



OLDHAM YOUTH COUNCIL

Manifesto

The Oldham Youth Council Manifesto tackles a wide range of topics affecting young people, from public transport to education for life.

The aim of the manifesto is to inform and influence local decision makers. It was created by our youth councillors, locally elected to represent the views of their peers, through consultation with their constituents and influenced through work with key decision makers and organisations. Our Manifesto is a live document and can be added to and amended by democratic decision making within the youth council meetings.

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Work Experience & Curriculum for Life (C4L)

- OYC believe that C4L should be delivered in a high quality, appropriate and meaningful manner.
- The issues could include:
 - **Meaningful work experience**
 - **Health:** Confidentiality, sexual health, mental health, appointment booking etc.
 - **Political Education:** How to vote etc.
 - **Life Skills:** CV Writing, interviews etc.
 - **Money Skills:** Loans, taxes, mortgages, money management (shopping & budgeting) etc.
 - **Dieting/Healthy Eating.**
 - **Key Social Skills:** Team/group work etc.

The Oldham Youth Council believe that the Curriculum for Life should be delivered in a high quality, appropriate and meaningful manner. These issues should include ensuring that work experience is meaningful, it is clear how confidentiality works within the health services, education on sexual and mental health as well as how to book appointments is provided. As well as this, young people should be taught how to vote as well as other aspects on political education such as understanding key party beliefs. Life skills such as CV writings, what to do and how to act in interviews as well as money skills such as how to manage money whilst shopping and budgeting is done responsibly and it is clearly understood how to pay Taxes, loans and mortgages should be taught meaningfully. Key social skills such as teamwork should be installed from an early age. A lot of young people feel the need to diet so it should be taught how to do this safely and healthily making sure that a balanced diet is still achieved.

Votes at 16

We the Youth Council believe that if those aged 16 and 17 pay into a system then we should have a say in who makes decisions about that system. 16 and 17 year olds may: pay national insurance contributions and PAYE contributions if they earn enough; pay fuel duty and road tax if we have cars or scooters; pay VAT on our clothes.

We as Young People, if we pay these duties, deserve Votes at 16 because we deserve the right to represent our views politically on a local, regional and national scale. If we are going to be affected by issues in parliament then we deserve the right to influence their outcome.

Discrimination

The OYC opposes discrimination in all forms. There has been a lot of campaigning, but despite all the campaigns we feel that discrimination is an ongoing issue for young people in Oldham and in wider communities of the UK. We believe it is our duty to educate all people about this. We, the youth council, believe this also encompasses important issues such as bullying and we will always raise awareness of these issues, fight and protest until discrimination is extinct in our society. Discrimination is the worst kind of inequality and can lead to many issues including mental health problems like anxiety and depression. It is not OK for anyone to be targeted and bullied just because they may not agree with the beliefs

or do not belong to a specific community. Discrimination is not okay and under no circumstances should it be tolerated.

Bullying

- 45% of young people experience bullying before the age of 18^[1].
- More than 16,000 young people are absent from school because of bullying ^[2].
- Over the last three years there has been an 87 % increase in the number of Childline’s counselling sessions about online bullying ^[3].

We the Oldham Youth Council do not condone bullying of any kind. Bullying has a direct effect on the number of young people suffering from poor mental health. Bullying is the repetitive act of harm or intimidation. Bullying can lead to low self-esteem, poor mental health and social isolation. To those who may be perceived as vulnerable, young people experience this all too often. We believe that no young person should be excluded or pressured to feel a certain way. Our aim is to: raise awareness, continue contrastive education and also offer support to all young people in Oldham who are affected by bullying.

Community Cohesion

Oldham Youth Council firmly believe in Community Cohesion, which is the merging of contrasting cultures & communities creating one unified society. Our aim is to promote all groups of communities who encourage the inclusion of people from different backgrounds at activities and events. As a borough we will not tolerate simply tolerance and will only accept acceptance.

Mental Health

- 20% of adolescents may experience a mental health problem in any given year.^[4]
- 50% of mental health problems are established by age 14 and 75% by age 24.^[5]
- 10% of children and young people (aged 5-16 years) have a clinically diagnosable mental problem^[6], yet 70% of children and adolescents who experience mental health problems have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.^[7]

Bad mental health has a detrimental effect on many young people from missing school, self-confidence issues, isolation, loneliness and many more. Almost everyone has an experience of poor mental health whether it be via a friend, family member or themselves.

- Usually start before the age of 14.
- Affects everything else. You become restricted from things.
- Confidence – Good mental health.
- Young People – Raising Awareness of mental health.
- Preventing mental health problems.
- Signposting to services.
- Understanding Mental Health: Breaking down stereotypes, it’s okay to talk.

- Solve/deal with issues at a younger age to better enable young people to deal with this and manage at an older age.
- MH:2K Project & Kooth.

The Youth Council feels that Mental Health is very important because mental health issues usually start before the age of 14. As a youth council, we want to raise awareness to allow people to understand mental health problems and break down stereotypes. We aim to do this and to try and prevent problems by encouraging other young people to talk, but also to signpost people in need to the services available such as Kooth.

Transport

- We feel public transport should be affordable, safe, accessible and frequent (Saddleworth should be more frequent around the rural areas). There should be an opportunity pass for people in disadvantaged situations.
- More accessible timetables.
- Safe: Bus drivers should be allowed to ask people to leave if there is a clear threat or disruption to other passengers' journey.
- Affordable: Allows many people to access transport. No matter what their situation.
- Information is shared in schools and colleges about cards that are available.

We the Youth Council feel that public transport should be affordable, safe and more frequent. By this, we mean anyone no matter what their financial situation, should be able to afford public transport. Bus drivers should be given more opportunity to remove unwanted passengers from the bus if they are causing disruption or discomfort. We should have passes for people in disadvantaged situations as we do for over 65's and people with disabilities. Financial trouble stops people driving cars but should not stop people from being able to take public transport. Information should be shared around schools about available tickets, bursaries and cards.

Sources

- [1] <http://www.ditchthelabel.org/uk-bullying-statistics-2014/>
- [2] http://redballoonlearner.co.uk/includes/files/resources/261298927_red-balloon-natcen-research-report.pdf
- [3] <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/annual-reports/childline-review-under-pressure.pdf>
- [4] WHO (2003). Caring for children and adolescents with mental disorders: Setting WHO directions. [online] Geneva: World Health Organization. Available at: http://www.who.int/mental_health/media/en/785.pdf
- [5] Kessler RC, Berglund P, Demler O, Jin R, Merikangas KR, Walters EE. (2005). Lifetime Prevalence and Age-of-Onset Distributions of DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. Archives of General Psychiatry, 62 (6) pp. 593-602. doi:10.1001/archpsyc.62.6.593.
- [6] Green, H., McGinnity, A., Meltzer, Ford, T., Goodman, R. 2005 Mental Health of Children and Young People in Great Britain: 2004. Office for National Statistics.
- [7] Children's Society (2008) The Good Childhood Inquiry: health research evidence. London: Children's Society.