

Northampton Youth Forum

Memorandum of Understanding

Scope: This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is between West Northamptonshire Council, Northampton Secondary Schools or local youth organisations, Parents and the Young People representing the Youth Forum.

It is understood that the Youth Forum will be elected, by their School or Youth Organisation. The MoU sets out responsibilities, frequency of meetings, support and management arrangements and principles, and purposes of the agreement for the Forum.

Principles and Purposes: The MoU has the key principle of creating an understandable and clear agreement on operational arrangements for the Youth Forum. The MoU will establish an open communication channel between young people, the Council, other statutory organisations and community and voluntary organisations, representing and supporting young people.

The purposes of the Youth Forum:

1. Ensure that all young people in Northampton have a voice
2. Young people are not just representing themselves but providing a voice for young people's thoughts on issues locally
3. To engage young people (aged 13-19 yrs) in a consultative process that empowers them to share their views, interests and needs with each other so that their collective voice will inform Service Providers, and contribute to the decision making process in relation to service planning and the deployment of identified resources
4. Ensure political leaders and officers engage proactively with young people via consultation and engagement
5. To promote equality for young people
6. To stimulate and improve communication between WNC, young people and other organisations in the West Northants
7. To act on issues that are, important to young people accessing our services and in the local community
8. To feed back information from meetings and projects to their school and peers, and promote public youth forum events

Frequency of meetings

Youth Forum meetings will be held during school holidays, usually on a Thursday between 10am and 3pm. Where meetings fall in term-time they will be shorter meetings after school for no more than two hours. The Covid pandemic has also introduced the use of virtual meetings where necessary.

There will also be other meetings or activities to attend throughout the year. The forum dates will be circulated via email.

There is an expectation that members attend as many meetings as possible and send apologies if unable to attend. If two consecutive meetings are missed, a valid reason will be requested.

Staff Support

This involves ensuring the youth forum is influential within the Council and that their voices are heard and acted upon. An officer from West Northamptonshire Council will be present at each meeting. They will help co-ordinate, guide and support the young group by giving them confidence to make positive contribution to the meetings.

It is the role of the staff to promote the forum across West Northants, while acting as an advocate for the forum and establish links with other youth and community programmes. All officers will have DBS clearance.

Chair and other Responsibilities

The aim is for the group to be run by the youth members with staff present for support. The members will take on responsibilities such as chairing the meeting with an internal election to choose these positions to be filled. Elections will take place annually.

Areas of work:

The Youth Forum will develop a 12 month rolling action plan, focusing on issues that matter most to young people.

Refreshments

Tea, coffee and cold drinks will be provided at each meeting. There will be an expectation for youth forum members to bring lunch with them, or money to purchase lunch. However, if there is a difficulty with these, please get in touch with us to discuss alternative arrangements. No refreshments can be provided for virtual meetings.

Travel

There will be an expectation that youth forum members arrange suitable travel arrangements to and from face to face meetings and forum led events. However, if there is a difficulty in arranging travel to and from meetings, please get in touch with us to discuss alternative arrangements.

Review: This document will be reviewed annually, along with the action plan.

If you would like to discuss further, please contact:

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