

The Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Youth Council Constitution

Purpose of Organisation:

The purpose of the Barnsley Youth Council (hereafter referred to as Youth Council) is to represent every young person in every area across the borough of Barnsley and provide him or her with the opportunity to have his or her voice heard.

How does someone become a member of the Barnsley Youth Council?

The way that a young person becomes a member of the Barnsley Youth Council is through them nominating themselves for election.

In order to nominate themselves for election an individual must be 13 to 19 years of age. If the individual is under 18 years of age their nomination must be accompanied with a signed Guardian/parent permission form giving consent.

The individual can only put himself or herself forward for election in the Area Forum area in which they live.

If an existing member of the Youth Council resigns or has to leave the Youth Council for disciplinary reasons, then the reserve for the specific Area Forum from the most recent election is offered the role.

If the reserve declines in taking up the seat the person who got the next highest votes in the election will be offered the place, if they also decline then the person with the next highest vote will be offered and so on.

If there is no one who stood for election interested in taking up the seat then the place will be offered to a member of a school council in the area forum area where the seat is vacant.

Co – opted Members of the Youth Council

Barnsley youth council aims to be representative of all young people within the borough of Barnsley. Due to the youth council being democratically elected, at times certain groups are not always represented. To ensure that these young people have a voice it is important that someone puts their views forward on the youth council. A way to overcome this is that the youth council will co – opt young people on from these groups. Therefore, a co – opted member is someone who is not democratically elected by all young people from Barnsley but elected by the group that they represent. For example 2 young people from the Multi Cultural Youth Committee have been elected by their group to represent the views of the Black and Ethnic Minority young people in Barnsley. The co-optees have full voting rights and will adhere to the Code of Conduct.

How does someone stop being a member of the Youth Council:

If a member of the Youth Council no longer wishes to continue they need to put this in writing and send it to the Youth Council Coordinator or if they wish they can present their resignation letter personally to the full Youth Council. Alternatively they can let the coordinator know by text/phone or e-mail.

If the Youth Council Coordinator cannot get in contact with the Youth Councillor then a letter will be sent out to them stating that if they do not contact the worker by a set date then it will be assumed that they have resigned from their position as Youth Councillor.

If a Youth Councillor does not abide by the 'Code of Conduct' they could be subject to disciplinary action.

Attendance:

A member could be subject to disciplinary action if they do not attend Youth Council meetings.

All non-attendance to meetings will be recorded regardless of whether or not apologies have been given. However non-attendance is acceptable in certain circumstances e.g. exams, illness

If a Youth Councillor cannot attend a youth council meeting then they should always send apologies as soon as possible to the coordinator giving the reasons why they are not attending.

If two consecutive meetings are missed without apologies then the support worker will contact the Youth Councillor by phone or mail stating that they must attend the next meeting otherwise disciplinary action may be taken.

Procedures of the elections:

The elections to be run within an Equal Opportunity framework which ensures that no young person within the age range is discriminated against in relation to standing for election or voting.

Annual elections will take place every March and will be conducted in every Area Forum area (please note this is currently under review).

A nominated returning officer who will have no personal interest within the Youth Council elections will oversee the elections.

Election Publicity will be equally distributed across all nine Area Forum areas.

An information pack to be produced and made available on request to any interested individual(s).

A Candidate Selection residential will take place in Feb half term; all nominees must attend the residential in order to qualify for election. Non-attendance will only be considered in special circumstances, this must be arranged with the coordinator.

Support to be given to young people to enable them to produce their campaign literature and to run their own individual campaign.

All young people under the age of 18 years of age must have their parental/guardian signed consent to stand for election.

Polling stations across all nine Area Forum areas need to be established.

Every 11 to 19 year old within the Area Forum area that they live has got the right to vote for candidates who are standing for election within that Area Forum Area.

The Count of votes will be undertaken in the presence of the returning officer and the successful candidates will be displayed in the Town Hall and printed in the local press.

Role of Council members:

The Youth Councils main role will be to represent the views of all the young people who live within the borough of Barnsley. This will not be an easy task but is an essential role of the Council. Therefore, it will be necessary for the Council and individual Council members to be able to take part in the following activities in order for the Youth Council to fulfil the role.

- Attend training meetings
- Attend Youth Area Action Group Meetings (YAGs) within the area they represent
- Attend Youth Council meetings
- Attend Youth Council Residentials
- Meet with other young people and listen to their issues/concerns.
- Meet with decision makers (Councillors, Council Officers or local residents) and put forward young peoples issues/concerns.
- Interface with Scrutiny Commissions to represent young peoples views (these oversee and scrutinise all decisions made by Barnsley Council)
- Oversee decisions that the Council needs to make that will affect young people within Barnsley.
- Be able to communicate effectively.
- Not to discriminate against any particular group or individual –be inclusive.
- Work alongside the Youth Council Coordinator (full time member of youth service staff to help the Youth Council fulfil their role)
- Work alongside Youth Participation workers and other Youth Provision
- Work with Elected Members (Councillors) so they can also meet with young people face to face.
- Undertake regular training so that they are fully aware of all the issues young people may have to face.
- Have fun!

How often the Council meets and meeting procedures:

Youth council meetings will take place every two weeks. The full youth council will not need to attend every meeting, sub groups will be set up to focus on specific issues. The full youth council will meet altogether at least once per month. Whenever possible meetings will take place in Barnsley Town Hall, Council Chamber.

For any decisions to be made/passed at a Youth Council meeting there has to be at least one representative from each of the nine Area Forums present.

For any changes to be made to the Youth Council Constitution there has to be at least one representative from each of the nine Area Forums present and a special resolution needs to be put forward and seconded, then voted on.

A Chair person will be elected by members at the beginning of the Youth Councils term of office. This person will remain Chair Person for one year.

Voting

Every Youth Councillor has voting rights but must be present at the meeting to vote. In any vote each Youth Councillor only has one vote.

The Chair person has the right to vote on all decisions as they are a full member of the Youth Council.

To make any decisions within the Youth Council resolutions need to be put forward and seconded and then voted on.

If any vote is tied for example 9/9 a further discussion takes place and another vote is undertaken if the vote is tied again then the matter will be adjourned to be discussed at the next meeting.

If any guests wish to attend the meeting they must go through the Youth Council Coordinator who will then put this to the Youth Council to make a decision.

Role of Youth Council Coordinator:

To interface with organisations, services and workers, to provide advice and support to all Youth Council Members, take minutes at youth council meetings to be Treasurer and keep record of budgets and make this available to members at all times.

The Youth Council Coordinator will have no voting rights.

The Youth Council Coordinator will give a brief report of activities undertaken by them since the last Youth Council meeting at every Youth Council meeting.

To coordinate the Youth Council Elections.

Budget:

The Youth Council annual budget allocation is £50,000, this is funded through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, £10,000 is allocated automatically to the Multi Cultural Youth Committee, which is linked to the Youth Council through two co-opted members.

The budget must be spent on activities that engage young people in getting their voices heard and involving them in decision-making processes. The budget is used to fund all training, team building activities that the Youth Council members undertake. Also the budget will fund all the Youth Council election process and all miscellaneous costs, for example publicity, postage, stationary that the Youth Council incurs.

The Youth Council budget will be administrated under the same policies and guidelines as the Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council budget.

The Youth Council Coordinator will take responsibility for monitoring the overall budget.

The Youth Council Coordinator will also oversee Youth Council expenses; all travel expenses to be paid for all members. Members must produce bus/train tickets in order to claim expenses back. Youth Council members to have all out of pocket expenses reimbursed. Members must produce receipts for any expense incurred.