

# OLDHAM YOUTH COUNCIL



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# Constitution

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Amended 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023

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The name of the group shall be Oldham Youth Council (OYC), and hereafter in this document shall be referred to as OYC.

The OYC will receive development and administration support from Oldham Youth Service.

### **Aims and Objectives**

- To encourage and initiate communication between Young People and local and National Government
- To be a voice for the Young People in Oldham and to represent their views to decision makers within Oldham and to ensure we are aware of the needs of individuals or groups of young people who may experience disadvantage or are unable to speak for themselves, in order to represent their views.
- To contribute to Full Council meetings with Presentations, Motions and Resolutions regarding young people's issues as identified by Oldham Youth Council
- To raise the profile of Young People in a positive way.
- To form a range of task groups as and where appropriate to enable the work of the OYC. These groups will report progress and conclusions to the full Youth Council.
- To participate in national and regional initiatives, such as the British Youth Council and the United Kingdom Youth Parliament.
- To meet and work with groups and agencies that work with and around the issues affecting young people to ensure the needs of young people are addressed.
- To inform Oldham Council and its partners of young people's views so that they can make decisions about young people more effectively.
- To promote and encourage activities, events and opportunities for young people from the Borough of Oldham.
- To celebrate and promote the achievements and successes of young people in Oldham.
- To plan, organise and deliver a range of activities and events for young people.

### **Membership.**

The OYC shall consist of a maximum of 70 members, with a minimum of 8 elected representatives from each of the 5 district areas (North, East, South, West and Central) of Oldham. These districts are to align with Oldham Council's districts.

The OYC is an opportunity open to all young people in the Borough of Oldham. Young people can become members by being voted through OYC elections that are held every 2 years.

Elections will take place in the November and December with the term of office starting on January 1<sup>st</sup>, concluding on the first Full Youth Council meeting in the December approximately 23 months later.

All members must be between the ages of 11 – 21 years inclusive on their acceptance to OYC. Exceptions can be made to those with additional needs and/or disabilities or with care experience. For these young people the upper age limit will be 25.

Each member must be a resident or work or study in the borough of Oldham.

A member of OYC may resign at anytime by informing the Chairperson of OYC in writing.

The Term of Office for each Youth Councillor will be 2 years from the election event.

Members are eligible to stand for re-election.

To enable the consistency and keep experience on OYC, a maximum of 25 existing Youth Councillors can be voted onto the following years Youth Council via an internal election.

Those who are not internally elected can stand in the public elections. These 25 must include the youth councillors in the leadership group.

### **Youth Voice Family Membership**

OYC is part of the Oldham Youth Voice Family, that includes Oldham Children in Care Council and Barrier Breakers forum.

OYC formally recognises both these groups as members of the OYC and is committed to working collaboratively with all members of the Youth Voice Family to ensure the OYC aims and objectives are met, and to ensure that Children looked after and young people with additional needs and/or disabilities are fully represented.

Members of the Oldham Youth Voice Family can attend OYC meetings, events, Committees, and task groups as and when appropriate. Those young people will have full voting rights when in attendance.

All Training and Development opportunities within the OYC are open to all members of the Youth Voice Family

### **Co-opted Members.**

OYC aims to be representative of all young people within the Borough of Oldham. At times due to the nature of elections certain life defining factors may not be represented in the membership of OYC.

These may include (but not exclusive to) –

- Geographical locality
- Young carers
- Young people who are parents
- Young offenders
- Young people who are homeless
- Young people from ethnic minority groups
- Young people who identify as LGBTQ+
- Young people from the travelling community
- Young people who are refugees or asylum seekers

To ensure that the views and voice of these young people are represented on the OYC, young people from these groups may be co-opted onto the Youth Council. A co-opted member need not be democratically elected at the biennial elections but will be elected by the group they represent (where appropriate). Co-optees have full voting rights and will serve a term of office until the next election event, where they are eligible to stand for re-election either internally or in the public vote.

## **Leadership group.**

All Youth Councillors are equal in status and opportunities, however, for the efficient running of the Youth Council, OYC has 3 categories of roles to steer the group and make decisions on its behalf.

### LEADS

- The OYC has 3 leads: the Youth Mayor, Chair and Vice Chair
- Leads hold their posts for one year.
- The vice chair is the only elected leads post. This election takes place in February each year and candidates must have 4 months experience of being on the youth council or similar forum.
- After 1 year the serving Vice Chair becomes the Chair and the serving Chair becomes the Youth Mayor Elect. At Youth Mayor Making, held in June, Youth Mayor Elect steps up to become Youth Mayor.
- Should the vice chair resign during their serving year an election for a new vice chair will be held.
- Should the Chair or Youth Mayor resign during a serving year. Then the other officers move up to the progressive roles early and an election for a new Vice Chairperson will be held.
- In the absence of the Chair and the Vice Chair, a temporary Chair may be adopted for specific meetings.

### REPRESENTATIVES

- The OYC elect representatives into roles to represent Oldham on a National and Regional level. The OYC has 2 Members of Youth Parliament (MYP), 2 Deputy Members of Youth Parliament (DMYP) and 2 Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority (GMYCA) Representatives.
- Internal elections for the MYP and DMYP roles are held in March every 2 years in line with the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) rules. Current serving MYPs and DMYPs must step down at the time of elections but may run for re-election if they meet the role criteria as laid out by UKYP.
- Internal elections will be run via single transferrable vote, with candidates coming 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> taking the MYP roles and candidates coming 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> taking the DMYP roles.
- Should an MYP resign (or be removed from their role) during their 2-year term of office, then the DMYP who came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the election steps up to take the MYP role. If the members feel that it is required, OYC will then hold an internal election to elect a DMYP to serve until the end of the current term of office. If a further MYP steps down, the DMYP in 4<sup>th</sup> place steps up and again an internal election takes place to elect a DMYP replacement. From then, DMYPs in office for the greatest length of time step up if MYPs resign. If there is a need to elect 2 DMYPs at the same time, priority to step up is given to the DMYP with highest number of votes.
- Should an DMYP resign (or be removed from their role) during a term of office, then the OYC will hold an internal election for a new DMYP if they feel that it is required.
- Internal elections for the GMYCA representatives are held each year in March with the serving representatives stepping down but who may run for re-election.
- Should a GMYCA representative resign during a serving year then an internal election will be held for a new GMYCA Representative.

## OFFICERS

- The OYC may appoint other officers, as it considers necessary to meet the work needs of OYC. The creation and deletion of these roles must be done via debate and vote at a full Youth Council Meeting.
- Youth Councillors take on the role via internal election, in March each year, and hold the post for 1 year.
- After serving 1 year all officers step down but can run for re-election.
- If an Officer resigns during the serving year, then an election for a new officer will be held. This Officer will hold their post until the following March.

To provide equality of opportunity, and to not over burden Youth Councillors, there are limits on how many roles a Youth Councillor can hold at any one time.

- Any Youth Councillor who holds a LEADS role cannot take on any other role listed above.
- Any Youth Councillor who holds a REPRESENTATIVE role cannot hold a Leads role or another representative role but may take an officer role.
- Any Youth Councillor who holds and OFFICER role cannot hold a Leads role but may take a representative's role or another officer role.

## **Meetings.**

The OYC will hold Full Youth Council meetings at least once per month.

The OYC may hold additional meetings to address specific issues and tasks as and when is considers necessary.

The OYC may invite anyone having special knowledge or experience relevant to the aims and objectives of the OYC to sit in and participate in OYC meetings. These people will have no voting rights.

The leadership group will hold strategic planning meetings at least every 3 months. These meetings will formulate plans that will be proposed at full council for final decision making

## **Attendance.**

Members of OYC are expected to attend all Full Meetings. Where this is not possible, they must send apologies.

All non-attendance at meetings will be recorded regardless of whether apologies have been given.

Non-attendance is acceptable if apologies have been given prior to the meeting, to the Chairperson or to the Youth Council support staff.

Persistent non-attendance (covering a 2 month period) will be addressed by the youth council and support staff. Correspondence will be sent to the non-attending member asking them to give a reason for their non-attendance and to attend future meetings or their membership may cease.

### **Political Views.**

The OYC is a non-party-political organisation.

Members may hold allegiance or membership of a political party but cannot express their party-political views as an OYC member or on behalf of OYC.

Members can meet with any political party at any time if it is not used in any way to gain votes for that party.

### **Voting.**

All decisions on OYC business will be by a majority voting system using either a show of hands or where needed a secret ballot.

All decisions will be made by a majority of members present, based on voting on a one member one vote basis. If there is a tie the Chairperson will have the casting vote.

Decision made by voting can only take place if one third of the current members are present (not including vacancies)

For the internal elections of Leads, Representatives and Officers, voting will be run using Single Transferrable Vote.

The number of votes received by candidates in any election will not be revealed to the full youth council, however, candidates can ask support staff who may reveal this information on a 1 to 1 basis.

### **Equal opportunities.**

All members of OYC are equal in status regardless of sexuality, race, age, gender, religion, ability, culture, lifestyle or background.

OYC are committed to pursuing equality of opportunity for all. OYC will ensure fairness is built into all we do. All those involved in the work of OYC will be expected to promote equality and justice at all opportunities and will ensure that no-one is treated unfairly or discriminated against.

All those working with OYC will be expected to challenge any forms of prejudice or discrimination.

### **Finance and Budget.**

The OYC finances and budgets will be administered under the same policies and guidelines as used by Oldham Council.

The Head of Oldham Youth Service will take responsibility for the monitoring of any finances and budgets, including any funds raised by Youth Council members or any external funding received for the Youth Council.

Any funds raised by young people for the Youth Council will be placed in the Oldham Youth Council bank account or the related Oldham Council Budget for Youth Council Work.

Decision making regarding how the funds is spent will be undertaken by members of the Youth Council in consultation with supporting staff.

**Alterations to the Constitution.**

The Constitution may only be amended by a majority decision at the first annual meeting of the Youth Council or at a special meeting called for that purpose.

**Dissolution.**

The Youth Council may be dissolved by a majority decision of the current membership at a meeting of all members, called for this specific purpose.

The reasons for the dissolution must be put in writing and sent to all members 2 weeks before the meeting. Dissolution of the OYC will remove all members from OYC but they may run in elections if a new Youth Council is elected.

This constitution was ratified by OYC members on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2006

Amended 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013

Amended 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018

Amended 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021

Amended 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023

Signed:  
Youth Mayor: Hamra Hanif-Ali

Date:

Signed:  
Chairperson: Isaac Quinn

Date:

Signed:  
Vice chair: Penelope Spencer-Simpson

Date: