Youth Voice Manifesto

Dear Prime Minister
Our Story

We are UK Youth Voice (UKYV), a group of young people aged 16 – 25 years old representing every region and nation of the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Channel Islands). UK Youth Voice is the national youth board of UK Youth and is a platform to be able to gather the views of young people throughout the UK Youth network and influence policy makers, Government and also the direction of UK Youth.

Founded in 1911, UK Youth improves social mobility by providing high quality services for young people aged 9-25 that are delivered through a network of locally accessible youth organisations across the UK. They offer support, advice and training to over 830,000 young people to equip them with vital life skills and engage them in education, volunteering and employment.

Since the EU Referendum, UK Youth Voice members have been working in partnership with our nation partners, Youth Cymru, Youth Scotland, Youth Action Northern Ireland and Youth Work Ireland on an Erasmus+ funded Youth Exchange project with the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA). We have undertaken widespread research with young people and have come together to identify united policy calls to present to MP’s, parliamentarians, Assembly Members and the Prime Minister in order to gain their pledge of support and help to build bright futures for all young people throughout the UK.

From this project, and following a large-scale consultation with our Nation partners and thousands of young people throughout our network of youth clubs and organisations around the United Kingdom, the Youth Voice Manifesto was born.

We are calling for you to acknowledge and support this youth-led, youth-written manifesto backed by our member network representing 830,000 young people across the United Kingdom. We are also calling for you to consider the proposals made by UK Youth Voice and respond to each section in turn in order for us to fully engage the young people of the United Kingdom in the confidence and safety of leaving the European Union.
Dear Prime Minister

UK Youth Voice are calling for you to:

1. Make youth services a priority public service
   For many young people, their youth club is their only safe space. We believe youth services underpin many other essential services for young people and enable all young people to build bright futures. Every young person in every region, city, town and village of the United Kingdom should have access to a minimum standard of youth services, enabling them access to mental health services, citizenship education, social mixing and training.

2. Enable every young person to take an active role in democracy
   Young people deserve a say in their future. Reduce the age of democratic participation in every election to 16 to value the positive contribution from young people to society.

3. Provide accessible, high quality education for all young people
   Education should not be based on social background. All young people should have access to the same free, high quality education that follows a non-biased political curriculum focused on life skills to tackle the skills shortage and promote active citizenship.

4. End discrimination, prejudice and hate crime towards young people
   Pledge to support an end to all discrimination surrounding protected characteristics, including gender, ethnicity, age, religious belief or non-belief, sexual orientation, class, size, disability or other status.

5. Enable future generations to live in a clean, safe and sustainable environment
   The environment should not be negatively impacted by the UK exiting the European Union. The UK should at least maintain standards equal to EU regulations and create an Environmental Protection Act to pledge our commitment to the global fight against climate change.
Dear Prime Minister

1. Make youth services a priority public service

A high quality standard of responsive and needs-based universal youth service provision for all young people, regardless of their location or background will enable young people access to essential services and skills not accessible in any other formal aspect of life. Young people require non-commercial opportunities to be able to engage and participate in sport, art, culture and heritage, budgets that are often the first to be cut.

Mental health services, careers and aspirational guidance, citizenship education, social mixing and training are imperative to a young persons’ development, listening and responding to the changing needs and requirements of young people.

Improve mental health services and access to services for young people

Provide mental health education and 24/7 access to services from mental health professionals to all young people from the age of 7 to tackle mental health issues early, encourage openness and awareness in young people and eradicate the stigma attached to discussing these issues in a public forum.

Enable all young people continued access to a free, high quality health care system

Protect the National Health Service (NHS) to continue to allow all young people 24/7 access to free, high quality health care and prescriptions from the point of use.

Ensure NHS hospitals, surgeries and services are adequately staffed, improving waiting times, standard of healthcare and staff wellbeing and morale.
Dear Prime Minister

2. Enable every young person to take an active role in democracy

Introduce the right to vote in every election in the United Kingdom from 16 years of age and automatic voter registration to maximise the youth vote

As proven by the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014, where 80% of 16 and 17 year olds eligible to vote, did vote. Young people deserve a say in our future and the future of Britain and should be able to choose our representatives accordingly.

Automatic voter registration will not only have a positive impact on the youth voter turnout, but also take away the need for and costs involved with voter registration drives from youth charities and organisations.

Ensure that the voices of young people are heard throughout the EU negotiations, whether this is on Government Bodies, Committees of Parliament or independent commissions

It is vital that young people are fully involved in this process as we are affected the most. We are requesting that there is youth engagement throughout every stage of the process of exiting the European Union and that there is inter-government-departmental work to ensure youth views and comments are not lost.

In turn this will create stronger democratic engagement of young people, a stronger trust in political representatives and for many young people, help to regain their sense of belonging and identity in the United Kingdom following the Brexit result.
3. Provide accessible, high quality education for all young people

Replace lost EU education and skills funding including Erasmus+, Higher Education Research Funding, education grants and EU student funding

Ensure that the UK government prioritises replacing the lost funding from the EU with a UK equivalent that maintains or improves the current level of spending in these areas in order to protect our world-class UK education system and internationally-renowned Higher Education Research and Youth Exchanges for a stronger and more skilled workforce, educated and more knowledgeable society.

Introduce statutory political education and implement a more vocational, skills based curriculum for life

Every young person should be given the opportunity of the best possible start in life. That requires a solid ground in education from the beginning. The UK Government must reform UK education, introducing non-biased citizenship education in schools, colleges and youth services and a life-skills focus on the curriculum replacing PSHE, tackling the skills shortage, promoting active citizenship and helping young people secure high-paid, high-skilled jobs in the future.

Allow every young person the choice and an equal chance to access free, accessible education, regardless of their background or location

Education should not be based on social background. All young people should have access to free, good quality education at all levels (secondary, further, higher and extra-curricular) and an equal chance of applying to prestigious schools, colleges and universities.

All levels of education should be free to young people, current student debt should be cancelled and living maintenance grants should be restored; putting a tax on education further deprives us of our right to learn.

Introduce minimum standards of education, skills, training and support for young people in apprenticeships and monitor well-being and satisfaction

Only high-quality apprenticeships will tackle the skills gap in young people in the United Kingdom. Apprenticeships need to be standardised across the United Kingdom to ensure a minimum standard of education, skills, training and support for our young workers.
Dear Prime Minister

4. End discrimination, prejudice and hate crime towards young people

End discrimination, prejudice and hate crime in the United Kingdom
Pledge to support an end to all discrimination surrounding protected characteristics and secure respect for every young person. Youth services have been proven to bring hyper-diverse young people together.

77% of young people that UK Youth Voice represent are from under-privileged backgrounds. We are calling for a government-led and backed campaign stamping out the verbal and physical actions and attacks of hate, ensuring young people do not become victims or perpetrators of crime, championing youth services for their social mixing and social mobility and ensure our young people are targeted no more.

Deliver an inclusive health education to all young people in all schools
Implement a full, LGBTQIA+ inclusive health education, including sex and healthy relationships education, equality and diversity education, positive body image and promote healthy lifestyles, eating and nutrition in schools. This education and support is crucial to our young people growing to be physically and mentally healthy young adults.

An equal pay for an equal day. Minimum wage to match living wage
The UK Government should advocate for companies and organisations that employ young people to match equality of pay for all, regardless of age. Effort should be taken in order to clamp down on unpaid internships and zero-hour contracts to allow every young person an equal chance.

Freedom of movement for study, travel and work for UK citizens and protection of movement and human rights for EU and non EU citizens living or residing in the UK
There are 3.3million EU citizens currently living in the UK with 2.1million of them working. There are around 1.2million British citizens living in EU countries with 800,000 of them working.
5. Enable future generations to live in a clean, safe and sustainable environment

Ensure UK maintains environmental standards equal to EU environmental regulations in the creation of an Environmental Protection Act for a commitment against climate change.

The environment should not be negatively impacted by the UK exiting the EU.

The UK should at least maintain standards equal to EU regulations protecting environmental legislation surrounding air quality, fishing bans, wildlife and waste management and financial pledges in climate aid.

We request that the government of the United Kingdom formally recognise climate refugees and announce a long-term goal for renewable energy to pledge our commitment to the global fight against climate change.
About UK Youth

Founded in 1911, UK Youth improves social mobility by providing high quality services for young people aged 9-25 that are delivered through a network of locally accessible youth organisations across the UK. Together we offer support, advice and training to over 830,000 young people to equip them with vital life skills and engage them in education, volunteering and employment.

Our vision
All young people are empowered to build bright futures, whatever their background or circumstances.

Who we reach
We work primarily with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, from a wide range of religious and cultural environments, family settings, academic ability levels and geographic locations across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

How we reach them
The young people we work with are encouraged and supported to get involved with UK Youth voluntarily. They typically find out about us through their friends and family, the local youth organisations in our network, the UK Youth staff team, or via referral partners (including schools, social services, the police, the NHS, and other local service providers).

Our mission
To provide access to appropriate, high quality services for young people in every community.

Our goals
To achieve our mission we have set three core goals for 2020:
Goal 1 - Young people can access support, advice & training in their community or online
Goal 2 - Young people become motivated, self-aware, receptive, resilient, responsible, confident, and good communicators
Goal 3 - Young people can engage with education, volunteering and employment

Our values
To deliver our vision, we need a strong sense of who we are and what we stand for. At the heart of all our work are these three core values:
Value 1 - We work with young people on their terms
Value 2 - We are committed to working in partnership
Value 3 - We advocate on behalf of young people and the sector