



Youth Parliament
MAKING OUR MARK

Supported by



MANIFESTO



2024-2026

Shaping our future, today not tomorrow



We believe that these policies represent the views of young people across the UK...



The issues we raise here – from votes at 16, the minimum wage, public transport, education and period dignity amongst many others, should not be taken as mere aspirations. They are demands for a more inclusive, equal, and resilient world for now and for the future.



UK YOUTH PARLIAMENT MANIFESTO

Contents

- Pg 5-6 Foreword (MYPs, NYA)
- Pg 8-9 The UK Youth Parliament
- Pg 10-11 Our Policy Process
- Pg 12 Devolution and Power Sharing
- Pg 14-34 Policy Chapters
 - Pg 14-15 Finance and the Economy
 - Pg 16-17 Local Government, Housing and the Constitution
 - Pg 18-20 Education and Skills
 - Pg 22-23 Business, Trade and Work
 - Pg 24-25 Health
 - Pg 26-27 Climate and Environment
 - Pg 28-29 Transport
 - Pg 30-31 Culture, Media and Sport
 - Pg 32-33 Crime, Justice and Immigration
 - Pg 34 Science and Technology
- Pg 35-36 How the UK's System of Government Works
- Pg 37-40 UK Parliament
- Pg 41-42 Devolution and Power Sharing



This manifesto is a rallying cry for everyone to work together to build a future that reflects these values of justice, fairness, and opportunity. It reminds us that the challenges we face today are not insurmountable if we empower young people with the tools, platforms, and resources we need to create change.



Foreword

On the threshold of a new era of the UK Youth Parliament, the voices of young people across the UK are louder and more determined than ever.

This manifesto is not just a document – it is a testament to the power of young people, our creativity, passion, and vision for a world where we can lead, inspire and shape change. It reflects the shared hopes and concerns of an entire generation that is ready to step forward and take on the challenges of today and tomorrow. Young people are not passive observers; we are activists, innovators and leaders at the forefront of these global shifts. This manifesto embodies our collective call for action – a plea for policies that place the wants and needs of young people at the heart of decision-making, education and empowerment.

This cohort of Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) have faced a unique journey during our time. Just as elections took place for the new UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) term of office, the British Youth Council, who ran the UK Youth Parliament from 2011 to 2024, suddenly announced its closure after 75 years of youth work. Amongst this uncertainty about the future of the programme, young people showed their potential and ambition by continuing to campaign independently until the National Youth Agency (NYA) took over the programme.

This manifesto would also not be possible without everyone who supports the UK Youth Parliament programme, including the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which helps to fund it, the NYA, which coordinates the programme, local support workers and partners, who are so valuable in supporting MYPs, and local youth councils, where they exist.

The issues we raise here – from votes at 16, the minimum wage, public transport, education and period dignity amongst many others, should not be taken as mere aspirations. They are demands for a more inclusive, equal and resilient world for now and for the future. This manifesto provides policies for leaders and decision-makers across the UK to follow, offering our solutions, ideas, and vision for progress.



This manifesto is a rallying cry for everyone to work together to build a future that reflects these values of justice, fairness, and opportunity. It reminds us that the challenges we face today are not insurmountable if we empower young people with the tools, platforms, and resources we need to create change.

This manifesto must serve as both a challenge and an invitation. To all those in positions of power, it is our call for you to listen, to act, and to make youth voices central to the decisions that shape our world. To all the young people who have contributed their ideas, their energy, and their dreams: this is your moment. Let this manifesto ignite the change we so desperately need.

We believe that these policies represent the views of young people across the UK, and this manifesto acts as a reference for how we want to shape the world, for today and not for tomorrow.

The UK Youth Parliament Manifesto Committee – Chiara, Sophia, Ealaf, Fatuma, Caitlin, James, Angela, Bobby, Vin, Honey, Robyn, Conor, Rajsee, Catriona, Iain, Pranav, Christopher, Rocky, Evie, Lowri, Emily, Austin, Anna and Giancarlo

On behalf of the National Youth Agency (NYA), I am delighted to welcome you to this 2024-2026 UK Youth Parliament Manifesto. 'Shaping Our Future, Today Not Tomorrow'

It is a privilege for the NYA to be the new home of the UK Youth Parliament following the closure of the British Youth Council in March 2024. Since we successfully bid to host the UKYP in May 2024, the UK Youth Parliament has grown from strength to strength, from hosting the Annual Conference in Warwick to the achievements of the Youth Select Committee, our work with Regions and Nations, and now the Annual Sitting in the House of Commons.

This Manifesto, which represents the views and issues of the young people of the UK distilled into 110 policies that can change the world, showcases the best of the youth voice and youth participation movement. I look forward to working with the MYPs and our partners in our Regions and Nations, including the many fantastic youth workers who support the UK Youth Parliament. Thank you for all your hard work to give young people a UK-wide elected forum to have their voices heard.

In a modern, effective society, it is vital that we put young people and their views as the next generation at the heart of decision-making. The motto, "Nothing About Us, Without Us", must be at the forefront of decision-makers' minds.



Leigh Middleton, OBE
Chief Executive Officer – National Youth Agency



#UKYP24

#UKYP24

#UKYP24

#UKYP24

South Parliament
NYA

The UK Youth Parliament

The United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP) is a programme that provides opportunities for 11-18 year olds to use their elected voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning.

Commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, on behalf of the UK Government, the National Youth Agency manages the UK Youth Parliament and works with partner organisations to deliver the programme.

The UK Youth Parliament is a UK-wide programme rather than a national programme. When talking about programme activities, such as the priority campaign, those involved with UKYP should not use the term “national” when referring to the UK as a whole.

The UK Youth Parliament is made up of 203 constituencies and 395 seats. Each Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) represents up to 20,700 young people.

In total, the UK Youth Parliament and its members act as the democratically elected voice of the 6.2 million young people aged 11-18 who live across all of the United Kingdom.

Primarily, the UK Youth Parliament will ensure that the young people of the United Kingdom are given a voice on any issue that affects them, as laid out in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Elections to the UK Youth Parliament take place every two years. The term of office for the UK Youth Parliament starts the 1 April and ends 31 March. Responsibility for elections is delegated to local authorities (or bodies acting on behalf or instead of a local authority) in England and Wales, the Scottish Youth Parliament in Scotland and are directly run by the National Youth Agency in Northern Ireland.

MYPs can be elected directly by constituency-wide elections or via internal youth council elections, as long as the youth council is elected.





Once elected, MYPs meet with decision makers, organise events, run campaigns, make speeches, hold debates, and ensure the views of young people are listened to by decision makers. As well as being aged 11-18 years old, MYPs must live, work, be educated or volunteer in the constituency in which they stand for election for 14+ hours a week.

Any MYP can set up a campaign, and any young person can support it and make a difference. The UK Youth Parliament and its members seek to influence policy and decisions that affect young people, at every level.

The UK Youth Parliament has a shared set of principles, conduct, commitment and expectations to ensure that members can effectively carry out their roles. An MYP's duty is towards the young people who voted for them, the young people who didn't vote for them and every young person in their constituency.

The UK Youth Parliament is an issue-based programme and members should ensure that the work of the UK Youth Parliament is not affiliated with any political party. The UK Youth Parliament seeks to represent no party-political view and UKYP discussions are to be solely issue-based.

Members of the UK Youth Parliament need to be non-party political when carrying out their role. Members are elected as representatives and their duty is towards; the young people who voted for them, the young people who didn't vote for them and every young person in their constituency.

The UK Youth Parliament must be a party politically neutral programme so we can make sure that all young people can engage with us, and so we do not alienate young people from decision makers.

As the programme is hosted by a charity, the National Youth Agency, the work of the programme and its members are bound by charity law which prevents UKYP from being explicitly party political or in any way implying our work is endorsing any particular candidates or parties. This extends to any activities that could be seen as renouncing any particular party or politician.

Charities can campaign for a change in the law, policy or decisions where such change would support the charity's purposes. However, it is a legal requirement that in the political arena, a charity must stress its independence and ensure that any involvement it has with political parties is balanced. A charity must not give support or funding to a political party, nor to a candidate or politician.

When meeting with politicians it is important to distinguish between a politician's party and the role/office they hold.

It is important to distinguish between the definitions of non-partisan and apolitical. A person may be described as apolitical if they are uninterested or uninvolved in politics. This definition is not true of MYPs or the work of UKYP and as a result the term non-partisan is correct, meaning that there is no affiliation with, or bias towards, a political party. There is a difference between being political and being partisan and UKYP is a political programme but cannot be partisan.

Our Policy Process

While individually MYPs have their own priorities, there isn't a collective answer to the question "what does the UKYP believe?" This is why we launched the 2024 policy process – with the aim of creating a new manifesto.

Acting as UKYP's vision for the future, the manifesto is wide ranging and broken up into chapters that link to the work of different UK government departments to ensure every social issue that is raised in the manifesto can link to a ministerial portfolio as we use this manifesto to advocate for the changes MYPs want to see in society or resist unwanted changes.

There are some policies and themes which sit across different departmental and ministerial portfolios. Policies have been grouped within the manifesto on a thematic basis using the department which holds the core responsibility or power, based on the aim of the policy; for example, "schools should provide more adequate and accessible mental health support for all students" sits within the education and skills section of the manifesto as an issue for the Department for Education to take action on rather than the Department of Health and Social Care due to the policies naming of schools.

Over September and October 2024, MYPs were invited to submit up to two policy statements. When submitting their policies, MYPs have been asked to complete the statement that "the UK Youth Parliament believes..." with the submissions directly relating to a change or issue that the MYP wants to bring attention to.

From the original 295 submitted policy motions that link to 16 different areas of the work of the UK Government, all submissions were included in an order paper, as individual points and grouped by the UK Government Department for MYPs to be able to debate and amend during their Annual Conference. Eighteen policy committees and a plenary session with all conference attendees provided MYPs with opportunities to explore ideas in depth and contribute to the decision-making process for shaping this term's policy positions.

To ensure voices for all four nations were fully involved in this process, the National Youth Agency worked with the Scottish Youth Parliament as part of the committee process, and before final votes took place, as MYPs from Scotland were unable to attend the Annual Conference in October.



During committees and for every policy motion, MYPs have been able to;

- Carry Forward – Present the policy at the plenary session
- Reject – Leave the policy at the committee stage
- Group – Merge similar policies into one
- Amend – Rewrite a policy

An example of how MYPs have amended policies is motions that included the term “period poverty” have been updated to “period dignity”.

An online ballot, to ensure all MYPs are able to take part, took place in November with MYPs being able to vote 'agree', 'disagree' or 'abstain' on every policy that came out of the plenary sessions. The UKYP manifesto for the 2024-2026 term of office only includes policies that a majority of voting MYPs voted to agree to.

To ensure not only the submission, debating and voting part of the policy process is youth led but also the creation of the manifesto, National Youth Agency brought together a manifesto committee made up of MYPs from around the UK to work in partnership to develop the final document.

While this was happening, and from the agreed list of 110 policies that make up the UK Youth Parliament 2024-2026 manifesto, MYPs have been able to vote to decide which five issues will be debated during the February 2025 House of Commons sitting to select their two UK priority campaigns for 2025; one devolved campaign and one reserved campaign.



Devolution and Power Sharing

Devolution is about how Parliaments and Governments make decisions. Depending on where you live in the UK, devolution will affect who makes what decisions. The nations that make up the UK (England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland) have different powers to make laws and deliver public services. These are often called devolved powers (and may also be called transferred matters). The UK Parliament and UK Government retain some powers across the UK as a whole. These are often called reserved powers. Anything that's not reserved is the responsibility of the nations rather than the UK as a whole.

Examples of reserved issues that the UK Government remains responsible for include the constitution, foreign affairs, national security, immigration, trade, broadcasting and some areas of taxation.

Devolution agreements are complex and are all different. Broadly speaking, the following things are devolved in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland but more topics exist;

- health and social care
- education and training
- local government and housing
- agriculture
- forestry and fisheries
- transport
- the environment and planning
- tourism and heritage
- sport



The different parts of the UK may have different identities, traditions, economies and cultures. Using correct terminology and pronunciation for the relevant part of the UK, will help show respect for, and reflect the national and regional differences and sensitivities of, all parts of the UK.

"The Government" can mean different things to different people. People living in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have two Governments, one at a UK level and one at a national level. This extends to Parliaments as well.

MYPs are Members of the UK Youth Parliament.



Finance and the Economy



The following section includes policies that are directed at the Treasury.

The Treasury is the government's economic and finance department, maintaining control over public spending, setting the direction of the UK's economic policy and working to achieve strong and sustainable economic growth.

The role of the Treasury is reserved. The Treasury calculates the block grant for the devolved nations of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland using the Barnett formula. Some areas of taxation are devolved.

Along with its own work, the Treasury also works with 18 agencies and public bodies that includes the UK Debt Management Office, Office for Budget Responsibility, The Crown Estate, Financial Conduct Authority and the Royal Mint.

Ministers within the Treasury include the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Parliamentary Secretary and the Minister for Investment.

The below policies are a result of the UK Youth Parliament's policy process and have been agreed by Members of Youth Parliament.



The UK Youth Parliament believes;

- ✖ The benefits system criteria should be based on a wider range of evidence, including housing and employment, to reduce the amount of homelessness.
- ✖ The Chancellor of the Exchequer should prioritise the cost of living crisis, and decrease child poverty, in future economic plans.
- ✖ Child poverty and financial inequality must be eradicated through increased government financial support to young people and caregivers at a UK level.
- ✖ Ending child food poverty is vital for every child's growth and success.
- ✖ More funding for schools and youth organisations to ensure food security.
- ✖ That the child benefit caps should be abolished.
- ✖ The government should review the means testing for the Winter Fuel Allowance.
- ✖ VAT should be included in private school fees, with a proportional focus.
- ✖ A wealth tax should be implemented, in conjunction with reductions of tax loopholes.
- ✖ Menstrual products should not be taxed.
- ✖ Public sector pay rise should increase by the same percentage as the private sector.
- ✖ In protecting funding and more guaranteed investment into youth services and additional provisions to unlock potential of young people especially those in the most deprived areas.
- ✖ Local youth work should be invested in by national and local governments and protected by law from budget cuts.
- ✖ Mandatory funding for youth councils in every constituency.
- ✖ A triple-lock system should be placed on all education funding.
- ✖ Funding absolutely must be reserved for the education of Gaelic heritage, specifically language and culture.



Local Government, Housing and the Constitution



The following section includes policies that are directed at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Cabinet Office.

The following section includes policies that are directed at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Cabinet Office.

MHCLG is a UK government department. The department has responsibility for housing and planning, democracy and local growth, housing and homelessness.

The Cabinet Office supports the Prime Minister and ensures the effective running of government. It is also the corporate headquarters for the government, in partnership with the Treasury, and it takes the lead in certain critical policy areas. This department is responsible for the union and the constitution.

The role of MHCLG is devolved. The role of the Cabinet Office is reserved.

Along with its own work, MHCLG also works with 16 agencies and public bodies that includes the Land Registry, Planning Inspectorate, Homes England, Housing Ombudsman, Regulator of Social Housing, Boundary Commission for England/Wales, Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation.

Ministers within MHCLG include the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Minister for Housing and Planning, the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution, the Minister for Building Safety and Homelessness, the Minister for Democracy and Local Growth, the Minister for Housing and Local Government and the Minister for Faith, Communities and Resettlement.

Along with the Cabinet Office's work, it also works with 27 agencies and public bodies that include the Leaders of the Commons and Lords, the UK Statistics Authority, the Crown Commercial Service, the Government Property Agency, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Committee on Standards in Public Life, the Social Mobility Commission, the Office for Equality and Opportunity, the Privy Council Office and the Civil Service.

Ministers within the Cabinet Office include the Prime Minister, the Minister for the Civil Service, the Minister for the Union, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Paymaster General and the Minister for the Constitution.

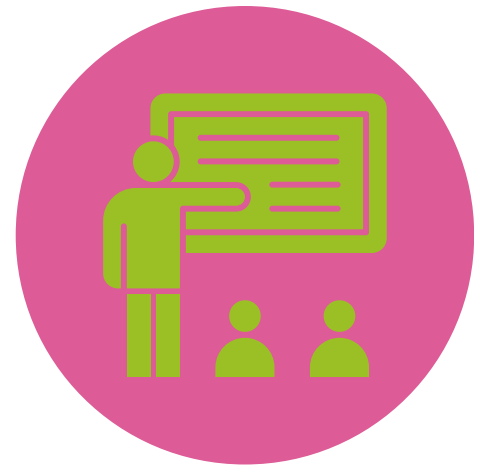
The below policies are a result of the UK Youth Parliament's policy process and have been agreed by Members of Youth Parliament.

The UK Youth Parliament believes;

- ✖ That 16 and 17 year olds should be allowed to vote in all elections and referendums, accompanied with more political education throughout school.
- ✖ The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) should be put into law UK wide.
- ✖ Freedom of speech should be balanced against the rights of others, and the law should better reflect this.
- ✖ In upholding and updating the Equalities Act to broaden the list of protected characteristics.
- ✖ Young people should be treated ethically and not face prejudice as a result of individual characteristics.
- ✖ Local councils should be held more accountable when failing to solve issues on quality of houses.
- ✖ That everyone who lives in the UK should have access to affordable and suitable housing.



Education and Skills



The following section includes policies that are directed at the Department for Education.

The Department for Education is responsible for children's services and education, including safeguarding, early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.

Education is a devolved matter in the UK, meaning that Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland set their own education policies and regulations; the UK government is responsible for centrally managing education in England.

Along with its own work, the Department for Education also works with 18 agencies and public bodies that includes Ofqual, Ofsted, the Teaching Regulation Agency, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, the Office for Students, the Office of the Children's Commissioner, Social Work England, the Student Loans Company and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

Ministers within the Department for Education include the Secretary of State for Education, the Minister for Women and Equalities, the Minister for Skills, the Minister for School Standards, the Minister for Early Education and the Minister for Children and Families.

The below policies are a result of the UK Youth Parliament's policy process and have been agreed by Members of Youth Parliament.



The UK Youth Parliament believes;

-  There should be more action against bullying with safe spaces for all, to protect their wellbeing.
-  There should be comprehensive anti-bullying initiatives with safe spaces for all students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
-  There should be active counselling, guidance and pastoral care services available in the education system.
-  Schools should provide more adequate and accessible mental health support for all students.
-  Schools should provide more mental health support and teachers should be mental health first aid trained.
-  All schools should have a mandatory safe and quiet space.
-  People who have special educational needs should be given the resources necessary for them to succeed.
-  All young people should have access to free school meals.
-  The government must ensure that school meals are of a high quality and ensure that young people can maintain a balanced, healthy diet.
-  Schools should receive greater funding to ensure high quality education is not compromised.
-  School uniforms should be free.
-  There should be universal support for students who require equipment for their subjects.
-  In equal opportunity to promote science as a subject by improving practical facilities.
-  All children and young people should have access to equal educational and extra-curricular opportunities as well as the same high standard of education regardless of which region or nation they live in.
-  Student loans and maintenance loans should not be dependent on household income, should be interest-free, and should give students an adequate sum of money which rises with the cost of living and inflation.
-  That university tuition fees should rise at no more than the rate of inflation.
-  The Education Maintenance Allowance should be nationalised.
-  That young people should be given the tools to unlock their potential through standardised work experience, careers advice and rhetoric education.
-  In adopting Northern Ireland's approach to post-16 education and work support across the wider UK.
-  All young people in the UK should have access to a standardised level of political literacy and democratic education to improve engagement in politics on a local, national and international level to develop critical thinking skills.

The UK Youth Parliament believes;

-  Media literacy education needs to be more firmly embedded into the school curriculum to help distinguish fact from fiction.
-  Young people should be taught public speaking skills to help them articulate their problems as well as how to interact with our democratic system to help them solve these problems.
-  All young people should receive statutory and standardised financial education which enables them to reach financial literacy.
-  All children should receive anti-hate speech education throughout school, as part of the curriculum.
-  That the national curriculum should be representative, and inclusive of all backgrounds, identities and histories and addressing the current colonial racist bias.
-  Schools should diversify the curriculum based on different cultural and historical backgrounds in order to promote equality.
-  Schools must do more to tackle racism and racism should not be normalised.
-  More needs to be done with students to stop misinformation on immigration.
-  There should be more education available on social media and more legislation in place so that young people can express themselves safely.
-  Health and safety education should be prioritised and standardised in the UK curriculum, including CPR, first aid, sexual health, eating disorders and periods.
-  There should be universal sex education which includes consent, safe sex and LGBTQ+ relationships. This should also cover the whole menstrual cycle and not just the period/menstruation.
-  Young people should have access to education on substances including vaping, smoking, drugs, and other harmful substances, to increase awareness.
-  Home-educated young people must be supported properly, as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
-  Schools should ensure that students have channels to discuss and propose changes and that this feedback from students is actioned.



Business, Trade and Work



The following section includes policies that are directed at the Department for Business and Trade and the Department for Work and Pensions.

The Department for Business and Trade is the UK government department for economic growth. It supports businesses to invest, grow and export, creating jobs and opportunities across the country. The Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. As the UK's biggest public service department it administers the State Pension and a range of working age, disability and ill health benefits to around 20 million claimants and customers.

The role of the Department for Business and Trade is reserved. The Department for Work and Pensions has some devolved policies and responsibilities which look different depending on where you are in the UK.

Along with its own work, the Department for Business and Trade also works with 19 agencies and public bodies that includes the Competition and Markets Authority, Companies House, the Insolvency Service, the Small Business Commissioner, the Low Pay Commission, the Post Office, the British Business Bank, the Groceries Code Adjudicator and the Pubs Code Adjudicator.

Ministers within the Department for Business and Trade include the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, the Minister for Services, Small Businesses and Export, the Minister for Trade Policy and Economic Security, the Minister for Industry and the Minister for Employment Rights, Competition and Markets.

Along with the Department for Work and Pensions' work, it also works with 13 agencies and public bodies that include the Disabled People's Employment Corporation, the Health and Safety Executive, the Money and Pensions Service, the Pensions Regulator, the Office for Nuclear Regulation and the Independent Case Examiner.

Ministers within the Department for Work and Pensions include the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Minister for Social Security and Disability, the Minister for Employment, the Minister for Transformation and the Minister for Pensions.

The below policies are a result of the UK Youth Parliament's policy process and have been agreed by Members of Youth Parliament.

The UK Youth Parliament believes;

- ✖ In increased regulation of the fast fashion industry and promotion of sustainable alternatives.
- ✖ Fast fashion items should come with an explanation of the negative side effects (e.g. the impact on human / workers' rights) attached to them.
- ✖ Vapes should be made less accessible and packaging should be less appealing to young people.
- ✖ In encouraging and promoting youth employment that complements and protects education to businesses and young people.
- ✖ Work experience and career opportunities should be more readily available.
- ✖ In eradicating youth unemployment by having work experience opportunities and a designated time period during school hours to equip many with soft skills to go into the working world.
- ✖ That the National Minimum Wage for every worker under 22 be raised in order to match the National Living Wage for those over 22.



Health



The following section includes policies that are directed at the Department of Health and Social Care.

The Department of Health and Social Care supports ministers in leading the nation's health and social care to help people live more independent, healthier lives for longer.

The role of the Department of Health and Social Care is devolved.

Along with its own work, the Department of Health and Social Care also works with 23 agencies and public bodies that include the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, UK Health Security Agency, Care Quality Commission, Health Research Authority, NHS (England), National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and the National Data Guardian.

Ministers within the Department of Health and Social Care includes the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Minister for Secondary Care, Minister of State for Care, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Patient Safety, Women's Health and Mental Health.

The below policies are a result of the UK Youth Parliament's policy process and have been agreed by Members of Youth Parliament.



The UK Youth Parliament believes;

- ✖ That there should be an integrated health service, which includes mental and physical health, accessible in a range of settings.
- ✖ That rehabilitation services should be free and accessible to young people for addiction.
- ✖ All young people deserve free and easily accessible mental health services, which are equal, inclusive and representative to all.
- ✖ Funding for young people's mental health support should be increased, including increased funding for community-based youth services.
- ✖ In more awareness around men's mental health.
- ✖ To establish period dignity, there should be free, accessible, good quality period products available in public spaces for everyone.
- ✖ The normalisation of youth alcohol and drug abuse should be tackled effectively with focus on the secondary impact of substance abuse.
- ✖ In better education and awareness on eating disorders.



Climate and Environment



The following section includes policies that are directed at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's work is about securing long-term energy supply, bringing down bills and reaching net zero. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is responsible for improving and protecting the environment. It aims to grow a green economy and sustain thriving rural communities. It also supports food, farming and fishing industries.

The role of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero is reserved. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' role is devolved, and the department works closely with the devolved administrations in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, even though it only works directly in England.

Along with its own work, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero also works with 16 agencies and public bodies that include Ofgem, the Coal Authority, the Committee on Climate Change, Great British Nuclear, the Committee on Fuel Poverty, the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management, the National Energy System Operator and Great British Energy.

Ministers within the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero include the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Minister for Industry, the Minister for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Minister for Climate, the Minister for Energy and the Minister for Energy Consumers.

Along with its own work, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs it also works with 34 agencies and public bodies that include the Forestry Commission, the Water Services Regulation Authority, the Animal and Plant Health Agency, the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, the Consumer Council for Water, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Office for Environmental Protection.

Ministers within the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs include the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Minister for Food Security and Rural Affairs, the Minister for Water and Flooding and the Minister for Nature.

The below policies are a result of the UK Youth Parliament's policy process and have been agreed by Members of Youth Parliament.

The UK Youth Parliament believes;

- ✖ And recognises there is a climate crisis, which requires immediate government action.
- ✖ A stronger commitment to the environmental and ecological protection of the planet is required by the government.
- ✖ The UK should move away from fossil fuels and move towards affordable renewable energy by 2035.
- ✖ In the importance of research into equally affordable and sustainable lifestyles for all as well as the promotion of sustainable living through protecting biodiversity and reduction in single use items.



Transport



The following section includes policies that are directed at the Department for Transport.

The Department for Transport works with agencies and partners to support the transport network that helps the UK's businesses and gets people and goods travelling around the UK. It plans and invests in transport infrastructure to keep the UK on the move.

The Department for Transport is responsible for the English transport network and a limited number of transport matters in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland that have not been devolved.

Along with its own work, the Department for Transport also works with 23 agencies and public bodies that include the Office of Rail and Road, the Driver and Vehicle Standards/Licensing Agency, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the British Transport Police Authority, HS2, National Highways, Network Rail, the Civil Aviation Authority, Crossrail, the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee and the Air/Marine/Rail Accident Investigation Branch.

Ministers within the Department for Transport include the Secretary of State for Transport, the Minister for Rail, the Minister for Local Transport, the Minister for Future of Roads and the Minister for Aviation, Maritime and Security.

The below policies are a result of the UK Youth Parliament's policy process and have been agreed by Members of Youth Parliament.



The UK Youth Parliament believes;

- ✖ Transport and active travel should be made more accessible for young people.
- ✖ The cost of car insurance for young people should be reduced.
- ✖ All public transport should be free for young people.
- ✖ Transport should be made more climate-friendly.
- ✖ That we must improve transport infrastructure, particularly by extending HS2.



Culture, Media and Sport



The following section includes policies that are directed at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Within the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, support can be found for culture, arts, media, sport, tourism and civil society across England and promotion of the importance of these sectors in contributing so much to the UK's economy, way of life and the UK's reputation around the world. The department's role includes championing sport for all at every level, support for cultural and creative industries and enhancing the cohesiveness of our communities.

The Scottish Government, Welsh Government, and Northern Ireland Executive are responsible for culture, sport, and tourism in their respective parts of the UK along with civil society and youth policy. Media-related policy and gambling regulations are reserved to Westminster.

Along with its own work, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport also works with 42 agencies and public bodies that includes the Charity Commission, the National Archives, Arts Council England, Historic England, the National Lottery Community Fund, the Gambling Commission, Sport England, UK Sport, VisitBritain, the National Citizen Service, the BBC, Channel 4, the Royal Parks, the Theatres Trust, Museums and Galleries.

Ministers within the Department for Culture, Media and Sport include the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Minister for Creative Industries, Arts and Tourism, the Minister for Sport, Media, Civil Society and Youth and the Minister for Gambling.

The below policies are a result of the UK Youth Parliament's policy process and have been agreed by Members of Youth Parliament.



The UK Youth Parliament believes;

- ✎ In more investment in creating and maintaining a variety of safe outdoor public sport facilities accessible to all, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) .
- ✎ Young people in the UK should be entitled to a substantial discount on any cultural material and events, such as books and theatre tickets.
- ✎ More free and safe holiday provisions available in the UK for young people, but with focus in deprived areas with protection funding for youth workers and youth clubs.
- ✎ Younger people should see themselves reflected in our democracy without fear of being silenced.
- ✎ Every young person deserves equal opportunities and should be heard and represented.
- ✎ In strengthening and increasing accessibility of civic programmes available for young people.
- ✎ Young people should be encouraged to hold pride in all aspects that unite them and their individuality.
- ✎ Targeted investment in programmes that provide job opportunities, mentorships, guidance, and support to young people in communities affected by violence, with the goal of steering them away from harmful behaviours and towards positive alternatives.
- ✎ That a nation (Wales) must reserve funding for individuals to be able to learn their language and culture.
- ✎ Funding should be reserved for individuals to learn their own language and culture, regardless of where they are in the UK.
- ✎ All sports should be inclusive, accessible and receive more funding.



Crime, Justice and Immigration



The following section includes policies that are directed at the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice.

The Home Office is the UK Government department responsible for immigration, security, law and order. The Ministry of Justice is the UK Government department that works to protect and advance the principles of justice.

The Home Office has a range of policy areas that are devolved, such as policing, and some that are reserved, such as immigration. The vast majority of the Ministry of Justice's work takes place in England and Wales. The ministry has no responsibility for devolved criminal justice policy, courts, prisons or probation matters in either Scotland or Northern Ireland.

Along with its own work, the Home Office also works with 29 agencies and public bodies that includes the Disclosure and Barring Service, the Immigration Advice Authority, the Independent Office for Police Conduct, the Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, the Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner, the College of Policing, the Commission for Countering Extremism, the Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, the National Counter Terrorism Security Office and the Security Service (MI5).

Ministers within the Home Office include the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the Minister for Security, the Minister for Border Security and Asylum, the Minister for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention, the Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls and the Minister for Migration and Citizenship.

Along with its own work, the Ministry of Justice also works with 35 agencies and public bodies that includes the Courts and Tribunals Service, the Prison and Probation Service, the Legal Aid Agency, the Office of the Public Guardian, the Criminal Cases Review Commission, the Independent Monitoring Authority for the Citizens' Rights Agreements, the Parole Board, the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, the Family Justice Council, the Sentencing Council for England and Wales, the Inspectorate of Prisons/Probation and the Victims' Commissioner.

Ministers within the Ministry of Justice include the Secretary of State for Justice.

The below policies are a result of the UK Youth Parliament's policy process and have been agreed by Members of Youth Parliament.

The UK Youth Parliament believes;

- ✖ The government should be doing more to tackle youth antisocial behaviour.
- ✖ We should increase awareness of youth crime.
- ✖ The youth justice system should focus on getting vulnerable young individuals into environments where they can thrive rather than exposing them to harmful activities.
- ✖ Police forces should support young people with external provision to help rather than criminalise.
- ✖ More should be done to tackle drug-related crime.
- ✖ In tougher measures on knife crime and availability of knives in communities with further support for victims and witnesses of knife violence.
- ✖ Websites selling life-threatening blades potentially used for endangering yourself or others should be banned.
- ✖ Public safety and crime reduction is imperative to creating a safer environment for young people.
- ✖ Awareness must be raised about gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and assault.
- ✖ Gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and assault, should be prevented and eliminated.
- ✖ Misogyny and violence against women and girls is universally unacceptable and must be met with harsher punishments.
- ✖ That everyone should be welcome in the UK. More should be done to support people affected by immigration. More should be done to prevent misinformation about immigration.
- ✖ Vaping regulations, including on possession, selling and use of vapes, must be enforced more strongly, especially for under-18s.



Science and Technology



The following section includes policies that are directed at the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology.

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology accelerates innovation, investment and productivity through science, ensures that new and existing technologies are safely developed and deployed across the UK and drives forward a modern digital government for the benefit of its citizens.

The role of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology is reserved.

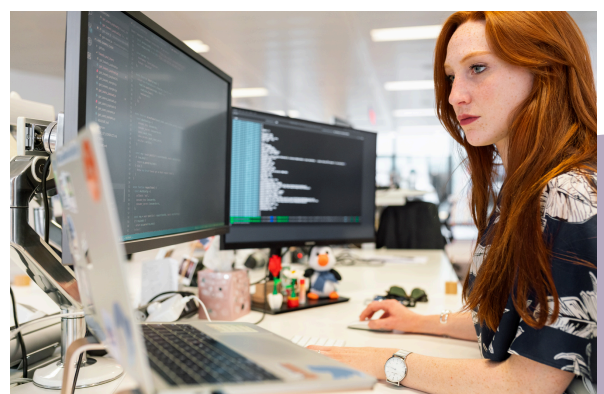
Along with its own work the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology also works with 17 agencies and public bodies that include Building Digital UK, the Intellectual Property Office, the Met Office, the UK Space Agency, the Information Commissioner's Office, Ordnance Survey and Ofcom.

Ministers within the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology include the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, the Minister of State for Science, Research and Innovation, the Minister of State for Data Protection and Telecoms, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for AI and Digital Government and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Future Digital Economy and Online Safety.

The below policies are a result of the UK Youth Parliament's policy process and have been agreed by Members of Youth Parliament.

The UK Youth Parliament believes;

-  That digital privacy and data protection should be educated, enhanced and regulated.
-  In ending the disparity of access to information and technology for young people.
-  That affordable access to IT equipment should be made universal.



How the UK's System of Government Works

The UK Government

In the UK, the Prime Minister leads the government with the support of the Cabinet and ministers. The Prime Minister is the leader of His Majesty's Government and is ultimately responsible for all policy and decisions.

The Cabinet is made up of the senior members of government. In total the UK Government has 120 ministers. Ministers are chosen by the Prime Minister from the members of the House of Commons and House of Lords. They are responsible for the actions, successes and failures of their departments.



Chooses
from the
members of
the House of
Commons
and House
of Lords



The UK Government is made up of 606 department, agency or public bodies that include

- The Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street
- 24 Ministerial Departments
- 20 Non-Ministerial Departments
- 424 agencies and other public bodies
- 115 High profile groups
- 19 public corporations
- 3 devolved administrations



How the UK's System of Government Works

Departments and their agencies are responsible for putting government policy into practice.

Some departments, like the Ministry of Defence, cover the whole UK. Others don't, such as the Department for Work and Pensions, which doesn't cover Northern Ireland. This is because some aspects of government are devolved to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



Non-ministerial departments are headed by senior civil servants and not ministers. They usually have a regulatory or inspection function like the Charity Commission.

Executive agencies are part of government departments and usually provide government services rather than decide policy, which is done by the department that oversees the agency.

An example is the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, overseen by the Department for Transport.

Executive agencies are part of government departments and usually provide government services rather than decide policy, which is done by the department that oversees the agency. An example is the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, overseen by the Department for Transport.

Other public bodies have varying degrees of independence but are directly accountable to ministers. There are four types of non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs):

- **Executive NDPBs** do work for the government in specific areas – for example, the Environment Agency.
- **Advisory NDPBs** provide independent, expert advice to ministers – for example, the Committee on Standards in Public Life.
- **Tribunal NDPBs** are part of the justice system and have jurisdiction over a specific area of law - for example, the Competition Appeal Tribunal.
- **Independent monitoring boards** are responsible for the running of prisons and treatment of prisoners – for example, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.

The Civil Service does the practical and administrative work of government. It is coordinated and managed by the Prime Minister, in their role as Minister for the Civil Service.

UK Parliament

The UK Parliament has two Houses that work on behalf of UK citizens to check and challenge the work of Government, make and shape effective laws, and debate and make decisions on the big issues of the day.

While the UK Government is the executive, the UK Parliament is the legislature. The legislature makes laws. The executive puts those laws into effect and plans policy. The judiciary administers justice by interpreting the law when its meaning is in dispute, ensuring the law is upheld.

The Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is the supreme legislative body of the United Kingdom. It meets at the Palace of Westminster, London, and may also be referred to as 'Westminster'.

Parliamentary sovereignty is a principle of the UK constitution. It makes Parliament the supreme legal authority in the UK which can create or end any law. Generally, the courts cannot overrule its legislation, and no Parliament can pass laws that future Parliaments cannot change.

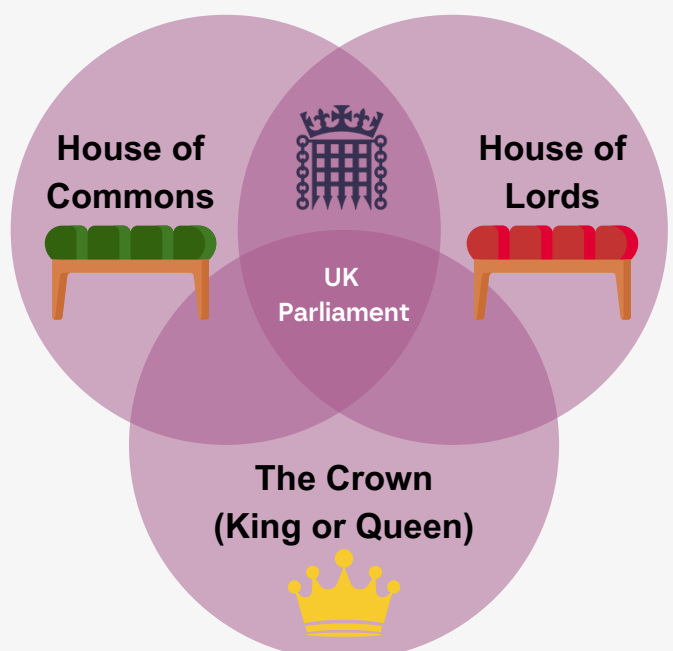
Parliamentary sovereignty can be seen as the most important part of the UK constitution.

A constitution is the set of principles and rules by which a country is organised and it is usually contained in one document. In the UK a constitution has never been codified in this way; instead, the various statutes, conventions, judicial decisions and treaties which, taken together, govern how the UK is run, are referred to collectively as the British Constitution.

In the UK, the Westminster Parliament possesses legislative supremacy (parliamentary sovereignty) and thereby holds ultimate power over all other political bodies in the UK.

While Parliament is bicameral (has two Chambers, known as the Houses), it has three parts: the sovereign (The Crown), the House of Lords, and the House of Commons.

The Crown normally acts on the advice of the prime minister, and the powers of the House of Lords are limited to only delaying legislation.



UK Parliament

The House of Commons is the elected lower chamber of Parliament, with elections to 650 single-member constituencies held at least every five years under the first-past-the-post system. By constitutional convention, all government ministers, including the prime minister, are members of the House of Commons (MPs), or less commonly the House of Lords, and are thereby accountable to the respective branches of the legislature. Most Cabinet ministers are from the Commons, while junior ministers can be from either house.

The House of Lords is the upper chamber of Parliament, comprising two types of members. The most numerous are the Lords Temporal, consisting mainly of life peers appointed by the sovereign on the advice of the prime minister, plus up to 92 hereditary peers. The less numerous Lords Spiritual consist of up to 26 bishops of the Church of England.

Before the establishment of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom in 2009, the House of Lords performed judicial functions through the law lords.



The UK Parliament questions the government about its plans, to make sure they are properly thought through and looks at them in detail before agreeing to them. Parliament also monitors the government's actions, to try to make sure that promises are kept, and public money isn't being wasted.

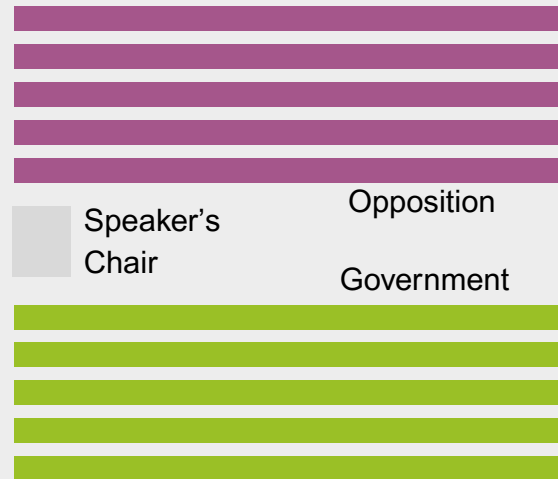
When a Prime Minister is appointed, a Leader of the Opposition is appointed too. Usually, this title falls to the leader of the next largest party in the Commons after a general election, which is known as the HM Official Opposition.

This official title underlines the principle that no government should be able to rule unopposed and that minority views should be heard – even if a government has won a landslide majority. The official opposition party has a special status in Parliament: in the Commons, a portion of time is set aside for debates chosen by the Opposition, and the Speaker usually allows its spokespeople a greater share of opportunities to question government ministers in the Chamber.

UK Parliament

The layout of the Commons Chamber emphasises this: rows of benches run down either side, so that government and opposition party MPs sit facing each other. The ministerial and shadow ministerial teams occupy the front row on either side and are known as frontbenchers, in contrast to ordinary, or backbench, MPs.

House of Commons Layout



In the House of Lords, rigid divisions along party lines are rare and a significant number of members do not belong to a political party. While the government and official opposition parties do sit facing one another on the front and backbenches in the Lords Chamber, an extra set of benches runs from right to left across the Chamber – known as the crossbenches – for those without a party allegiance.

After questions, the government is expected to make any important announcements to MPs in the Commons Chamber, where questions can be asked about it afterwards. Statements can also take place or be repeated in the Lords. If a statement like this has not been made voluntarily by a minister, and either House thinks that current events warrant one, a minister can be summoned to make a statement that same day. This is done by an MP applying for an Urgent Question in the Commons, or a member of the Lords requesting a Private Notice Question.

The day's main agenda item in each House is often a proposal that the government is asking Parliament to agree to. A minister begins by explaining the government's proposal fully; this is usually followed by a speech from the shadow minister on the opposition benches and then a range of speeches follow from across the House. A minister is expected to finish by responding to any questions and concerns that have been raised during the debate.

At the end of the debate, the proposal may be put to the House for decision, either in favour or against the proposal. If the decision is contested, a 'division' takes place where the votes of those for and against the proposal are counted in separate division lobbies and names are put on the record.

UK Parliament

Some of the most important scrutiny work in Parliament is done by committees – smaller groups of members that are given a specific remit or task to complete and report on.

Select committees are small, crossparty groups of around a dozen members, who work together to investigate something and reach a consensus on it, before reporting back with their findings and recommendations.

A select committee typically starts a new investigation with a ‘call for evidence’, inviting anyone in the country with an interest or relevant experience to send them information. Some people are offered the chance to answer the committee’s questions in person, at a public hearing. The committee can then put their questions and concerns to the ministers or officials responsible to hear their perspective.

Then, based upon all the information it has gathered, the committee draws up a report containing its conclusions and any recommendations for how things could be improved. Because the recommendations are agreed across party lines, they normally carry greater weight. The government is expected to respond to the report within two months. In this way, select committees not only work to make decision-makers accountable; they can also help to shape future decisions.



Devolution and Power Sharing

Devolution is about how parliaments and governments make decisions. Depending on where you live in the UK, devolution will affect who makes what decisions. Devolution is a process of decentralisation. It puts power closer to the citizen, so that local factors are better recognised in decision making.

In the UK it means that there are separate legislatures (parliaments or assemblies) and executives (governments) in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The powers that the different legislatures and executives have come from the UK Parliament and have been agreed by referendums.

Different legislatures and executives may be known as;

- The UK Parliament (also known as Westminster) and the UK Government (also known as Whitehall)
- The Scottish Parliament (also known as Holyrood) and the Scottish Government
- The Welsh Parliament (or Senedd Cymru / Senedd) and the Welsh Government
- The Northern Ireland Assembly (also known as Stormont) and the Northern Ireland Executive



In September 1997, referendums were held in Scotland and Wales, and a majority of voters chose to establish a Scottish Parliament and a National Assembly for Wales. In Northern Ireland, devolution was a key part of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement supported by voters in a referendum in May 1998.

Following this public endorsement, the UK Parliament passed three devolution acts: the Scotland Act 1998, the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and the Government of Wales Act 1998 (which was later effectively superseded by the Government of Wales Act 2006). These acts established the three devolved legislatures, which were given some powers previously held at Westminster. Further powers have been devolved since these original acts, most recently through the Scotland Act 2016 and Wales Act 2017.

The nations that make up the UK have different powers to make laws and deliver public services. These are often called devolved powers (and may also be called transferred matters). The UK Parliament and UK Government retain powers across the UK as a whole. These are often called reserved powers. Anything that's not reserved is the responsibility of the nations. Each nation has their own Ministers supported by civil servants to deliver their priorities.

Devolution and Power Sharing

Examples of reserved issues and the UK Government remains responsible for include the constitution, foreign affairs, national security, immigration, trade, broadcasting and some areas of taxation.

Devolution agreements are complex and are all different. Broadly speaking, the following things are devolved in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland but more topics exist;

- health and social care
- education and training
- local government and housing
- agriculture
- forestry and fisheries
- transport
- the environment and planning
- tourism and heritage
- sport



On a local level, power is also shared between different groups and where you live in the UK will affect who makes decisions about which local issues.

Councils provide more than 800 services to their communities. They are obliged by law to offer most of these services (which are known as statutory). But for some services, they have more flexibility over whether and to what level they provide them at (these are known as discretionary).

The meaning of and role of local government is also different around the UK.

The UK Parliament remains sovereign and retains the power to amend the devolution Acts or to legislate on anything that has been devolved. That said, the UK government has made clear it will not normally legislate on a devolved matter without the consent of the devolved legislature, which requires a Legislative Consent Motion.

Note on logo use: The crowned portcullis is the official emblem or logo of the UK Parliament. It is an image of a grilled gate of the type found on medieval castles with a crown on top. It is formally a royal badge and is subject to terms and conditions of use. We have used the crowned portcullis logo within this document for educational purposes only to explain how Parliament and Laws work and use of the crowned portcullis does not and should not imply endorsement or agreement by the UK Parliament to any and all of the Manifesto Statements.





United Kingdom

Youth Parliament

MAKING OUR MARK

Supported by



National Youth Agency



Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport

To find out more, please contact the National Youth Agency

E: ukyp@nya.org.uk

W: nya.org.uk

X: @UKYP