Youth Engagement Impact Study

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Executive Summary

The **UK Youth Parliament** and the **Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG)** provide young people with opportunities to have a voice on issues that matter to them. Both youth engagement programmes are funded by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), and support the government's commitment to help young people to reach their full potential, have a voice on issues they care about, and shape their futures.

The **UK Youth Parliament** is made up of approximately 300 elected Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs), and Deputy Members of Youth Parliament, aged between 11 and 18 years. MYPs are elected to represent the views of young people in their local areas to the government, as well as to national and local youth service providers. Young people vote for MYPs in elections, held every two years. MYPs meet regularly to hold debates and plan local and national campaigns, and an annual debate in the House of Commons. The Make Your Mark ballot is an annual vote, open to all 11–18 year olds in the UK, on the biggest issues facing young people. The results give the UK Youth Parliament its mandate for the following year. The programme was established in 2000 and is currently delivered by the British Youth Council (BYC).

The **Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG)** is a group of 40 young people aged 16-25 from across England. Young people can apply to take part, and are required to give a four month commitment. The YPDG engages with senior officials and ministers on a range of policies and decisions through online engagement, monthly roundtables and meetings. The group is open to all government departments to seek young people's input on their policies. The YPDG canvas a wider youth voice through online polling, surveys and social media. The programme started in 2019, and is delivered by Shout Out UK through the Youth Engagement Grant. Prior to this, the programme was previously delivered by BYC from 2019-2021 under the name 'Youth Steering Group'. From 2023, the programmes will be amalgamated into the UK Youth Parliament programme, delivered by British Youth Council.

Research aims and method

DCMS commissioned Ecorys UK in partnership with Participation People to deliver the Youth Engagement Impact Study, to understand the experience of young people engaged in the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG, and map the outcomes achieved. This study was delivered between October 2022 to March 2023. It aimed to:

- ▶ Understand the (perceived) short and long-term impacts of the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG on young people, policy officials and government policy and decision making.

- ▶ Understand the enablers and barriers to programme participation for young people.

The study comprised a mixed-method research design with six iterative work-packages (WP) (see Figure 1). The initial planning (WP1), was followed by:

- ▶ A **documentary analysis** of 41 policy documents related to the programmes (WP2)

- ▶ Primary research with current and former programme participants: 175 took part in an **online survey** (WP3), and 68 took part in a **focus group or interview** (WP4)

- ▶ To engage the range of programme stakeholders, 10 delivery staff and 14 policy officials were interviewed (WP4)

- ▶ 45 young people who have not taken part in either programme were engaged via Listening Labs to gather their perceptions of the programmes (WP4)

▶ The emerging findings **were** sense-checked with programme stakeholders in two **intergenerational workshops** (WP5), one for each programme.

Figure 1. Research Method.

Framework for child and youth participation

The **Lundy model (2007)**[1] is an internationally recognised child rights-based model of child participation. This framework was used to assess the effectiveness of DCMS' Youth Engagement programmes.

Figure 2. The Lundy model of child participation.
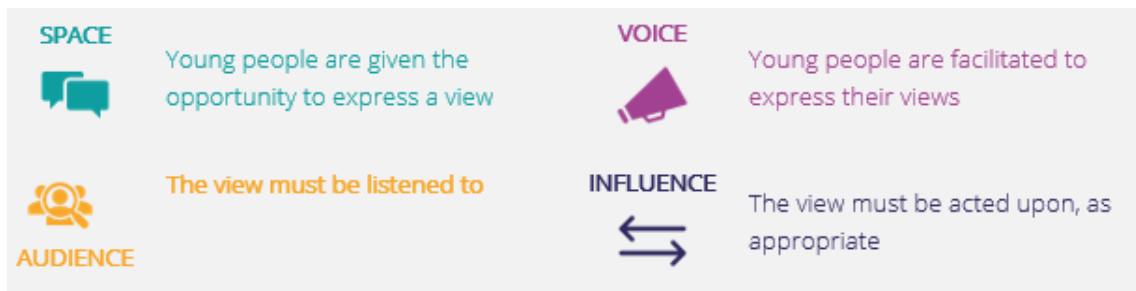
Findings

Programme reach and motivations to take part

Current and former programme participants generally took an active **interest in politics** prior to being involved in the UK Youth Parliament or YPDG. They typically studied politics, and were engaged in local youth politics or youth activism. They all shared **a desire to make a difference**, whether it be on a local or national level. The potential to meet ministers and decision makers and use their voice to shape future policy, especially on the issues they cared about, was a primary motivator to take part. They also wanted to

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[1] The Lundy model of child participation (2007):
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/lundy_model_of_participation.pdf

better understand political processes through programme membership. Secondary motivators included the chance to learn new skills, have enriching experiences, the potential to bolster CVs and support future education and employment opportunities.

They found out about the programmes via **school, involvement in local or regional youth council, social media, and word of mouth** from peers and family. Additional routes to becoming aware of the programmes included: college and university, youth groups, social or youth workers, and via other youth engagement initiatives. Participants suspected that attending a school that does not have links to youth engagement programmes or a student council, and living in a local authority without a youth council may limit young people's opportunities to come across the programmes. Similarly, they thought that young people whose social networks are unaware of the programmes, may also be at a disadvantage.

While YPDG **recruitment** was said to be straight-forward and quick via an online application form, the UK Youth Parliament participants delivered a time intensive election campaign. UK Youth Parliament participants invested in a full range of campaign activities. MYPs reported variation in how well they felt supported during the election. The level of guidance they received depended on the capacity of local authorities, local staff or teachers. MYPs believed that having more support and guidance helped to have a successful election campaign.

Participants believed that both programmes attract young people who are middle class and live in urban areas. They thought these groups were more likely to seek out the programmes and the social and practical support to maintain ongoing engagement. **Participants wanted the programmes to be more representative of a diverse group of young people**, to speak up for different lived experiences and demographics. Delivery staff, however, were divided on this matter. While one group of staff agreed with participants, an alternative perspective was that membership did include a diversity of young people. They also believed that the programme delivery teams actively sought to address this through recruitment efforts.

Young people not involved in the programmes had **little to no awareness** of them or what participation involves. While they correctly guessed that the programmes are for young people and have a focus on politics, they had misconceptions about it being a paid role. These young people did not feel they were interested in politics. However, they articulated issues and causes that mattered to them (e.g. mental health, climate change) which aligned to issues that matter to programme participants. This suggests that non-participating young people may be politically minded but do not identify it as such. Non-participants did not feel they had the time for these programmes, alongside other commitments, including education, family and caring responsibilities and their preferred leisure activities. Other barriers included worrying about 'fitting in' and travel costs.

Programme delivery

The UK Youth Parliament and the YPDG have distinct programme structures and delivery models. The UK Youth Parliament is a 2-year programme with a series of local, regional and national activities. The YPDG is a smaller entity, a shorter-term programme, and its activities are responsive to the needs of government departments.

Space and voice

The UK Youth Parliament staff believed that the **2-year programme design** gave MYPs the time to understand their role, deepen their knowledge of the priority issues, and develop campaigning skills and ideas through regular meetings and training (in year 1); which then equipped them to implement a well-planned campaign (in year 2). Participants of the UK Youth Parliament programme agreed that it was a well-balanced programme. Most participants (75%) reported that the programme gave them the opportunity to address the issues that they care about. MYPs particularly enjoyed the annual House of

Commons sittings (60%), the Annual Conference (30%) and meeting new people (39%). Participants felt empowered when running campaigns as this supported their motivation to make a change on important issues.

Participants were largely positive about the **training** received. They noted the training schedule aligned well to upcoming meetings and events, which helped them to feel prepared and gave them a chance to put the training into practice. One suggestion from older participants was that the training content and materials were sometimes too simplistic, and more suited to younger groups. They suggested that training materials and delivery could be better tailored across the full age range of MYPs.

MYPs reported different **programme experiences and opportunities**, these variations were linked to the local authority they were based in. Those who were fully integrated into the local youth council or regional youth networks with regular meetings, were supported to attend BYC events and had contact with their local youth worker, reported a positive programme experience. This wrap-around support offered them additional opportunities outside of the programme. However, this level of support was not universal. Some MYPs were not offered reimbursement for travel to meetings or supported to attend regional and national meetings. Delivery staff explained that external factors caused this variation, like reductions in funding for youth services, local government budgets, and capacity of youth workers.

Older participants suggested that the starting **age for the programme** may be too young, suggesting the role required a level of maturity. However, there were also MYPs and delivery staff who believed that the youngest MYPs added value to the programme and advocated for retaining the current age cut-offs.

MYPs believed the selection of the **priority issues** was democratic. However, MYPs suggested that the programme team may pre-empt particular topics that they think young people will want to support (e.g. Votes at 16). Furthermore, those with right-leaning views and those wanting to champion, and debate devolved issues, did not always feel they had the opportunities to discuss these. They reported feeling dismissed by their peers who held different beliefs or prioritised other issues. These examples suggest that particular groups of participants may not feel they have a safe space to have their say.

YPDG participants felt they were provided with a safe space and supported by staff and policy officials. YPDG participants particularly enjoyed roundtable discussions and workshops (50%), delivering policy briefs (50%), learning about the policy making process (45%), and engaging with MPs and local politicians (45%)[2].In focus groups, young people explained that the issues they investigated were determined by policy officials. This was double edged for participants, on the one hand participants did not always get to focus on the issues that mattered to them. However, this also offered opportunities to learn about different topics and policies that they otherwise would not have engaged in. In the survey, participants thought the training package supported them to perform well in the role, and 95% felt supported to take part in activities.

Participants across the programmes were in favour of the **hybrid delivery approach**, offering a mix of in-person and online attendance, which made participation more accessible. For UK Youth Parliament participants in rural areas with limited public transport options, attendance at in-person events was not feasible, especially if the local authority was unable to provide financial or practical transport support. Importantly, those with visible disabilities felt well supported by delivery staff with their needs accommodated. However, those with less visible conditions, e.g. dyslexia, did not always feel their needs were held in mind, especially at group events or meetings.

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[2] Based on survey responses of 20 YPDG participants.

Audience

UK Youth Parliament and YPDG participants reported that they had **two audiences: decision makers and young people**. For participants across programmes, meeting with ministers was a real draw of the programmes. While the UK Youth Parliament's audiences were local decision makers (e.g. MPs, councillors, local authority leadership, local leaders in education and Police, etc.), the YPDG's audience included central government officials and ministers. Participants across programmes wanted more engagement with ministers and policy officials (60% YPDG and 57% UK Youth Parliament of survey respondents, respectively) via the programmes.

A key difference between the programmes was that **UK Youth Parliament participants were responsible for making connections with local decision makers**. This was expected to be completed either by reaching out to an MP directly or leveraging existing connections through their youth council, which could be challenging. They reported local differences in the levels and quality of staff support they received with this. The UK Youth Parliament had recently **started to run roundtables**, for which, a DCMS policy official organised attendance of local and national decision makers. Participants welcomed the roundtables as an opportunity to meet with and be heard by decision makers. Younger participants did not always feel heard by decision makers, believing they listened more to the older MYPs.

YPDG meetings with policy officials were arranged by the programme delivery team. The roundtables offered dedicated and consistent opportunities to meet with decision makers. Participants generally met with policy officials, yet would prefer more contact time with ministers. They said that contact with policy officials was often one-off, but they preferred it when there were multiple opportunities to meet with the same official. This built relationships and allowed for follow-up on the policy outcome.

Participants across programmes regularly connected to the **wider youth audience**. Both programmes had built in activities to canvas the views of young people more widely, which participants then used to inform their interactions with, and messages for, decision makers, to effect change. Participants wanted to have more engagement with a broader cross-section of young people. They acknowledged they were more likely to engage those with an interest in politics, and they expressed concern about political apathy among their peers. Programme participants and delivery staff attributed this to a lack of political education in schools, coupled with experiences of adults not prioritising young people's views.

Influence and outcomes for policy and decision making

Participants across programmes believed that they did influence change in government policy and decision making. They believed that the programmes supported and facilitated youth-informed policy development. While UK Youth Parliament participants felt they had more influence at a local level, the YPDG had influenced national policy decisions. Yet participants wanted the programmes to have even more influence in this aspect.

As mentioned above, the **UK Youth Parliament** participants believed that there was too much local variation in the delivery model. MYPs' experiences of influencing change were also linked to the local support offer available to them and levels of decision maker engagement. Participants, delivery staff and policy officials described areas where the programme had highlighted issues important to young people, such as reducing the voting age to 16, knife crime and environmental issues. The documentary analysis undertaken highlighted the ways this was achieved. For example, in 2019, the UK Youth Parliament embarked on a campaign to tackle knife crime. The Youth Select Committee published a report which included recommendations for the government to consider why young people may carry knives. A government response, published in 2021, highlighted ongoing government actions and further investments, including an extension of the Anti-knife Crime Community Fund and a new £23 million investment in early intervention programmes to prevent youth violence.

Staff explained the struggle for the UK Youth Parliament programme to provide a forum to achieve national influence. They attributed this to the Department changes that oversee the programme, and associated changes to ministers and policy officials they work with. With stable strategic departmental oversight, the programme team hopes to be better positioned to influence national policy in the future.

The **YPDG** participants, delivery staff and policy officials identified multiple examples of how the programme has supported change to government policy work: from informing the Mental Health Strategy for the Department for Health and Social Care; to supporting work on gene modification for the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; and helping DCMS to sense-check the language and appeal of materials for young people. Policy officials noted the YPDG is a generalist group, suggesting value in specialist sub-departmental groups.

Participants wanted quicker and more regular **feedback** on the outcomes of their inputs on policy and other decisions. However, policy officials explained that policy processes take time, and can often take longer than the duration of the programmes.

Outcomes for participating young people

Participants across both programmes highlighted multiple benefits as a result of programme participation. In the short term they **learnt about political processes**, through a combination of the training and activities. They developed **communication skills** from debating and presenting on a range of issues; **social and teamwork skills** through working with peers in the programme and formed friendships. Above all, they felt a **sense of achievement** from trying new activities, engaging with decision makers and representing the views of other young people. In turn, the combination of these benefits supported improvements in **self-confidence**.

In the longer term, former participants reflected that they had developed **social networks** of peers and professionals which they had maintained over time. They gained **transferable knowledge, skills and competencies** that they used in education and employment (e.g. understanding policy processes, research, and presenting). The programme supported some participants to identify **education and career pathways**. This included study and careers in public service, politics, social and youth work.

Conclusions and recommendations

Policy makers noted that both programmes were important mechanisms for promoting the voice of young people in local and national government policy decisions. Participants generally reported positive programme experiences. They enjoyed the activities on offer, and reported personal, social, and vocational benefits of programme participation. The programmes have supported and informed local and national policy making decisions across several policy areas and government departments.

Feedback across the study offered improvements and suggestions to make the programmes more representative of wider demographics of young people and further improve the value they add to policy processes.

- ▶ Firstly, both programmes could benefit from **greater promotion**, particularly amongst young people and in areas that are currently less represented.

- ▶ Both programmes should continue and do more to **reduce barriers to participation**, including continuation of a hybrid delivery and covering the costs of transport to events.

- ▶ The UK Youth Parliament could benefit from **a more consistent approach** across the localised delivery model, to ensure that all participants have equal access to all opportunities available

through the programme. Local youth voice infrastructures are critical to the success of the youth engagement programmes, and therefore need to be supported and maintained.

▶ The UK Youth Parliament programme could better support **alternative voices** to be heard, like right-leaning MYPs or those from devolved nations.

▶ Topic areas which the YPDG were consulted on had variable levels of interest from participants. To support meaningful representation of youth voice, participants recommended that, where possible, roundtables should **match the interests of both policy makers and young people**.

▶ There could be **greater awareness and use of the programmes from local and national policy officials**. Participants across the programmes also felt that both programmes could benefit from more regular activities that engage policy decision makers, such as ministers.

Future research and evaluation of DCMS' Youth Engagement programmes may consider including:

▶ **A programme theory of change** to provide a shared understanding of the inputs, activities, and outputs alongside the intended outcomes and impacts.

▶ **Embedding research and evaluation activities within the programme cycle** to provide efficiencies and reduce research burden.

▶ **Monitoring information about programme participation** for example, demographic information about young people who apply, take part in programmes, and exit early would support concrete judgements about the representativeness of the programmes.

▶ **Longitudinal research** to track the outcomes of participants.

▶ **Youth-led research methodologies** to ensure a youth-led focus.

1.0 Background to DCMS' Youth Engagement programmes

The **UK Youth Parliament** and the **Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG)** provide opportunities for young people to participate in political decision making and give them a platform to have their voices heard. Both youth engagement programmes are funded by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), and support the government's commitment to help young people to reach their full potential, have a voice on issues they care about, and shape their futures.

The programmes also tie into the UK Government's commitments to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC is an international agreement setting out the fundamental rights of everyone under the age of 18. The treaty extends to Devolved Administrations, three Crown Dependencies and nine Overseas Territories. The UK is periodically reviewed by the UN Committee every five years. The UNCRC covers a broad range of areas including: education; child protection; welfare; health; alongside protections for vulnerable groups such as children in care. One of the general principles within the UNCRC is 'respect for the views of the child'. This includes systematic inclusion of the voice of the child. The UK Youth Parliament and YPDG are examples of ensuring the systematic inclusion of the voice of children in policy and decision making.

DCMS commissioned Ecorys UK in partnership with Participation People to deliver the **Youth Engagement Impact Study**. The study sought to understand the experience of young people engaged in the UK Youth Parliament and the YPDG, and map the outcomes they had achieved. The findings from this study builds the evidence-base on DCMS' Youth Engagement programmes to inform future work so that youth participation remains meaningful and beneficial to young people and the policy and decision making process.

This report summarises the findings from research with current and former programme participants, young people who did not participate in either programme, delivery staff, and policy makers. It provides evidence on the effectiveness of each programme, the approaches that facilitate meaningful youth engagement, alongside the enablers and barriers to programme participation. It also provides insights on the (perceived) short and longer-term impacts for programme participants and on government policy and decision making. The study ran from October 2022 to March 2023.

1.1 The UK Youth Parliament

The UK Youth Parliament represents the views of young people across the UK to government and to national and local youth service providers. It is made up of approximately 300 elected Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs), as well as Deputy Members of Youth Parliament, aged between 11 and 18 years. MYPs are not elected on a party-political basis. They are elected to represent the views of young people in their local areas to government and national and local youth service providers. Young people vote for their MYPs in elections every 2 years, which are held in over 70 percent of UK constituencies. MYPs meet regularly to hold debates and plan campaigns on a local and national level, which includes an annual debate in the House of Commons. The Make Your Mark ballot results give the UK Youth Parliament its mandate for the following year, with the top results being taken forward for their campaigns and debates. The ballot is an annual vote on the biggest issues facing young people. It is open to all young people aged 11-18 in the UK and is supported by local authorities, schools, UK Parliament, the National Citizen Service and other youth organisations. The UK Youth Parliament was established in 2000. The 2022/23 UK Youth Parliament is delivered by the **British Youth Council (BYC),** a national charity that aims to empower young people across the UK.

1.2   Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG)

The **Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG)** is made up of 40 young people aged 16-25 from across England. Young people can apply to be involved via the programme webpage and are required to give a four month commitment. The YPDG engage with senior officials and ministers on a range of policies and decisions through online engagement, monthly roundtables and meetings. The group is open to all government departments to use and seek young people's input on their policies. Members of the YPDG receive a programme of training and upskilling sessions and receive support to develop policy briefs on specific topics. Additionally, they have one to one support from delivery staff to aid their development. Aside from the core group of young people, wider youth engagement is delivered through online polling, surveys and social media. The YPDG uses social media and a third-party polling company to engage and canvas the views of young people more widely. The 2022/23 YPDG is delivered through the Youth Engagement Grant. It is currently delivered by **Shout Out UK (SOUK)**, a social enterprise that delivers training and programmes to young people on media and political literacy. The programme was launched in 2019 to engage young people in policy development and design. The group was previously called the Youth Steering Group and was delivered by the BYC. From 2023, the programmes will be amalgamated into the UK Youth Parliament programme, delivered by British Youth Council.

2.0   Methodology

A mixed methods design was used to investigate the impact of DCMS' Youth Engagement programmes, namely the UK Youth Parliament and the Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG).

2.1   Research aims

The two overarching aims of this study were to:

▶ Understand the (perceived) short and longer-term impacts of the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG on young people, policy officials, ministers, and government policy and decision making.

▶ Understand the enablers and barriers to programme participation.

Figure 3. Research Method.

The study comprised an initial planning stage (WP1), followed by a documentary analysis (WP2), an online survey with current and former programme participants (WP3), qualitative research with young people (current and former programme participants and non-participants), programme delivery staff and policy officials (WP4), two intergenerational workshops to sense-check the emerging findings with programme stakeholders (WP5), and concluded with analysis and reporting (WP6). The method for each work-package is detailed below.

2.1.1   Framework for effective child and youth participation

All research tools (survey questions, topic guides) and the analytical framework were aligned to the Lundy model (2007)[3] of child participation. This internationally recognised model of child participation outlines four key domains of meaningful child and youth participation: Space, Voice, Audience and Influence. This framework provides a child rights-based approach to youth participation to effectively inform both policy and practice. We therefore use it to underpin our understanding of youth participation across DCMS' Youth

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[3] The Lundy model of child participation (2007):
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/lundy_model_of_participation.pdf

Engagement programmes, and make assessments on how well each domain works in the current delivery models.

Figure 4. The Lundy Model for child participation

SPACE: Young people are given the opportunity to express a view

VOICE: Young people are facilitated to express their views

AUDIENCE: The view must be listened to

INFLUENCE: The view must be acted upon, as appropriate

2.1.2 Documentary analysis (WP2)

Ecorys conducted a desk review of documents related to the UK Youth Parliament, the YPDG and former Youth Steering Group. The review examined written outputs produced by each youth engagement programme as well as government responses and policy outcome documents. Documents were acquired from DCMS and supplemented through online searches. In total, 41 documents were reviewed. All documents were systematically logged and categorised in Excel. Each document was reviewed, and key information summarised under thematic areas of interest (e.g. policy area, recommendations, outcomes). Each document was also assessed and scored on its quality, related to its clarity and usefulness in assessing the UK Youth Parliament, the YPDG or the Youth Steering Group recommendations and subsequent outcomes. Policy recommendations from each document were then appraised on a scale from 1 to 3, with: 1 = Unclear recommendations with lack of policy background knowledge, 2 = Clarity could be improved, gaps in policy background knowledge, and 3 = Clearly formulated recommendations with good policy background knowledge. The review provided an understanding of whether and how recommendations from the programmes had influenced policy development processes. This work-package informed the development of the qualitative topic guides for focus groups and interviews with stakeholders. The full documentary analysis can be found in Annex 3.

2.1.3 Surveys of former and current participants (WP3)

Two online surveys were designed and administered, one for current and former UK Youth Parliament participants and a separate, but complementary, survey for current and former YPDG participants. The YPDG survey was also used for former members of the Youth Steering Group. Both surveys were created in Confirmit (online survey software), and largely asked the same questions, with adaptations for each programme. The online surveys were available for completion from November 2022 until March 2023. The

survey links were shared with BYC and SOUK to distribute to current and former participants. The survey links were shared via email, newsletters and in group sessions and activities. Survey completion was voluntary, anyone aged under 16 was required to have parental consent to take part, and those aged 16+ were able to provide consent for themselves. All survey participants were given the option to enter a prize draw; a total of ten £50 high street vouchers were issued. In total, 175 current and former programme participants completed the survey (155 UK Youth Parliament members and 20 YPDG members). The response rate for the UK Youth Parliament survey was 14% and 44% for the YPDG survey. The full demographic breakdown of survey participants can be found in Annex 4.

The survey was designed to take 12-15 minutes to complete and included questions across five broad areas:

- ▶ **Awareness and motivations:** Length of involvement in each programme; how they heard about it, and what they wished to gain from the programme before they took part.

- ▶ **Experiences of the programmes**: the roles they held, the activities they engaged in, how much they enjoyed these, as well as barriers and facilitators for participation.

- ▶ **Impact and outcomes**: the aspects they enjoyed most about taking part, whether they had achieved what they set out to, the extent to which they have developed personal, social, and academic skills.

- ▶ **Suggestions for programme improvement**: closed feedback questions and a free-text feedback field.

- ▶ **Socio-demographic** questions.

The full survey questions are in Annex 1.

2.1.4   Qualitative research with programme stakeholders (WP4)

2.1.4.1   Interviews with delivery and policy stakeholders

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with delivery staff across both programmes and policy makers who had recently engaged with one of the programmes. All interviews were facilitated by an Ecorys researcher, using an agreed topic guide tailored to each stakeholder type. They were delivered remotely using MS Teams, from December 2022-March 2023, and lasted, on average, an hour in length.

- ▶ **Delivery staff interviews** aimed to gather staff views on the effectiveness of the programmes. The interviews included staff from both the BYC and SOUK, plus regional and local delivery partners. The main topics discussed were: the role of delivery staff; how they support meaningful youth engagement, perceptions of the effectiveness of current delivery processes, and perceived impact of the programmes for participating young people and on policy development, improvement suggestions and overall reflections on the programmes. Delivery staff were invited to participate via email. Ecorys drafted an email which was distributed by BYC and SOUK to staff. Staff who wanted to take part contacted Ecorys to arrange an interview. Ten delivery staff took part (7 UK Youth Parliament/BYC and 3 YPDG/SOUK).

- ▶ **Interviews with policy makers** included politicians and civil servants, across multiple central government departments and at various levels of seniority. These interviews aimed to understand ministers' and policy officials' involvement with the programmes. The main topics discussed were: awareness and engagement with the programmes, perceptions of programme effectiveness to inform policy decisions, and perceived impact of the programmes on policy development and for participating young people, as well as improvement suggestions and overall reflections on the

programmes. DCMS provided Ecorys with a list of policy officials who had recently been involved in the programmes (name, department, work email, type of programme involvement). Ecorys invited policy officials to take part via email, and up to four reminders were sent. Interviews were arranged with those who wanted to take part. In total, 14 policy officials/ministers took part. This included a minister, two senior civil servants, and 11 policy officials.

2.1.4.2 Focus groups and interviews with current and former programme participants

Current and former participants of both programmes were invited to take part in a focus group or 1-2-1 interview. These discussions explored the enablers and barriers to participating in the programmes, perceptions of the effectiveness of programme organisation and delivery, and impact of the programmes for them (i.e., personal benefits gained) as well as the impact on policy development. They were also given the opportunity to suggest programme improvements. The discussions were facilitated by an Ecorys researcher, using an agreed topic guide.

Focus groups lasted around 70 minutes and included between 3 and 11 participants. Seven were delivered online and six in-person. Interviews lasted up to 60 minutes and took a 1-2-1 format. All groups and interviews were run from January-March 2023. Those who took part received a £20 high street voucher as a thank you for their time and contribution. Sixty-eight young people were included (56 UK Youth Parliament and 12 YPDG).

Participants were recruited through two methods:

▶ **Survey:** Participants could register their interest to take part in a focus group or interview at the end of the survey. Ecorys purposively sampled individuals to represent a diversity across a number of demographic criteria, including: age, gender, ethnicity, UK region, experience of the programme, and their availability. This ensured a diverse range of opinions were considered.

▶ UK Youth Parliament and YPDG events: A sample of current participants took part in a focus group at planned regional events or training days, that the research team were also present at. We took a convenience sample approach at these events. This recruitment route enabled us to capture a wider pool of voices, including young people who had not completed the survey.

As with the survey consent processes, anyone aged under 16 was required to have parental consent to take part, and those aged 16+ were able to provide consent for themselves.

All qualitative topic guides are in Annex 2.

2.1.4.3 Listening Labs with young people (non-programme participants)

To engage the views of young people who had not participated in either programme, Participation People led and facilitated three youth-led Listening Labs for 45 young people across the UK, aged 11-18. This included young people not in education, employment or training, those from Black and Asian Minority Ethnic groups and those with Special Educational Needs. The Lab discussions explored their awareness and perceptions of the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG, and what would help or stop them from taking part. Listening Lab participants were given a £20 high street voucher for taking part as a thank you for their time and contribution.

Recruitment of Listening Lab participants happened in three phases:

▶ Universal recruitment – through a paid for, targeted social media campaign.

▶ **Targeted recruitment** – working through professionals and partners of Participation People across the UK.

▶ **Proactive recruitment –** where sign-up tracking was low or certain demographics of young people who were underrepresented in UK Youth Parliament and YPDG demographics.

Recruitment materials were co-designed, tested and refined by Participation People's Young Consultant Team; a team of young people aged 11-25 who support Participation People's programme delivery and quality assurance processes. Listening Labs were run online and scheduled on different times and dates after school in November-December 2022. They were co-designed and co-facilitated by Participation People's CEO, Youth Voice and Influence Officer and five Young Consultant Team members.

2.1.5   Intergenerational workshops to sense-check the research findings (WP5)

Two intergenerational workshops were delivered toward the end of the study to sense-check the emerging study findings and co-produce the recommendations with programme participants, delivery staff and DCMS policy officials. One was run with the UK Youth Parliament and another with the YPDG. The workshop included a presentation outlining the nature and purpose of the study followed by the emerging findings. This was followed by smaller break-out discussions for programme participants, delivery staff and policy makers to discuss and provide feedback. Three questions were asked to scaffold these discussions:

▶ Do the findings make sense to you, and fit with your experiences of the programme?

▶ Have we missed anything? Or misinterpreted anything?

▶ What recommendations do you have to improve the programme?

Feedback gathered at the workshops provided a layer of confidence and quality assurance in the findings.

2.2   Sample

A total of 312 participants took part in the study: 175 programme participants completed a survey, 68 took part in a focus group/interview, and 45 non-participants participated in a Listening Lab. Additionally, we spoke to 10 delivery staff and 14 policy makers. We also reviewed 41 policy documents. This represents a diversity of data sources and stakeholder views and experiences, enabling a rich and nuanced picture of the programmes' reach, effectiveness and value to young people and policy decision processes. The table below shows the achieved sample.

Table 1. Study sample achieved by work-package.

Research activity	Numbers of documents/people consulted
Documentary analysis (WP2)	41 documents reviewed (see Annex 3.)
Surveys (WP2)	155 UK Youth Parliament members (current and former) (see Annex 4.) 20 YPDG members (current and former) (see Annex 4.)
Qualitative research (WP4) Focus groups/ interviews/ Listening Labs	**Young people** 56 UK Youth Parliament members (current and former) 12 YPDG members (current and former) 38 Non-participating young people (not in either programme) **Delivery staff** 7 UK Youth Parliament staff 3 YPDG staff **Policy officials** 14 Policy officials / ministers
Intergenerational workshops (WP5)	2 workshops (1 for UK Youth Parliament, 1 for YPDG)

2.3 Analysis

2.3.1 Qualitative data

All **documentary data** was systematically logged and summarised in a thematic framework in Excel. This ensured that each document was considered in equal measure across agreed themes of interest. Each document was reviewed, and key information summarised under thematic areas of interest (e.g. policy area, recommendations, outcomes). Each document was assessed and scored for its quality, determined by its clarity and relevance.

Interviews and focus groups were recorded with participant permission, and auto-transcribed or detailed notes were made from the recording. Where participants declined to be recorded, the researcher took detailed notes. An analytical framework was developed, following familiarisation of the transcript/notes data and the key themes that emerged. The data was managed and analysed in Excel, using an inductive Framework approach. Framework is a qualitative data analysis method which uses a 'matrix' approach. Transcript data from each interview and focus group was coded under each theme (e.g. participant background, reach, effectiveness: space, voice, audience, influence, impact) within the analytical framework. The qualitative data was then systematically and thematically analysed to explore the range of participants' experiences and views, identifying similarities and differences based on key characteristics, where possible. This approach allowed for thorough analysis of the data and comparisons between cases (looking at what different stakeholder groups said about the same topics) and within cases (looking at how opinions/experiences on a programme component related to their views on another programme

component). The analysis was fully documented, and conclusions can be clearly linked back to the original source data.

2.3.2 Quantitative data

Survey data was downloaded into Excel from the Confirmit survey platform. The data was uploaded into R (statistical software package). All data was then cleaned, managed and analysed using R version 4.2.2 running in Rstudio. The data cleaning involved excluding incomplete surveys, and then merging the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG surveys to create a full dataset. The YPDG survey sample was too small to allow for analysis on its own, without it being disclosive. The analysis involved descriptive statistics only, frequencies, means and cross tabulations of key questions. All analysis is transparently logged in the R code. Graphical outputs were created in Excel. For demographic data, we do not display data where the base size of a response category is below 10 to protect the anonymity of survey participants.

2.4 Ethical considerations

Ensuring the highest ethical standards were met was vital, given the involvement of young people (aged 11+). The Ecorys Project Director and Manager considered all potential ethical risks to participants and researchers ahead of data collection. To safeguard all participants, our key ethical measures included:

▶ **Careful recruitment** and ensuring **informed consent** to participate. BYC and SOUK distributed the survey on our behalf and supported recruitment of young people to some focus groups. Study leaflets and information for young people, parents/carers and professionals were designed to provide clear information about the study, its purpose, what participation involved and how to register interest in taking part. These were accompanied by a privacy notice detailing how the information collected would be processed. Parent/carer consent to take part was required for those aged under 16.

▶ We took a **participant-led approach**. At the start of the survey and each interview/focus group, the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, the areas of interest, the right to skip questions and stop taking part at any time, as well as how the information would be processed and reported on was reiterated. There were no safeguarding disclosures or incidents of distress reported.

▶ All researchers held a clean **enhanced DBS** check and had received **safeguarding** awareness training. All staff are aware of their duty to contact the Ecorys safeguarding lead on any reportable incidents. There were no such incidents in this study.

2.5 Study limitations

As with any study, the data limitations and caveats must be identified. The report provides a snapshot of views from a finite sample of participants, delivery staff, policy makers and non-participating young people, drawing out themes and findings. The final achieved sample met the requirements, allowing for an exploration of all the key themes and topics of the study.

The survey is not representative of the full former and current UK Youth Parliament and YPDG population. This is because an open survey link approach was most practical for the timelines of this study. The research team did not have access to a full sample frame of participants and their demographics. We were therefore unable to calculate an overall response rate or weight/adjust the survey results to reflect the programme population on all demographic characteristics.

Some demographic information about programme participants was made available to the research team. 70% of UK Youth Parliament survey respondents identified their ethnicity as any 'white'. This is roughly reflective of MYPs, of which (depending on year) 30-38% identified as Black, Asian, or other minority ethnic group. However, according to programme information, only 30% of YPDG participants identify as white, which is lower than the survey rate of 70%.

It is important to note that the views of the participants included in this study were not intended to be representative of the general programme population and its stakeholders. It was an explorative study, and did not include an impact evaluation. As such, the conclusions do not provide an assessment of the empirical impact of the programmes on policy making and participation.

2.6   **This report**

The subsequent chapters present the findings from the Youth Engagement Impact Study.

▶ Chapter 3 outlines the **programmes' reach**, including young people's awareness and perceptions of the programmes, as well as the motivators and barriers to participation.

▶ **Programme delivery and effectiveness** is discussed in Chapter 4 and 5. Chapter 4 outlines how the programmes create safe **spaces** and how participants are supported to develop their **voice** and views on the matters they care about. Chapter 5 then discusses how the programmes support meaningful interactions with key **audiences** (i.e. policy makers) and youth voice is used to **influence** policy decision making.

▶ Chapter 6 presents evidence gathered on how the programmes **impact** the policy decision making process and **benefit** young people.

▶ The overall study **conclusions** are presented in the final chapter, providing reflection on how the programmes support meaningful youth participation and benefit the young people who take part and policies they support. This section also discusses participant suggestions to enhance programme delivery to add further value to young people and policy making in the future.

3.0 Programme reach

This chapter draws on participant and delivery staff data from both programmes alongside feedback from young people who did not take part in the programmes (non-participants). It presents the main reasons why young people chose to engage in the UK Youth Parliament and the Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG), how they became aware and then involved in each programme, and the enablers and barriers to participation. The chapter ends with study participants' suggestions for improving programme awareness.

3.1 Initial programme perceptions and motivations to take part

The main motivators to take part in the programmes, according to the survey, were to represent young people's views (69%), to make a difference (58%), and to engage in discussions with policy makers (43%)[4]. The qualitative research found that both programmes strongly appealed to the young people who took part in them. Participants generally said they had an **existing interest in politics**, different policy areas, and the policy-making process before taking part. Participants in focus groups and interviews explained that a key motivator for participating in the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG was a desire to develop an understanding of politics and the policy decision making process. Young people across both programmes were currently or had previously studied politics at school, college or at university. Similarly, others were already engaged in youth activism or local/regional youth politics groups (e.g. youth councils) and thought that joining the programme would be a 'natural' next step. For participants, the prospect of directly engaging with policy makers and government ministers as well as learning about political processes was a key selling point.

> *"I thought it would be a really great opportunity to learn about the policy making process. So being involved in the discussions that civil servants and ministers attend." – YPDG Participant*

Participants reported in interviews and focus groups that having an interest in politics or political issues gave them a foundation of knowledge and made them feel confident to take on the role. However, they also emphasised that this was not an essential requirement for signing up and that the programmes should not solely be targeted at young people with an existing interest in politics. Delivery staff agreed with this, adding that it is more important that young people are motivated and committed individuals. Non-participants, however, did perceive that the programmes are for people interested and knowledgeable about politics and thought that they would not fit in.

> *"You don't have to be a confident person necessarily. You don't have to want to go into politics or that kind of thing to participate. None of my A-levels or my studies really align with a future in politics in the sense of becoming a Member of Youth Parliament (MYP). But I still think I can represent the people in my area and it's beneficial to me." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

Young people across both programmes articulated in the qualitative research they were also motivated by the **desire to make a positive impact** on a local or national level. They wanted to represent the views of other young people from their local areas (e.g. their school or local youth group) and affect real change to policy making. Participants across both programmes emphasised the importance of representing their local area or school, as well as their culture and background to address a perceived lack of representation in youth politics. They were motivated by the need to increase youth representation in the policy making process.

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[4] Survey of 175 programme participants.

"What made me originally apply was that I wanted to help people and offer representation, especially the young people that I am with every day at school. To make sure our voices are being heard. It's so important that everyone gets a say." – YPDG Participant

UK Youth Parliament participants who reported being from deprived areas, specifically wanted to affect local change and thought the programme would be a good avenue to do this. However, they were initially unsure as to how this would work in practice.

"I just wanted to have some opportunity to make a positive change in my local community and sort of get actions done and maybe see a change, even as a young person." – UK Youth Parliament Participant

Secondary motivations for programme participation were consistent between the participant survey and focus groups and interviews. This included the **opportunity to develop skills and have enriching experiences**[5], add to their CV and potentially help with future education and employment opportunities[6]. For instance, UK Youth Parliament participants said that the chance to go to the House of Commons was a unique opportunity that they could highlight in their CV as part of their professional experience.

Non-participants had limited or no awareness of the programmes. They guessed that the programmes provide a place for young people to use their voice for social change and have a say in their future. They thought that both programmes were a young people's version of being a Member of Parliament (MP) but wrongly assumed that the role was paid.

3.2 Programme awareness and recruitment

The findings show that there were various ways in which UK Youth Parliament and YPDG participants became aware of the programmes, which also informed how they joined them. This includes finding out via school, college or university, social media, local youth groups, social or youth workers, peers and family as well as other youth engagement initiatives.

3.2.1 How young people became aware of the programmes

According to the survey, UK Youth Parliament participants became aware of the programme through their educational setting (32%) or community groups (21%). YPDG participants also became aware of the programme through social media (25%)[7].

Participants who took part in the qualitative research explained that **schools** played a key role in raising awareness of both programmes. This was especially the case for those who attended a school actively involved in local youth politics and youth engagement initiatives (e.g. a school council). They stressed that schools are a good way to promote the programmes. Older young people (aged 18+) also found out about the YPDG through their university.

"In [my local area], everybody knew about it through their schools. The guy that was in charge of our local area for everything, sent out emails to all of the schools, and I found out because my form tutor told me about it. That was the most effective thing in my area." – UK Youth Parliament Participant

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[5] The survey corroborates these secondary motivations. Survey participants said they wanted to develop new skills (25%), meet new people (23%), make new experiences (22%), and improve future career prospects (22%). For survey respondents, the biggest motivator to join was to represent young people's views (69%), to make a difference (58%), and to engage in discussions with policy makers (43%).

[6]

[7] Survey of 155 UK Youth Parliament and 20 YPDG participants.

For UK Youth Parliament participants, being an elected member of their **local or regional youth council** was also their introduction to the programme. They highlighted that in many areas of England, young people had to be members of their local youth council to stand for election to the UK Youth Parliament. Participants valued being able to talk to existing members of the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG as this allowed them to ask them questions and better understand the programme.

> *"When I joined the Youth Forum, I was introduced to the youth elections and the UK Youth Parliament. I started learning more about the process and talking to other MYPs. I learned about UK Youth Parliament and also discussing with the existing members on how the process worked and how the organisation worked as well." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

Other **youth engagement** programmes were also a facilitator, for example, some YPDG participants found out about the programme through their participation in the #iWill initiative or the National Citizen Service Youth Forum.

Social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter also introduced the programmes to young people; this was particularly mentioned by the YPDG participants. After becoming aware of the programme via social media, they became curious to know more, so reached out to peers involved in the YPDG to ask questions. Whilst UK Youth Parliament participants also mentioned hearing about the programme via social media, they were generally already aware of it due to their involvement in their local youth council. Finding out about the programmes via social media was particularly useful for young people who were not already involved in a local youth group or studied politics at school.

Personal networks including peers (e.g. engaged in youth politics) and family (e.g. working in a local council) were important too, highlighting the importance of social connections and word of mouth to promote the programmes. Participants discussed the programme with the peer or family member and took the opportunity to ask questions to understand what participation would involve before committing to it.

Young people and delivery staff suggested that the marketing and communication of the programmes could be improved. They suggested that it needs to include clear information about the programmes, as well as member roles and responsibilities. In the survey, 30% of participants[8] pointed this out as an area of improvement. Non-participants did not have a clear understanding of what being a member of the UK Youth Parliament or YPDG involved and what is required of members.

3.3 Programme recruitment experiences

Given the differences in programme designs, the way young people experienced recruitment varied between both programmes. Experiences also varied amongst UK Youth Parliament participants as the local recruitment and election approach varied by local authority.

3.3.1 UK Youth Parliament recruitment

According to UK Youth Parliament delivery staff and participants, the election approach varies across local areas, and may involve initial recruitment via schools or colleges, youth services, using social media or a combination of these. Delivery staff explained that the approach taken is at the local authorities' and youth workers' discretion, informed by an understanding about what works well in their local area. The British Youth Council provided guidance to local authorities to ensure that the local election processes were fair and transparent, while giving local authorities a degree of flexibility in their approach. However, young people saw these different local approaches to elections as inconsistent across geographical areas. For

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[8] Survey of 175 programme participants.

example, some young people did not have a local youth council in their area and were recruited via their school. Participants thought it was unfair that the level of a school's engagement with their local youth council and the UK Youth Parliament was a determining factor in elections. Consequently, 30% of UK Youth Parliament survey participants perceived that the way young people find out about the programme could be improved, as well as the programme's marketing and branding (30%)[9].

> *"The awareness of UK Youth Parliament was spatially different so certainly in schools where there had been a member of youth parliament there was a lot of engagement. Where there had not been someone from the youth parliament, it was difficult to get engagement to get schools involved in campaigns and to get people to vote." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

UK Youth Parliament participants described that the election process involved various activities including: writing a campaign manifesto, creating an election video which would be shared with schools, and doing a 'mini' preparation election at school prior to the live election. However, some reported that the support they received with the local elections varied across local authorities which they believed affected the success of their election campaign.

3.3.2 YPDG recruitment

Similarly, to the UK Youth Parliament programme, recruitment for the YPDG relied on firstly engaging youth sector organisations, youth workers, schools and colleges, each of which received guidance from Shout Out UK and were then responsible for coordinating recruitment activities. Just over a third (35%) of YPDG survey participants[10] thought that the way young people find out about the YPDG could be improved. This included social media advertisements and sharing video content about the programme and what participants do. Young people then had the opportunity to apply to the programme via an online survey. Participants reported that the application process worked well, and especially liked the flexibility and option to submit application responses by voice note. YPDG participants recalled that the application form included a collection of demographic characteristics. They believed this was important, and it indicated to them the emphasis on diversity and inclusivity of the programme.

3.4 Enablers and barriers to programme participation

3.4.1 Enablers to programme participation

In terms of ongoing programme engagement, participants across both programmes reported similar enablers. Survey results[11] show the five key enablers to programme participation: when meetings are run, having a school/college that supports programme engagement, information provided by programme teams, access to technology, and locations of meetings.

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[9] Survey of 175 programme participants.

[10] Survey of 20 YPDG programme participants.

[11] A total number of 175 participants completed the survey. Figure 5   s percentages are calculated using this base number.

Figure 5. Key enablers to programme participation.
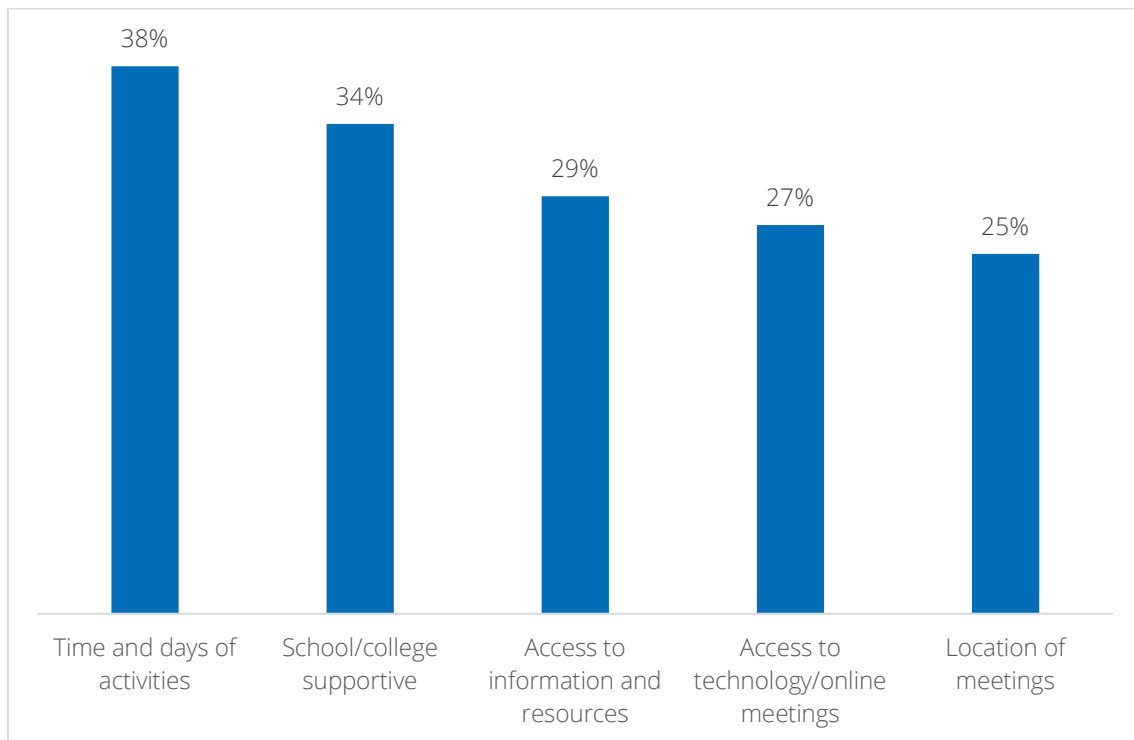
Source: Survey of programme participants. (20 YPDG and 155 UK Youth Parliament participants).

Note: Access to information includes information provided by the British Youth Council and regional youth units/YouthFocus, Children in Wales or Scottish Youth Parliament and Shout Out UK.

As previously mentioned, **schools** play a key role in supporting young people to engage in both the UK Youth Parliament and the YPDG. Many survey participants articulated the importance of having a supportive school to facilitate and encourage their participation. For example, offering flexibility in allowing them to do programme activities or attend events during school time. Participants that did not have a local youth council, yet had a supportive school, felt empowered to get involved in the programmes, especially the UK Youth Parliament.

> *"A very supportive college or school is really good as well because some of these events happen during school time, if we weren't allowed out of school we wouldn't go." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

Similarly, UK Youth Parliament participants, in particular, emphasised the role of a **supportive local youth council** in facilitating their participation. For example, some local youth councils funded travel, allowing participants to attend UK Youth Parliament events.

For **participants with a disability**, facilitators to participation were similar to those described above. Survey participants with a disability also reported that information and resources provided by the local authority was a facilitator to their participation (32%)[12].

3.4.2   Barriers to participation

The survey and qualitative research highlighted several barriers to participation in the programme, which will be outlined in more detail in this section. This includes the perception of the programmes and the type of people it attracts; the level of support from schools and local youth voice infrastructure; accessibility

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[12] Survey of 175 programme participants.

needs of participants; and the time commitment of the programmes. These barriers are not exhaustive of all participants' experiences as many reported having no barriers to participation.

Figure 6. Main barriers to participation in the programmes.
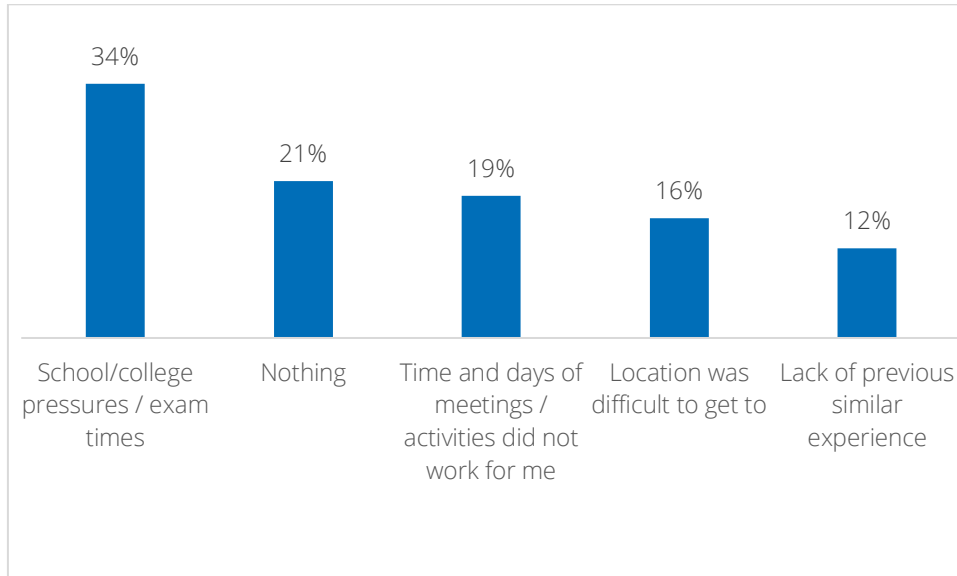
Source: Survey of 175 programme participants.

Across all survey participants, 21% reported they experienced no barriers to participation. However, for participants with a disability, the second most frequent barrier was their health condition or disability (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Two key barriers to programme participation for those with a disability.
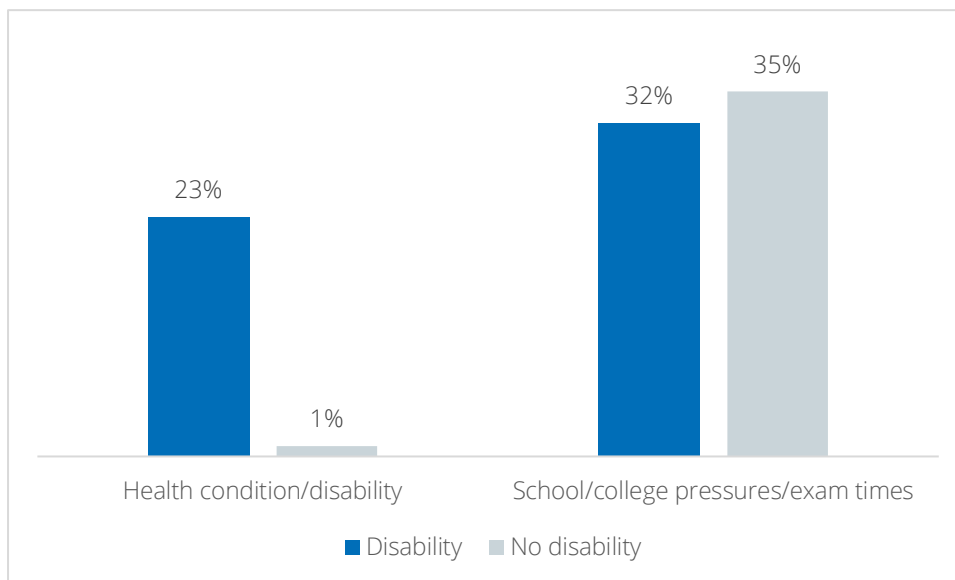
Source: Survey with 168 programme participants; 44 with and 124 without disability.

A general perception across the programmes was that, whilst they may be diverse in terms of race, gender and sexuality of members, both the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG do have some diversity gaps. For example, there was a common perception in focus groups and interviews that both **programmes attract a 'certain type of person'** which participants linked to class, interests and where people live. Young people perceived that programme members tended to be middle-class, already interested and engaging in youth politics or lived in urban areas. There were mixed views amongst UK Youth Parliament and YPDG delivery

staff on this issue. One view emphasised that their respective programme already does a lot to encourage diversity and representation, whilst an alternative view was that more could be done to improve access of opportunity for under-represented groups.

> *"No matter how diverse or whatever they claim to be as a group, they're [participants] relatively homogenous in terms of life, background, upbringing, that kind of thing." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

The **UK Youth Parliament's localised design**, and its reliance on local authorities and youth workers was perceived, by participants, to lead to inconsistent programme experiences. Participants observed that some local authorities prioritise youth voice initiatives more than others, with varying levels of quality. Delivery staff agreed that local authority constraints and varying levels of funding and staff capacity meant that the programme was different in each locality. Whilst local authorities have a statutory duty to deliver some form of youth engagement, they have agency over how to approach this. Additionally, some participants experienced financial barriers to taking part, and linked this to the lack of support from their local youth council.

Lack of **school** support presented a barrier to some participants' involvement. For example, participants reported that some teachers worried about them missing essential school time due to the programme. Non-participants said that academic pressures were a key reason for not wanting to sign up to either programme. They also expressed that the programmes sounded like school, which they already found challenging or wanted a break from in their free time.

Participants also reported issues with **accessibility**, mostly related to location and travel. Participants who had to travel long distances to attend in-person events found this frustrating especially when the travel time exceeded the time for the event itself. Participants from rural areas had experienced this and found it challenging to attend in-person events, which normally took place in political hubs like London, Belfast, or Cardiff. Open text responses from the survey across both programmes supported this, mentioning that event/meeting dates were not sent out with enough notice and the location of the meetings being far away, or a lack of funding for transport and public transport options. UK Youth Parliament participants also highlighted that some local youth councils covered travel costs whilst others did not.

> *"In rural youth council work, there's like a quite high cost related to transport or at least accessibility. Bus routes are infrequent, so you're not gonna be able to rely on those to get to any of these places, you've got to have an adult or a licence and a car to fully participate and be adequately representing the people in your area. That's a major barrier to participating because you've got to have the transport thing sorted out." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

The **required time commitment** was also mentioned as a barrier. Some older participants struggled to fit the programme alongside their studies, part-time jobs and other commitments. Non-participants felt strongly that family commitments would deter them from participating in the programmes. Delivery staff added that constraints on young people's time should be considered more in the programme design to improve retention and increase participation. Most YPDG participants (40%) engaged with the programme for three to five hours per month[13]. Among UK Youth Parliament participants, 27% said they engaged with the programme for three to five hours per month, another 27% said they engaged with the programme for more than eight hours per month[14].

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[13] Survey of 20 YPDG participants.

[14] Survey of 155 UK Youth Parliament participants.

3.5 Participant suggestions to improve reach and awareness

The following suggestions are from programme participants and relate to improving marketing, information and communication of both programmes, and recruitment methods.

UK Youth Parliament: Share and promote information about local MYPs. For example, a webpage with MYPs' names, picture, short biography and contact information.

UK Youth Parliament: Improve consistency in programme delivery, a UK-wide approach to promote the programme and to elect young people onto the programme.

YPDG: Improve existing links with schools and colleges.

YPDG: Use social media to share content about key events (e.g., roundtables) to increase interest in the programme.

Both: Better use of social media platforms to reach and attract a wider and more diverse group of young people, including using Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and TikTok to share online content.

Both: Engage with more and a wider variety of schools and colleges, focusing on those not yet engaged in youth initiatives, rural and remote schools/colleges.

Both: Do more in-person outreach in schools and colleges, including assemblies to raise awareness of the programmes, which are co-delivered by delivery staff and current programme members.

Both: Use competitions and e-bulletins to reach a wider audience of young people to promote the programmes.

4.0 Programme delivery and effectiveness: space and voice

This chapter examines how the UK Youth Parliament and Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG) seek to create an environment which enables young people to engage with politics, issue-based campaigns, and policy development.

The next two chapters will draw on the Lundy model of child participation to assess the effectiveness of the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG delivery models in supporting high-quality youth participation. This chapter focuses on how the programmes achieve space and voice for participants.

Figure 8. The Lundy model of child participation: space and voice.

SPACE: how the programmes create a safe and inclusive environment for participants to express their views.

VOICE: how the programmes work as a forum to allow young people to develop their views.

This chapter uses data from the surveys and qualitative research with all stakeholders. It will first describe the programme activities and the extent to which participants enjoy them. This will be followed by examining the policy areas that the programmes have delved into, including how these thematic areas are chosen and their alignment with the interest of young people. Finally, the chapter will outline whether and how both programmes create an accessible and tolerant environment within which participants feel able and comfortable to articulate their views.

4.1 How participants' voice is developed

4.1.1 UK Youth Parliament programme structure and activities

The UK Youth Parliament offers a programme of activities to improve Members of Youth Parliament's (MYPs) knowledge of political processes and campaigning skills. This is achieved in three key ways: induction and ongoing training; local, regional and national events and campaigns involving peers and policy makers; and informal support from delivery staff and peers.

Participants are initially invited to an **induction session** where they learn what being a MYP involves and what is expected of them, and sign a UK Youth Parliament Code of Conduct. After this, MYPs will meet regularly at either **local or regional events and sessions** to receive training on topics such as campaigns, youth voice, and political processes to aid them with their work. During this period, MYPs work on influencing their local decision makers to act on MYPs' local manifesto campaigns and national UK Youth Parliament campaigns. The programme has two flagship events which MYPs attend, the **Annual Conference** and **House of Commons sitting**. The Annual Conference is a weekend-long residential where MYPs come from across the country to meet, discuss issues, learn, vote for which policies will be on the Make Your

Mark ballot, and nominate debate leads for the UK Youth Parliament House of Commons sitting. The House of Commons sitting gives MYPs the opportunity to represent their communities and voice their opinions in the Commons Chamber. MYPs are given turns region by region to debate key issues selected by young people and then all MYPs vote to select which issue will form the national campaign for the year.

Prior to the current (2022/24) cohort of MYPs, the UK Youth Parliament was a one-year programme but is now a **two-year programme**. Both delivery staff and participants explained that just as MYPs were becoming comfortable in the role, the programme and their term in office would end. The two year programme is intended to allow the MYPs to get more out of their roles. The first-year focuses on developing their skills, understanding the priorities for young people and ideas for campaigning. The second year will then prioritise the delivery of the campaigns. A delivery staff member explained it as follows:

> *"[We] changed the programme to be a 2-year programme which is already having big benefits... Now the way we split it is the first year is the policy year... As we start the second year of the 2-year programme, that's going to be the campaigning year, ...with the 2-year programme, young people have got these improved skills, they've got these ideas solidly written down and they're ready to campaign, and now they have a full year to go out and campaign." – UK Youth Parliament Delivery Staff*

4.1.1.1 UK Youth Parliament participant views on the structure and activities

Generally, participants in the programme were pleased with the training and activities provided as part of the programme. They found it informative and developmental, teaching them not just about how to campaign on issues they care about, but the different avenues they can get involved with in political processes aside from elected politics. The things they enjoyed the most were UK Youth Parliament House of Commons sittings (60%), meeting new people (39%), and the Annual Conference (30%)[15].

The annual **House of Commons sitting** was the activity participants found most engaging, acknowledging the privilege it is to sit in the chamber. It was seen as a milestone in participants' lives, with friends and family watching the debate live on BBC Parliament. Aside from the prestige of the event, participants were keen to note that it functioned well in its purpose of deciding campaign issues and that the regional method of campaign selection was fair.

Participants enjoyed the **Annual Conference**, citing that the training and discussions around the manifesto were highly beneficial. They also enjoyed the social aspects, including meeting all MYPs and the disco. Those who raised policy motions and delivered speeches in particular noted the benefit that the Annual Conference had on their confidence and enthusiasm for the programme. Participants would like more 'free time' during the weekend to have informal conversations with MYPs from across the country as the social aspect was highlighted as equally important.

Campaigns were also reported as an enjoyable part of being an MYP. Young people felt empowered by the programme and were enthusiastic to spark change. Young people explained that this could involve tweeting about issues, lobbying their elected representatives or raising awareness among other young people. Participants felt inspired by being part of a wider group of change-makers.

The training was seen as beneficial to MYPs learning about different political processes. They reported that the timing of the training aligned well to the activities and events, giving them the chance to put their new knowledge into action. There was some criticism of the **training**, namely that it was often too simplistic or easy. Participants understood that the training content had to work for everyone, including the youngest

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[15] Survey of 155 UK Youth Parliament participants.

MYPs. They suggested that the training content and materials could be tailored for younger and older MYPs.

> *"We always thought the training was, or some of the activities were, a bit childish." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

Older aged MYPs and former MYPs reflected that the **programme's age range is very broad (11-18 years)**. One view among older and former MYPs was that the programme required a level of maturity to fully engage in it. These participants suggested that the entry age for the programme could be raised to 14 years old, or that the programme team could facilitate age-appropriate activities, events and training, tailored and split across the younger and older MYPs. However, delivery staff and other MYPs believed that the younger MYPs added value to the programme and the age of entry did not need to be changed.

> *"I mean, we saw some who were 11 or 12 and where some of them maybe weren't mature enough to be there – some of them clearly weren't... I think that there has to be some sort of relook at which age groups are allowed to take part and maybe saying 14/15 and above would be better." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the UK Youth Parliament has a **localised funding and delivery model**. As a result, participants reported perceived inconsistent programme structures and activities. MYPs can live in neighbouring towns yet can have completely different programme experiences. Some MYPs were fully integrated into local youth councils or regional youth networks with regular meetings, were supported to attend BYC events and were in close contact with their local youth worker. This level of support and additionality allowed MYPs to gain further knowledge and experience outside of mandatory UK Youth Parliament activities that are organised by BYC. But these types of additional activities were not available in all regions of the UK Youth Parliament, therefore creating different opportunities and experiences of the programme. One former MYP said the only support they received outside of BYC organised events were quarterly 30-minute check-in meetings with their local youth worker, meetings that they felt were not especially productive. There are often external factors that influence this variation, like reductions in funding for youth services, local government budgets, and capacity of youth workers. However, this lack of consistency limits the UK Youth Parliament's ability to consistently develop participants to express their views.

4.1.2   YPDG programme structure and activities

The YPDG is narrower in its scope of activities than the UK Youth Parliament. All activities centred around the **policy roundtables** organised with different government departments. YPDG staff ran **monthly training sessions** with members which provided training on policy development processes, background on specific policy areas, and presentations to inform young people on how to deliver recommendations to policy makers.

> *"We have a set of Key Performance Indicators that we want to meet to improve the young people's [skills], such as public speaking, so in every training session I try to give them something that will develop them. We also have conversations around media literacy – looking at what young people see online around different issues and how to think about this. We also give space for the young people to debate with each other in a controlled environment, knowing that they are safe to do so." – YPDG Delivery Staff*

4.1.2.1   YPDG participant views on the structure and activities

Members of the YPDG enjoyed **training sessions** which offered regular learning opportunities. They reported that the activities they enjoyed the most were policy roundtable discussions and workshops

(50%), developing policy briefs (50%), and learning about the policy making process (45%), as well as engaging with politicians (45%)[16]. Participants found policy roundtables enjoyable, especially the opportunity to engage with ministers to deliver policy recommendations.

Participants also enjoyed the **variety of opportunities** the programme offered. The fact that any policy could require their consultation allowed them to learn about topics that they otherwise may not have thought about. The following example illustrates how a participant had the chance to learn about and influence online gaming policy via the YPDG, a topic they had not previously been interested in.

> *"I actually think it's quite interesting that they give us random topics because it will touch on policy areas that government departments are interested in and prioritising. Things like online gaming wasn't something I was interested but then did the training and the roundtables and it's actually quite a fascinating topic. It's good that the government are consulting young people on such topics that young people aren't asked to be consulted about." – YPDG Participant*

4.1.3   Activities that participants enjoyed across both programmes

Participants valued **meeting people** with a like-minded passion for politics, via the programmes. They appreciated the opportunity to network and the potential these connections could result in, whether this be meeting peers at training, learning from delivery staff and guest speakers, or engaging with MPs. Participants across both programmes were keen to have more **engagement with politicians**. Engaging with MPs and ministers was seen as a unique appeal of participating in the programmes which gave significant benefits to participants (explored fully in Chapter 4.0). Even if this engagement is figurative and the decisions are made elsewhere, participants felt it is important for elected officials to hear and validate the views and concerns of the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG members.

Figure 9 shows that the programmes generally fare well on the Lundy model dimensions of space and voice. Activities were well organised, interesting and engaging. Young people were supported to actively participate, and develop their own voice, and express themselves in a safe space.

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[16] Survey with 20 YPDG programme participants.

Figure 9. Participants' views on the extent to which the programmes developed voice and space.
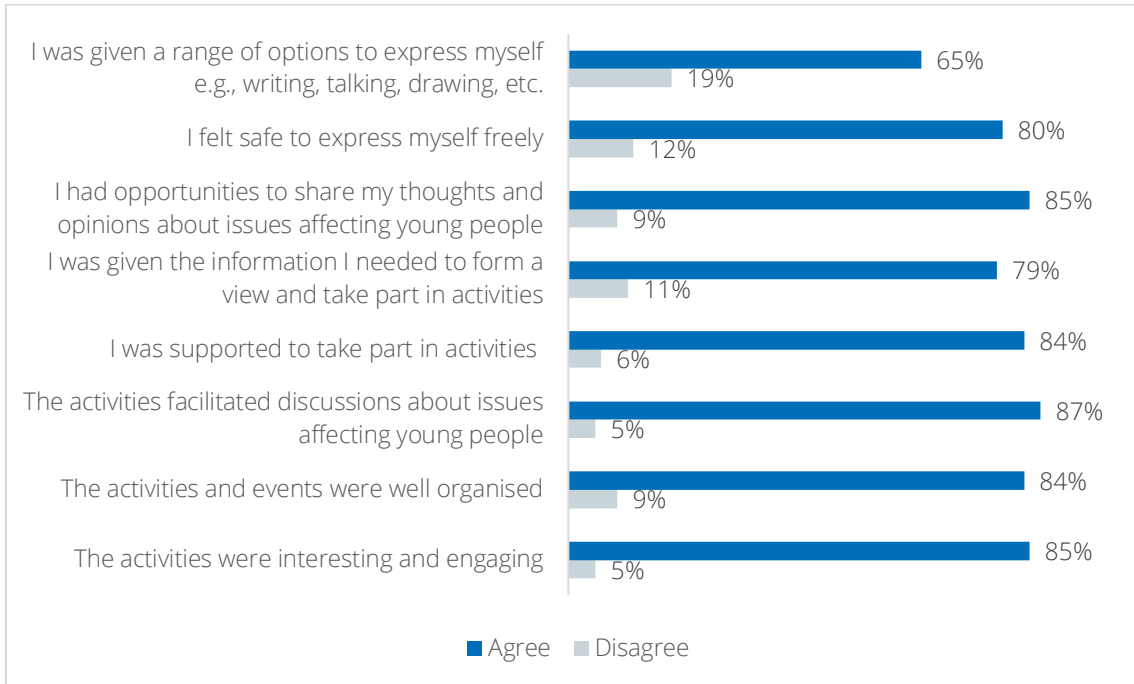
Source: Survey with 167-175 programme participants. Table specifying sample size for each question

4.2 Policy areas and issues important to programme participants

The survey results show that the top three issues that were most important to participants in both programmes were identical (see Table 2). These were: climate change and the environment, poverty, and education. Most participants also felt that they had been able to engage in these issues through programme membership.

Table 2. Top three issues programme participants care about the most.

Which top three issues affecting young people do you care about the most?	YPDG	UK Youth Parliament
Climate change and the environment	65%	36%
Poverty	60%	45%
Education	55%	62%

Source: Survey of programme participants (20 YPDG and 155 UK Youth Parliament participants).

Table 3 Opportunities for programme participants to engage with issue they care about

Do you feel like you have had opportunities to engage in addressing the issues you care about the most?	YPDG	UK Youth Parliament
Yes	85%	75%
No	15%	25%

Source: Survey of programme participants (20 YPDG and 155 UK Youth Parliament participants).

Additionally, the interviews and focus groups with participants revealed that **mental health services** and **political participation** are also important issues. Participants explained that having the space and opportunity in the programmes to discuss and debate important policy issues was a motivator to their ongoing participation.

> *"[The] key one is youth policy and things related to this. The two past roundtables have been on volunteering and career education, and these are linked to members' own experiences and interests. Also, climate change, mental health (latter always comes up in roundtables despite the topic)." – YPDG Delivery Staff*

These issues were largely in step with non-participants who engaged through the Listening Labs. When asked what topics the non-participants felt passionate about, the top three responses were:

- ▶ **Mental health**, particularly regarding experiences of sexism and equality of mental health, LGBTQ issues, suicide, insecurities, bullying and feeling safe.

- ▶ **Protecting the environment**, specifically around climate change. cars and traffic, plants and animals, and veganism.

- ▶ **Gaming and technology**, including young people using technology and playing video games.

This finding suggests there are similarities and overlap in the issues young people, in and outside of the programmes, care about.

4.3 Participants expressing views on issues they care about

4.3.1 UK Youth Parliament issues selection

Overall, participants were pleased with the processes the UK Youth Parliament follows to decide the issues MYPs will campaign on nationally during their term in office. The process starts with manifesto pledges made by all MYPs as part of their election campaign. Manifesto pledges are nominated and voted on by MYPs at the Annual Conference, and whittled down to a shortlist which forms the ballot of the Make Your Mark campaign. Make Your Mark ballots are then voted on and completed by young people across the country. The top three issues selected by young people are then debated in Parliament, during the House of Commons sitting. During this, MYPs debate the merits and de-merits of each issue before voting. The issue which receives the most votes from MYPs will then become the national campaign for the duration of their term.

MYPs felt overall that this was a **fair and democratic way of determining which issues** to prioritise on a national basis and noted that this did not prevent them from advocating for their own manifesto pledges

locally. There were participants who felt that the programme teams may pre-empt particular issues that they believe all young people will want to support, for example, decreasing the voting age to 16.

> *"We had a debate on votes at 16 and majority of the room were in favour of votes at 16 – I wasn't… and once the vote had finished, the staff had printed posters for us to say that we supported votes at 16. I thought it's not helpful to diverse debate, if they had already printed their posters." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

4.3.2   YPDG member's issues selection

Issues explored by the YPDG are decided by policy makers in government departments. This involved DCMS reaching out to government departments who are interested in hearing young people's views on particular topics, or to departments that the YPDG have expressed a policy interest in, or a particular policy maker approaching DCMS leads. The delivery team then received a set of questions that the department wanted answered and devised a training session to inform young people around the topic. SOUK and DCMS staff liaised with YPDG members to hear what is important to them and tried to find topics which align with their interests. However, delivery staff and policy makers thought that this may not always be possible due to a lack of awareness of the YPDG across government and capacity of policy officials.

YPDG members believed this approach has benefits and drawbacks. As mentioned above, the variety of policies the YPDG are consulted on, allows members to learn about new topic areas. However, the downside of this is the members can lack interest in certain topics. YPDG members were also frustrated at certain topics they were not consulted on which they felt the group could add significant value to, such as the Online Harms Bill, which was highly relevant to young people. An example where all these components aligned well was the roundtable on Mental Health Services with Gillian Keegan MP and Dr Alex George. Participants found this roundtable extremely rewarding and interesting as it matched the interests of policy makers and young people.

4.4   Creating a space where all young people can express themselves

4.4.1   Online vs in-person

It is important that both programmes create an accessible, open environment where young people can participate and express their views openly. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, delivery staff have adapted their approach to include more online activities. Both the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG run a **hybrid model** with regular online events and less frequent in-person events.

Delivery staff were concerned that young people were missing out on the full benefits of the programmes with online events. Social benefits and 'screen fatigue' were cited as the primary drawbacks of online delivery.

> *"I think most importantly is those young people are together face to face because they drive that passion and that excitement, they need to know each other. They need to know each other really well. That's maybe what we've lost, the relationships. We're missing some of that enthusiasm. I think anything they can be physically involved in, instead of this online stuff." – UK Youth Parliament Delivery Staff*

Participants liked the option of online sessions, they improved accessibility and avoided the need to travel. This improved access for participants living in rural areas and outside of London. YPDG members also liked

that online sessions were recorded, which allowed them to catch-up if they had other commitments on the day.

> *"Accessibility is the main thing because a lot of us struggle to travel to London, so how are we going to get there? I think online meetings are quite accessible and to government ministers." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

There was consensus that a combination of online and in-person events was important. In-person events allowed participants to have more informal discussions about topics outside of programme activities which was important for social development, whilst online events supported accessibility.

4.4.2   Accessibility

Across the programmes, participants with additional needs largely felt these were supported and accommodated. This was especially true for large events where there were hearing aids available, wheelchair accessibility, and travel assistance. However, this was not always felt to be the case for regular meetings and especially for those with hidden or less visible disabilities, for example, dyslexia. Participants suggested this could be improved by using transcription in online meetings, verbally introducing everyone in meetings and explaining acronyms.

> *"From a disability point of view, there definitely needs to be more work put into accessibility. For example, I'll be given photographs when I need written documents [to support accessibility needs]. I think it needs to be part of the core training – how to make social media more accessible and that sort of thing." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

4.4.3   Politically right-leaning views

There was a perception among UK Youth Parliament participants that those expressing politically right-leaning views were 'shut down' by peers in meetings. This caused some right-of-centre MYPs to feel alienated and uncomfortable participating in the programme. Participants recommended that MYPs should receive training on tolerance and encountering differing views to better manage this in the future.

> *"I stood up in a debate and voiced an opinion that was not the opinion held by the vast majority of MYPs, and they literally all rose up out of their seats and shouted me down, waving and pointing me down, telling me to sit down and shut up – very aggressive. It was very intimidating, when you've got a lecture theatre full of young people doing that to you. I ended up having to shout, not because I was particularly passionate about what I was saying, just because I had to be heard over what seemed like the rabble, and that left me quite shook. I really didn't want to go to another UK Youth Parliament event after that. I very strongly considered resigning." – UK Youth Parliament participant*

This was not the case for the YPDG, where it seemed that personal political leanings mattered less. Participants suggested that the YPDG not being an issues-based group like the UK Youth Parliament, and the goal of making realistic and professional policy recommendations, de-politicised the group.

> *"What I like here is that you have that mediator and whilst it's not specific training on terminology or understanding specific briefs, you have that open space to debate, learn and understand what the policy at hand is. It's all very evidence led and that's one of the things that gives us leverage" – YPDG Participant*

4.4.4 Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales UK Youth Parliament participants' interests

Participants from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales had unique experiences compared with participants from England. They felt the programme could be 'Anglo-centric' and thought more could be done to consider the needs and experiences of those outside England. Participants felt English policies were prioritised over devolved matters or devolved matters were only discussed in a tokenistic way.

> *"English policies came first and then the devolved way down the line, there were topics we were asked to speak on that didn't relate to Northern Ireland. It felt like an English Youth Parliament, with other issues tagged on." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

The UK Youth Parliament is delivered by the Scottish Youth Parliament in Scotland. Scottish MYPs felt that more could be done to link both institutions as the Scottish Youth Parliament does not often engage with the priorities of the UK Youth Parliament. Participants of both programmes therefore perceived a tension between the Scottish Youth Parliament and UK Youth Parliament delivery teams.

Participants from all constituent nations of the UK wanted more opportunities to meet and socialise with MYPs from other parts of the UK. At times they felt siloed into English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish groups rather than one UK Youth Parliament.

4.4.5 The important role of delivery staff

Participants across both programmes mostly felt safe and able to express themselves. They attributed this to the staff who support their involvement. They felt well looked after by delivery staff and valued the consistency and support they offered. UK Youth Parliament participants described delivery staff as patient, informed and affable. Participants described forming trusted relationships with staff across the 2-year programme.

> *"I do think the BYC does a good job of fostering like an inclusive and accepting environment - I think that's done really well." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

Similarly, YPDG participants felt delivery staff provided them with the support they needed to develop and articulate views into policy recommendations. Staff often acted as a mediator during training as participants debated the merits of different ideas and approaches to the given topic. Participants also mentioned that the staff being younger helped them feel comfortable expressing their views.

> *"… we've had different members of staff and they're quite young and we feel like we can really say what we think… The staff really help in creating an environment where we feel that we can say what we think, and they also say what they think." – YPDG Participant*

4.5 Participant suggestions – improving space and voice

Below is a summary of the recommendations participants made to further enhance the programme delivery and support safe spaces and development of voice.

UKYP: 2-year programme is beneficial to participant development.

UKYP: Consider the age-appropriateness of the programme content and activities. Consider changing the age range of the programme to 14-18 or tailoring activities and materials to a younger and older age group.

UKYP: Review ways to improve the consistency of delivery across regions.

UKYP: Support more programme outputs and decisions to be youth-led.

UKYP: Consider introducing training for participants on tolerance of different opinions.

YPDG: Where possible, match interests of policy makers and young people.

Both: Ensure participants can engage with politicians in some form during the programme.

Both: Continue with a hybrid approach to delivery of events.

Both: Ensure that participants receive documentation in good time and take consideration for non-visible additional needs.

5.0 Programme delivery and effectiveness: audience and influence

This chapter discusses how youth voice gathered through the programmes is used to influence policy development processes. It focuses on the 'audiences' and 'influence' dimensions of the Lundy model of participation.

Figure 10. The Lundy model of child participation: audience and influence.

Audience – how the programmes support youth voice to be listened to by decision makers.

Influence – how the programmes support youth voice to be taken seriously and acted on.

5.1 Audiences

Participants described having two key audiences: local and national policy makers, and the wider population of young people (outside of the programmes).

5.1.1 Engaging policymaker audiences

We asked survey participants to what extent they had an influence on policy makers. Figure 11 shows YPDG feel they have more influence.

Figure 11. Participant agreement that the YPDG/UK Youth Parliament has an influence on decisions made by policy makers affecting young people's lives.
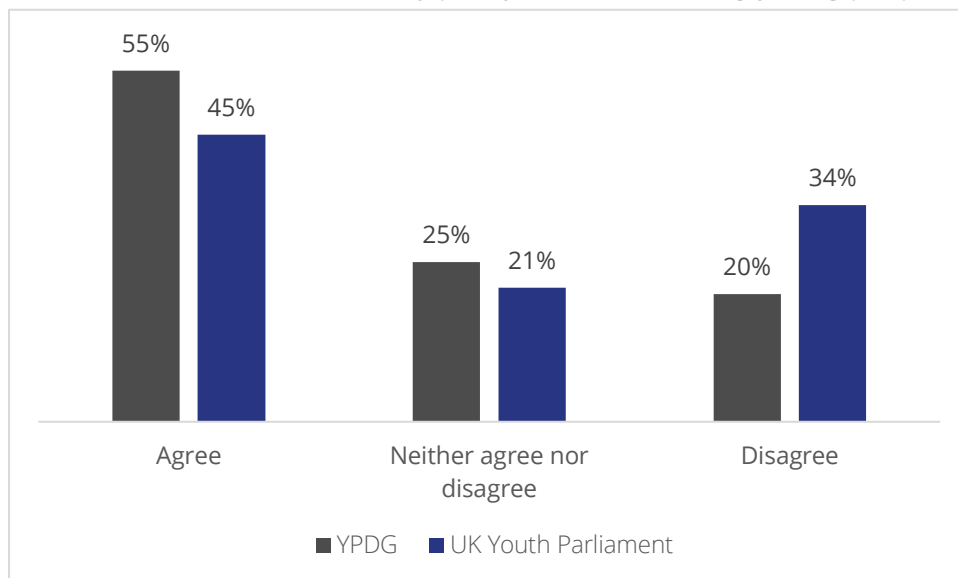
Source: Survey of 175 programme participants.

5.1.1.1   UK Youth Parliament and policy audiences

UK Youth Parliament participants worked with diverse policy audiences, ranging from ministers, local MPs, devolved representatives, and councillors. Whilst there are no formal lines of communication between UK Youth Parliament and decision makers, participants reported reaching these audiences in four key ways:

▶ UK Youth Parliament members made use of their **existing connections** with MPs who they had met whilst serving on the local Youth Council.

▶ Some **MPs proactively showed an interest** in the UK Youth Parliament activities.

▶ **MPs facilitated access** to other local decision makers, such as local mayors.

▶ More recently, the UK Youth Parliament has added **policy roundtables** to their activities, which has added another avenue by which participants can engage with policy makers.

Meeting with local MPs and decision makers was not an easy or universal experience for participants. MYPs across the UK regions consistently reported facing significant challenges in engaging these audiences. Participants felt that there was too much reliance on MYPs' existing contacts, established through the local youth council's, to engage MPs and local councillors. Younger participants felt it was even harder for them to engage local decision makers than it was for their older peers. They also felt their views were not taken as seriously by decision makers, compared to older counterparts, because of perceptions based on their age. Participants across the board suggested a need for additional support at the programme level to facilitate a first meeting with decision makers.

Participants reported a frustration with the **local variances in engaging with decision makers** across the UK Youth Parliament constituencies. Firstly, participants explained that UK Youth Parliament constituencies do not map directly onto MP constituencies, following local authority boundaries instead. For instance, some MYPs' constituencies covered three MPs, whilst other constituencies had two MYPs for one MP. Secondly, some areas had a built-in structure for MYPs to meet with local MPs and mayors. MYPs in some areas were discouraged by delivery staff from making direct contact with their MP as the expectation was that this would be facilitated by a local support worker. These local differences created a perceived disparity in the extent to which MYPs could regularly engage with policy makers. Participants also felt a lack of engagement with policy officials was detrimental to the effectiveness of their campaigns.

> *"That would be really nice if there was a connection between the MYP and the MP, but it is quite difficult." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

5.1.1.2   YPDG and policy audiences

All YPDG **contact with policy makers was organised by DCMS with support from the SOUK delivery team**. As part of the policy roundtables, the YPDG participants were provided with numerous opportunities to engage with national policy makers. Policy makers generally provided key questions to help the YPDG structure their presentation. Some policy makers reviewed the draft presentation and provided a steer to help young people finalise content. This process of engagement also enabled policy makers to brief the minister on what may be presented in advance of the roundtable.

Some policy makers encouraged wider policy colleagues to attend the roundtables. Policy makers viewed the YPDG as a forum to support cross-departmental working, especially where issues spanned multiple departmental remits. This enabled the YPDG to support and influence policy areas under review holistically. Policy makers stated that cross-government policy roundtables with the YPDG allowed them to reflect on wider perspectives that might otherwise not have been heard.

> *"On domestic abuse, mental health and youth employment – it was really us providing information for them [YPDG] and giving them [YPDG] the opportunity to talk to other government departments. For*

example, on youth employment, we got Ministers from the Department of Work and Pensions to join us and talk about what was going on." – Policy Maker

YPDG members believed that ministers were their key audience. They wanted ministers to hear their views and use this to inform policy development. They felt frustrated when their interaction with policy makers was limited to junior civil servants. They stated a preference for interacting with ministers, which was a key motivator for participating in the programme. That being said, participants were aware of the value of engaging with policy officials as their target audience to inform policy development.

"When it comes to trying to influence and change policy, the audience tends to be civil servants…they're the people doing the policy, so I think it works really well talking to them. From my experience they are the group of people who we have spoken to. It would have been nice if we had spoken to more Ministers, I don't think we've spoken to one." – YPDG Participant

5.1.1.3   Barriers to reaching policy makers

Young people from both the UK Youth Parliament and the YPDG identified challenges in engaging policy audiences. Over half of survey respondents across both programmes (60% of YPDG and 57% of UK Youth Parliament[17]) highlighted the need to improve '*engaging with ministers and senior civil servants*'. Participants believed that policy makers were less interested in issues that did not align with local or national policy priorities. Delivery staff also noted that engagement was variable between government departments, which sometimes prevented participants from engaging with topics most relevant to young people's interests. Participants, delivery staff and policy makers suggested that it would be good practice to consult young people as a standard component of all policy making.

Policy makers' awareness of the programmes, or lack thereof, was seen as a barrier to youth voice reaching and influencing policy decisions. Policy makers commonly found out about the programmes and their remit through word of mouth. Policy makers suggested it would be beneficial for information on the programmes to be shared more widely and routinely across Whitehall. They suggested the key mechanisms to facilitate this could include awareness raising through: staff training and induction, via the Policy Profession network, and departmental emails, newsletters and e-bulletins.

5.1.2   Young people as an audience

Whilst influencing policy makers is a key function of both the UK Youth Parliament and the YPDG, participants and delivery staff across both programmes were keen to stress that **young people (not involved in the programmes)** were also an important audience. UK Youth Parliament members and delivery staff alike, highlighted the representative function of the MYP role. As elected members, participants felt responsible for representing their communities on a wider stage, especially at events like the Annual Conference or House of Commons sitting. Participants also noted that they found garnering constituents' views through activities like Make Your Mark to be an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Some participants ran surgery events for young people in their area, using the closer connections they had to local politicians to raise young peoples' concerns.

"[Our audience is] …all young people in the UK I'd say. In terms of what we're trying to attract, it is for young people and making sure their voices are heard." – UK Youth Parliament Participant

Although not elected, YPDG members also felt an obligation to represent and engage with young people outside of the programme. Participants felt that it was important to incorporate wider views from young

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[17] Survey with 175 programme participants.

people alongside the groups' ideas into policy recommendations. They captured the views of young people through activities like surveys and via social media.

> *"The primary audience is and should be the other young people who are observing us – observing the actual choices the group makes overall." – YPDG Participant*

Participants across both programmes would like to get young people more involved in their work. They acknowledged that the activities were most likely to interest those with an existing interest in politics. They expressed concern about political apathy amongst their peers. Programme participants and delivery staff attributed limited interest in politics to a lack of political education in schools, coupled with experiences of adults not prioritising young people's views.

> *"[I am] trying to reach the people in my area but can also reach other MYPs, and youth groups. [It] doesn't always reach them [young people], it mostly reaches adults. I want to make sure young people's voices are heard but sometimes there's a struggle to get to them." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

5.2 Influencing policy processes

Both the UK Youth Parliament and the YPDG influenced their intended audiences to some extent. This was most evident for both programmes when the request from decision makers was clearly defined and related to a specific request or tangible policy development. Delivery staff said that when the policy area or request matched the interests of policy makers and young people, this also increased the likelihood of the youth engagement activities having an influence on policy development. The application of participants' views and wider research efforts to inform policy developments made the experience more rewarding for participants and policy makers alike. This approach supported evidence-based and youth-informed policy making. Participants were pleased to help refine policy messages and targeting. As such, programme participants have influenced different stages of the policy formation cycle, from informing consultation questions (for young people) to helping to articulate the results to decision makers. Policy makers consistently commented on the high level of engagement and commitment displayed by participants. They reflected that programme delivery staff provided an important layer of support for participants, helping them to be well informed and engaged.

> *"The feedback was that they were really engaged – they'd done their homework, thought about the issues, had loads of suggestions. I think they were a really valuable asset, and that's very uncommon, and it takes a lot of work to get young people to that place where you can get them turning up really engaged, really intelligent, really well informed. That's a huge win." – Policy Maker*

Survey participants were asked whether the programmes influenced policy makers and their decisions. Figure 12 gives an overview – young people perceive a higher impact on local rather than national decision making. Young people do not feel that it was explained to them why their work could not be acted on.

Figure 12. The UK Youth Parliament and YPDG's influence on policy making.

Taking part made a difference to political decision making — Agree 46%, Neither agree nor disagree 26%, Disagree 28%

When the group's work could not be acted on, the reason for this was explained to us — Agree 33%, Neither agree nor disagree 22%, Disagree 45%

The UK Youth Parliament's thoughts and opinions were acted on by national decision makers — Agree 25%, Neither agree nor disagree 23%, Disagree 52%

The UK Youth Parliament's thoughts and opinions were acted on by local decision makers — Agree 45%, Neither agree nor disagree 19%, Disagree 36%

The YPDG's thoughts and opinions were acted on — Agree 56%, Neither agree nor disagree 33%, Disagree 11%

There was a clear audience to share the group's work with e.g., policy makers, councillors, ministers — Agree 65%, Neither agree nor disagree 16%, Disagree 19%

My thoughts and opinions were taken seriously — Agree 76%, Neither agree nor disagree 12%, Disagree 12%

■ Agree   ■ Neither agree nor disagree   ■ Disagree

Source: Survey with 150-172 programme participants; detailed sample sizes in Annex 4. YPDG question answered by 18 YPDG survey participants.

5.2.1   UK Youth Parliament influence

The UK Youth Parliament demonstrated local success, with MYPs designing local campaigns to engage with local politicians and change makers (such as people working in strategic positions in education and transport). MYPs felt that they had informed a range of local actions, for example, in one locality the Police and Crime Commissioner engaged with MYPs to discuss knife and youth crime, exploring young people's concerns.

> *"I did a knife crime campaign because knife crime was one of the main things that came back [in Make Your Mark]. I did a whole social media campaign on that with quite a large budget given by the council, and I pitched it to the council. A lot of local civil servants were there in talks on mental health - getting them all in the same room, launching the campaign, that was really successful." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

UK Youth Parliament staff said they struggled to provide a forum for young people to achieve influence at a national level (see also

Table 4). This was attributed to factors outside of the programme. Delivery staff explained that the changes to which Departmental Portfolio the programme belongs to, had been disruptive to delivery and its potential impact for policy influence. Over the last decade the UK Youth Parliament has been overseen by the Department for Education, Cabinet Office, and now by DCMS. Additionally, delivery staff felt that changes in ministers and civil servants have hindered awareness and engagement across national government in the programme.

Table 4. Opportunity of UK Youth Parliament participants to influence decision makers at different levels.

What activities have you been involved in, as part of the UK Youth Parliament? Meeting and influencing decision makers...	UK Youth Parliament
...from my local area	72%
...from my region	56%
...on a national level	31%

Source: Survey of programme participants (155 UK Youth Parliament participants).

5.2.2   YPDG influence

The YPDG has informed national policy makers to some extent. This was most evident when young people were able to input into a tangible policy development or document. For example, the YPDG helped to sense-check messaging and language, using the results of their consultations with young people to inform their overall policy recommendations. A clearly defined scope helped to influence change. For example, as part of their Youth Review activities, DCMS worked with the Youth Steering Group (the previous iteration of the YPDG) to develop survey questions intended for young people. The survey results were used to inform the overall new direction for DCMS' youth programmes, which were published as the national Youth Guarantee.

> *"That was something that the [young people] did help us with, setting the questions for our online surveys that went out more broadly – just to make sure that they were appropriate for young people, would young people understand what we're asking, etc." – Policy Maker*

The YPDG programme influenced policy audiences most effectively when the intervention was well timed. Policy makers identified key stages in the policy formation cycle when it was most useful to consult with young people - early on to inform initial developments, and later to test firm proposals. At the initial stages, young people were able to input to the proposed strategy, and at the end, sense-check the final approach.

> *"At the earliest possible stage when you're doing the problem diagnosis, understanding what the issue is... And then I think, towards the end of the process, when we've got some firm proposals of what we want to do – and just walk through with them how this will work in practice." – Policy Maker*

5.2.3   Receptiveness of policy makers

5.2.3.1   Quality of engagement and enhancing the evidence base

Policy makers commended the quality of the research produced by the YPDG. It was evident that the YPDG had used existing evidence as well as consulting young people more widely „to generate new insights that represented their cohort and addressed gaps in the existing evidence base. For example, the YPDG informed the work of DCMS on the Dormant Assets bill.

> *"The roundtable event engagement was absolutely fantastic. It was very informative. They've 100% shaped our policy – their views have been incorporated into everything along every step. All the responses from the roundtable have been considered. It got us thinking about environmental aspects, to hear from young people that they care so much about the environment, that's a really big topic." – Policy Maker*

The YPDG also provided a useful sense checking forum for policy makers, for example around communicating research findings to different audiences. This helped policy makers reflect on the need to use a range of reporting styles, mediums, and platforms to reach youth audiences.

UK Youth Parliament participants had fewer opportunities to engage national policy stakeholders. MYPs commented that the issues-based focus of the programme meant that party political stances often dictated the level of engagement participants would achieve. Participants felt that policy makers' engagement was dependent on their own personal political views. This was often made harder by the expansive nature of national campaigns. MYPs suggested that smaller goals would be more achievable and support relationship building between themselves, MPs and the Cabinet.

There were clear differences in levels of engagement with policy makers across the programmes. Delivery staff explained that the UK Youth Parliament is a pressure group for young people, which competes with other groups for government attention. Meanwhile the YPDG is a device which the government can use to consult with a dedicated group of young people. The UK Youth Parliament staff and participants advocated for increasing the number and nature of interactions participants have with policy makers. They believed this would help to match the interests of policy makers and young people and improve the quality of engagement.

5.2.3.2   Policy specialisation

Policy officials explained that depending on the policy area they wanted to consult on, they may choose to consult special interest groups, such as the youth boards of arts organisations or wildlife charities, who have in-depth knowledge of a particular issue. This ensured the group of young people they consulted were highly informed and had relevant experience of the topic. Policy makers felt the generalist nature of the YPDG could reduce young people's engagement levels in some policy areas and affect the quality of their input. Policy makers suggested the YPDG could consult more extensively with young people outside of the programme to inform their research and improve representation of wider views. Likewise, participants suggested expanding the scope of the YPDG by introducing specific departmental sub-groups, which would allow for greater specialisation.

5.2.3.3   Feedback loops

Participants across both programmes expressed frustration at the limited feedback received from policy audiences. A key challenge commonly identified by young people associated with achieving influence was knowing whether and how policy makers had taken forward their actions and recommendations. This is

also reflected in the survey: 48% of UK Youth Parliament participants perceived that communications about the outcome of their work could be improved[18]; and 40% of YPDG participants perceived that the process of developing policy briefs could be improved[19]. Policy makers also recognised that more could be done to feedback the results of the UK Youth Parliament and the YPDG actions and celebrate their achievements in national policy circles.

> *"There's no feedback on previous campaigns, and it means there's no formal feedback from government, which used to be annoying. There was no record." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

When received, young people valued feedback from policy makers. Some policy makers provided constructive feedback on roundtables - what worked well and suggestions for improvement. A feedback template with set questions was provided for policy makers, which they found useful. When policy makers provided feedback soon after the roundtable, this was helpful for young people's reflection and development. However, receiving feedback was patchy and identified an area for programme improvement.

> *"When we did the roundtable with [the Minister], she was really supportive and hugely complementary of the way we articulated ourselves – she didn't expect the level of articulation and detail we gave her." – YPDG Participant*

Policy makers suggested that the feedback loops could be streamlined. Policy makers could feedback directly to the YPDG, rather than sending it to DCMS to forward to SOUK, who then share it with the YPDG. Some policy makers attempted to improve feedback loops by providing immediate feedback on how the YPDG's research would be used.

5.2.3.4   Timelines for change

Participants expressed frustration with how long the policy process takes, sometime much longer than the duration of the programmes. This meant that people may exit the programme before hearing about the outcome of their input. Policy makers highlighted delays and complexities in the policy making process, which limited what could be shared with participants. Policy makers thought that young people's expectations on timelines for change could be managed more effectively, through their training and ongoing support.

> *"We sent out a ministerial letter of thanks to acknowledge the contributions and say that the Minister is now aware of what you've put forward, and that we're going to keep it in mind. After a few months of delays when the change in administration began, my colleague sent out an update email saying we haven't been able to publish on the timescale we said we would." – Policy Maker*

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[18] Survey of 155 UK Youth Parliament participants.
[19] Survey of 20 YPDG participants.

5.3   Participant suggestions for improving audience engagement and policy influence

Below is a summary of the recommendations participants made to further enhance the programme delivery and improve visibility amongst key audiences and increase influence:

UKYP: Continue policy roundtables with MPs/decision makers.

UKYP: Increase consistency between parliamentary and youth parliament constituency boundaries, where possible.

UKYP: Increase the number and nature of interactions with policy makers.

YPDG: Increase minister attendance at roundtables.

YPDG: Consider introducing government department specific sub-groups.

Both: Make consultation with young people a standard component of policy making.

Both: Increase awareness of the programmes among government staff.

Both: Improve feedback loops between government and both programmes.

6.0 Programme outcomes and impacts

This chapter focuses on how the UK Youth Parliament and Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG) programmes benefit policy making processes and participating young people. First, it outlines how the programmes enable youth voice to influence policy processes; presenting the overall effect the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG have on political processes, illustrated through policy case studies. The chapter then discusses the personal, social, and vocational benefits young people receive from participating in the programmes. This section draws on all the evidence collected, including the documentary analysis of policy documents.

6.1 How youth voice informs political processes

The UK Youth Parliament and the YPDG supported and enabled the inclusion of youth voice in policy decision making. The evidence from interviews with policy makers and the documentary analysis suggests that the programme activities, namely the results of young people's polls, ballots and presentations, have fed into policy developments. This finding illustrates that the programmes provide real opportunities for youth-led policy development practice. Given the programme designs, the UK Youth Parliament participants mainly used their voices to influence local policy making, whilst the YPDG had greater access to national policy decisions.

6.1.1 UK Youth Parliament outcomes and impacts

Overall, participants believed that they could make more change at a local level than nationally. They felt that their title as MYP 'opened doors', which enabled them to build relationships with local MPs, Councillors and decision makers. This, in turn, allowed participants to affect change in their area. For example, a young person ran a local campaign on mental health in schools during their UK Youth Parliament term. Based on their recommendations, the council established the role of young persons' representative on the local authorities' Education Improvement Board to ensure youth voice was included.

Participants, policy makers, and delivery staff alike, articulated areas that the programme had national influence. This included influencing debates on issues such as: reducing the voting age to 16 (as detailed in Case Study 1), knife crime (as detailed in Case Study 3) and environmental issues, like banning single use plastics.

Case Study 1: Youth engagement and youth services

Youth engagement and youth services directly impact many aspects of young people's lives. Between 2014 and 2022, UK Youth Parliament and YPDG participants had the opportunity to engage in a range of activities on topics such as Vote at 16, youth participation in sport, youth policy engagement, and improvements in youth services.

Activities

▷ Members of UK Youth Parliament and YPDG participated in consultation activities (i.e. roundtables) with DCMS policy officials, including a YPDG roundtable on the use of youth community spaces and facilities to shape Phase two of the Youth Investment Fund.

▷ MYPs voted to make 'Votes at 16' one of the UK Youth Parliament's national campaigns throughout 2014 and then continuously every year between 2016 and 2019.

▷ The Youth Select Committee addressed the issue in a report - *Lowering the Voting Age to 16 (2014)*. The report included recommendations as to why the voting age should be lowered to 16.

▷ Members of both groups worked closely with The Mix and Policy Lab in 2019 exploring digital tools that would enable young people outside of the programmes to be involved.

Impact

▷ The UK Youth Parliament's campaign started a conversation about Votes at 16 and democracy locally and nationally. To date, the campaign has gained 3,015 supporters.

▷ The Scottish Parliament and Welsh Parliament lowered the voting age to 16 for devolved elections.

▷ Reducing the voting age was debated in parliament in 2017 and a Bill was drafted.

▷ Several digital engagement tools were co-designed and tested with young people as well as government officials. This led to introducing the final blueprint of a new youth consultation platform called Involved that was piloted in 2021.

Source: Annex 3: Document analysis.

6.1.2   YPDG outcomes and impacts

Policy makers were impressed by YPDG member's presentation skills. Policy makers highlighted the quality of recommendations made by YPDG members during roundtables. Furthermore, they were impressed with the depth of knowledge displayed on policies, especially given YPDG members only had sight of the policy area a month in advance of the roundtable. This was echoed by delivery staff, who reported that the YPDG influenced policy decision making, bringing fresh ideas to the process.

> *"The roundtable was really nice, the Minister had a really nice time and was really impressed by the young people, and they had a good time and a good discussion... Some of those ideas had already been entertained by us, so that was good – that was reassuring that we were on the right path. There were some ideas that we took forward, what they thought the problem was and the way to address it."*
> *– Policy Maker*

Participants had slightly different views to policy makers and delivery staff. They highlighted that policy makers and ministers were supportive and engaged in the process, but thought that the potential impact on policy development was limited. They explained that the scope of roundtables could be too broad. Furthermore, participants felt that the YPDG policy recommendations were sometimes too high-level. They suggested that greater definition and engagement from policy makers would allow YPDG members to

deliver more impactful recommendations. Nonetheless, participants cited multiple examples of roundtables where their voice influenced the policy process, such as mental health services with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) (as detailed in Case Study 2) and gene modification with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Case Study 2: Mental health and wellbeing services

Mental health and wellbeing regularly appears in the top issues young people face in Make Your Mark results. In 2022, it was identified as the top priority for young people across the UK.

Activities

- ▷ The topic was prioritised by the Youth Select Committee's report in 2015, and again in 2017 with a further focus on body image.

- ▷ In 2022, the YPDG had a chance to meet with Minister Gillian Keegan and Dr Alex George and share their views and recommendations to shape the Department for Health and Social Care's (DHSC) Mental Health Strategy.

Impact

- ▷ The government official response to the Youth Select Committee 2017 report, included a government promise to seek opportunities to support campaigns encouraging body confidence. The government also stated that they will conduct an audit of available resources, including on the gov.uk website, to ensure quality resources on body image are widely available to young people, parents, and teachers. It is unclear if those promises have been actioned.

- ▷ The main impact of the YPDG's recommendation for the Mental Health Strategy was around the use of inclusive language in the strategy. A DHSC's senior policy advisor confirmed that the recommendation around inclusive language 'drove some changes in the policy draft.'

Source: Annex 3: Document analysis.

6.1.3   Creating more informed citizens

Both the UK Youth Parliament and the YPDG provide opportunities to create more informed citizens. The UK Youth Parliament and the YPDG informed young people's understanding of political processes through a number of mechanisms.

The UK Youth Parliament provided many opportunities for participants to develop their understanding of political processes. MYPs are encouraged to engage their local decision makers and MPs. Participants learn about the UK political system and are taught campaigning principles, giving them practical skills and applicable tools. Some MYPs also presented ideas to their peers on a national stage, through the Annual Youth Conference and the House of Commons sitting, providing opportunities for knowledge exchange and debate.

> *"On a national scale I got to speak in Parliament and that was amazing, that gets televised and it's great we can have our voices heard that way." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

The YPDG supported its participants to become more informed citizens by providing opportunities to consult national policy makers and undertake research to inform national policy developments. This enabled YPDG participants to develop their understanding of evidence-based policy making and the wider complexities and context of policy development.

The survey supports this view – young people from both groups felt their involvement led to a better understanding of politics, the policy making process in the UK, and democracy. Figure 13 suggests that involvement has also encouraged participants to become more involved in politics.

Case Study 3: Knife crime prevention services

The topic of Knife Crime was the UK Youth Parliament's national campaign in 2019 and 2020.

Activities

▷ In 2019, UK Youth Parliament partnered with the NO Knives, Better Lives Programme, and a Scottish national programme run by YouthLink Scotland to deter young people from carrying knives. MYPs were encouraged to prepare discussion-based sessions with schools and local communities. This was to raise awareness of the dangers of carrying a knife and encourage young people to support the cause. The campaign also aimed to persuade decision makers to do the same.

▷ The Youth Select Committee published a report Our generation's epidemic: Knife Crime which included recommendations urging the government to consider the underlying factors that may lead to young people turning to knife crime.

Impact

▷ The government's response was published in May 2021, and highlighted the actions already taken by government plus ongoing and further investments to support relevant services. This included an extension of the Anti-knife Crime Community Fund, to year 3 (2019 and 2020) as well as a new £23 million investment in early intervention programmes to prevent youth violence.

▷ The topic of knife crime remains a top priority for many MYPs who continue to deliver local campaigns and work with their local Police Crime Commissioners, MPs, and wider community.

Source: Annex 3: Document analysis.

Figure 13. Development of political knowledge in both programmes.

	UK Youth Parliament	YPDG
I have a better understanding of how democracy works in the UK	74%	75%
I have a better understanding about UK politics	72%	65%
I feel more informed about the issues affecting young people	86%	95%
I have exchanged ideas with young people from different parts of England	89%	100%
I have a better understanding about the UK policy making process	0%	95%
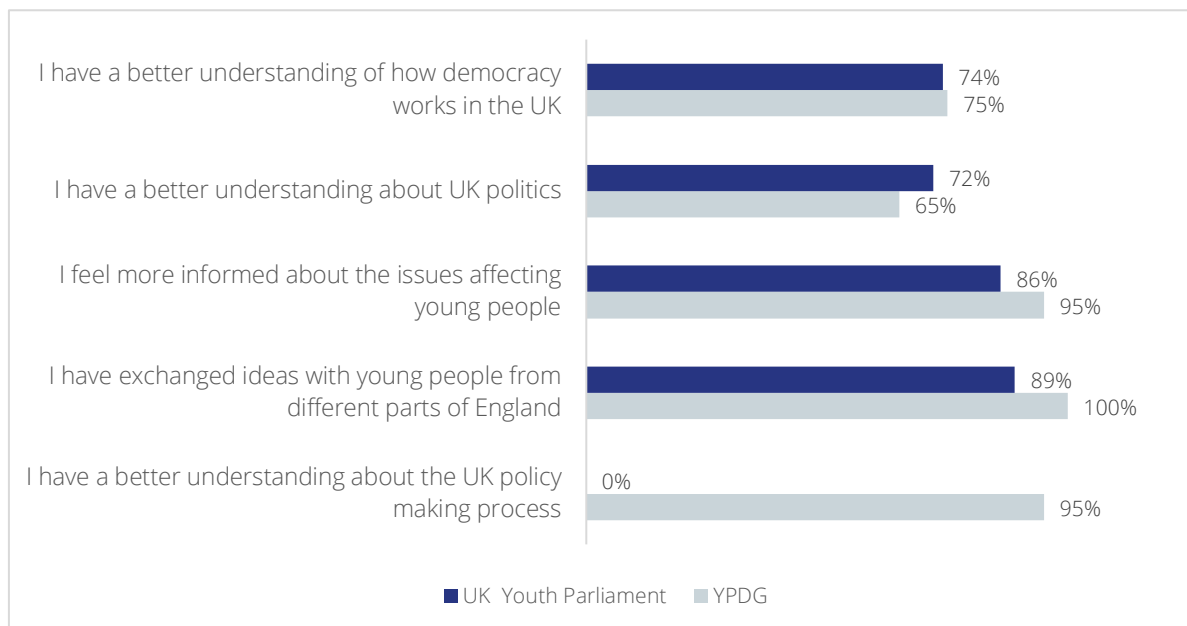
Source: Survey of 20 YPDG participants and 153 UK Youth Parliament participants (155 for "I have exchanged ideas with young people from different parts of England"). Last question was asked of YPDG participants only.

6.2   Benefits for young people

Programme participation had a positive impact on young people in three key areas: personal, social, and vocational development. In some cases, participants fulfilled their motivation to join the programme by developing skills and meeting other young people. Delivery staff and policy makers noted that young people developed a range of transferable skills, including communication and presenting skills, which they also linked to improved confidence, and led to personal growth.

"I just think you see them grow so much in terms of confidence, character, time management and prioritising tasks, communication, etc." – UK Youth Parliament Delivery Staff

Figure 14. Percentage of survey respondents who wanted to achieve skills and whether they achieved it.
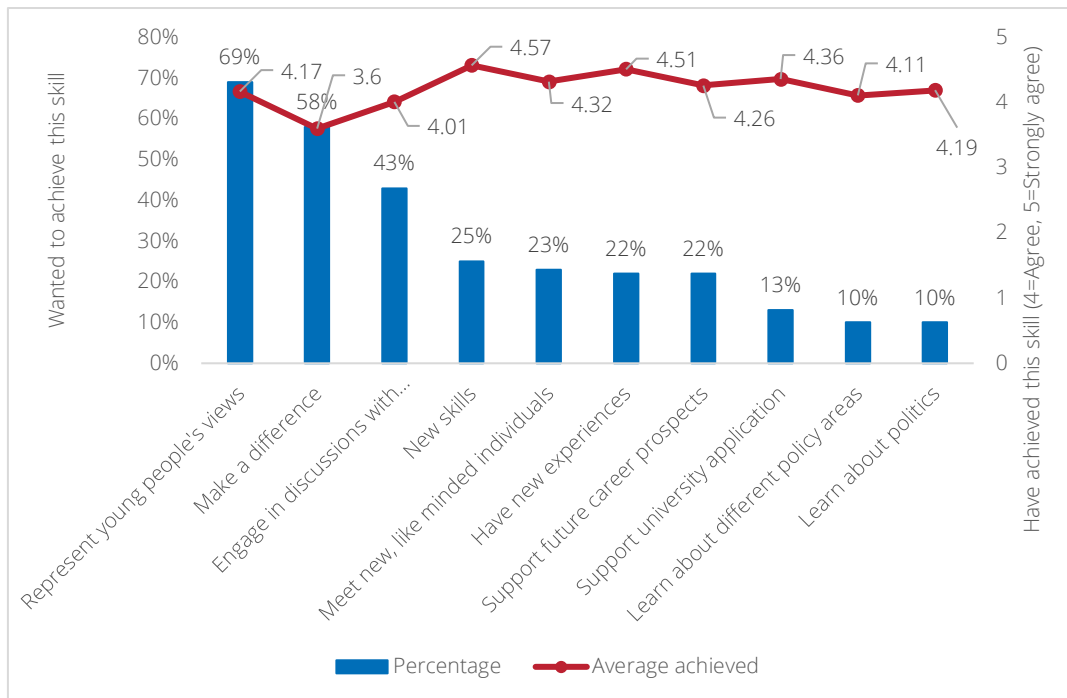
Source: Survey of programme participants (20 YPDG and 155 UK Youth Parliament participants). Sample size for average ratings can be found in Appendix 4.

Figure 14 shows that the three things most participants across both programmes wanted to achieve were to **represent young people's views, to make a difference, and to engage in discussions with policy makers**. We also asked them to what extent they felt they had achieved this on a scale ranging from 1 *Strongly disagree* to 5 *Strongly agree.* On average young people agreed that they had achieved their goals. The only goal for which young people seemed to agree to a lesser extent was 'make a difference' (average rating 3.6).

The benefits young people gained varied slightly between the two programmes. UK Youth Parliament participants emphasised **friendships and long-lasting connections** as the main social benefit of being a part of the programme. YPDG participants saw their relationship with peers more pragmatically, appreciating the networking aspect with others who have similar interests in specific policy areas. Learning more about policy development and policy areas was a strong theme amongst YPDG members when describing benefits for their vocational development.

Survey responses only partially corroborate these differences. In the survey, UK Youth Parliament respondents agreed more strongly that they made new friends (on average 4.3 vs. 3.7 for YPDG respondents), and they also agreed more strongly that they have developed leadership skills (average

agreement of 4.3 for UK Youth Parliament vs. 3.8 for YPDG). For all other personal and social outcomes we asked about, participants from both groups agreed that they had achieved these skills, as detailed below.

We also asked former UK Youth Parliament participants about their political and civic engagement activities after the programme had finished. As Figure 15 below shows, 84% voted in an election, 74% volunteered, and 54% served on a committee. This suggests that participants stay positively engaged citizens beyond the programme.

Figure 15. Political activities of former UK Youth Parliament participants.
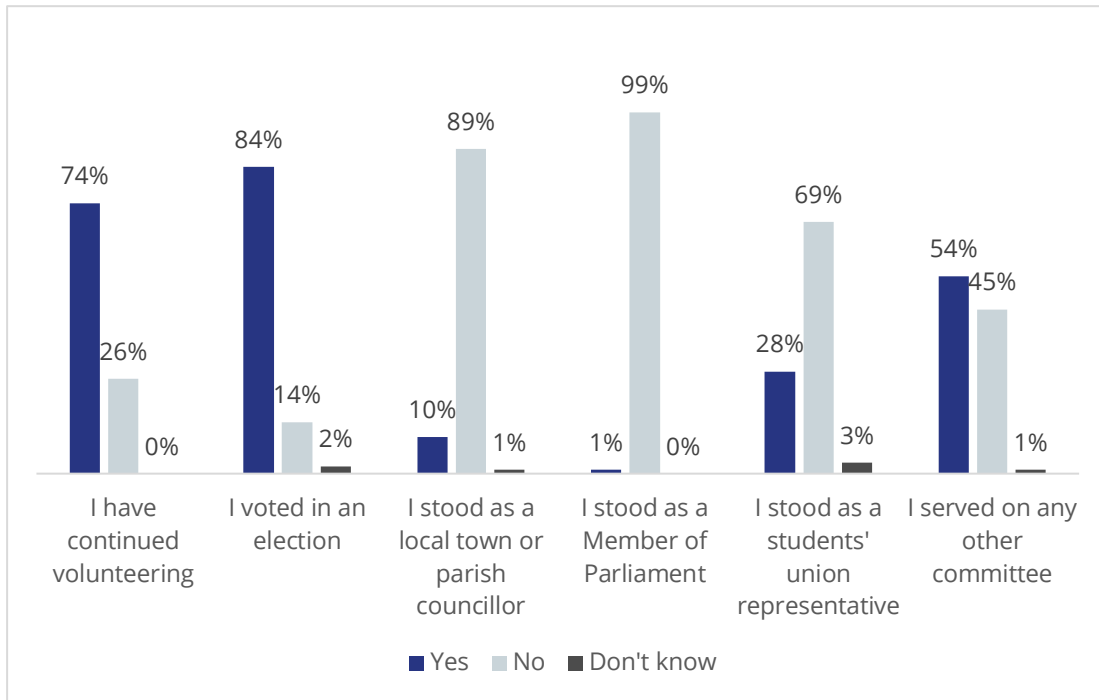
Source: Survey of programme participants (104 former UK Youth Parliament participants).

6.2.1   **Personal development**

Across focus groups and interviews, participants report three main personal benefits of the programme. Improved **confidence, communication skills and leadership skills**. Survey responses supported this finding, young people agreed that they had developed their confidence (YPDG: 75%, UK Youth Parliament: 90%), leadership skills (YPDG: 60%, UK Youth Parliament: 82%) and their communication skills (YPDG: 90%, UK Youth Parliament: 90%)[20].

Improved confidence was identified by all types of stakeholders as one of the strongest positive impacts that the programmes have on young people's personal development. Participating young people shared several examples about how the range of training opportunities, safe space, open discussions, and peer support help young people to gain more confidence. This was especially the case amongst those young people who struggled with their confidence, prior to joining UK Youth Parliament or YPDG.

> *"I'm autistic and I was bordering on being semi non-verbal [...] I could never have imagined myself being as confident as I am now. And the opportunities that the UK Youth Parliament has given me – it really helped me." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

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[20] Survey of 20 YPDG participants and 153 UK Youth Parliament participants (confidence and communication), and 154 UK Youth Parliament participants (leadership).

MYPs also emphasised the importance of local youth workers in building their confidence and providing motivation to step from their comfort zone.

> *"I'm completely different because having that group of youth workers who would push you to go out of your comfort zone…" – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

Participants felt **empowered to use their voice and make a change**, as a result of the confidence and skills they had built through the programme, which also supported development of leadership skills. Young people reported that participating in the programmes allowed them to develop their **communication skills**, mainly in two areas – public speaking and being able to clearly articulate ideas. Young people described the training activities and debates, especially debate leads for the House of Commons sitting, as crucial opportunities that taught them how to speak in front of others confidently, whilst formulating clear ideas.

> *"You gain a lot of confidence and ability to articulate yourself because you're in a space of people that want to hear your views and want people to listen to you and work with your perspectives." – YPDG Participant*

6.2.2   Social development

Participants were able to meet other young people through the programmes with shared interests and built **friendships**. In particular, the UK Youth Parliament creates a unique opportunity for MYPs to make new and diverse connections with people who they would not meet otherwise or those with different opinions. Overall, participants agreed that they had developed new skills (88%), developed social skills (82%), developed teamwork skills (86%)[21].

> *"On personal level, it was meeting people from completely different backgrounds – that was probably the biggest thing." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

The role of friendship and socialising played a less important role within the YPDG compared to the UK Youth Parliament. The members of YPDG were focused on building more pragmatic networks with young people interested in similar policy areas. This difference is corroborated by survey data, where 83% of UK Youth Parliament participants said they made new friends, but only 50% of YPDG participants said the same.

Alongside friendships and networking, both programmes allowed their participants to learn from each other through **peer support**. Young people reported that residentials and various training activities were focused on **team building and skills.** Participants also suggested opportunities for peer support could be further enhanced by encouraging networking between people with different levels of experience and confidence.

> *"It definitely gave me the tools to establish a team dynamic and how to maintain it over a longer period of time. So yes, practically speaking, it's had an impact on my social skills as far as team working goes." – YPDG Participant*

Delivery staff also described how residentials opened up additional opportunities for peer support and described them as a way 'to fast-track their confidence and skills'. However, it is important for young people that the activities strike a **balance between fun and skill developing**, and activities like the Annual Conference allow for both skill building and informal socialising.

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[21] Survey of programme participants. Sample sizes as follows: 173 (new skills), 154 (social skills), 174 (team work skills).

6.2.3   **Vocational development**

In the survey, participants from YPDG and the UK Youth Parliament agreed that they had developed critical thinking skills (70%) and negotiating skills (72%). Most (87%) survey participants felt that they had developed their verbal communication skills and applied them to their school, college or university work; 66% said the same about their written communication skills; and 64% felt that the programmes informed what they want to do in the future[22].

This was corroborated through focus groups and interviews. Participants agreed that the experience introduced them to **new opportunities** such as new job roles or wider participation and activism. Both programmes were described by their participants as experiences recognised by employers. The UK Youth Parliament and YPDG allow young people to develop many **transferable skills** that can be used in a range of different roles and careers. Besides the communication skills mentioned prior, young people mentioned they were able to develop campaigning skills and critical thinking.

MYPs reported that participating helped them to identify **a career path** they would like to follow. This included not only careers in public service or politics, but some also felt inspired to become social and youth workers.

> *"I definitely think that being MYP and being part of the Youth Forum in my county, it definitely influenced what I'm going to do my degree in - which is social work." – UK Youth Parliament Participant*

We also asked UK Youth Parliament survey respondents more specifically about the impact of participating in the programmes on their vocational development. Participants agreed with the following statements:

- ▶ Participating has informed my future job/career decisions (63%).
- ▶ I want to pursue a career in politics, public policy, or activism due to participating (54%).
- ▶ The skills and knowledge I have developed have helped me in my current job (67%)[23].

YPDG members highlighted that being part of the group provides them a unique opportunity to be close to the policy development process. This was a chance for those passionate about politics to **learn about policy development and specific policy areas**. Policy makers corroborated this by highlighting that the programmes had opportunities to learn more about civil service careers directly from civil servants.

> *"It was really useful for bringing clarity to that sort of sphere...It showed me the inner workings of it all (policy development)." – YPDG Participant*

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[22] Survey of 172 programme participants.
[23] Survey of programme participants; sample sizes as follows: 155 (future), 152 (career), 135 (current job).

6.3 Suggestions to improve the programme outcomes and impacts

The table below provides a summary of the recommendations participants made to further increase the positive impacts of the programmes on young people:

UKYP: Continue to utilise local networks (like youth councils and events), where possible, to enact change.

UKYP: Strike a balance between fun and skill development in activities to allow personal development as well as friendship building.

UKYP: Provide support from local youth workers to enhance personal development.

UKYP: Assess participants' goals and skills they want to achieve through the programme and use this tool to support their growth.

YPDG: Ensure there are opportunities to learn about policy development and different policy areas.

YPDG: Ensure that scope of policy roundtables aligns both policy maker and young people's interests to increase impact and engagement.

Both: Continue to deliver activities that shape politically informed citizens.

Both: Continue with training activities to provide opportunities for personal development and building of transferable skills.

7.0   DCMS' Youth Engagement programme theory of change

This theory of change for DCMS' Youth Engagement programme is informed by the evidence collected in this study. DCMS and its partners can use it to reflect programme design and intended outcomes to support a shared understanding of the programme and provide a framework for future evaluation.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Government Department / DCMS Programme specification Budget Contract management Programme guidance Programme timetable Delivery team National/ local delivery staff Staff training, supervision, and support Partners: local authorities, schools/college, youth groups, policy officials Programme materials and resources Technology Programme website / information for young people and professionals Settings/venues Transport Safeguarding processes	**Recruitment of young people** Marketing activities UK Youth Parliament (election) YPDG (application) **Activities** Induction and ongoing training *UK Youth Parliament* Residentials Annual Conference Make your Mark Ballot House of Commons sitting Campaigns Local/ Regional/National meetings and events Roundtables / meetings with local MPs, decision makers, Ministers *Youth Policy Development Group* 1-2-1 support Policy request Research and canvassing young people's views Presentations Roundtables with policy officials and Ministers Feedback loops with decision makers *Evaluation activities*	Provision of free to access youth engagement programmes for young people (aged 11-25) More young people have an opportunity to have their say on issues that matter to them More positive and enriching experiences and opportunities for participating young people More staff trained and skilled in effective youth participation work More local/national decision makers aware of youth engagement programmes More local/national decision makers engage with young people / youth voice More policies are youth-informed Programme evaluation	**Young people** ▶ Improved **knowledge** of political processes: elections, campaigns, policy development ▶ Improved **skills**: communication, campaigning ▶ New **social opportunities** (peers, trusted adults) ▶ More **enriching activities** ▶ Increased confidence ▶ Increase **sense of achievement** **Policy decision making** ▶ More government departments and policy officials are **aware** of the programmes ▶ More government departments and policy officials **engage** with the programmes ▶ More **policy development is youth-informed** ▶ More policy officials are aware of the current **needs and priorities of young people**	**Young people** ▶ **Transferable skills and competencies for education and employment** ▶ Support decision-making with **education and career pathways** ▶ Improve **social capital**/ networks ▶ More informed and active citizens **Policy decision making** ▶ **Improved systems for youth participation in political processes and decision making** ▶ More local and national government **policy/decisions are youth-informed** ▶ More local / national government policies and Programs are **responsive to the needs of young people**

Risks and assumptions
▶ Young people and policy officials have a desire to participate
▶ Young people can maintain involvement in programmes alongside other commitments
▶ Young people are sufficiently supported and feel safe to have their say
▶ Youth participation is meaningful and high quality

8.0   Conclusion

This final section discusses the evidence gathered across all data sources about DCMS' Youth Engagement programmes. It draws conclusions on the strengths of the UK Youth Parliament and Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG) to enable effective youth engagement and participation, influence government policy development and facilitate positive outcomes for participating young people. It also summarises stakeholder suggestions to enhance programme processes to add further value to future delivery and participant experiences, support even more inclusive approaches to participant reach and maximise opportunities for youth-informed policy making.

8.1   Programme reach

Based on the evidence gathered in this study, the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG reached and included young people who were **actively interested and engaged in politics and youth activism**. The programmes appealed to young people's existing interests, offering platforms to have a say on the issues that matter to them, represent the views of other young people and enact change at local or national levels. Current and former participants were motivated to take part in the programmes as means to learn more about political processes and the chance to meet and be heard by local and national policy officials. Young people anticipated that programme participation would support them to develop transferable skills and experiences to add to CVs and support future education and employment prospects.

Pathways to becoming aware of the programmes and choosing to take part, were underpinned by **young people's social and cultural capital**. The role of schools, local authority youth provision and social networks of friends and family, were important to young people's opportunities and pathways into the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG. Schools and local authorities with student and local youth councils, youth activism and citizenship programmes, provided the initial stepping stones to young people's involvement in formal youth politics. Friends and family who were aware of the programmes, or had participated in them, provided trusted information sources about the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG and encouraged participation. Local youth provision infrastructure coupled with supportive teachers, youth workers, friends and family gave young people the knowledge, skills and confidence to progress into DCMS' Youth Engagement Programmes.

While current and former participants valued meeting like-minded young people via the programmes, they believed that the programme predominately attracted and included homogenous cohorts of young people (those interested in politics, middle-class and based in urban areas). They suggested that the programmes could **provide better access routes to include and represent a broader range of young people**. Non-participants identified several barriers to programme participation.

- ▶ Firstly, non-participants had **little to no awareness** of the programmes, presenting a clear engagement barrier.

- ▶ These young people did not describe themselves as politically interested, and therefore **believed the programmes were not for them.** They assumed that the programmes were more suited to academic and politically knowledgeable young people; and so, **thought they would not 'fit in'**. However, when asked, non-participants expressed interests in social and political issues (e.g. youth mental health, the environment and climate change) which closely aligned to the issues that matter to programme participants.

- ▶ Non-participants were worried about the **time commitment** involved and whether they would be able to fit this in alongside their other education, work and personal commitments and interests. Additionally, a **formalised structured programme** (that feels like school) did not appeal. Non-participants, however, expressed an interest and willingness to support informal activities that required a lesser commitment, e.g. support a petition or one-off campaign.

▶ Finally, non-participants stated that the **cost of participation** (e.g. for travel) would be unaffordable to them and their families.

Going forward, the programme may consider ways to reach a broader range of young people, including those who may feel disengaged or disenfranchised from political processes. This, however, is no easy challenge to overcome. The programmes may seek to **diversify promotion and recruitment routes** and activities via existing partnerships and engagement with schools, local authority youth services and wider youth programmes. Exploring and building relationships with youth organisations that are not as engaged presents a challenge in the context of time poor professionals and limited local authority funding for youth provision. Young people suggested **social media** as a tool to promote the programmes, bypassing the need for youth service engagement. Furthermore, the evidence suggested a need to **sense-check promotional materials and messaging** with non-participating young people, to ensure that it also appeals to different demographics.

8.2 Programme delivery and participant experiences

All stakeholders – participants, delivery staff and policy officials - agreed that these government funded programmes were important vehicles to engage young people in UK political processes. They provided participants with first-hand experience and insights into political governance systems, and a platform to lobby politicians on the issues that young people care about. Overall, participants described positive and formative programme experiences. Stakeholders highlighted the strengths of the current delivery models alongside areas for further consideration to enhance delivery and strengthen youth participation.

8.2.1 UK Youth Parliament: delivery and participant experiences

UK Youth Parliament participants **valued the range of activities and opportunities** the programme offered them. The opportunities for residentials, training, the Annual Conference and House of Commons sitting, campaigning and meeting with local politicians made for varied and enriching programme experiences. Participants described different programme experiences based on where they **lived, their age and personal views and priorities.**

▶ The **UK Youth Parliament's localised delivery** model was linked to different programme experiences. Participants described having access to **different levels and quality of support** from staff, dependent on which local authority they lived in. Participants in areas with highly engaged local staff, established youth engagement programmes and funding to cover transport costs, felt well supported to engage with the programme. They reported positive programme experiences, with the necessary support to develop informed views, express these and assistance to engage with local politicians. Furthermore, they reported having opportunities to learn and develop skills, both in and outside of the programme. Whereas participants in areas where this infrastructure was not present, felt isolated and less invested compared with peers in other localities. Delivery staff attributed these differences to structural issues that shape local youth provision. Limited **local authority funding for local youth provision** affected the available youth programmes, numbers and capacity of youth workers, which had knock on effects for the UK Youth Parliament programme delivery and participant experiences.

▶ Older participants thought that programme **content and activities could be at times too simplistic**, to cater for the youngest age groups. They suggested introducing **tailored materials and content for different age groups**. Younger participants believed that politicians and decision makers were more interested in the views of older participants and took them more seriously. One participant's view

was to raise the age of entry for the programme, however, there was resistance to this suggestion among participants and delivery staff who advocated for the value that the youngest age groups bring to the programme. The findings around age suggest a need to review approaches to ensure equitable support for all participants across the 11–18-year-old.

▶ Those with **right-leaning views** felt they were in the minority, and unable to express themselves fully; especially when they experienced being shut down, ostracised, or ignored by peers because of their views. They suggested a need for training on tolerance to address this.

▶ Representation from across all constituent nations of the UK is cornerstone of the programme. Participants from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales enjoyed the programme and valued the experiences it gave them. However, they felt that the programme, its national events and campaigns took an Anglo-centric focus and did not fully consider **devolved issues** that mattered to them. These participants recommended more opportunities for participants across the UK to interact to increase awareness of the devolved issues and opportunities to voice devolved matters.

8.2.2 YPDG: delivery and participant experiences

The **YPDG's delivery model** had a smaller and contained remit compared with the UK Youth Parliament. It therefore had a dedicated number of staff who were able to provide participants with consistent and supported programme experiences. A factor that affected programme experiences was the extent to which participants were able to influence issues and policies that mattered to them. The YPDG responded to requests from government departments that wished to consult young people on a given policy. This resulted in variable interest among participants on the issues they were consulted on. Policy officials suggested the introduction of YPDG subgroups for different government departments, to better match participant's interests to the policies they are consulted on.

8.2.3 Effective youth work

High-quality youth work facilitated positive participant experiences, across programmes. Participants described developing trusted relationships with staff, who helped them to develop informed opinions, created safe spaces and gave them the confidence to try new things and have their say. A common finding across both programmes was the **value of the training provided by staff** for participants to learn about political processes and tangible skills, from how to campaign on an issue, to developing concrete policy recommendations suitable for policy maker audiences. Additionally, staff encouraged and created the conditions for supportive peer relationships. Participants cited memorable moments of their programme journeys, from chairing a roundtable with a minister, to presenting a policy idea at Annual Conference, or speaking in the House of Commons chamber; and that staff support was key to feeling prepared and confident to take these steps. The evidence from this study highlights the reliance and need for a **sufficiently-resourced and skilled workforce**, to enable effective youth engagement and participation across both programmes.

8.3 Youth-informed policy development and decisions

Both programmes provided **important mechanisms for promoting the voice of young people in local and national government policy decisions**. Participants across both programmes emphasised that engaging with politicians should be a primary focus of the programme design and activities. A major reason young people took part in the programmes was precisely because they wanted a platform to engage with politicians, to share their own insights as well as the views of wider young people to influence policy. The UK Youth Parliament participants had influenced local and (to a lesser extent) national policy developments

and debates, including issues on knife crime, Votes at 16 and on the environment. While the YPDG has influenced national policy developments and decisions across departments including the Department for Health and Social Care, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and DCMS.

UK Youth Parliament participants were able to **campaign on issues that mattered to them and wider young** people, which was a strength of the programme design. However, they experienced challenges in reaching and engaging their local politicians on these issues. They invested huge time and effort in reaching out to local politicians and leaders, which did not always yield a response. As mentioned above, the capacity of the local staff team meant that participants had variable support to facilitate these connections. Furthermore, the lack of uniformity between UK Youth Parliament and Parliamentary constituencies created disparities in the number of policy makers participants had access to, as well as the quality of this engagement. Participants therefore **welcomed the addition of policy roundtables** to the programme delivery events, which gave them a regular route to engage with policy makers, in addition to their localised campaign work.

YPDG members, on the other hand, had **regular opportunities to meet with policy officials** and influence policy development. Participants explained that, in their roundtables, ambiguity in the requests and a lack of feedback from politicians were the main obstacles to having the desired influence. However, when the goals of policy makers and interest of young people aligned, the roundtables were perceived to be effective in developing youth-informed policies.

A strength of both programmes were their systems to garner the **views of young people outside of the programme** to ensure wide representation of youth voice, via the UK Youth Parliament's Make Your Mark youth consultation and the YPDG surveys. Policy makers suggested that wider youth consultations could be more robust. For example, capturing the voice of larger numbers of young people would provide greater confidence in the evidence presented to decision makers.

Policy officials and ministers who interacted with the programmes **gained youth-led insights that benefited their work**. The key challenges to engaging this audience are the demands on their time and limited awareness of the programmes across local and national government departments. The evidence suggests a need to promote awareness of and engagement with the programmes across national and local government departments. Finally, feedback loops between policy officials and participants/programmes about the outcomes of young people's input was patchy. Feedback loops are key to good youth participation and presents an area for improvement.

8.4   From youth participation to informed citizens

Participants recounted multiple **personal, social and vocation benefits** gained as a direct result of the programmes. In the short-term participants improved their **knowledge of political processes**. Through a programme of training, they learnt about campaigns and policy development and were then given opportunities to apply this learning in tangible ways, through UK Youth Parliament campaigns or YPDG policy roundtables. In turn, young people reported that these experiences, coupled with staff and peer support, improved their **communication and teamwork skills, they made friends, which overall boosted their confidence**.

In the longer-term, the programmes equipped participants with transferable skills and experiences which supported **education and employment pathways**. They also gained connections from the **social networks** they had developed with peers and professionals. Both programmes provided memorable experiences, a sense of achievement, and above all supported young people to be and remain **engaged citizens**.

8.5   Recommendations for future research and evaluation

Future research and evaluation of DCMS' Youth Engagement programmes may consider inclusion of the following:

▶ **A programme theory of change:** to provide a shared understanding of the inputs, activities, and outputs alongside the intended outcomes and impacts. It would also provide a framework for future evaluation. As part of this study, we have provided a draft theory of change (see Chapter 7.0) for DCMS and its stakeholders to update and refine to support future evaluation.

▶ **Embedding research and evaluation activities within the programme cycle:** to provide efficiencies and reduce research burden. Collecting feedback from programme stakeholders throughout the delivery cycle would provide real-time feedback loops and minimise risks of recall difficulties and bias. Furthermore, embedding research activities within the programme design offers potential benefits for both the programme delivery and evaluations teams.

▶ **Monitoring information about programme participation:** for example, demographic information about young people who apply, take part in programmes, and exit early would support concrete judgements about the representativeness of the programmes. Additionally, data on programme key performance indicators and progress towards these, would enable firm conclusions on programme delivery.

▶ **Longitudinal research:** to track the outcomes of participants qualitatively (follow-up interviews) or quantitatively (drawing on survey or government administrative data, e.g. education outcomes).

Youth-led research methodologies: to ensure a youth-led focus. For example, this could include sense-checking research designs, tools and findings with participants, or training and supporting participants to run research activity to gather feedback on participant experiences of the programme.

Annex 1: Survey scripts

UKYP Survey

Tell us about your experiences of the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) programme.

This survey is for current or past participants of the UK Youth Parliament.

The survey is being done by a team of researchers at Ecorys. Ecorys is an independent research organisation. This survey is part of the Youth Engagement Impact Study, which Ecorys is running for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and in partnership with the British Youth Council (BYC).

About the survey – what to expect

This survey will ask you:

- ▶ a bit about yourself
- ▶ your experiences of the UK Youth Parliament from application to taking part
- ▶ what helped or hindered your involvement
- ▶ if and how taking part has benefited you and political processes
- ▶ if you'd like to take part in an interview or focus group to discuss your experiences of the UK Youth Parliament in more detail

It should take around **15 minutes to complete**, and can be done from a mobile phone, laptop, desktop or tablet.

Everyone who completes the survey (and provides their email address) will automatically be entered into a **prize draw for the chance to win one of five £50 e-vouchers**.

Your views matter

- ▶ Taking part is a chance to provide honest feedback about the UK Youth Parliament and help shape the future of the programme.
- ▶ Taking part in this survey is completely voluntary.
- ▶ There are no right or wrong answers, you can skip questions that you don't want to answer.
- ▶ You can stop taking part at any time, without giving a reason.

How the survey information will be used

- ▶ Only the research team at Ecorys will know who takes part in the survey.
- ▶ Your survey answers will be kept **private and confidential**, and only used for this research.
- ▶ The only time we might have to tell someone else your survey answers is if you tell us something that makes us concerned that you or somebody else is in danger. We have a duty to report such concerns to keep everyone safe.
- ▶ All survey results will be summarised and included in a report for the DCMS. The report will not include any identifiable information, like your name or where you live. The report will be published on the DCMS website. BYC will be sent a summary of the findings to share with you too.

▶ You can read more about your information rights in the **Privacy Notice**, which you can view <u>here</u>. (PN: HYPERLINK TO PRIVACY NOTICE)

Consent to take part

If you are aged 11 to 15 your parent/carer will need to give their consent before you complete this survey. Your parent/ carer can give their consent <u>here</u>. **(PN: HYPERLINK TO PARENT LANDING PAGE)**

If you are aged 16+ please click the next button to begin.

[PN[24]: REQUIRED - ASK ALL]

Do you agree to take part in the survey?

□ Yes **[PN: PROCEED TO SURVEY]**

□ No **[PN: END SURVEY]**

PN: DO NOT DISPLAY PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q1: Do you currently participate in the UK Youth Parliament or have you previously participated in the UK Youth Parliament?

□ I am currently participating in the UK Youth Parliament

□ I previously participated in the UK Youth Parliament

[PN: SINGLE CODE, DROP-DOWN LIST]]

Q2: When did you first get involved in the UK Youth Parliament?

□ 2022

□ 2021

□ 2020

□ 2019

□ 2018

□ 2017 or before

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q3. Roughly how many hours a month do you engage/did you engage with the UK Youth Parliament?

□ Less than 1 hour

□ 1 hour to 3 hours

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[24] PN stands for 'Programmer Note'.

□ 3 hours to 5 hours

□ 5 hours to 8 hours

□ Over 8 hours

[PN: SINGLE CODE, DROP-DOWN LIST]

[PN: IF Q1 = I am currently participating in UKYP THEN Q3 = How long have you been involved in UKYP?]

[PN: IF Q1 = I previously participated in UKYP THEN Q3 = How long were you involved in UKYP?]

Q4. How long have you been/ were involved in the UK Youth Parliament?

□ Less than 6 months

□ 6 months to 1 year

□ Over 1 to 2 years

□ Over 2 years

PN: **DO NOT DISPLAY** MOTIVATIONS & APPLICATION

[PN: SINGLE CODE, RANDOMISE OPTIONS APART FROM 'OTHER']

Q5. How did you hear about the UK Youth Parliament?

□ Social media

□ Google search

□ Friends

□ Family

□ Youth/Community/Faith group

□ School/College/Sixth-Form

□ British Youth Council (BYC)

□ Member(s) of the UK Youth Parliament

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY]**

□ Don't know / can't remember **[PN: LOCK]**

[PN: MULTICODE, MAXIMUM UP TO 3, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, APART FROM 'OTHER']

Q6. Before being elected to the UK Youth Parliament, what (if anything) did you wish to gain from the programme?

Choose up to 3 options from the list below.

□ New skills (such as public speaking and communication)

□ To meet new, like-minded individuals

□ To make a difference

□ To learn about politics

□ To engage in discussions with policymakers

□ To represent young people's views

□ To learn about different policy areas

□ To have new experiences

□ To support my university (or equivalent) application

□ To support my future career prospects

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY]**

[PN: NEW PAGE]

PN: DO NOT DISPLAY EXPERIENCES OF UKYP

[PN: MULTI CODE]

Q7. What role(s) have you had in the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP)?

Select all that apply.

□ Member of the Youth Parliament (MYP)

□ Deputy Member of Youth Parliament (DMYP)

□ UKYP Steering Group (previously known as the procedures group)

□ Youth Select Committee member

□ Debate Lead

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY]**

□ Don't know / not sure

[PN: MULTICODE, MAXIMUM UP TO 3, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, APART FROM 'OTHER' AND 'NOTHING']

Q8. What, if anything, <u>helped</u> you to participate in the UK Youth Parliament?

Choose up to 3 options from the list below.

□ Location of meetings was easy to get to

□ My accessibility needs were met by the British Youth Council i.e. at Annual Conference/Sitting, House of Commons event or Convention/YouthCon

□ My accessibility needs were met by my Local Authority

□ My accessibility needs were met by someone outside of the British Youth Council/Local Authority (e.g., a carer or support worker)

□ Cost of transport was affordable

□ Access to technology / online meetings (such as a device and internet connection)

□ My friend/relative did the UK Youth Parliament with me

□ School/college were supportive

□ My employer was supportive

□ Previous similar experience

□ Access to information and resources by the British Youth Council inc. regional youth unit/YouthFocus/Children in Wales or Scottish Youth Parliament

□ Access to information and resources by my Local Authority

□ Time and days of meetings / activities worked well for me

□ Other **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY] [PN:LOCK]**

□ Nothing **[PN: LOCK]**

[PN: MULTICODE, MAXIMUM UP TO 3, RANDOMISE OPTIONS]

Q9. What, if anything, <u>hindered</u> your ability to participate in UK Youth Parliament?

Choose up to 3 options from the list below.

□ Location was difficult to get to

□ My accessibility needs were not met by the British Youth Council i.e. at Annual Conference/Sitting, House of Commons event or Convention/YouthCon

□ My accessibility needs were not met by my local authority

□ My accessibility needs were not met by someone outside of the British Youth Council/Local Authority (e.g., a carer or support worker)

□ Cost of transport was not affordable

□ I did not have access to technology (such as a device and internet connection)

□ Health condition/disability

□ School/college were not supportive

□ School/college pressures / exam times

□ My employer was not supportive

□ I did not have a friend/relative doing UK Youth Parliament with me

□ Lack of previous similar experience

□ Lack of access to information and resources by the British Youth Council inc. regional youth unit/YouthFocus/Children in Wales or Scottish Youth Parliament

□ Lack of access to information and resources by the local authority

□ Time and days of meetings / activities did not work for me

□ Caring responsibilities

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY] [PN:LOCK]**

□ Nothing **[PN: LOCK]**

[PN: MULTICODE]

Q10. What activities have you been involved in, as part of the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP)?

Select all that apply.

□ Developing the Manifesto

□ Induction (residential/online) or Youth Voice Leaderships Development Programme

□ Submitting policy motions for the Manifesto

□ Attending BYC Conventions/YouthCons

□ Campaigns

□ Make Your Mark

□ Debates

□ Policy development

□ UKYP House of Commons sitting

□ Regional UKYP meetings

□ Annual Conference

□ Lobbying

□ Roundtables/workshops

□ Surveys

□ All Party Parliamentary Groups

□ Youth Select Committee

□ Making decisions about the programme as part of the Steering Group/Procedures Group

□ Focus groups/sessions with young people in my local area

□ Representing young people from my local area

□ Meeting and influencing decision makers from my **local area**

□ Meeting and influencing decision makers from my **region**

□ Meeting and influencing **national** decision makers

□ Training opportunities provided by the British Youth Council or regional youth unit/YouthFocus/Children in Wales or Scottish Youth Parliament

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY]**

[PN: MULTICODE, MAXIMUM UP TO 3; RANDOMISE OPTIONS, APART FROM 'OTHER']

Q11. Which <u>top three issues</u> affecting young people do you care about the most?

□ Climate change/ the environment

□ Covid recovery

□ Discrimination and hate crime

□ Education/ national curriculum

□ Health and wellbeing

□ Human rights and democracy

□ Jobs and work experience

□ LGBT+ related issues

□ Poverty and inequalities

□ Other(s) (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY] [PN:LOCK]**

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q12. Thinking about the activities you have engaged in with the UK Youth Parliament, do you feel like you have had opportunities to engage in addressing the issues you care about the most (based on answer(s) to Q11)?

□ Yes

□ No

[PN: SINGLE CODE PER STATEMENT]

Q13. Thinking about the activities you have been involved with in the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP), to what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable
The activities were interesting and engaging						
The activities and events were well organised						
The activities facilitated discussions about issues affecting young people						

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable
I was supported to take part in activities						
I was given the information I needed to form a view and take part in activities						
I had opportunities to share my thoughts and opinions about issues affecting young people						
I felt safe to express myself freely						
I was given a range of options to express myself e.g., writing, talking, drawing, etc.						
My thoughts and opinions were taken seriously						
There was a clear audience to share the UKYP work with e.g., policy makers, councillors, ministers						
The UKYP's thoughts and opinions were acted on by local decision makers (e.g. local councils)						
The UKYP's thoughts and opinions were acted on by national decision makers (e.g. UK government)						
When the UKYP's work could not be acted on, the reason for this was explained to us						
Taking part made a difference to political decision making						

PN: **DO NOT DISPLAY** IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

[PN: MULTICODE, MAXIMUM UP TO 3; RANDOMISE OPTIONS, APART FROM 'OTHER']

Q14. Please choose your top 3 things that you enjoyed the most about participating in the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP).

□ Developing the Manifesto

□ Campaigns

□ Make Your Mark

□ Debates

□ Policy development

□ UKYP House of Commons sitting

□ Annual Conference

□ Lobbying

□ Meeting new people

□ Learning more about UK politics

□ Engaging with Members of Parliament/service providers

□ Engaging with local decision makers (Councillors, Police & Crime Commissioners etc)

□ Working with British Youth Council staff

□ Taking part in surveys

□ Taking part in All Party Parliamentary Groups

□ Roundtables/workshops

□ Youth Select Committee

□ Making decisions about the programme as part of the Steering Group/Procedures Group

□ Focus groups/sessions with young people in my local area

[PN: SINGLE CODE PER STATEMENT]

[PN: ONLY INCLUDE STATEMENTS SELECTED IN Q6]

Q15. You previously selected the following as things you wanted to gain from the UK Youth   Parliament. To what extent   do you agree or disagree that you achieved this?

[PN: STATEMENT 1]

□ Strongly disagree

□ Disagree

□ Neither agree nor disagree

□ Agree

□ Strongly agree

[PN: STATEMENT 2]

□ Strongly disagree

□ Disagree

□ Neither agree nor disagree

□ Agree

□ Strongly agree

[PN: STATEMENT 3]

□ Strongly disagree

□ Disagree

□ Neither agree nor disagree

□ Agree

□ Strongly agree

[PN: GRID SINGLE CHOICE PER STATEMENT]

Q16: Thinking about the impact of the UK Youth Parliament on your personal and social development, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
I developed **new skills**						
I developed **social skills**						
I have **developed teamwork skills**						
I made **new friends**						
I have **developed my communication** skills						
I **developed confidence**						
I developed **leadership skills**						
I **exchanged ideas** with young people from different parts of the UK						

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
I feel **more informed** about the issues affecting young people						
I have a **better understanding about UK politics**						
I have a **better understanding of how democracy works** in the UK						

[PN: GRID SINGLE CHOICE PER STATEMENT]

Q17: Thinking about the impact of the <u>UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) on your academic life</u>, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable
I have developed **my critical thinking** skills and applied them to my school/college/university work						
I have developed **my influencing and negotiation** skills and applied them to my school/college/university work						
I have developed my **verbal communication** skills and applied them to my school/college/university work						
I have developed my **written communication** skills and applied them to my school/college/university work						

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable
I have developed my **confidence** which has helped me at school/college/university						
Participating in UKYP has informed what subject/course/work I want to do in **the future**						

[PN: GRID SINGLE CHOICE PER STATEMENT]

Q18: Thinking about the impact of the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) on your professional life, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable
Participating in UKYP has informed my future job/career decisions						
I want to pursue a career in politics, public policy, or activism due to participating in UKYP						
The skills and knowledge I have developed in UKYP have helped me in my current job						

[PN: Only ask Q18b if Q1 = I previously participated in UKYP]

[PN: GRID SINGLE CHOICE PER STATEMENT]

Q18b: Since leaving the UK Youth Parliament, have you gone on to do any of the following?

	Yes	No	Don't know
I have continued volunteering			
I voted in an election			

	Yes	No	Don't know
I stood as a local town or parish councillor			
I stood as a Member of Parliament			
I stood as a students' union representative			
I have served on any other committee			

Q19. To what extent would you agree that the UK Youth Parliament has an influence on decisions made by policymakers affecting young people's lives?

□ Strongly disagree

□ Disagree

□ Neither agree nor disagree

□ Agree

□ Strongly agree

[PN: NEW PAGE]

PN: DO NOT DISPLAY SUGGESTIONS/ FEEDBACK

[PN: MULTICODE, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, EXCEPT 'OTHER' AND 'NOTHING']

Q20. Do you think any of the following aspects of the UK Youth Parliament could be improved?

□ Finding out about the UK Youth Parliament

□ Local elections for the UK Youth Parliament

□ Developing the Manifesto

□ Campaigns

□ Make Your Mark

□ Debates

□ UKYP House of Commons sitting

□ Regional meetings

□ Annual Conference

□ Lobbying (regional or national)

□ Steering group/Procedures Group

□ Youth Select Committee

□ Roundtables/workshops

□ Surveys

□ All Party Parliamentary Groups

□ Representing young people in my local area

□ Online resources

□ The timing of meetings / activities

□ Communications about the outcome/feedback on the UK Youth Parliament 's work from government

□ Perception of the group

□ Engaging with Ministers and Senior Civil Servants

□ Marketing/branding of the UK Youth Parliament

□ Communication from British Youth Council

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY] [PN: LOCK]**

□ Nothing needs to be improved, it's working well as it is **[PN: LOCK]**

[PN: DO NOT SHOW IF Q20 <> nothing needs to be improved SELECTED]

[PN: OPEN TEXT – 250 WORD MAX]

Q21. Please explain how the UK Youth Parliament could be improved?

[PN: NEW PAGE]

The next few questions will help us understand a bit more about you and the background of UK Youth Parliament participants. This will give us important information on which groups of young people do and don't take part.

[PN: SINGLE CODE, DROP-DOWN LIST]

Q22. How old are you?

□ 11 years old

□ 12 years old

□ 13 years old

□ 14 years old

□ 15 years old

□ 16 years old

□ 17 years old

□ 18 years old

□ 19 years old

□ 20 years old **[PN: ONLY FOR Q1 = 'I previously participated in UKYP']**

□ 21 years old **[PN: ONLY FOR Q1 = 'I previously participated in UKYP']**

□ 22 years old **[PN: ONLY FOR Q1 = 'I previously participated in UKYP']**

□ 23 years old **[PN: ONLY FOR Q1 = 'I previously participated in UKYP']**

□ 24 years old **[PN: ONLY FOR Q1 = 'I previously participated in UKYP']**

□ 25 years old **[PN: ONLY FOR Q1 = 'I previously participated in UKYP']**

□ 26 years old **[PN: ONLY FOR Q1 = 'I previously participated in UKYP']**

□ 27 years old or older **[PN: ONLY FOR Q1 = 'I previously participated in UKYP']**

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q23. What gender do you identify as?

□ Woman

□ Man

□ Non-binary

□ Prefer not to say

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY]**

[PN: SINGLE CODE, DROP-DOWN LIST]

Q24. Which ethnic group do you identify with?

Asian or Asian British

□ Indian

□ Pakistani

□ Bangladeshi

□ Chinese

□ Any other Asian background

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African

□ Caribbean

□ African

□ Any other Black, Black British, Caribbean or African background

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

□ White and Black Caribbean

□ White and Black African

□ White and Asian

□ Any other Mixed or multiple ethnic background

White

□ English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British Irish

□ Gypsy or Irish Traveller

□ Roma

□ Any other White background

Other ethnic group

□ Arab

□ Any other ethnic group

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY]**

□ Prefer not to say

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q25. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

□ Do/Did not attend school

□ Primary school or secondary school OR attending

□ GCSE or N5 or equivalent qualifications OR attending

□ A-level and AS level or Scottish Highers or equivalent qualifications OR attending

□ Apprenticeship, T-Levels OR attending

□ Degree-level or higher qualifications OR attending

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY] [PN: LOCK]**

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q26. Did at least one of your parents/carers go to university?

□ Yes

□ No

□ Don't know

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q27. Have you ever been eligible to have Free School Meals?

□ Yes

□ No

□ Don't know

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q28. Do you have experience of being in care, or are you a care leaver?
Living in care is when you live away from your parents. It could be with foster parents, other family members, in a care home, a residential school or secure accommodation. A care leaver in the UK is an adult who has spent time in foster or residential care and is leaving at the age of 18.

□ Yes

□ No

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q29. Do you have experience of being a carer or are you currently a carer?
A carer is anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support.

□ Yes

□ No

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q30. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?
A disabled person is defined under the Equality Act 2010 as someone with a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

□ Yes

□ No

□ Prefer not to say

[PN: OPEN TEXT – 250 WORDS MAX]

[PN: IF Q1 = 'I previously participated in the UK Youth Parliament', Q33 = What was your postcode when you participated in UKYP?]

Q31. What is your postcode?

We are asking this question so we know what part of the country participants live in.

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

[PN: IF Q1 = 'I previously participated in the UK Youth Parliament', Q34 = Where did you live when you participated in UKYP?]

Q32. Where do you live?

□ England

□ Northern Ireland

□ Scotland

□ Wales

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY]**

[PN: NEW PAGE]

[PN: INCLUDE TITLE]

Invitation for interview or focus group

The research team at Ecorys is also doing interviews and focus groups with young people to further their experiences and benefits of the programme in more detail.

Participation in an interview or focus groups are completely voluntary. Interviews and focus groups will last 60 minutes. Interviews and focus groups will be facilitated by Ecorys researchers.

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q33. Would you like to be contacted to participate in an interview or focus group?

□ Yes – ONLY for an interview

□ Yes – ONLY for a focus group

□ Yes – for either an interview OR a focus group

□ No **[PN: END SURVEY]**

[PN: MULTICODE, DISPLAY AS GRID DAYS ALONG THE TOP AND TIMES IN ROWS AND TICK BOX TO ALLOW RESPONDENT TO SELECT MULTIPLE OPTIONS]

Q34. Please indicate below when you would generally be free to attend an interview/ focus group.

We will take this into account when organising interviews and focus groups, but please note that this does not guarantee that you will get your selected option(s).

Monday

□ Lunchtime (12pm - 2pm)

□ Afternoon (4pm - 6pm)

□ Evening (6pm - 8pm)

Tuesday

□ Lunchtime (12pm - 2pm)

□ Afternoon (4pm - 6pm)

□ Evening (6pm - 8pm)

Wednesday

□ Lunchtime (12pm - 2pm)

□ Afternoon (4pm - 6pm)

□ Evening (6pm - 8pm)

Thursday

□ Lunchtime (12pm - 2pm)

□ Afternoon (4pm - 6pm)

□ Evening (6pm - 8pm)

Friday

□ Lunchtime (12pm - 2pm)

□ Afternoon (4pm - 6pm)

□ Evening (6pm - 8pm)

Saturday

□ Morning (10am - 12pm)

Sunday

□ Morning (10am - 12pm)

[PN: TEXT BOX – 250 WORDS MAX]

Q35.: What is your name?

[PN: TEXT BOX – 250 WORDS MAX]

Q36. What is your personal email address?

[PN: TEXT BOX – 250 WORDS MAX]

Q37a. What is your telephone number?

PN: DO NOT DISPLAY END OF SURVEY

[PN: DISPLAY MESSAGE]

Thank you very much for completing our survey. A researcher from Ecorys will be in touch about the interview/focus groups.

If you are aged under 16, we'll also need to ask your parent/carer for consent for you to take part in an interview or focus group, before we can sign you up.

[PN: NEW PAGE]

[PN: INCLUDE TITLE]

Prize Draw

Thank you for taking time to take part in this survey. If you would like to be entered into the prize draw for a chance to win a £50 gift voucher, please enter your email address below.

If you have won, we'll email you the voucher directly.

[PN: TEXT BOX – 250 WORDS MAX]

Q37b. What is your email address?

[PN: DYNAMICALLY ON SAME SCREEN AS Q37b IF Q37b_1 SELECTED]

Q38. Please confirm your email address.

[PN: OPEN TEXT PN: EMAIL VALIDATION]

Please **click Next** to submit your survey and be entered into the prize draw.

[PN: MARK SURVEY AS COMPLETE HERE]

[PN: END SCREEN FOR ALL SURVEY RESPONDENTS REACHING Q33]

Thank you very much for your time.

[PN: ONLY FOR RESPONDENTS WHERE QCONFIRM = 'No']

Thank you for taking the time to interact with our research. Unfortunately, this time you are not eligible to complete the survey.

YPDG Survey

Tell us about your experiences of the Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG) or DCMS Youth Steering Group

This survey is for current or past participants of the Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG) or DCMS Youth Steering Group.

The survey is being done by a team of researchers at Ecorys. Ecorys is an independent research organisation. This survey is part of the Youth Engagement Impact Study, which Ecorys is running for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and in partnership with Shout Out UK and the British Youth Council.

About the survey – what to expect

This survey will ask you:

- ▶ a bit about yourself

- ▶ your experiences of the Youth Policy Development Group/DCMS Youth Steering Group from application to taking part

- ▶ what helped or hindered your involvement

- ▶ if and how taking part has benefited you and political processes

- ▶ if you'd like to take part in an interview or focus group to discuss your experiences of the Youth Policy Development Group/DCMS Youth Steering Group in more detail

It should take around **10-12 minutes to complete**, and can be done from a mobile phone, laptop, desktop or tablet.

Everyone who completes the survey will automatically be entered into a **prize draw for the chance to win one of five £50 e-vouchers**.

Your views matter

- ▶ Taking part is a chance to provide **honest feedback** about the Youth Policy Development Group/DCMS Youth Steering Group and help shape the future of the programme.

- ▶ Taking part in this survey is completely **voluntary**.

- ▶ There are **no right or wrong answers**, you can skip questions that you don't want to answer.

- ▶ You can stop taking part at any time, without giving a reason.

How the survey information will be used

- ▶ Only the research team at Ecorys will know who takes part in the survey.

- ▶ Your survey answers will be kept **private and confidential**, and only used for this research.

- ▶ The only time we might have to tell someone else your survey answers is if you tell us something that makes us concerned that you or somebody else is in danger. We have a duty to report such concerns to keep everyone safe.

- ▶ All survey results will be summarised and included in a report for the DCMS. The report will not include any identifiable information, like your name or where you live. The report will be published on the DCMS website. Shout Out UK and the British Youth Council will be sent a summary of the findings to share with you too.

▶ You can read more about your information rights in the **Privacy Notice**, which you can view <u>here</u>. (PN: HYPERLINK TO PRIVACY NOTICE)

Please click the next button to begin.

[PN: NEW PAGE]

[PN: REQUIRED - ASK ALL]

Do you agree to take part in the survey?

☐ Yes [PN: PROCEED TO SURVEY]

☐ No [PN: END SURVEY]

[PN: NEW PAGE]

PN: DO NOT DISPLAY PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q1: Do you currently participate in the Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG) or have you previously participated in YPDG or DCMS Youth Steering Group?

☐ I am currently participating in YPDG

☐ I previously participated in YPDG

☐ I previously participated in the DCMS Youth Steering Group

[PN: SINGLE CODE, DROP-DOWN LIST]

[PN: IF Q1 = I am currently participating in YPDG THEN Q2 = How long have you been involved in YPDG?]

[PN: IF Q1 = I previously participated in YPDG THEN Q2 = How long were you involved in YPDG or DCMS Youth Steering Group (DCMS YSG)?]

Q2: How long have you been/ were involved in Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG) or DCMS Youth Steering Group (DCMS YSG)?

☐ Less than 4 months

☐ 5 months to 8 months

☐ More than 8 months

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q3. Roughly how many hours a month do you engage in Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG) or DCMS Youth Steering Group (DCMS YSG)?

☐ Less than 1 hour

☐ 1 hour to 3 hours

☐ 3 hours to 5 hours

□ 5 hours to 8 hours

□ Over 8 hours

[PN: NEW PAGE]

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q4. Are you currently, or have you previously taken part in the UK Youth Parliament?

□ Yes

□ No

PN: **DO NOT DISPLAY** MOTIVATIONS & APPLICATION

[PN: SINGLE CODE, RANDOMISE OPTIONS APART FROM 'OTHER']

Q5. How did you hear about Youth Policy Development Group / DCMS Youth Steering Group?

□ Social media

□ Google search

□ Friends

□ Family

□ Youth/community/faith group

□ School/college/sixth form

□ University

□ Shout Out UK

□ British Youth Council / UK Youth Parliament

□ Member(s) of Youth Policy Development Group / DCMS Youth Steering Group

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY] [PN: LOCK]**

□ Don't know / can't remember **[PN: LOCK] [PN: EXCLUSIVE]**

[PN: MULTICODE, MAXIMUM UP TO 3, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, APART FROM 'OTHER']

[PN: CAPTURE ORDER]

Q6. Before successfully applying to the Youth Policy Development Group or DCMS Youth Steering Group, what (if anything) did you wish to gain from the programme? Choose up to 3 options from the list below.

□ New skills (such as public speaking and communication)

□ To meet new, like-minded people

□ To make a difference

☐ To engage in politics

☐ To engage in discussions with policymakers

☐ To represent young people's views

☐ To learn about different policy areas

☐ To have new experiences

☐ To support my university (or equivalent) application

☐ To support my future career prospects

☐ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY] [PN: LOCK]**

[PN: NEW PAGE]

PN: DO NOT DISPLAY EXPERIENCES OF YPDG AND DCMS YSG

[PN: MULTICODE, MAXIMUM UP TO 3, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, APART FROM 'OTHER' AND 'NOTHING']

Q7. What, if anything, <u>helped</u> you to participate in the Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG) or DCMS Youth Steering Group?

Choose up to 3 options from the list below.

☐ Location of meetings was easy to get to

☐ My accessibility needs were met by Shout Out UK/British Youth Council

☐ My accessibility needs were met by someone outside of Shout Out UK/British Youth Council (e.g., a carer or support worker)

☐ Cost of transport was affordable

☐ I had access to technology/online meetings (such as a device and internet connection)

☐ My friend/relative participated with me

☐ School/college/university were supportive

☐ My employer was supportive

☐ Previous similar experience

☐ Access to information and resources by Shout Out UK/British Youth Council

☐ Time and days of meetings/activities worked well for me

☐ Other **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY] [PN: LOCK]**

☐ Nothing **[PN: LOCK] [PN: EXCLUSIVE]**

[PN: MULTICODE, MAXIMUM UP TO 3, RANDOMISE OPTIONS, APART FROM 'OTHER' AND 'NOTHING']

Q8. What, if anything, <u>hindered</u> your participation in the Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG) or DCMS Youth Steering Group?

Choose up to 3 options from the list below.

□ Location was difficult to get to

□ My accessibility needs were not met by Shout Out UK/British Youth Council

□ My accessibility needs were not met by anyone outside of Shout Out UK/British Youth Council (e.g., a carer or support worker)

□ Cost of transport was not affordable

□ I did not have access to technology (such as a device and internet connection)

□ I did not have a friend/relative participating with me

□ Health condition/disability

□ School/college/university were not supportive

□ School/college pressures/exam times

□ My employer was not supportive

□ Lack of previous similar experience

□ Lack of access to information and resources by Shout Out UK/British Youth Council

□ Time and days of meetings/activities did not work for me

□ Caring responsibilities

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY] [PN: LOCK]**

□ Nothing **[PN: LOCK] [PN: EXCLUSIVE]**

[PN: MULTICODE]

Q9. What activities have you been involved in, as part of the Youth Policy Development Group/DCMS Youth Steering Group?

Select all applicable options from the list below.

□ Roundtable discussions/workshops

□ Developing policy briefs

□ Training and upskilling (organised by Shout Out UK/British Youth Council)

□ One to one support from Shout Out UK

□ Surveys

□ All Party Parliamentary Groups

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY]**

[PN: MULTICODE, MAXIMUM UP TO 3; RANDOMISE OPTIONS, APART FROM 'OTHER']

Q10. Which <u>top three issues</u> affecting young people do you care about the most?

□ Climate change/the environment

□ Covid recovery

□ Discrimination and hate crime

□ Education/national curriculum

□ Health and wellbeing

□ Human rights and democracy

□ Jobs and work experience

□ LGBT+ related issues

□ Poverty and inequalities

□ Other(s) (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY] [PN: LOCK]**

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q11. Thinking about the Youth Policy Development Group/DCMS Youth Steering Group activities you have been part of, have you had opportunities to engage in addressing the issues you care about the most (based on answer(s) to Q10)?

□ Yes

□ No

[PN: SINGLE CODE PER STATEMENT]

Q12. Thinking about the Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG)/DCMS Youth Steering Group activities you have been involved in, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable
The activities were interesting and engaging						
The activities and events were well organised						
The activities facilitated discussions about issues affecting young people						
I was supported by staff to take part in activities						

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable
I was given the information I needed to form a view and take part in activities						
I had opportunities to share my thoughts and opinions about issues affecting young people						
I felt safe to express myself freely						
I was given a range of options to express myself e.g., writing, talking, drawing, etc.						
My thoughts and opinions were taken seriously						
There was a clear audience to share the work with e.g., policy makers, ministers						
The groups' thoughts and opinions were acted on						
When the groups' work could not be acted on, the reason for this was explained to us						
Taking part made a difference to political decision making						

[PN: NEW PAGE]

PN: **DO NOT DISPLAY** IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

[PN: MULTICODE, MAXIMUM UP TO 3; RANDOMISE OPTIONS, APART FROM 'OTHER']

Q13. Please choose your top 3 things that you enjoyed the most about participating in the Youth Policy Development Group/DCMS Youth Steering Group.

☐ Roundtable discussions/workshops

☐ Developing policy briefs

□ Meeting new people

□ Learning more about UK politics

□ Engaging with Members of Parliament/local politicians

□ The training organised and delivered by Shout Out UK/British Youth Council

□ Working with Shout Out UK/British Youth Council staff

□ Taking part in surveys

□ Taking part in All Party Parliamentary Groups

[PN: SINGLE CODE PER STATEMENT]

[PN: ONLY INCLUDE STATEMENTS SELECTED IN Q10]

Q14. You previously selected the following as things you wanted to gain from the Youth Policy Development Group/DCMS Youth Steering Group. To what extent do you agree or disagree that you achieved this?

[PN: STATEMENT 1]

□ Strongly disagree

□ Disagree

□ Neither agree nor disagree

□ Agree

□ Strongly agree

[PN: STATEMENT 2]

□ Strongly disagree

□ Disagree

□ Neither agree nor disagree

□ Agree

□ Strongly agree

[PN: STATEMENT 3]

□ Strongly disagree

□ Disagree

□ Neither agree nor disagree

□ Agree

□ Strongly agree

[PN: GRID SINGLE CHOICE PER STATEMENT]

Q15: Thinking about the impact of the Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG)/DCMS Youth Steering Group on your personal and social development, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable
I have developed **new skills**						
I have **developed social skills**						
I have **developed team work skills**						
I have made **new friends**						
I have **developed my communication skills**						
I have developed **confidence**						
I developed **leadership skills**						
I have **exchanged ideas** with young people from different parts of England						
I feel **more informed** about the issues affecting young people						
I have **a better understanding about UK politics**						
I have **a better understanding of how democracy works** in the UK						

[PN: GRID SINGLE CHOICE PER STATEMENT]

Q16: Thinking about the impact of the Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG)/DCMS Youth Steering Group on your academic life to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable

I have developed **my critical thinking** skills and applied them to my school/college/university work						
I have developed **my influencing and negotiation** skills and applied them to my school/college/university work						
I have developed my **verbal communication** skills and applied them to my school/college/university work						
I have developed my **written communication** skills and applied them to my school/college/university work						
I have developed my **confidence** which has helped me at school/college/university						
Participating in the group has informed what subject/course/work I want to do in **the future**						

[PN: GRID SINGLE CHOICE PER STATEMENT]

Q17: Thinking about the impact of the Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG)/DCMS Youth Steering Group <u>on your future job/career</u> choices, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable
Participating in the group has informed my future job/career decisions						
I want to pursue a career in politics or activism due to participating						

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable
The skills and knowledge I have developed have helped me in my current job						

[PN: OPEN TEXT – 250 WORD MAX]

Q18. What is the one thing you are the most proud of/the biggest difference you have made, during your time on the Youth Policy Development Group/DCMS Youth Steering Group?

Q19. To what extent would you say that the Youth Policy Development Group/DCMS Youth Steering Group has an influence on decisions made by adults affecting young people's lives?

□ Strongly disagree

□ Disagree

□ Neither agree nor disagree

□ Agree

□ Strongly agree

[PN: ONLY SHOW IF Q19 = Strongly disagree or disagree]

[PN: OPEN TEXT – 250 WORD MAX]

Q20. What is the main barrier to the Youth Policy Development Group/DCMS Youth Steering Group having an influence on decision making by adults?

[PN: NEW PAGE]

PN: DO NOT DISPLAY SUGGESTIONS/ FEEDBACK

[PN: MULTICODE, RATING SCALE, RANDOMISE OPTIONS]

Q21. Do you think any of the following aspects of the Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG)/DCMS Youth Steering Group could be improved?

□ How young people find out about the YPDG

□ The application

□ Roundtable discussions/workshops

□ Developing policy briefs

□ Training and upskilling (organised by Shout Out UK/British Youth Council)

□ One to one support from Shout Out UK/British Youth Council

□ The timing of meetings/activities

□ Ongoing review and improvement of the programme

□ Communication/feedback on the outcome of the group's work

□ Support and signposting to other activities after the programme has ended

□ Perception of the group

□ Engaging with Ministers and Senior Civil Servants

□ Marketing/branding of the group

□ Communication from Shout Out UK/British Youth Council

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY] [PN: LOCK]**

□ Nothing needs to be improved, it's working well as it is **[PN: LOCK] [PN: EXCLUSIVE]**

[PN: ONLY SHOW IF Q20 <> nothing needs to be improved]

[PN: OPEN TEXT – 250 WORD MAX]

Q22. Please explain how the YPDG/DCMS YSG could be improved.

[PN: NEW PAGE]

The next few questions will help us understand a bit more about you and the background of participants. This will give us important information on which groups of young people do and don't take part.

[PN: SINGLE CODE, DROP-DOWN LIST]

Q23. How old are you?

□ 16 years old

□ 17 years old

□ 18 years old

□ 19 years old

□ 20 years old

□ 21 years old

□ 22 years old

□ 23 years old

□ 24 years old

□ 25 years old

□ 26 years old

□ 27 years old or older

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q24. What gender do you identify as?

□ Woman

□ Man

□ Non-binary

□ Prefer not to say

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY]**

[PN: SINGLE CODE, DROP-DOWN LIST]

Q25. Which ethnic group do you identify with?

Asian or Asian British

□ Indian

□ Pakistani

□ Bangladeshi

□ Chinese

□ Any other Asian background

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African

□ Caribbean

□ African

□ Any other Black, Black British, Caribbean or African background

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

□ White and Black Caribbean

□ White and Black African

□ White and Asian

□ Any other Mixed or multiple ethnic background

White

□ English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British Irish

□ Gypsy or Irish Traveller

□ Roma

□ Any other White background

Other ethnic group

□ Arab

□ Any other ethnic group

□ Prefer not to say

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY]**

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q26. What is the highest level of education you have completed or are working towards?

□ Do/Did not attend school

□ Primary school or secondary school OR attending

□ GCSE or equivalent qualifications OR attending

□ A-level and AS level or equivalent qualifications OR attending

□ Apprenticeship, T-Levels OR attending

□ Degree-level or higher qualifications OR attending

□ Other (please specify) **[PN: ADD PLEASE SPECIFY] [PN: LOCK]**

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q27. Did at least one of your parents/ carers go to university?

□ Yes

□ No

□ Don't know

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q28. Have you ever been eligible to have Free School Meals?

□ Yes

□ No

□ Don't know

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q29. Do you have experience of being in care, or are you a care leaver?
Living in care is when you live away from your parents. It could be with foster parents, other family members, in a care home, a residential school or secure accommodation. A care leaver in the UK is an adult who has spent time in foster or residential care and is leaving at the age of 18.

□ Yes

□ No

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q30. Do you have experience of being a carer or are you currently a carer?
A carer is anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support.

□ Yes

□ No

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q31. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?
A disabled person is defined under the Equality Act 2010 as someone with a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

□ Yes

□ No

□ Prefer not to say

[PN: OPEN TEXT – 250 WORDS MAX]

Q32. What is your postcode?

We are asking this question so we know what part of the country participants live in.

[PN: NEW PAGE]

[PN: INCLUDE TITLE]

Invitation for interview or focus group
The research team at Ecorys is also doing interviews and focus groups with young people to further their experiences and benefits of the programme in more detail.

Participation in an interview or focus groups are completely voluntary. Interviews and focus groups will last 60 minutes. Interviews and focus groups will be facilitated by Ecorys researchers.

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

Q33: Would you like to participate in an interview or focus group?

By selected a 'Yes' option, you are agreeing to being contacted by an Ecorys researcher for the purposes of an interview/focus group.

□ Yes – ONLY for an interview

□ Yes – ONLY for a focus group

□ Yes – for either an interview OR a focus group

□ No **[PN: END SURVEY]**

[PN: SINGLE CODE]

[PN: MULTICODE, MAXIMUM 3 CHOICES]

Q34: Please indicate from the list below your first, second and third preference for an interview/focus group.

We will take this into account when organising interviews and focus groups, but please note that this does not guarantee that you will get your preferred option(s).

	First choice	Second choice	Third choice
[dates]			
[dates]			
[dates…]			

[PN: TEXT BOX – 250 WORDS MAX]

Q35: What is your name?

[PN: TEXT BOX – 250 WORDS MAX]

Q36: What is your email address?

[PN: TEXT BOX – 250 WORDS MAX]

Q37: What is your telephone number?

PN: DO NOT DISPLAY END OF SURVEY

[PN: DISPLAY MESSAGE]

Thank you very much for completing our survey. A researcher from Ecorys will be in touch about the interview/focus groups.

[PN: NEW PAGE]

[PN: INCLUDE TITLE]

Prize Draw

Thank you for taking time to take part in this survey. If you would like to be entered into the prize draw for a chance to win a £50 gift voucher, please enter your email address below.

If you have won, we'll email you the voucher directly.

[PN: TEXT BOX – 250 WORDS MAX]

Q38: What is your email address?

[PN: End screen for all survey respondents]

Thank you very much for your time.

Annex 2: Interview Topic Guides

Topic guide for interviews with ministers and policy officials

Interview Questions

Introduction [max 5 minutes]

▶ What is your job role/position?

▷ Probe – how long have you been in this job role? How long have you been a policy official/minister?

▷ Probe – did you hold other government positions prior to your current role? If yes, what roles were they, and how long did you hold those positions for? How long have you worked in government for, in total?

▶ Which programme have you interacted with: UKYP and/or YPDG or DCMS Youth Steering Group?

▶ How would you describe the Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP to other policy colleagues?

Ministers and policy officials' awareness and engagement with the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP [max 15 minutes]

These questions will explore how you heard about the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP, your reasons for engaging with the programmes, and how you have engaged with the programmes.

▶ How did you hear about the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP?

▷ Probe – how the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP are promoted to ministers and policy officials across government

▶ Do you think the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP could be promoted more widely or in other ways to support the work of your policy colleagues?

▷ Probe – specific suggestions to enhance policy officials'/ministers' awareness of DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP across government

▶ How have you engaged with the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP?

▷ Probe – whether they have consulted the YPDG/DCMS Youth Steering Group (young people aged 16-25) and/or UKYP (young people aged 11-18 years)

▪ *Explore – which age group they were most keen to engage with and why?*

▶ Which policy areas have you explored with the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP?

▷ Probe – explore each policy area they have been involved with in turn.

▪ Explore – which policy areas were young people most keen to engage with?

▷ Probe – are there particular policy themes/areas that you think should be prioritised for the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP, from your perspective as a policy official/minister? If yes, which policy themes/areas are these and why should they be prioritised?

▷ Probe - are there particular policy themes/areas that you think should be prioritised for the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP from the perspective of young people? If yes, which policy themes/areas are these and why should they be prioritised? How do you know this?

▶ Why did you want to consult with the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP?

▷ Probe – to provide youth insights, lived experience, other

▷ Probe - because you needed to/were mandated to engage with young people on the topic area

▷ Probe – do the YPDG/UKYP support evidence-based policy making in your view, and if so, how?

▶ How did you consult with the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP? [if not covered above]

▷ Probe – attending roundtables/workshops

▷ Probe – attending training sessions

▷ Probe – discussing UKYP campaigns and debates, reflecting on UKYP annual conference themes

▷ Probe – receiving written summaries/presentations of research from YPDG/UKYP, policy briefs presented by YPDG.

▷ Probe – receiving written recommendations to inform policy development

▷ Probe – reflecting on UKYP 2022 Manifesto (NB. May not have happened yet, launched Oct 22)

▶ How often did you engage with the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP?

▷ Probe – How many times did you engage with the group(s)?

▶ How easy/difficult was it for you to engage with the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP?

▷ Probe - What, if anything, could have been done differently to help you engage with the group(s)?

▷ Probe - Was your wider team, line management chain, Directorate, Department supportive of engaging with young people on policy development?

▷ Probe - Do you have support/time/resources to engage with young people in your role?

▷ Probe - Is there anything specific it would be useful to have to help support your engagement with young people? E.g. information guides, examples of previous engagement.

Effectiveness and impact of the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP

These questions will explore the impact of the Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP on policy formation and decision making and on participants from your perspective.

Impact of the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP on policy formation and decision making [max 15 minutes]

▶ How did engaging with the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP make a difference to your work?

▷ Probe – in relation to DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG (young people aged 16-25) and/or UKYP (young people aged 11-18 years) and developing evidence-based policy.

● *Explore – what made the most difference to your work and why? Explore the role of both DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG and UKYP*

● *Explore – whether they had any contact with MYPs through UKYP, and if so, how this informed their work.*

● *Explore – whether their work with UKYP was informed by/fed into the Make Your Mark ballot*

▶ Did the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP practically/tangibly make a difference to policy developments you were responsible for?

▷ Probe – if yes how? Please give an example of a policy document, consultation theme or line of enquiry that was directly informed by the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP

▷ Probe: if yes, how did YPDG/UKYP inform the processes you adopt to inform policy development?

▶ Have you shared the outcomes/what you do with the information provided by the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP?

▷ Probe - If yes, who did you share the outcome with and how? Did you share the outcomes with the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP?

▷ Probe - are there any barriers to sharing outcomes/feedback with the youth engagement groups? If so, what are they? And do you have any suggestions for how they could be overcome?

▷ Probe - Is sharing feedback/outcomes   an area that could be strengthened, and if so, how?

▶ Is there a stage in the policy formation cycle when it is most useful to consult with young people in your view? If yes, what stage is this, and why?

▷ Probe – to identify new ideas; sense check emerging ideas linked to needs and concerns identified by policy advisors, VCS partners etc; road-test initial policy formation; development of public messaging etc

▶ Were there any opportunities for DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG (young people aged 16-25) and UKYP (young people aged 11-18 years) to collaborate with each other?

▷ Probe – if yes, how did this work and what difference did it make?

▷ Probe – if no, would you like to see opportunities for collaboration between the groups   in the future?

▶ Could any improvements be made to how ministers/policy officials consult with the YPDG/UKYP, in your view?

▷ Probe – ways of interacting with YPDG/UKYP, gaining feedback from YPDG/UKYP, timeliness of inputs from YPDG/UKYP, to inform decision making.

▶ What is the best way for young people to engage with policy teams/ministers, in your opinion, to make an impact on policy development?

▷ Probe - Is there a difference between policy officials/ministers?

Impact on YPDG/UKYP participants [max 10 minutes]

▶ What would you say are the benefits of the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP for young people who take part? And why?

▷ Probe – explore benefits for UKYP and YPDG members e.g., Personal, social and vocational development – ask for examples

Suggestions and overall reflections [max 5 minutes]

These questions provide an opportunity to reflect overall on learning from your involvement with the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP programme(s).

▶ How would you sum up the difference the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP has made to your policy work?

- ► How would you sum up the difference the DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP has made to policy formation and decision making more widely/across government?

- ► Do you have suggestions for maximising the value of the YPDG/UKYP? For young people? For wider political processes?

- ► [Only ask if time]. Have you noticed a change in DCMS Youth Steering Group/YPDG/UKYP participants you have engaged with over time? If yes, what has changed and how has this been brought about, in your view?

  - ▷ Probe – increased confidence in public speaking, articulating ideas, making the case for policy formation

  - ▷ Probe – increased awareness of policy formation cycles and the potential for informing policy development

  - ▷ Probe – development of life skills, career aspirations, volunteering and civic engagement etc

  - ▷ Probe – are there differences in outcomes by participant demographics, particularly amongst those taking a leading role in sessions/discussions (gender, age, ethnicity, region, disability, religion etc)

CLOSE [max 5 minutes]

- ► Check if there is anything else they would like to share

Topic guide for interviews with delivery staff

Interview Questions

Role within UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] [max 10 minutes]

These questions are about your role in the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate].

▶ What is your job role/position, and organisation your work for?

▷ Probe – how long have you been in this role? How long have you been involved in UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate]?

▷ Probe - how often do you engage/work with the group?

▷ Probe – do you hold another job/role (in addition to your UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] role)? Please briefly describe your other role and whether it informs your approach to your UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] role.

Chief executive at BYC – role is very broad in that it covers governance, leadership, strategy of the charity as a whole. The BYC is the national youth council of the UK and do a lot of work with young people on how they influence policy in multiple ways.

Been in BYC for over 6 years.

Role is much more relating to the oversight of programmes but because BYC is a small charity, INT is also involved in delivery of things. Like for UKYP, for past 6-8 months INT was project lead for annual conference, residential conference in the summer, and the commons sit-in in November. With Youth voice group, INT started that and no longer manages that but steps in when they need support with it.

▶ Please can you describe the key responsibilities of your role in supporting the

UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate]?

▷ Direct work with young people

▷ Work with policy officials / ministers

▷ Local / regional / national activities

Oversight duties include everything from financial reporting, grant management and other managerial duties.

Other than oversight- technically, INT does not have any responsibilities. BYC is a small organisation so INT steps in wherever it is needed to deliver the service. Particularly with UKYP events, they pull the whole team together for events with potentially 300 kids. So, works directly with kids when needed.

Works directly with ministers sometimes in roundtables for example, as it is helpful to have the title of CEO in a room.

Reach and effectiveness of the UKYP /YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate]

Reach and participation of young people [max 10 minutes]

▶ Can you talk me through promotion and recruitment of the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] to young people?

▷ Probe – what are the main recruitment and promotion mechanisms; which are the most effective recruitment approaches?

▷ Probe - what is the main barrier to participation? Is there anything specific that can be done to tackle this?

▷ Probe – what motivates or stops young people from being interested / taking part?

- *Explore - what is the most common reason for young people dropping out of the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?*

▷ Probe – demographic representation of participants (gender, age, religion, disability, location etc)

▷ Probe – which groups of young people don't tend to take part and how do you think they could be reached?

Meaningful youth engagement[25] [max 15 minutes]

These questions explore the extent to which the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] provides an effective forum for meaningful participation and impact on participants from your perspective, and the extent to which participants' views are acted upon by policy makers and ministers to inform policy development and decision making.

[Researchers note: tailor questions to explore the project the interviewee has been involved in i.e. UKYP or YPDG/Youth Steering Group]

▶ **Which policy areas are young people most keen to engage with, and why?**

▷ Probe – going forward, are there particular policy themes/areas that you think should be prioritised for the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] from the perspective of young people? If yes, which policy themes/areas are these and why should they be prioritised? How do you know this?

▶ **What types of activities are young people most keen to engage with, and why?**

▷ Probe – training, discussions with peers, discussions with policy-makers/ministers, campaigns, etc

▶ **Which policy areas explored by the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] do you feel have been most influential/impactful?**

▷ Probe – explore in what way they have been influential/impactful; and reasons for this

- *Explore – role of young people, delivery staff, policy officials / ministers*

▶ **How does the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] provide a forum for participants to form and express their views?**

▷ Probe - voice – Do participants receive training to help them develop and express their views?

▷ Explore – what types of training is most helpful to young people? Who   is the training provided by?

▷ Explore – how well does the training prepare participants for their role, and do you have any suggestions for improving the training?

▷ Probe - How do you facilitate the group to enable participants to express their views? What works well and why do you say this?

- *Explore –how participant-led are the activities. Seek examples*

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[25] This section applies the Lundy model of child participation (2007), to explore the conditions for meaningful youth engagement: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/lundy_model_of_participation.pdf

- *Explore – managing group dynamics, information exchange, encouraging less confident members, etc.*

- *Explore – areas for improvement*

▷ Probe - **space** – how does the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] provide safe, inclusive opportunities for participants to form and express their views?

- *Explore – modes of participation: verbal, draw, write, debate, face-to-face and online engagement, etc*

- *Explore – success factors: peer support, setting ground rules etc*

- *Explore – support to ensure all participants can take part (visual aids, hearing loops etc)*

▶ How does the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] provide a forum for young people, not taking part in the programme, to be involved and share their views?

▷ Probe - How are young people outside of the group included? How effective is their involvement? What works well and what could be improved?

▷ Probe - What more could be done to engage with young people outside of the group? What mechanisms do you think would work well?

- *Explore - social media, working with schools, colleges, youth groups, engagement sessions led by young people in the group, linking up with existing youth voice groups, targeted engagement with specific groups.*

▷ Probe - How can young people that wouldn't normally choose to engage with this type of programme, e.g. more marginalised young people, be included and involved? What mechanisms do you think would work well?

▶ Are there opportunities for join up / collaboration with other youth voice groups, e.g. UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group, NCS, iWill etc?

▷ Probe - If so, what does this involve and how often does it happen? What works well and what could be improved?

▷ Probe - If not, would this be beneficial and do you have suggestions on how this could work?

▶ How does the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] provide a forum for participants to have their views heard by policy decision-makers?

▷ Probe – **audience** – who are the audiences for UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group? [Delete as appropriate] Are participants' views listened to by their intended audience? How is this achieved? Seek examples

- *Explore – how often are ministers/policy officials involved? Is this on an ad hoc basis or is there a planned schedule for engagement? What works best to involve them? E.g., attending roundtables/meetings and engaging in discussions with participants*

- *Do you engage with multiple officials/ministers once or is there engagement with the same officials/ministers over a longer period of time?*

- *How easy/difficult is it for you to engage with policy officials/ministers?*

- *Are there other ways the group could engage with government, is there anything you think could work well?*

- *Is the engagement with policy officials/ministers meaningful? How often?*

- *How does this work with central government / DCMS? What works well and what could be improved?*

- *How reliant are you on central government / DCMS to ensure this engagement? Is there anything that could be done to decrease this reliance?*

▷ Probe – suggestions for improving engagement with government, officials and ministers to ensure the participants   have their voices heard by policy makers?

▷ *Probe - what is the main barrier to meaningful engagement between young people and government officials/ministers/policy makers?*

▶ Do you think the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] could be promoted more widely or in other ways across government?

▷ Probe – specific suggestions to enhance policy officials'/ministers' awareness of UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] across government

▷ Probe – specific suggestions central government / DCMS could do to increase engagement and awareness

Impact of the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate]

Impact of the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] on policy formation and decision making [max 10 minutes]

▶ To what extent are the views of UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate]participants acted upon by ministers/policy officials?

▷ Probe – **influence** – are the groups' views acted upon? Do participants' views inform policy developments and decision-making processes, and how? Seek examples

- *Explore – ministerial/departmental responses to UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] recommendations, and examples of messages being taken forward in policy documents, consultation themes or lines of enquiry*

- *Explore – what are the challenges associated with ministers/policy officials acting upon the views of UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate]? Suggestions for addressing these?*

▶ Is there a stage in the policy formation cycle when it is most useful for ministers/policy officials to consult with young people in your view? What stage, and why?

[Researchers note: the policy formation cycle starts with the identification o   f an initial theme/issue/idea, which the public is often consulted on, to inform the development of draft policy papers and documents, before they are voted on by Parliament].

▷ Probe - to identify new ideas; sense check emerging ideas linked to needs and concerns identified by policy advisors, VCS partners etc; road-test initial policy formation; development of public messaging etc

▶ Have participants been provided with feedback explaining why ministers/policy officials did/did not take up their recommendations?

▷ Probe - whether ministers/policy officials shared the outcomes/what they did with the information provided by the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate]

- *Explore - how ministers/policy officials shared any outcome with participants.*

▷ Probe – could any improvements be made to how ministers/policy officials consult with the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] in your view?

- *Explore - ways of interacting with UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate], gaining feedback from UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate], timeliness of inputs from UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate], to inform decision making.*

▷ Probe - Do you have any suggestions for improvement, to increase the influence of UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] on policy formation and decision making?

- *Explore – could feedback loops be improved?*

▶ **What is the best way for young people to engage with policy teams/ministers, in your opinion, to make an impact on policy development?**

▷ Probe - Is there a difference between policy officials/ministers?

For young people [10 mins]

▶ **What would you say are the main benefits of the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] for participants? And why?**

▶ Probe – Personal development - increased confidence in public speaking, articulating ideas,

▶ Probe – Social development - development of life skills, leadership and team working skills

▶ Probe – Vocational development - work-related skills, career aspirations, volunteering and civic engagement etc

▶ Probe – increased awareness of policy formation cycles and the potential for informing policy development making the case for policy formation

▶ Probe – are there differences in outcomes by participant demographics, particularly amongst those taking a leading role in sessions/discussions (gender, age, ethnicity, region, disability, religion etc)

Suggestions and overall reflections [max 5 minutes]

These questions provide an opportunity to reflect overall on learning from your involvement with the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate]

▶ **Do you have suggestions for maximising the value of the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate]? For young people? For wider political processes?**

▶ **Based on your experiences of working with UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate], do you have any suggestions for developing good practice standards to inform future youth engagement work?**

CLOSE [max 2 minutes]

▶ Check if there is anything else they would like to share

Topic guide for participant interviews

Interview Questions

Background and involvement within UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] [max 15 minutes]

These questions are about your involvement in UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate].

▶ What youth group (UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group) were/ are you a part of and why did you decide to join the group?

▷ Probe: How did you find out about UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?

▷ Probe: What did you hope to get out of the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?

▷ Probe: Have you participated in similar programmes/groups before joining UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?

▷ Probe: For how long were you/ have you been part of UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?

• Explore: If they dropped out early, explore the reasons behind their decision?

▶ What was the recruitment/election process like for you?

▷ Probe: Did you receive any support or guidance when applying to UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?

▶ Do/Did you hold a specific role in UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [delete as appropriate], and if so, what is/was it?

▶ Probe: What were/ are your responsibilities as a member of UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?

▶ Probe: For UKYP this could be debate lead or steering group member too.

▶ Did/ do you have regular meetings as a group? What did/ do these meetings look like?

▷ Probe: How often do you meet as a group?

▷ Probe: Who else joins those meeting?

▶ What were/ are the main activities you've been involved in?

▷ Probe: Were/ are there any specific roles or additional activities or responsibilities you took/ have taken on? If yes, please describe those (training, discussions with policymakers/ ministers, campaigns, etc.)

• Explore: What was the motivation behind taking on those specific role/s or extra responsibilities?

▷ Probe: In what format were activities delivered? (e.g., face to face, virtually, mix?)

• Explore: What did you or would you have preferred and why? Did you have any barriers (e.g., distance, travel, lack of access to technology)

▶ Were there any activities you were involved in that you particularly enjoyed, and why?

▷ Probe: What has worked well about the activity/activities?

▷ Probe: What has worked less well about the activity/activities?

▷ Probe: Have you received sufficient support and guidance from the BYC/ ShoutOut UK [delete as appropriate]?

▷ Probe: Is there anything you would change about the activity/activities? (Prompts if needed: the format of delivery, timing, people running the sessions?)

What makes for meaningful youth engagement[26]? [max 20 minutes]

These questions explore the extent to which the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] represents meaningful participation to inform policy development and decision making.

VOICE

▶ **What were/ are the key platforms and activities through which you were/ are able to express your views?**

▷ Probe: training, discussions with peers, discussions with policymakers/ ministers, campaigns, etc.

- Explore: What worked/ works well and less well? E.g., peer support, setting ground rules etc.

▶ **How did/ does the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group help/ed you to develop and articulate views?**

▷ Probe: What training and/ or other activities was/ is provided to help you develop and articulate your views?

- Explore: How well did the training prepare you for the role? What types of training was/ have been most helpful?

- Explore: Do you have any suggestions for improving the training?

▶ **Do you feel like you were/ are able to express your views in the group?**

▷ Probe: How participant-led are the activities? Are there examples of this?

▷ Probe: How did/ do the facilitators manage group dynamics, encourage information exchange, encourage less confident young people, etc.?

▷ Probe: Could anything be improved, in your view?

SPACE

▶ **Do you feel that the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group provide/d safe space and inclusive opportunities for you to express your views?**

▷ Probe: Was/ Is there support to ensure everyone can take part (visual aids, hearing loops etc)

▶ **Which policy areas were/ are you most keen to engage with, and why?**

▷ Probe: Are there particular policy themes/areas that you think should be prioritised for the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group? If yes, which policy themes/areas are these and why should they be prioritised? How do you know this?

- Explore: Whether they feel that they had opportunities to engage in the policy areas that interest them.

AUDIENCE

▶ **Who do you think the main audiences of the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group are?**

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[26] This section applies the Lundy model of child participation (2007), to explore the conditions for meaningful youth engagement: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/lundy_model_of_participation.pdf

▷ Probe: Probe: Did/ Do you engage with a range of ministers/ policy officials or was/ is it the same group of ministers/ policy officials being usually involved?

▷ Probe: Which activities/outputs of your activities addressed these audiences?

▷ Probe: Does the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group provide a forum for young people to have their views heard by policy decision-makers?

- Explore: What are the examples of where this worked/ has worked well / less well?

▶ **How did/ does the intended audience interact with the group and specifically with the outputs of your activities?**

▷ Probe: Were/ Are participants' views listened to by their intended audience?

▷ Probe: How often were/ are ministers/policy officials involved?

- Explore: In your experience, what worked/ works best to involve them? E.g., attending roundtables/meetings and engaging in discussions with participants

- Explore: Are there other ways you think the group could engage with government, is there anything you think could work well?

▶ **What was your experience like with engaging with government officials/ ministers/ policy makers?**

▷ Probe: Have you experienced any barriers in engaging with government officials/ministers/policy makers? If so, what the main barrier to meaningful engagement between young people and government officials/ministers/policy makers were/ are?

Impact of the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [max 15 minutes]

Now we would like to explore the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group's [Delete as appropriate] impacts on participants, and the extent to which young people's views are acted upon by policy makers and ministers to inform policy development and decision making.

INFLUENCE (Impact on policy)

▶ **What activities do you think had/ have had the most impact on the policy development in that specific policy area/s and why?**

▷ Probe: What were/ are the policy areas that these activities were/ have been the most impactful in?

- Explore: In what way have they been influential/impactful? <u>Are there examples?</u>

▶ **How is the group given feedback explaining why ministers/policy officials do/do not take up the recommendations from the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?**

▷ Probe: Who is the feedback given by?

▷ Probe: Do you have suggestions to improve the influence of UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] on policy formation and decision making?

▶ **Do you know how the views and recommendations of UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group were/ are acted on by ministers/policy officials?**

▷ Probe: Do you know if the participants' views inform policy developments and decision-making processes, and how? Are there examples?

▷ Probe: Could improvements be made to how ministers/policy officials consult with the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] in your view?

Impact of the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group on young people

▶ What were/are the main benefits you gain from   participating in the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group and why?

▷ Probe: What was/ has been the impact on your **personal development**? (e.g. increased confidence in public speaking, articulating ideas)

▷ Probe: What was/ has been the impact on your **social development**? (e.g. developing life skills, leadership and team working skills, engaging with people across the country)

▷ Probe: What was/ has been the impact on your **vocational development**? (e.g. work-related skills, career aspirations, volunteering and civic engagement)

▷ Probe: What did/ have you learn/ learnt about the **policy development process and the policy areas** that you engaged with? (e.g. increased awareness of policy formation cycles, skills and knowledge to make the case for policy formation)

Suggestions and overall reflections [max 5 minutes]

These questions provide an opportunity to reflect overall on learning from your involvement with the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group

▶ Did/ Has the participation in the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group meet/met your expectations?

▷ Probe: What did you expect to gain from your participation in the group? Was this/ Has this been achieved?

▶ Do you have any suggestions on how the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group could be improved to enhance young people's experience?

▷ Probe: How could the recruitment be more effective in targeting diverse groups of young people (gender, age, religion, disability, location etc.) and those who don't participate in similar activities normally? How can the offer be made more attractive?

▷ Probe: How could the activities run by the group be improved in order to enhance young people's experience?

▶ How can the impact on policy development and decision-making process be improved?

▷ Probe: What do you think needs to be done to achieve this?

▷ Probe: Who should take ownership over making the activities and outputs more impactful on policy development and decision-making process?

• Explore: On what level (young people, delivery staff, or government) the changes have to be made to improve the impact on the decision-making?

CLOSE [max 2 minutes]

▶ Check if there is anything else they would like to share.

Topic guide for focus groups with participants

Focus Group Questions

[Researchers note: tailor the tense of all questions according to the group, i.e. use the past tense for former participants and present tense for current participants].

Introductions / Icebreaker [max 10 minutes]

Please can everyone introduce themselves, sharing:

- o your name,
- o [Optional] age (if you are comfortable to do so),
- o [Optional] where you live
- o [Optional] which area of politics you are most interested in, and why?

▶ [Activity] Please can everyone now write one meaningful word that you associate with UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group in the chat?

[Facilitators note: explain that we will revisit the meaningful words towards the end of the session, to see if everyone is still happy with their word, or if anyone would like to change it].

[Co-facilitator to copy the initial words onto a slide so we can visit these towards the end of the session.]

Session 2: Reaching young people and supporting involvement in the UKYP /YPDG/Youth Steering Group [15 mins]

In this session we would like to explore the things that help or get in the way of participating in the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group.

▶ How do young people find out about UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?

▷ Probe: Friends, family, school teachers/ college lecturers, local MP/campaigns, social media, local or national press, other

▶ What works well in raising awareness of the groups to young people?

▷ Probe: Views on how to reach a cross section of young people, from different backgrounds.

▶ What are young people's first impressions of UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?

▷ Probe: What do they think it will be like? Are there any misunderstandings of the groups? Are there things that put young people off?

- • Explore – any groups of young people that don't tend to take part and how do you think they could be reached?

▶ What was/are the main motivation for taking part in UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?

▷ Probe: Are there different short-term motivations and longer-term motivations?

▶ What maintains participants' interest in UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?

▷ Probe: What keeps young people interested and committed to the group?

▶ What gets in the way of young people staying involved/ interested in UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?

▷ Probe: What are the barriers to attendance?

- Explore: communications, accessibility, image, travel, support, staff etc

- Explore demographic representation of participants (gender, age, religion, disability, location etc)

▷ Probe: What reason do young people drop out early?

▶ [Activity] Could improvements be made, to encourage a wider range of young people to participate and stay involved in the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?

▷ Please can everyone write suggestions for improving reach of the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group in the chat?

▷ Probe: Please vote in the chat function – for most important factor

Session 3: What makes for meaningful youth engagement[27]? [max 15 minutes]

Now we would like to explore the extent to which the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] represents meaningful participation to inform policy development and decision making.

VOICE

▶ How does the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group provide a forum to develop and express young people's views?

▷ Probe – What training is provided to help develop and express young people's views?

- *Explore – What types of training are most helpful? Suggestions for improving the training?*

▷ Probe – Are all participants able to express their views in the group? What works well and why?

- *Explore –how participant-led are the activities. Are there examples of this?*

- *Explore – How do the facilitators manage group dynamics, encourage information exchange, encourage less confident young people, etc.*

- *Explore – could anything be improved, in your view?*

SPACE

▷ Probe -– does the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group provide safe, inclusive opportunities for young people to form and express their views?

- *Explore – What works well and less well? E.g., peer support, setting ground rules etc*

- *Explore – Opportunities to interact in different ways: discussions/debates, drawing, writing, face-to-face and online engagement, etc*

- *Explore – support to ensure everyone can take part (visual aids, hearing loops etc)*

▶ What types of activities are young people most keen to engage with, and why?

▷ Probe – training, discussions with peers, discussions with policy-makers/ministers, campaigns, etc

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[27] This section applies the Lundy model of child participation (2007), to explore the conditions for meaningful youth engagement: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/lundy_model_of_participation.pdf

▶ Which policy areas are young people most keen to engage with, and why?

▷ Probe – going forward, are there particular policy themes/areas that you think should be prioritised for the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group? If yes, which policy themes/areas are these and why should they be prioritised?

AUDIENCE

▶ Does the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group provide a forum for young people to have their views heard by policy decision-makers?

▷ Are there examples of where this has worked well / less well.

▷ Probe– who are the audiences for UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?

▷ Probe– Are participants' views listened to by their intended audience?

- *Explore – how often are ministers/policy officials involved?*

- *What works best to involve them? E.g., attending roundtables/meetings and engaging in discussions with participants*

- *How easy/difficult is it to engage with policy officials/ministers?*

- *Are there other ways you think the group could engage with government, is there anything you think could work well?*

▷ Probe - what is the main barrier to meaningful engagement between young people and government officials/ministers/policy makers, in your view?

Session 4: Impact of the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [max 10 minutes]

Now we would like to explore the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group's [Delete as appropriate] impacts on participants, and the extent to which young people's views are acted upon by policy makers and ministers to inform policy development and decision making.

INFLUENCE

▶ Which policy areas have the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group been most influential/impactful?

▷ Probe – explore in what way they have been influential/impactful? <u>Are there examples?</u>

▶ Do you know whether the views of UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group are acted on by ministers/policy officials?

▷ Probe – Do participants' views inform policy developments and decision-making processes, and how? <u>Are there examples?</u>

- *Explore – ministerial/departmental responses to UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group recommendations*

▷ Probe – could improvements be made to how ministers/policy officials consult with the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] in your view?

▶ Is the group given feedback explaining why ministers/policy officials do/do not take up the recommendations from the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group?

▷ Probe – How feedback is given? Who by?

▷ Probe - Do you have suggestions to improve the influence of UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] on policy formation and decision making?

▶ [Activity] Please can everyone now write what has been most memorable about participating in UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group in the Chat box?

▷ Probe: specific events, activities, experiences.

▷ Facilitator to summarise chat entries and invite people to comment on their most memorable response.

▷ [Facilitator note: Explain that we will collate all the final responses from the groups and use them to produce a word cloud or similar visual demonstrating the most common views. The word cloud will feature in a summary for young people participating in the study, and also in the final report].

Impact of the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group on young people

▶ What are the main benefits of the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group [Delete as appropriate] for young people? And why?

▷ Probe – Personal development - increased confidence in public speaking, articulating ideas

▷ Probe – Social development - development of life skills, leadership and team working skills

▷ Probe – Vocational development - work-related skills, career aspirations, volunteering and civic engagement etc

▷ Probe – increased awareness of policy formation cycles and the potential for informing policy development making the case for policy formation

SESSION 5: Round-up: Suggestions and overall reflections [max 5 minutes]

These questions provide an opportunity to reflect overall on learning from your involvement with the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group

▶ [Optional] Do you have suggestions for making the UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group even better for young people?

▷ Check if there is anything else they would like to share

▶ [Activity] Finally, let's return to the one meaningful word everyone identified at the beginning of the session, that you associate with UKYP/YPDG/Youth Steering Group

[Facilitator to share words (written up by co-facilitator) on screen.]

▶ Do these still seem the 'right' words? Does anyone want to change their word? Please write amendments in the chat or use reactions to discuss.

CLOSE [max 2 minutes]

Annex 3: Document analysis

As part of the Youth Engagement Impact Study, Ecorys conducted a desk review of documents related to the UK Youth Parliament and Youth Policy Development Group (YPDG). The aim of this review was to examine written outputs produced by the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG as well as government response/policy outcome documents. The analysis focused on categorising the documents, identifying related policy areas, and assessing the quality of the outputs. The review also allowed for further understanding of the use of recommendations by the youth groups as a tool to influence the policy development process. This was crucial for informing other work packages in this study including the development of our topic guides for focus groups and interviews with stakeholders.

This paper provides an update on the review, a description of the methodology and some emerging findings.

Method

Ecorys systematically reviewed and logged 41 documents, in an analysis framework (using Microsoft Excel). The types and number of documents reviewed are shown in Table A1 below.

Table A1. Summary of the types and number of documents reviewed.

Types of documents reviewed	Breakdown of document type and number
32 recommendation documents provided by BYC and SOUK	▶ Youth Select Committee reports (8) ▶ Presentations from YPDG Roundtables (6) ▶ Presentations form Youth Steering Group Roundtables (6) ▶ Presentations from Youth Voice Roundtables (3) ▶ Notes from youth engagement workshops (3) ▶ Policy review documents by Youth Steering Group (2) ▶ A Youth Voice Groups report (1) ▶ A presentation from UKYP Roundtable (1) ▶ A letter addressed to policy officials (1) ▶ A recommendations report produced by a third party (1)
9 government response/ policy outcome documents	▶ Government response documents to recommendations from Youth Select Committee reports (6) ▶ A DCMS report summary and government response (1) ▶ Reflections to Roundtable (1) ▶ Youth Voice report produced by a third party (1)

Each recommendation document has been summarised and reviewed under a framework consisting of the following categories: ID, title, date, source, name of the relevant youth group (i.e., UK Youth Parliament, YPDG, Youth Select Committee etc.), names of decision-makers/ policy officials involved, policy/ theme, short summary, main recommendations, additional content, researcher comments, and who selected the specific theme/ policy area (i.e., young people vs. policy official).

Policy recommendations from each document were then appraised on a scale from 1 to 3, with:

▶ 1 = Unclear recommendations with lack of policy background knowledge,

▶ 2 = Clarity could be improved, gaps in policy background knowledge, and

▶ 3 = Clearly formulated recommendations with good policy background knowledge.

Similarly, we have also summarised and reviewed the government response/ policy outcome documents capturing ID, title, date, source, author, type of document, names of decision-makers/ policy officials involved, policy/ theme, name of the youth group directly mentioned in the document (i.e., UK Youth Parliament, YPDG, Youth Select Committee etc.), policy/ theme, short summary, policy outcomes/ direct responses to the recommendations, additional content, and researcher comments. The researcher comments section was used to capture the nature of the government response/ policy outcome documents and reflect on the extent to which the government was able to take the youth recommendations forward.

Findings

This section outlines the headline findings from the document review and next steps.

Policy area / themes coverage

Table A2below shows the number of recommendation documents provided by BYC and SOUK addressing 12 identified policy areas/ themes, as well as the average quality score of the recommendations under each theme.

▶ **Youth engagement and youth services** and **mental health and wellbeing** were the top two policy areas in which the recommendations were made.

▶ Nine documents addressed issues and provided recommendations for **youth engagement and youth services**, and covered issues such as youth policy engagement, voting rights for under 16s, sport and youth engagement, and improvement of youth services.

▶ Six of the documents provided recommendations for **mental health and wellbeing**, including issues of body image, mental health in schools, and loneliness amongst young people. Additionally, mental health and wellbeing challenges were also more broadly addressed in some of the recommendation documents covering COVID-19.

Table A2. Identified policy areas, average quality score of the recommendation documents and government response/ policy outcome documents.

Policy area/ theme	Number of reviewed recommendation documents	Average quality score	Government response/ policy outcome documents available
Youth engagement and youth services	9	2.0	Yes
Mental health and wellbeing	6	2.3	Yes

Policy area/ theme	Number of reviewed recommendation documents	Average quality score	Government response/ policy outcome documents available
Education, training, and employment	3	2.0	Yes
Environment	3	2.8	No
COVID-19	3	1.7	Yes
Online harms and gambling	2	1.0	No
Knife crime	1	3.0	Yes
Discrimination	1	2.0	Yes
Domestic violence	1	2.0	No
The Rights of the Child	1	2.0	No
Gene modification	1	2.0	No
Transport and young people	1	2.0	Yes

Quality and clarity of policy recommendations

The quality and level of detail of the recommendations varied, and was closely related to the type and format of the document the recommendations were presented in. It appears that government responses are more readily available to youth-led recommendations that are presented in formal report outputs, compared with PowerPoint outputs.

▶ Policy recommendations presented in **formal reports** often used clear language/terminology and provided arguments that demonstrated a good knowledge of the policy background.

▶ Whereas policy recommendations presented in **meeting notes or presentation slides** were generally lacking in arguments based on strong policy background knowledge. Presentations and notes could, in some cases, benefit from providing more detail and clarity.

▶ In some of the reviewed documents, the recommendations were **focused on how to increase and improve youth engagement to address the specific policy issue**, rather than reflecting on the policy issue directly and focusing on improving policy outcomes.

This variation in how recommendations are described and recorded appears to affect the quality and clarity of some of the recommendations. This inconsistent approach to recording recommendations, in turn has the potential to limit and trace their impact.

Government responses/ outcomes of recommendations

Out of the eight Youth Select Committee reports reviewed, we gained access to six government official response documents. In nearly all cases, the documents responded to all the main recommendations presented in Youth Select Committee reports. Other reviewed documents include a publicly available

DCMS report summary and government response, a reflection document to Youth Steering Group's Roundtable, and a Youth Voice report produced by a third party.

The majority of the reviewed government response documents were a direct response to Youth Select Committee reports. This suggests that the government and/or policy official might be more likely to provide a formal response to more structed and formalised youth recommendations.

Individual responses varied, however, government responses can broadly be grouped into three categories:

1. **Promises to take actions** as a direct response to young peoples' recommendations. However, these could lack clear timeframes or a named policy lead taking this forward. Additionally, the information about planned actions, could be vague, as shown in the example extract below:

   'We recognise that further work in this field is needed. Since the committee published its report, we have engaged in the early stages of a digital project that would include assessment of digital resources and tools by clinical experts. We are taking action as a result and will be in a position to explain in further detail soon.' Government policy response

Therefore, this document review was unable to trace if the promises have been actioned in practice.

2. Highlighting the **actions already taken** by the government on the given issue. As above, these lacked clear timeframes, named policy lead or evidence on changes achieved.

   'The Government held a public consultation on our plans for a new serious violence legal duty, which ran for eight weeks in Spring 2019. In developing our plans for legislation, we have taken into account responses received from professionals in health, education, police, social services, housing and the voluntary and community sector.' Government policy response

3. **Clarification where central government cannot take action**, by providing information on the issues that can only be addressed by external bodies or institutions (e.g., local authorities, schools, providers etc.), as opposed to central government.

Document review case studies

We have identified **three case study policy areas** in which the UK Youth Parliament and YPDG recommendations were implemented. Based on our appraisal of the policy recommendations and policy outcome documents, we recommend the following three policy areas to be considered for case studies:

1. Youth engagement and youth services

2. Mental health and wellbeing, and

3. Knife crime

This selection is based on the number of documents covering the policy areas, the quality score, as well as access to additional documents, such as, government response documents and UK Youth Parliament campaign materials, that would provide further evidence.

Annex 4: Survey: demographic information

Table A3. Sociodemographic characteristics of programme participants.

Characteristic	YPDG	UK Youth Parliament
Number of survey participants	20	155
Current participants	13	51
Former participants (incl. DCMS Youth Steering Group/Young Inspectors)	7	104
Average age	19.8 years	19.5 years
Gender*	45% men* 47% women*	
Ethnicity		
Asian or Asian British	11%	
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	7%	
Other ethnic group	10%	
White	70%	
Prefer not to say	2%	
Highest level of education		
Primary school or secondary school OR attending	6%	
GCSE or N5 or equivalent qualifications OR attending	12%	
A-level and AS level or Scottish Highers or equivalent qualifications OR attending	37%	
Degree-level or higher qualifications OR attending	43%	
Parents to university (Did at least one of your parents/carers go to university?)		

Yes	50%	56%
No	50%	42%
Free School Meals (ever)		
Yes	34%	
No	62%	
Being in care or care leaver (ever)		
Yes	7%	
No	93%	
Past or current carer		
Yes	17%	
No	83%	
Disability		
Yes	25%	
No	71%	

Note: We report characteristics jointly for both programmes when there are concerns of disclosure. * The sample also includes participants identifying as non-binary, other, and those who did not want to indicate their gender. We do not report numbers of those due to risk of disclosure.

Table A5 Sample sizes for figure 9.

Question	Sample size
The activities were interesting and engaging	173
The activities and events were well organised	173
The activities facilitated discussions about issues affecting young people	174
I was supported to take part in activities	174
I was given the information I needed to form a view and take part in activities	174
I had opportunities to share my thoughts and opinions about issues affecting young people	175
I felt safe to express myself freely	171

I was given a range of options to express myself e.g., writing, talking, drawing, etc.	167

Table A6. Sample sizes for figure 12.

Question	Sample size
My thoughts and opinions were taken seriously	171
There was a clear audience to share the UKYP work with e.g., policy makers, councillors, ministers	172
The YPDG's thoughts and opinions were acted on	18 (of 20 YPDG survey participants)
When the group's work could not be acted on, the reason for this was explained to us	166
Taking part made a difference to political decision making	171
The UK Youth Parliament's thoughts and opinions were acted on by local decision makers (e.g. local councils)	150
The UK Youth Parliament's thoughts and opinions were acted on by national decision makers (e.g. UK government)	152

Table A7. Sample sizes for figure 14.

Question	Sample size
New skills	42
Meet new, like minded individuals	40
Make a difference	101
Engage in politics	2
Engage in discussions with policymakers	74
Represent young people's views	120
Learn about politics	18
Have new experiences	39
Support university application	22
Support future career prospects	39

Other	2