are still unknown, it is known that vaping carries a whole array of health risks: lung cancers, throat disease and breathing difficulties among them. Over the past few years, increasing numbers of young people have turned to vaping in Sunderland, many of whom have never smoked before.

With vape shops becoming more common on the high street, young people are more exposed to vaping from an early age. One thing which is causing this problem is the trivialisation of vaping: the

range of fruity flavours available makes young people think that what they are breathing in is simply scented air as well as the attractive marketing which work to entice young people into the world of vaping. The main reasons for vaping, specified by young people in a government report (Vaping in England:2021 Evidence Update) were 'to give it a try', 'for fun' and 'liking the flavours'. Furthermore, vapes are very widely available whilst the packaging displays little of what it may contain. Toxins such as arsenic and nickel have been found in them.

Currently, many young people are vaping in school toilets and around the school site. We believe schools should educate young people on the effects of vaping, so that they are able to make a more informed judgement when it comes to this issue. According to the Vaping in England: 2021 Evidence Update, 11.9% of young people started vaping to quit smoking, whereas 20.6% of young people vaped before they smoked. This shows that vaping often leads to more harmful practices, like smoking. There are a range of actions that I think are necessary to combat the rise in youth vaping. We propose the government should :-

- Regulate the packaging of vaping in the same way that cigarette packaging is: instead of fruity flavours on them they should include negative outcomes of what vaping can cause.
- Increase the penalty for vaping underage. Currently the maximum fine is £2500, which should be made the minimum fine for first offence
- Educate members of the community about vaping, what it is and the potential risks. This could be done through a wide range of adverts, such as social media, TV/on-demand adverts.
- Support educational establishments so that they are informed, and then can teach about the potential ramifications of vaping, such as dangers to health and fire hazards.
- Support schools to manage vaping around their site by suggesting what they can do about it.
- Extend the Check 25 scheme to include the purchase of vapes and refill liquids.

68. Violence Against Women and Girls

Violence against woman and girls (VAWAG) is a growing concern- in 2021 stalking and sexual offences increased respectively by 5% and 13% (the highest amount of cases recorded to date). The question being asked repeatedly is why aren't women able to experience life as safely and freely as they should? Society sees a man walking down a street and doesn't think much whereas they frown upon it when it's a woman. This mentality should be eradicated, but it's hard for it to be when women in fact do have that sense of fear themselves due to past hate crimes against them as well as media portrayal, not to mention the assault some very disgustingly face which had become in a way casual within social media. None of this is right, just let them be free and safe, no need for such a mentality but there is a need for safety.

Moreover, research has also shown that sexual violence is more prevalent in younger women with 1 in 3 being affected in the last year alone. This violence has lasting effects on young people in all aspects of life.

We propose:-

For the government to take preventative measures in ensuring all bus shelters are equipped with better lighting and CCTV as well as introducing compulsory self-defence skills into the core PE curriculum.

For the government to initiate awareness spreading campaigns and fundraisers for charities in support of women safety.

We also propose for young people to start campaigns and write to media companies and journalists too to raise awareness of this issue.

69. First Aid

The standard first aid course falls short for young people living with a disability. The standard First Aid Qualification provides candidates with the skills to assist people in an emergency. However the course does not teach the skills required to save the lives of people with disabilities. This can leave teachers, youth workers, carers and members of the public with more questions than answers, especially in mainstream environments. A course adapted to include First Aid in a disability setting would use basic First Aid principles and adapt them to suit situations an individual living with disability may face so members of the public, carers, teachers and youth workers can be equipped to respond. Example situations include:

- CPR with mobility limitations or paralysis
- Responding to a seizure in a wheelchair
- Recognition and assistance for Autonomic Dysreflexia
- Consent and communication in a disability setting
- Choking in a wheelchair

Learning these skills is vital, particularly for disability carers, teachers and youth workers because there is only a small window to save a young person's life in an emergency. Whilst individual care plans can help assist those with disabilities in case their condition fluctuates, they are not easily accessible to everyone and don't necessarily cover general emergency care. First Aid courses help to provide people with confidence that they can make a difference and assist in an emergency situation however this confidence is not reciprocated when working with those with a disability. This course should be easily and readily available for: Disability carers, Nurses, Health care professionals, Medical practitioners, School teachers, University staff and students and family members of people with a disability. Every year there are preventable deaths that occur because the individuals did not get timely help. Our aim is to ensure Young people with disabilities have access to the same standard of emergency care as anyone else. A new course in Disability First Aid could be the difference between life and death for a young person living with disability. Young people should not be limited by their ability or health, yet many lose out on opportunities over concerns that their health needs will not be adequately catered for. After talking to carers working alongside those with disabilities, it has become evident that more extensive First Aid training is a priority. Talking to parents of those with a child who has a disability, they have raised concerns over the immense worry and stress they face when their child leaves the direct care of them or their career. Disability First Aid will not only save lives, but enhance opportunities, open new doors and provide reassurance for both young people and their parents. We are calling on the government to ensure that our health system and qualifications do not discriminate or exclude those of different abilities and that those with a first aid qualification have the same ability to help a young person with a disability as they would with any other child.

We call on the government to:

- Introduce and incorporate First Aid in a Disability setting into the standard First Aid qualification or alternatively offer it separately as an easily accessed and readily available qualification.
- Ensure that all youth workers, carers and teachers have the adequate skills to deal with standard Disability First aid procedures
- Offer this course to members of the public to ensure that anyone who wishes to, has the skills and confidence to help a child with a disability in an emergency situation.
- Ensure our healthcare system is inclusive

70. Outdoor Learning

The Scottish Youth Parliament calls on decision makers to learn from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic by investing in and improving outdoor learning, whilst also recognising the benefits of outdoor learning for the mental and physical well-being of young people.

71. Eating Disorders

Eating disorders have a severe impact on the mental wellbeing, social development and academic performance of young people, and one in sixteen British people show symptoms. Government advice on PSHE delivery in schools states that teachers are best placed to understand the needs of their pupils, yet teachers and eating disorder patients have stated that staff are currently unequipped to address such a nuanced and misrepresented issue. Sustaining a healthy relationship with food is a critically delicate balance for young people- complicated by individual backgrounds, online influences and social environments- and guiding us in doing this is naturally the same.

We call on the Government to consult medical professionals and social advocates to build a curriculum that centres the diversity and widespread prevalence of eating disorders, and to encourage and incentivise schools of all types across the country to use this resource.

72. Period Equality

We believe that period equality, defined as access to period products, hygiene facilities and reproductive knowledge, affects every member of society today. From those who are lucky to have menstrual equality, to those who struggle to afford products each month, from people who do not menstruate but have people in their life who do, to those who are children, we are all impacted by period inequality and have a responsibility to do something about it. It has been estimated that over 137,000 children have missed school due to living in period poverty, and this issue is even more pertinent now as over 1 million children in the UK struggled to afford or access period products during the pandemic. With 3 in 10 children struggling now, it is our belief that period poverty is still extremely prevalent among young people in the UK, and that this form of poverty and abject inequality is hugely damaging to the health, education and wellbeing of young people during these already stressful times.

This issue has been prominent for a very long time, but has recently become incredibly pressing and necessary to solve as a result of the pandemic. 1 in 10 young people cannot afford period products and the number is increasing in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is due to a range of reasons, including financial constraints and other significant life events, and also includes a lack of knowledge about menstrual and general reproductive health. In the UK, these individuals are also shown to be at risk of falling 145 education days behind their non-menstruating counterparts. It is being tackled worldwide in similar form - and it is evident that the only way to begin clearly solving this crisis is to start talking about it, and break the stigma. Young people's educations have already become severely limited as a result of two years off - it is important that every measure is taken to ensure that we do not have to miss school for period poverty further. T

We call on the Government to develop a schools-based strategy to educate young people UK-wide through schools and other youth groups on both menstrual and reproductive rights and knowledge, and break the stigma around period poverty by encouraging education on this type of poverty to facilitate understanding of the topic for both menstruators and non-menstruators and knowledge of what to do if you or someone you know are placed in that position.

73. Mental Health Services - Northern Ireland

In South Down, one of the most important issues is to organise better and more local mental health services, as well as to spread knowledge about the severity of this crisis. Particularly since the Covid-19 lockdowns, statistically, young people's mental health is collectively declining. I believe that greater services should be assigned to tackling this in my local area. Already, there are some services being provided by charities or the government. However, I would like to expand upon these, I don't believe that the correct people are being targeted by these workshops and so I'd like to provide them in a greater and more accessible way.

74. Youth Safety and Empowerment

We believe that for young people to feel safe, and empowered in their communities, action must be taken. This is to stop the violence and oppression of young people who are regularly taken advantage of. The lack of safety and empowerment of young people is an issue that largely impacts individuals mental health and wellbeing. If young people aren't protected in their schools and homes, then this is going to add to 75% of young people suffering mental health problems, as well as an increase in the countless young people who are marginalised due to their race, culture, sexuality or any other biases.

Within this campaign, we aim to promote more awareness of the importance of the safety and empowerment of young people. We aim to educate and inform, from young people's perspectives, the teachers who are the confronting face of injustice within schools. We aim to help teachers and students understand the current problems when it comes to the safety of young people. And to help them seek out ways to tackle this issue within their own communities, to create a more safe and empowering environment.

75. Lad Culture

Young people have rightfully raised concerns about things like 'lad culture', catcalling and unnoticed behavioural misconduct from men to women. For us to truly achieve egalitarianism and a fair definition of equality, young men must be conditioned to understand how to appropriately treat women, and that some things are better left unsaid.

Although it is wonderful that the Home Secretary has started a campaign regarding behavioural misconduct from men to women and how men themselves can nip that sort of behaviour in the bud before it escalates into something further, more practical steps must be taken in order to truly uproot these sorts of attitudes. In the year ending March 2019, the crime survey estimated 25% of women aged 18 to 74 years, around 5.1 million women, had experienced some form of abuse before the age of 16 years. Not to mention, the controversy surrounding Mason Greenwood and his girlfriend in early 2022, bearing in mind Mason was a massive role model for many young men.

Therefore, we are calling on the government to develop a mentoring system in which young men are regularly given guidance on how to redefine chivalry in the context of the 21st century. We believe these classes should teach young boys, from around the age of 13, about the nature of the damaging porn industry, the toxicity of 'lad-culture', how to make women feel safer via simple techniques [crossing the road should you be behind her and it is past nightfall, walking on the roadside]. Should this system be implemented, we believe that the issues surrounding violence towards women and girls will be efficiently ameliorated.

76. Child Abuse (TW: discusses abuse)

An alarming 25,000 cases of child abuse occurred over 2020. I feel as though that overtime, the voice for victims of child abuse have been less and less represented in media. Though I think mental health and knife crime are extremely important, we must not lose the voice of those who had suffered this horror.

77. Impact of Discrimination on Mental Health (TW: discusses suicide)

People face many forms of discrimination every single day from mass amounts of racism, homophobia, fataphobia etc and it can have a detrimental effect on young and older generations mental health. It can and has lead to many suicide cases and the main way to change it is by spreading awareness of it through things like school and the media. I also want / need to spread awareness of mental health and allow it to not be a stigmatised topic but something people can express and work on.

We believe there should be another mental health line set up for young people that is filled with a mass of things to help young people overcome mental health problems. WE would also like to create other platforms for podcasts about inspirational things about minorities in society and educate people on society's problems.

78. Optional Period Leave

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that all people who menstruate should be offered an optional period of paid menstrual leave from their workplace in order to reduce the stigma of periods and accommodate for those living with menstrual health conditions.

79. Bereavement Support

Bereavement support isn't as accessible for young people who need it as it needs to be. There should be more of an offer in schools, to ensure bereavement support is accessible for all young people.

80. Early Mental Health Intervention

We believe that in order for our generation to succeed and reach our full potential after the devastating impact of the Covid pandemic, we need to prioritise providing access to mental health services and early intervention support for young people.

Between May 2020 and Feb 2022, the NHS has seen an almost 37% increase in the number of young people reaching out to mental health services, with a marked rise in anxiety and developmental problems linked to the pandemic. This strain on mental health services has resulted in extremely high threshold criteria being required to access any publicly funded support, meaning that many go without the vital support and services they need, and the opportunity for early intervention before reaching crisis point is often missed.

We ask the government to create increased opportunities for young people to be able to access early intervention mental health support. This is a critical first stage of a long-term mental wellbeing strategy that should include measures such as wider awareness and training in mental health for those working with young people and additional focus on those communities most impacted, for example in areas of lower income.

Money, Home, Jobs and Opportunities

81. Transport

Public transport is a vital service for young people, it enables them to get to work or school, see friends and family and to pursue new interests and opportunities. We believe public transport services should be expanded, and made to be more affordable, accessible and safe. Improving transport services will improve the equality of young people across the UK, and will play an important role in tackling the climate crisis.

Currently, young people that live in rural areas, disabled young people, young people living or at risk of poverty or any young person who feels unsafe on public transport are being let down by the UK's public transport services. This is due to poor and unreliable rural bus and train services, lack of accessibility, increasingly expensive costs - with most adult fares beginning at 15 - and sexual assaults or hate crimes taking place on our public transport services. The impact of this is massive, with public transport and independent means of travelling left unavailable to a growing number of young people.

In response to these issues, we call on the UK Government, local authorities and wider decision makers to:

- Ultimately, make public transport free for all 11-18 year olds. 55% of young Londoners said they would be unable to get where they need to go without free access to transport. Failing the extension of this to the whole of the UK, child rates must rise as standard to 18 and local authorities should expand youth public transport pass schemes.
- Invest in and expand public transport services in rural areas or areas with few services, this could be done through franchising.
- Renationalising the rail network, reducing the costs for ticket holders, and increasing investment in regeneration of old lines should be increased to provide a connection for those towns that need it.
- Mandate spaces for standing on buses be separate from that for wheelchairs and ensure every public transport service is required to be accessible legally and is staffed well enough to make sure this is a reality.
- Increase DBS checks of those that work in public transport and establish a national 'safe language' scheme of signals that can be given to police, bus drivers etc. to make it easier to spot someone in distress on public transport.

82. Standardised Minimum Wage

Currently, minimum wage for people aged 23 and over is £9.50, meaning someone aged 21-22 would be earning £9.18 whilst someone aged 18-20 would get paid £6.83 and someone who is under 18 would receive just £4.81. We think this is fundamentally unfair, young people deserve an equal amount of pay for an equal amount of work.

Many young people feel exploited by employers, and with the cost of living crisis impacting people of all ages, they are feeling the burden of unnecessary financial stress and difficulties. It is often assumed that young people don't have financial responsibilities, but we stress that this is not the case. Whilst young people from the age of 15 have to pay adult fares on buses and train; they are being paid significantly less than their adult co-workers doing the same job.

We call on the UK Government to standardise the minimum wage, bringing the rates for those 22 and under to the same as their adult counterparts. We also call on them to ensure young people aren't exploited by companies and corporations

83. Careers Advice

Young people across the UK need more opportunities for employment post-education and greater support when choosing the path they wish to take; be it further education, apprenticeships or a job. Unemployment is a real issue amongst young people, with little career advice available to young people when in school and those deciding against a university education feeling forgotten about.

Whilst government-funded schemes are available - such as Kickstart, apprenticeships, and T-Levels - to help youth employment rise and allow other paths to employment rather than further education, these are not widely known or shared as part of careers advice in schools. As a result, many young people feel they could get stuck in a career they are unhappy with, as they didn't have enough information, experience or opportunity to pursue anything else whilst at school.

We call on the UK Government to implement a wide-reaching, broad and effective career education programme within schools. Schools should be obligated to inform children of opportunities both within and outside of further education, and ensure young people have the necessary tools and guidance to help them access these programs. We also call on the Government to increase the funding and size of programmes such as Kickstart, combating unemployment and supporting young people to develop fulfilling careers.

84. Youth Councils

Access to and funding of youth and young people's services and spaces - such as parks, youth clubs and youth councils has massively decreased in recent years. In Northumberland alone, funding for youth services has decreased by around 75% since 2011.

This leaves young people without a platform to express their views, without places to safely socialise and without many of the activities and spaces that are vital to their mental and physical wellbeing and sense of community.

We believe that in order to combat this:

- Local councils and wider government budgets should increase and prioritise funding for young people's services. They must recognize the impact these cuts are having and the importance of these services and spaces to young people.
- We must invest in, expand and strengthen Youth Voice services across the UK to ensure young people feel equipped to tell those in power exactly how important these services or other issues are to them. We need to make Youth Voice more accessible to young people so that everyone, no matter their socio-economic status, has an equal and fair opportunity to make their views heard.

85. Youth Councils in Wales

A lack of youth consultation in schools, local government and other youth provisions has led to a top down approach on decision-making which has limited benefit. This could be fixed by spreading awareness to schools as to the UNCRC and other relevant laws requiring them to include youth inclusion.

We have found that, particularly in schools, children and young people are not involved in decision making. This has been emphasised by the Coronavirus pandemic which has led to bodies, such as school councils, ceasing to exist in many instances, particularly for year 9-13 students.

A larger campaign to encourage provisions and guidance for and from the youth in places such as schools is vital in creating the dialogue we so desperately need. A larger campaign is needed to encourage provisions and guidance for and from the youth in places such as schools. It is vital in creating the dialogue we so desperately need.

86. Transport in the Isle of Wight

The Isle of Wight has an inefficient and comparatively expensive public transport network. This excludes many young people on the Isle of Wight from using it and as a result has an adverse impact on local economies and the capacity of the Isle of Wight to avoid a 'brain drain' of young people from the Island. The re-introduction of a subsidised fare option for young people would serve to reinforce the Island's environmental pledges and would provide a great deal of benefits to young people, local economies and road safety.

Despite the large size of the Island, the biggest parliamentary constituency in the United Kingdom by population, the Isle of Wight at present has only one bus provider and one train operator.

Southern Vectis is the only bus company on the Isle of Wight and has since the late 1980s has been privately run, it was a state run service from 1969 to 1987. Island Line trains is a subsidiary of South Western Railway, a company that is part owned by a British company and a company in Hong Kong, before 1996 the Island Line was owned by the government.

Cost

Travel on the Isle of Wight is exceptionally expensive compared to other regions of the UK. The cost of a single adult ticket to go from Ryde to Newport, seven miles, is £4.60. By way of comparison, to travel from the city of Leeds to the city of Bradford in West Yorkshire, 11 miles, on a similarly privately run bus company, First Bus, would cost only £2. This is a significant price difference. Moreover, the price of a ticket for a young adult from Ryde to Newport is £3.60, this price is evidently above the market average for a young person's ticket. The train is considerably more competitive at £2 for a young person (aged under 15 years), however the line runs only from Ryde in the North-east of the Island to Sandown in the South-east and has no connections whatsoever with Newport, the administrative and shopping 'capital' of the Isle of Wight. Therefore, many young people are reliant on the buses as their central means of transport.

Furthermore, it is important to address the issue of the roads. Naturally, for many young people this is not feasible for independent travel, given that the age that one can learn to drive is fixed at 17 years of age. Moreover, this is an expensive process, unrealistic for many in light of the cost of living crisis and is made worse by the backlog in practical tests that has emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Isle of Wight Council's website highlights, when drivers do get on the road, they have a disproportionately higher chance of being involved in a car accident than people above the age of 25. This is in part a result of the nature of the rural roads that connect many of the towns and villages on the Isle of Wight, they are complex for early drivers and serve as a dangerous introduction for young drivers. As such, the option of personal vehicles for young people on the Isle of Wight is unattainable for many on account of age, and for others on the

grounds of cost. Further still, there is not insubstantial risk for young drivers in navigating the Island's difficult roads.

In conclusion, the Isle of Wight's travel network is not fit for purpose in serving the young people on the Isle of Wight. It is exceptionally expensive, relatively limited and the alternatives are undesirable for many young people at best and unachievable at worst. The Island is in desperate need of a fit for purpose pricing system that can enable the young people of the Island to work, socialise and study in all areas of the Island. The benefits of such a revamp are tremendous, it would serve to stem the tide of young people leaving the Island looking for more accessible leisure and work activities. The abundance of 'park and ride' schemes in cities such as Portsmouth and Oxford show that by competitively pricing transport, activity can be bolstered in city centres. Therefore, we could hope to see greater economic activity in regions of the Island that are desperate for rejuvenation after the COVID-19 pandemic, such as Sandown and Freshwater. Better public transport options could enable the Island to harness its young population and the natural appeal of these towns to improve the Isle of Wight's economic future.

Crucially the Isle of Wight needs to offer incentives to encourage young people to both travel and ultimately stay on the Isle of Wight. The COVID-19 pandemic saw the UK government spend vast amounts of money to maintain the public transport operators on the Isle of Wight, and therefore dispels the myth that these entities are really 'private' in the true sense of the word. Therefore it is clear that greater government, either central or local, investment and pressure on companies, such as Southern Vectis, to offer cheap travel for young people is a viable option.

The Isle of Wight claims to be a 'green' Island, and by enticing young people to the buses, it can considerably lessen the frequency of car travel on the roads, as parents dropping their young people at various locations would be diminished if it was more economical for those young people to use public transport. This would lessen emissions on the Isle of Wight's roads, and traffic. As a result if the Isle of Wight Council was to replace the word 'COVID' with the word 'CLIMATE' in their recovery funds and apply the same financial support to companies in tackling climate change as it did to tackling the economic impacts of COVID-19 there would be great support for this policy.

Finally, in light of the vast success of the 'Student Ryder' fare in the late 2000s and early 2010s, a blueprint already exists for cheap travel on the Isle of Wight. This ticket option saw great young people engagement with Island public transport and as a by-product saw considerably economic boosts for leisure-orientated Island locations, where young people could travel to, and spend at, whilst enjoying their leisure time. Therefore, the return to a price point of a £1 single or a £2 return would be a reasonable and highly popular option. I would encourage further focus group research into the success of this, but through a cursory comparison with other national bus operators, I feel it would be a successful policy that would benefit the young people of the Isle of Wight.

In conclusion, I feel passionately that in light of the many challenges facing the Isle of Wight, the multitude of benefits that encouraging greater young person engagement with public transport would bring make the re-introduction of the 'Student Ryder' ticket a policy where the positives would far outweigh the negatives.

The Isle of Wight is an area with vast natural beauty and many opportunities for young people. But the vast natural beauty comes at the cost of difficult transport links which serves to hinder the opportunities for young people. By making public transport cheap and affordable for young people, the Island can maintain its natural beauty and mitigate the difficult transport links whilst unlocking the expansive opportunity that young people bring to the local economies on the Island.

87. Funding Youth Services

We believe in the principle that for young people of the UK to see and achieve true change that we must be involved with and oversee the allocation of funding to UK youth services. When I was elected as Halton's Member of Youth Parliament it was my primary focus to encourage and ensure better funding and management of youth services in Halton.

Without access to youth services young people have a lack of safe spaces and can often feel alone and isolated in their own communities. Lack of these services can lead to increases in anti-social behaviour and a rise in knife crime and gang violence, leaving young people feeling vulnerable and unsafe in their communities.

Since 2010/2011 there has been a sharp decline of 70% from £1.4 billion in youth service funding down to £429 million in 2018/2019 that would only have been made worse by the Covid pandemic. Across the UK every region has seen funding for youth services cut by more than 60% since 2010. In the North West there has been a 74% decrease, 76% decrease in the North East and a decrease of 80% in the West Midlands.

We call upon the government to increase funding to youth services and allow the youth of the UK to oversee the funding and management of new, current, and expanded youth services across the UK.

88. Rural Infrastructure

Our rural areas are being neglected. In more than just the environment and how it is treated with people littering but with road infrastructure, and wifi connectivity.

Getting something as basic as a wifi connection is something that most households in rural areas struggle with. Bad access to an internet connection can lead to problems with school work especially at the moment when the internet is needed so much when working from home. Not to mention if a young person can not get the connection to engage with other young people then that person is becoming more and more isolated which can lead to serious mental health problems. Infrastructure in rural areas is a serious issue that is being neglected. Roads are covered with potholes which could lead to injury. These potholes take months and even years to get sorted. Another of many reasons on how rural areas are being neglected is the lack of care for the environment. Constantly cars drive up and down the roads of rural areas with not a care in the world and throw rubbish out of their windows, or maybe even someone who is out for a walk and does not wish to carry their rubbish anymore. Bins must be provided in rural areas, just because its not a town or city does not mean that it should be a dumping ground for cans and food boxes. This is polluting our environment and making the rural areas less beautiful and enjoyable. Young people should not have to grow up in a dump. Another issue that needs to be addressed is the lack of concern for certain issues such as people driving the loud and fast cars up and down roads at night and during the day. Not only is it a health hazard but it keeps people up at night which will affect a young person's sleep and how they will perform in school. All of these factors will and are affecting young people and putting people off moving to rural areas.

Wifi connectivity is something that was addressed by the Government. However the Government needs to address these issues by keeping rural infrastructure in better condition and providing more areas where people can socialise and shop in rural areas, as well as getting wifi connection and being able to sleep peacefully at night without the sound of people driving their loud cars. Reckless drivers in rural areas have no respect and this needs to be dealt with by Local Authorities.

89. Classism in Universities

For years upon years, people have faced prejudice for their financial situations, missed out on opportunities because employers choose someone with a more upstanding, wealthy family – no matter how much more talented the other applicant was. You may think this is a mere thing of the past, yet our society is so tightly entwined with classism that we merely pass it by as a normal everyday thing – our very foundations are built upon centuries of classism, from way back before the 1500's to present day and we have done next to nothing to solve this ever-prominent issue. We as a collective need to expose and correct these normalised wrongs in our society.

One industry where classism is majorly present is universities, specifically those 24 within the Russell Group. For example, in an investigation done by the Office of Students (the government's regulator regarding higher education) found that the vast majority of towns with the lowest university admission rates were that of industrial cities of the north of England and the Midlands, as well as towns located on the coast – all of these with a predominantly working-class population. To put this into perspective, in a recent study it was found 55% of young people go into higher education in London (a majorly upper-class area) whereas only 40% of young people do in the entirety of the north-east. This doesn't stop merely at application, but within university itself.

In 2020, a sick and purely classist as well as sexist 'competition' was exposed in Durham University where the 'posh lads' would compete to sleep with the 'poorest girl'. The sexual harassment those in lower classes face in significantly upper class universities is not just a one-time thing that doesn't happen everywhere, it merely goes unreported and the victims are silenced – a tactic the wealthy use with the promise of money to say nothing. Once again at Durham university (who places #2 behind Oxbridge for percentage of private school students, and maybe not so coincidentally the second highest amount of reports of sexual misconduct over a 7 year period in all of the UK's universities) a female student reported being offered money by a male upper-class student to have sex with him, after learning she went to state school with him harassing her more by asking her for her number, but refusing to give her his as "I don't give my number to people who went to state school.". This is simply horrendous for anyone to do, and a great injustice that it is implied he faced no punishment by the school for this.

In Cambridge University it has been reported that the northern accent has been played by the upper class for a quick laugh frequently, one student saying the following "I also remember in one of my first weeks of first year a comedy debate at the union which had one of the speakers acting 'dumb' and 'ditsy' in character trying to impersonate a Yorkshire accent—I didn't realise how much it would get to me but it did." Such mockery has led to 28% of young people being ashamed of their regional accents worrying that it will affect their job prospects and subsequently their lives.

Another instance of students being mocked for their northern accents is reported in Oxford University, a student saying tutors would see her accent as 'rude' and 'bad-mannered' as well as being treated like a project. In Newcastle university, a student was told "it sounds funny hearing something clever in that accent" mocking the working class as being undereducated and idiotic.

Students in these classist environments have felt the need to change themselves to fit in, one student changing everything from their mannerisms to voice feeling the need to change their accent from "Stokie to Tory" to be taken seriously. Another more serious case demonstrates how negatively a Durham student's mental health was affected. The discrimination she faced in her time there led her to develop severe anorexia that she has never recovered from.

We call on the government to protect the working-class youth when going into elitist universities where they face constant belittlement and discrimination and finally hold those upper-class people

accountable and hopefully see a lower in classism across the country. The youth deserve the right to feel proud of getting into some of the top universities across the UK and not feel like the odd one out or have their time affect their mental health for the rest of their lives. It is our right to feel safe in education and environment. We must not stand for this injustice. If we are to progress as a society, we must rid our society of the prejudice. It is our duty to fix these wrongs for the generations to come after us.

90. Bursary for Student Carers

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that student carers should receive more financial support and calls for the introduction of a new bursary which should be made available to all student carers, regardless of their income.

91. Young Workers' Rights

Currently, the minimum wage for 16-17, 18-20, and 21-22 year olds is significantly lower than the minimum wage for 23 year olds and above. It is a sad reflection on our country that ageism still exists here, young people deserve an equal amount of pay for an equal amount of work, that's just common sense.

We call on the government to set the minimum wage for everyone at £12.50 in order to prevent discrimination, and help people through the upcoming cost of living crisis.

92. COVID-19 and BAME Young People's Unemployment

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a particularly adverse impact on Black, Asian and minority ethnic young people's employment, exacerbating existing inequalities; and therefore calls on decision-makers and employers to work proactively in eliminating the additional barriers they face.

93. Financial Education

We believe that it is vital to help protect and support the future of this country financially. The Bank of Scotland found that only 39% of people aged 18-34 know confidently how a mortgage works, and 25% believe that it is a barrier, in owning a home, to not have a proper financial education. We know that many young people will benefit from having a thorough financial education after growing up and it will support them. Whilst this won't solve all personal financial issues, it will definitely help change the way we, the youth, will think about finances compared to those who went before us. We are calling for the government to increase the proficiency and thoroughness of financial education and for it to be incorporated in the curriculum from the start of primary school to the end of the mandatory GCSE period.

94. Job Creation in Rural Areas

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that quality of life should be improved for young people across Scotland through rural job creation and promotion in rural areas, and more employment based education opportunities in rural communities.

95. Barnahus Model

The Scottish Youth Parliament calls on the Scottish Government to implement the 'Barnahus' model of supporting all children and young people through the justice system, giving them a person-centred environment in which to give evidence, and receive medical examinations, counselling and therapy.

Our Rights and Democracy

96. Votes at 16

The UK Youth Parliament believes that the voting age should be lowered to 16 across the UK, giving all 16 and 17 year olds the right to vote. Just under one and a half million people are aged 16-17 in the UK, and we believe they should have the right to hold politicians to account on issues that affect them now, and will continue to affect them in the future.

We think that by bringing in Votes at 16 we can ensure young people feel heard, enable them to hold politicians formally accountable on issues that matter to them and ultimately increase democratic participation in the long run. In Scottish and Welsh local elections, 75% of 16-18 years olds voted with 97% of them saying they would vote in future elections. Young people of the same age, but living in Northern Ireland and England do not share this right to vote and if Votes at 16 were to be enacted everywhere, young people in Northern Ireland and England would be able to have a say in their political representation.

We call on the UK Government to lower the voting age to 16 across the UK, in line with Scotland and Wales, but to also invest in a political literacy programme for young people of all ages. Every young person should have the opportunity to learn about, understand and then participate in the democratic structures of this country.

97. Increasing Youth Democracy

We believe that British democracy only works when young people are engaged, represented, educated, and empowered to participate in it.

Despite having the highest stake in the future of our country, young people are disengaged with and under-represented in British decision-making. Whilst having high levels of interest in local, national, and international issues, many young people simply do not see British democracy as the way to address the issues affecting them.

We call on our elected representatives to address this democratic deficit by:

- educating all young people about how Britain is governed, who is accountable for what, and how to get involved
- taking clear steps to involve young people in British decision-making through increased use of youth consultations
- ensuring that all levels of democracy are accessible through an increased use of social media and a bigger presence of MPs and councillors in schools, colleges, and youth community groups
- taking a national survey of at least 50% of all 11-18 year-olds each year and taking clear, measurable steps to address the issues raised.

We believe that taking these steps will begin to restore faith in British democracy, make politicians more accountable, build a generation of passionate and educated voting citizens, give young people a sense of national ownership and responsibility, and empower young people to get involved themselves by proving that democracy is the way to get things done.

98. Recognise Palestine as a State

The Scottish Youth Parliament supports a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine crisis and calls on the UK Government to recognise Palestine as a state, alongside the state of Israel, based on the 1967 borders. We also call for the UK Government to further stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine by challenging breaches of international law they are subjected to and offering aid, and ask that the Scottish Government use their powers to support us in this stance.

99. Youth Voice

The issue I was elected on is giving people in my local area a voice in large decisions that will affect them in the future. If young people do not have a say in these decisions, they can't have any control over their future lives. Young people need to be more educated in politics and understand how decisions made will affect them. Local schools can implement politics workshops and clubs to educate young people on the decisions made and the issues surrounding them- so they can make a positive difference. This would, in turn, create a structure to show young people the importance of votes and voting, and potentially validate having votes at 16.

Young people around schools usually do not know much about current, political events and the decisions being made in parliament. They are often unaware of how these important decisions will affect them in the future. This means that when young people vote at 18, or even 16 (hopefully), they will not fully understand the implications of their vote. Not having the full picture, makes it harder for young people to have their say.

100. Mosquito Devices

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that the use of mosquito devices represents a clear violation of young people's rights, and therefore calls for a legislative ban on their sale and use.

101. Pet Passport Scheme

The Scottish Youth Parliament calls on the UK government and the EU to come to an agreement which gives assistance dog owners the same freedoms they enjoyed under the Pet Passport Scheme.

102. Raise the Minimum Age for Recruitment to Military

The Scottish Youth Parliament recognises the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Committee's stance on recruiting 16 and 17 year olds to the military and echo's their calls on the UK Government to raise the minimum age of recruitment for the military to 18, and in the meantime, review their recruitment practices aimed at young people.

103. Online safety - Social Media Platforms

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes that there should be greater legislative restrictions placed on the data collected by social media platforms in order to create a safer online environment, limit the risk of social media addiction and reduce the spread of misinformation and conspiracies.

Poverty

104. Homelessness

Youth poverty and homelessness is a growing issue. One in every four young people in the UK are affected by child poverty, with 4.3 million children in the UK living in poverty in 2019-20. The rates of homelessness are increasing across many local authorities, and lack of development and investment in local areas leaves young people at risk.

Youth poverty and homelessness has massive impacts on the wellbeing of young people and affects many areas of their life, from academics to mental and physical health. Lack of public investment too leaves young people in deprived areas four times more likely to be killed or injured on the road than those in less deprived areas. As the cost of living continues to rise the effects on young people only grows, with many more families struggling to financially support themselves.

We call on the UK & local government to take action; supporting those struggling with the cost of living increase, invest in homelessness support centres with information, job opportunities, food and drink, and comfortable essentials like sleeping bags and invest in deprived areas and push for infrastructure redevelopment. We want to make sure all children and their families can live a happy and fulfilled future.

105. Child Food Poverty

Child Food Poverty is an issue of growing importance, due to the growing amount of young people it affects. 2.5 million children lived in food insecure households in 2019.

It has a massive impact on the health and wellbeing of young people, causes high levels of stress and worry, and negatively impacts their studies and academic achievements.

We call on the UK Government to dedicate resources to ensuring that effective solutions are put in place to support young people affected by food poverty. We want to ensure every young person affected by food poverty should have access to a universal support package which provides them with a daily allowance for a nutritional meal (with increased provisions in the school holidays), access to free or subsidised transport, and access to life skills classes and academic support (cooking, health and safety, career skills, help buying revision guides etc).

106. Talking about Poverty in School

I believe that for our generation to be happy and successful we need to first focus on making sure everyone has a roof over their heads. I was elected on a manifesto of justice for all and a reduction in poverty. Cheshire East may not seem from the outside to have a poverty problem, but we do. I know that 1 in 9 children live in poverty within Cheshire east. These stats are from

2020. It could and is probably worse by now. Children and young people need to be able to focus on their GCSE or A levels. That should be their main priority. I call on the government to build an education system that teaches students how to escape poverty and how to prevent falling into poverty in later years. This can't just fall on form tutors to talk about this in form times. This topic needs to be put into the education system.

107. Helping Low Income Families

Many refugees and regular households will be suffering due to the cost of living crisis and 2 years of lockdown. We propose that the government supports families that are struggling with vouchers for food banks.