

Final Policy and Internal Motions Booklet

Please keep this document safe, you will need it to participate in BYC's Annual Council Meeting 2018. If you need this document in another format contact events@byc.org.uk or on 020 7250 8373.

This document contains all of the motions that BYC member organisations have submitted for debate at the Annual Council Meeting 2019. The motions are in alphabetical order by member organisation. We intend for all motions to be debated on the day.

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How the debates will work

Debate rules

A member of the Board of Trustees will chair the policy debates. For each motion, the debate will run as follows:

- A 1 minute speech in favour of the motion or item of business, which will normally be from the proposing organisation;
- Up to 5 minutes of additional speeches, which may be for or against the motion or just for information;
- The option of a 2 minute summation in favour of the motion, which will normally be from the proposing organisation;
- The vote on the motion or item of business

Where there are approximately equal numbers of speakers for and against the motion or other item of business, the Chair will try to alternate between speeches for and against.

If any amendments have been submitted, they will be debated after the initial speech in favour the motion to which they relate. The procedure for each amendment will be the same as that for a motion. Once all the amendments have been dealt with the debate returns to speeches on the motion as amended.

With advice from the deputy the Chair can limit the number of speeches on a motion or limit the length of time of speeches.

If the proposing organisation is not present, the BYC Board will propose the motion.

During the debates any questions can be directed to the helpdesk at the front of the room where a member of BYC staff and a member of the Board of Trustees will be positioned to answer questions.

Voting

Each member organisation has an allocated number of voting delegates based on the size of their organisation and therefore the number of young people they represent. This is why some large national organisations will have more voting delegates than a smaller local youth council, for example.

At the event, only delegates who have registered as voting delegates can cast votes in motion debates and elections. Observer delegates are not permitted to vote. Each delegate is entitled to one vote only.

During the policy debates votes will be cast via electronic voting pads which allows for real time accurate results to be seen by the room.

Policy Motions (in alphabetical member order)

1. Save our arts services (Adur and Worthing Youth Council)

The provision of arts education in schools is vital to the mental health and skills development of young people, however due to recent cuts in education spending, arts and creative subjects have often been the first to be cut.

According to a BBC survey of over 1,200 schools, 9 out of 10 have had to make a cut to their provision of creative subjects. This has had a further knock on effect resulting in 3 in 10 schools saying they may have to stop offering at least one creative GCSE. We the Adur and Worthing youth council have found this to be true in our local area, with the suspension of drama GCSE in some schools. This can be seen as the result of the pressure to encourage STEM subjects and the encouragement of the EBacc since 2015, meaning that the uptake of arts is now facing the same problems that STEM was 13 years ago.

The impact of these changes can be seen as early as key stage 2 as teachers have seen a decline in independent thinking and a negative attitude towards the value of arts as a subject as they move to secondary school. At key stage 3 schools are pressured to perform well at EBacc subjects thus further contributing to the devaluing of arts subjects. Then at key stage 4 schools are finding it harder to recruit specialist teachers due to the decline in funding further resulting in arts being cut.

The benefits of arts are being lost as funding declines. We have found that creative subjects teach a number of skills that aren't taught by STEM subjects. This includes communication skills, self-esteem and teamwork. There are also benefits particular to each subject for example dance teaches spatial awareness, drama empathy and music active listening. Furthermore, arts have also been linked to stress relief and have been found to have a profound positive impact on mental health. It has been found that those who have a creative outlet are less likely to suffer from depression or anxiety or if they do are better equipped to deal with their thoughts and feelings.

Text to be inserted into the British Youth Council manifesto

The British Youth Council recognises the problems faced by schools due to the cuts to education and tightening of budgets, despite this we believe that more can be done to support and save our arts and creative subjects. We also recognise the value of STEM subjects.

We call upon the government to ensure protection for funding to arts in schools via ring fencing of funds in coalition with the local authorities to support schools in providing a balanced curriculum were by the provision of STEM subjects doesn't come at the cost of creative subjects.

We also call upon the government to recognise the benefits of arts and creative subjects in creating positive mental health as a preventative measure as well as an alternative treatment. And to consider this impact when funding to arts are being cut.

We call on the Government to implement these strategies early into the curriculum so that any young people vulnerable to poor mental health can get help early on and to provide more help for those who suffer with the illness as self harm can lead to bigger consequences in the future if not stopped.

2. Sustainable period products (Girlguiding)

The environment is at breaking point and taking action to prevent a point of no return is something that cannot be delayed. We have seen a lot of positive changes around items such as plastic straws and bottles, which should continue, but it's time for action to be taken on single-use menstrual products and for them to be made more sustainable. We think this is a really important area to be included in debates around how to address plastic over-use and develop more sustainable products. These products are largely unsustainable and environmentally damaging, as shown through some of the statistics below:

- Pads, which are currently the most favoured menstrual product around the world, are made up of around 90% plastic, which is equivalent to four plastic bags (Natracare, 2019).
- Tampons, which are made up of less plastic at 7%, are unfortunately largely encased in plastic applicators and then individually wrapped in plastic (BBC, 2018).
- One year's worth of typical menstrual products contributes around 5.3kg CO2 equivalent per person to the climate (Friends of Earth, 2018).

With the average menstruating person throwing away 200kg of menstrual products in their lifetime (Friends of Earth, 2018), and 45 billion menstrual products being used each year (Natracare, 2019), these products need to be made more sustainable. Those who menstruate should not feel responsible for causing negative environmental impacts through purchasing much needed menstrual products, when it's the manufacturers who should be altering their products to make them more sustainable to start with. However, it is also extremely important that menstrual products are affordable through these changes to continue to tackle period poverty.

Furthermore, there needs to be an increase in young people's knowledge and understanding of reusable and more sustainable menstrual products, such as menstrual cups and cloth pads, allowing young people to make a more informed decision surrounding the products they use. Further work also needs to be carried out to reduce the stigma surrounding these products and for these products to be made more affordable and accessible to young people

Text to be inserted into the British Youth Council manifesto

The British Youth Council calls for manufacturers of menstrual products to make their products more sustainable, predominantly through the reduction of plastic used, whilst also ensuring that they are affordable to young people. The British Youth Council also calls for manufacturers to list the materials used in their products on the product packaging to allow young people to make a more informed choice surrounding their menstrual products, as this is not currently part of UK law.

The British Youth Council also support the production of reusable menstrual products, such as menstrual cups and cloth pads, but believes that companies and organisations need to work to increase young people's knowledge of these products whilst also tackling the stigma that surrounds these products too. The British Youth Council does also call for these products to be made more affordable and accessible for young people.

3. Restricting the promotion and sale of dieting products to children and young people and providing an accessible way of complaining (Girlguiding)

Issues around body image and pressure from social media have a negative impact on many young people. We believe that the promotion of diet products on social media, such as 'skinny teas', adds to these pressures.

The Girls' Attitude Survey (GAS) 2018 found that 59% of girls aged 11-21 felt stressed due to pressure from social media. As they are advertised on social media, diet products often have celebrity endorsement. GAS 2018 found that 22% of 11-21-year-olds tried a diet after hearing a celebrity using it, showing the potential impact of diet products being advertised to young people. Along with improper health warnings of the effects of Senna glycoside, a natural laxative, these products are being abused by young people who according to BBC newsbeat have been known to take more than the suggested dose and use them to replace meals. These products can contribute to a negative view of body image as, in GAS, 53% of 11-21-year olds said they would like to look more like pictures of women and girls they see in the media. GAS also showed that 52% of 11-21-year olds have known a girl who has experienced an eating disorder. Whilst diet teas haven't been proven to cause these they can be known to exacerbate them, as shown by a BBC newsbeat report about addiction to diet tea. Therefore, we believe that advertising diet products to children should be banned.

We also believe that there should be a clear complaints procedure to report when these products are being advertised to children. In GAS, 53% 11-21 year olds said that bloggers and YouTubers create an idea of being perfect that is unrealistic and unachievable. Therefore, if young people can recognise unrealistic images, they need a way to be able to report them to create more body realistic content. This would allow the 52% of girls that told GAS they sometimes feel ashamed of how they look because they aren't like girls and women in the media to report detrimental content. Thus, encouraging bloggers to post more body realistic content, fostering a better environment online. A young woman aged 11-16 said to GAS, "I'd like to change the ideal body shape to something more realistic" which is what we aim to achieve by regulating the advertising standards of diet products.

Text to be inserted into the British Youth Council Manifesto

The British Youth Council understands public figures such as Jameela Jamil have begun to expose the risks of diet products containing natural laxatives, but we believe more can be done.

We call upon the government and Advertising Standards Authority to place greater restrictions on the promotion and sale of diet products to children and young people (under 18) by not showing them before the watershed, on public billboards or on social media.

We also call upon social media sites to have clearer complaints procedures specifically linked to diet products and their promotion of an unrealistic body image so that young people can report when they are feeling pressured to change.

4. Fast fashion and the environment (Girlguiding)

Young people across the UK are becoming increasingly aware of our environmental impact and in turn becoming increasingly passionate about protecting the world that we are inheriting and growing up in.

Fast fashion is a contemporary movement and refers to inexpensive clothing produced rapidly by mass-market retailers in response to the latest trends. This is having a detrimental impact on our environment and is not sustainable. Research by the Environmental Audit Committee (2019) found that the textile industry creates 1.2 billion tonnes of CO2 per year, which is more than international aviation and shipping combined, consumes lake-sized volumes of water, creates chemical and plastic pollution; and 35% of micro plastics found in the ocean come from synthetic clothing. Alongside this, the fast fashion culture in society means that most garments purchased are discarded by consumers after an average of 5 weeks (The Guardian, 2019). This results in 1.3 million tonnes of waste produced by the fashion industry each year, most of which goes to landfill or gets incinerated.

Girlguiding has added an environmental aspect to a lot of our activities, as we know from our Future Girl consultation with 76,000 girls that our members are passionate about the environment. 34,376 of our Brownies, aged 7-10 (nearly all of those asked) stated that they wanted to live in a world where people care about the environment and recycling. We therefore believe that this should extend to our fashion industry.

If we want to protect our planet for the future generations, we must make our fashion industry more sustainable, before it is too late. This responsibility sits primarily with manufacturers of clothing, but also with society as a whole, through the adoption of a culture of recycling and sustainably purchasing clothing – including through education for young people and others on fast fashion and its impact.

Text to be inserted into the British Youth Council manifesto

The British Youth Council supports the work that is being done to tackle environmental issues, but believes that more could be done. This includes work surrounding the fashion industry.

The British Youth Council believes that the Government should call on manufacturers to develop and more widely adopt more sustainable production methods, such as using waterless dyeing, in order to reduce the significant environmental impact that the industry has.

The British Youth Council also believes that brands should be encouraging customers to recycle their old clothes when purchasing new ones, such as having a collection box inside their stores. The British Youth Council knows that the fashion industry is built upon consumerism and as such it's not realistic to ask manufacturers to produce fewer clothes, as that lessens revenue, therefore, the call is for brands to become more conscious of their environmental impact and use innovative and more sustainable ways to manufacture their products. This, in turn, will allow young people to purchase clothing knowing that the garment that they are purchasing is being produced more sustainably and is having a lessened negative environmental impact.

5. Bringing agriculture into the classroom (The National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs)

The NFYFC would like to bring together some of their previous motions as they believe that children and young people still do not receive consistent and good quality advice about food production

Text to be inserted into the British Youth Council manifesto

The British Youth Council believes that Farming and countryside education should play a larger role within the primary and secondary education of children and young people in the UK. We believe that children and young people do not receive consistent and good quality advice about farming, the countryside and food production. We believe that practical outdoor learning will enhance children's education experience on physical, academic and social levels. We believe that children require an understanding of farming and food production in order to make positive consumer and diet choices in later life. Equally, children with a respect for food, its production, and distribution and value instilled at an early age will be less likely to waste food and reduce its impact on the environment.

Everybody should have the opportunity to understand where their food comes from or how it is made to the products seen on shelves. Many children and some adults currently believe that food comes from the supermarket and don't think about the actual producers of the food they eat every day. From primary age field to fork education should be a part of the national curriculum as a fundamental part of a child's learning.

This should involve trips to see farmers and growers, understanding how food gets from the farm to their plate and the farming practices involved. As children then move in to secondary education this would also provide the chance to experience crop production, understanding the process of caring for animals and farming as a business with the associated careers.

This in turn could then be supported by other subjects such as science, geography, business and economics and physical education. Organisations like the School Farms Network, Linking Environment and Farming Education (LEAF Ed) and the resources base The Countryside Classroom all support teachers to integrate farming and countryside education in the national curriculum.

6. Agriculture and the environment (The National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs)

Text to be inserted into the British Youth Council manifesto

Climate change and the future of our environment are of utmost concern to young people across the globe and the government are seeking the input of young people through the youth steering group. The UK is a world leader in making changes in order to reduce society's impact on the planet.

Recently in the media there has been negativity towards the agriculture industry and farming based around environmental impacts, climate change and animal welfare, and includes some misinformation. We feel that it is important that people take the time to look at a range of sources of information in order to make an educated decision on these topical issues. NFYFC would like to highlight sources of information that young people can trust and that are based on research and fact in order to offer a balanced opinion and lead to informed choice.

Such examples of this media coverage are stories surrounding livestock and climate change and the increase in plant based diets which have been sensationalised by the media. This is just one topic which is not as simple as it might seem, and where workable climate solutions could be dismissed in the rush towards quick fixes with unintended consequences. Whilst there are changes to be made in agriculture and food production to support climate change targets we would urge young people to explore sources outside of the mainstream news feeds such as –

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board's knowledge library

Pasture for life

European Environment Agency

These sources offer a factual science based approach to the issues we face, the facts around them and potential solutions.

7. Remember to spend time in the real world (The National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs)

Text to be inserted into the British Youth Council manifesto

Young People are spending increasing amounts of time on devices; this could be communicating with others, interacting on social media, gaming or searching for information. Whilst there are so many positives to being connected through the internet including access to information and communication are people becoming too reliant on their devices. Young people are living two lives, their physical one, when they meet up with friends and spend time together and their digital lives, where they may interact regularly with people they have never met. The digital world never stops and has no set time limitations. Young people have access to an abundance of information both positive and negative and this impacts their daily lives.

Some of the content and images online may lead young people into having unrealistic expectations of themselves and the world around them which could have a negative impact on their mental health. The rise and fall of people's popularity in the digital world can be rapid and this can leave its victims feeling alone. In the digital world anyone can develop content and the big tech companies are unable to maintain full control over instantly uploaded content. This means that children and young people may be exposed to content that is not suitable for them or that they may not be equipped to deal with. Information and education is needed from an early age in order to navigate the digital world, benefitting from its positives and building knowledge and resilience not to become a victim of it or of those with poor intent.

Whilst young people's digital lives are important and form part of their identity we want to encourage young people to engage with the physical world and all the benefit that can be gained from doing so. As an organisation our members spend large amounts of physical time together and this often involves being outside accessing the countryside and rural areas, as well as parks and growing spaces. Outdoor space can be enjoyed no matter the size. Being with people and spending time outdoors both have physical health benefits and young people should be encouraged to spend time outdoors to give their life a balance.

8. CHANGE AMENDMENT 1: Recognise Our Minds Matter and Improve Our Mental Health Services (The Scout Association)

Text to in bold to be added, text with ~~strikethrough~~ to be deleted.

We believe that there should be more awareness of mental health issues and more work done to challenge the stigma surrounding mental health issues, so that young people know where to get help.

We believe that the Government needs to do more to address mental health challenges faced by young people. We also believe that stigma surrounding mental health prevents many young people from seeking support; and that help and advice are often scarce. Greater investments need to be made to ensure that support and care is; age-appropriate, youth-friendly and accessible both locally and nationally for 16-25 year olds.

In order to do so, we believe that these services should be developed with Young People involved to ensure that the points above are satisfied, providing a welcoming service that is more likely to be used. In line with this, it is also important that the workforce providing the assistance has sufficient specialty training to be able to successfully engage with Young People using the service to ensure that it is open to all.

We believe that the following measures would support the increase in quality and quantity of Youth Mental Health provision across the UK:

- All Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Mental Health Access points should be youth friendly (**as defined in the Manifesto Motion “Create a youth-friendly National Health Service”**).
- CAMHS literature should be youth proofed and should be tailored to suit all learning needs.
- Peer education projects should be run in schools and youth projects to raise awareness of mental health issues and to reduce the stigma associated with mental health.
- Development of a national mental health policy website
- A CAMHS open door policy offered in every borough or district.
- Development of a list of 10 national indicators of poor mental health common amongst young people

~~We believe that mental health and people’s resilience to coping with everyday life is a huge issue. Young people in rural areas often have the added difficulties of accessing real social networks, education, employment, transport and basic services. In some cases, these issues can lead to a feeling of rural isolation and social exclusion.~~

~~It is often it is recommend that people suffering with mental health issues ‘go for a walk in the countryside’ unfortunately for those residing there the realities can be very different. Although idyllic in many ways rural areas present unique challenges. For young people living in rural area it can feel like they are living in a goldfish bowl. Despite the benefits of living within a close and supportive community it can present a challenge when you don’t conform~~

~~to peoples expected norms or when you expect a level of confidentiality that is not adhered to or achievable due to the nature of the community. Rural areas can often feel suffocating and the desire to be 'unknown' by young people can put additional pressure on young people.~~

~~The lack of services within rural areas has been aided by the internet support options, where internet connection is reliable but to physically access services it usually involves a referral through a GP which may not be an option for a young person if they know the GP personally and don't feel comfortable discussing it with them.~~

~~We would like the issue of rural mental health to be highlighted as it presents different issues to those young people living in more urban areas. Young Farmers Club provides workshops on positive mental health to support their members in partnership with the Farming Community network but those people that are not a member of the organisation may not be aware these local services exist. We need to raise awareness of the mental health issues in rurally isolated areas and highlight the 'rural element' to mental health organisations to ensure that young people in rural areas have someone to talk to and to identify ways in which they can access the necessary support if required.~~

9. CHANGE AMENDMENT 2: 'Recognise Our Minds Matter and Improve Our Mental Health Services' to become 'A Better Mental Health Service in Rural Environments' (The Scout Association)

Text to in bold to be added, text with ~~strikethrough~~ to be deleted.

We believe that mental health and people's resilience to coping with everyday life is a huge issue. Young people in rural areas often have the added difficulties of accessing real social networks, education, employment, transport and basic services. In some cases, these issues can lead to a feeling of rural isolation and social exclusion.

It is often it is recommend that people suffering with mental health issues 'go for a walk in the countryside' unfortunately for those residing there the realities can be very different. Although idyllic in many ways rural areas present unique challenges. For young people living in rural area it can feel like they are living in a goldfish bowl. Despite the benefits of living within a close and supportive community it can present a challenge when you don't conform to people's expected norms or when you expect a level of confidentiality that is not adhered to or achievable due to the nature of the community. Rural areas can often feel suffocating and the desire to be 'unknown' by young people can put additional pressure on young people.

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10. CHANGE AMENDMENT: Statutory Youth Voice (Stroud District Youth Council)

Text to in bold to be added, text with ~~strikethrough~~ to be deleted.

We believe that young people's voice can improve and support decision making in local authorities. ~~We call on the Government to make provision of, and meaningful consultation with, a top tier youth voice vehicle compulsory for all local authorities.~~ We call on the government to make provision of a youth voice vehicle, a statutory requirement for every local authority (including county, district, unitary, metropolitan districts and London boroughs in England and Wales; local councils in Northern Ireland; and unitary authorities in Scotland)

11. CHANGE AMENDMENT: 'Education on disabilities' to become 'Education on and around disabilities, learning difficulties and neurodiversity' (Stroud District Youth Council)

Text to in bold to be added, text with ~~strikethrough~~ to be deleted.

~~With many people in society having a disability in some way, shape or form, the lack of teaching and growing stigma must be addressed. The British Youth Council believes that in schools, people should be learning about the different kinds of autism and disabilities, and how to help someone with autism if they have it. Therefore, to reduce the discrimination and ignorance that surrounds being disabled, in any way shape or form, we must raise awareness.~~

The stigma and lack of teaching around disabilities, learning difficulties and neurodiversity must be addressed. The British Youth Council believes that people should be learning about these, especially in schools, in which to reduce the discrimination and ignorance that surrounds them. We must promote acceptance and inclusivity at all times.