

Reading Youth Council

Constitution

2024-2027

OWNER

Reading Youth Council

VERSION

Version 1

DATE

May 2024

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Brighter Futures for Children
Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading RG1 2LU

Company number 11293709

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1 Role of Reading Youth Council

Reading Youth Council is an elected voice, representing the young people of Reading. It is an effective way for young people to communicate with decisions makers, to have their say and have influence on decisions which affect them and other young people.

1.1 The purpose of Youth Council is to:

- Be an elected voice for the young people of Reading
- To facilitate access to contact with elected officials and organisations

1.2 The role of the Youth Council is to:

- Take part in and planning the delivery of services for young people
- Consult and influence decision makers
- Consult young people across Reading

1.3 The role of the support staff is to:

- Facilitate each meeting and provide resources where necessary
- Help organise events planned by the Reading Youth Council
- To help answer any questions in regard to British Youth Council or Brighter Futures for Children
- To manage the external application process
- To offer ongoing advice and guidance to members of the Reading Youth Council

1.4 The role of Youth Council within Brighter Futures for Children:

- To report any information which may be useful in delivering services for Brighter Futures for Children
- To discuss and update the Director of Children's Services members of Brighter Futures for Children Board and other professionals with information when requested

2 Membership

2.1 Reading Youth Council will have an upper limit of 40 members.

2.2 Reading Youth Council is open to all people ages 11-18 who live or go to school in the Borough of Reading.

2.3 Members must be between 11 and 18 in January following selection.

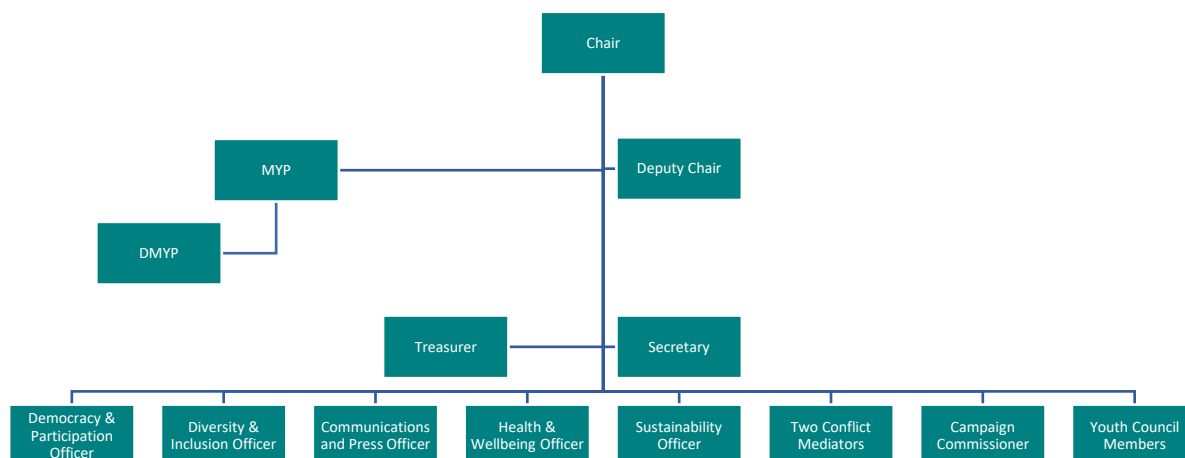
2.4 Members are elected for a 2 year period.

2.5 If further involvement is so desired, members can stand for re-selection after their 2-year term.

2.6 Every member is to engage actively and consistently, within meetings.

2.7 If membership is required to be terminated early, a request should be sent to the Chair in written form.

3 Structure and Roles



3.1 Reading Youth Council Executive Roles

3.1.1 Chair of the Reading Youth Council

Responsible for:

- the effective running of the Reading Youth Council
- creating the agenda and ensuring meetings are organised
- ensuring all members participate and are given equal opportunities
- liaising with all members and staff about Reading Youth Council matters

3.1.2 Deputy Chair of the Reading Youth Council

Responsible for:

- ensuring other role members effectively carry out their responsibilities
- aiding the Chair with their responsibilities
- standing in for the Chair during absences

3.1.3 Treasurer of the Reading Youth Council

Responsible for:

- liaising with campaign coordinator and staff to allocate the budget fairly
- ensuring the budget is spent responsibly by minimising expenditure
- maintaining a clear record of all expenditure
- developing fundraising initiatives
- liaising with all members and staff about Reading Youth Council matters

3.1.4 Secretary of the Reading Youth Council

Responsible for:

- recording and distributing the minutes to all members
- measuring the impact of RYC campaigns in partnership with the campaign coordinator
- writing emails to visitors and outside agencies

3.1.5 Member of Youth Parliament (MYP)

Responsible for:

- upholding the roles and duties outlined by UK Youth Parliament

3.1.6 Deputy Member of Youth Parliament (DMYP)

Responsible for:

- Supporting the MYP in their role as outlined above

3.2 Reading Youth Council Officer Roles

3.2.1 Democracy and Participation Officer

Responsible for:

- encouraging participation in Reading Youth Council campaigns, events and *Make Your Mark*
- liaising with Councillors to promote views important to young people
- ensuring the application process is democratic and fair

3.2.2 Diversity and Inclusion Officer

Responsible for:

- ensuring that members reflect the population demographic (encouraging underrepresented groups to stand for selection)
- encouraging discussion and debate within the meetings
- ensuring that the views of young people are reflected in Reading Youth Council work and that everyone's ideas are listened too

3.2.3 Communications and Press Officer

Responsible for:

- managing Reading Youth Council social media
- writing press releases
- ensuring the Reading Youth Council projects are inclusive and reflective of young people's views

3.2.4 Health and Wellbeing Officer

Responsible for:

- promoting the health and wellbeing related interests of the young people of Reading
- liaising with health and wellbeing groups in Reading to this end
- helping to voice widespread health concerns for young people in Reading

3.2.5 Sustainability Officer

Responsible for:

- Promoting environmentally friendly initiatives
- Conversing with organisations in Reading on climate positive policy
- Making sure purchases are sustainably sourced

3.2.6 Conflict Mediator

Responsible for:

- Facilitating open and respectful communication among youth council members to address and resolve conflicts

- Ensuring a neutral and unbiased mediation process that promotes fair negotiation and consensus-building

3.3 Reading Youth Council Campaign Roles

3.3.2 Campaign Commissioner

Responsible for:

- coordinating campaign planning
- ensuring that everyone in the campaign groups is contributing
- setting and meeting achievable campaign goals
- reporting on progress to the Chair

There will be one campaign coordinator per campaign each year.

4 Social Networking

4.1 Use of social media in campaigning

- 4.1.2 Members personal accounts are not required to have a neutral political stance but cannot use Brighter Futures for Children or Reading Youth Council to espouse their views.
- 4.1.3 The official social media accounts of Youth Council should be run by the Communications and Press Officer, MYP and Chair combined and overseen at all times by support staff.
- 4.1.4 The passwords for the social media accounts should be kept in a secure document, which should be kept by the Chair, MYP and Communications and Press Officer and passed onto the next Chair, MYP and Communications and Press Officer once a new one is elected.
- 4.1.5 Before a post is submitted, the Youth Council should be given a brief statement as to the content and type of post.
- 4.1.6 If a post is requested by the Youth Council then the Communications and Press Officer is required to write up a release.

4.2 The Youth Council social media platform and Brighter Futures for Children

- 4.2.2 Reading Youth Council may request a post to the Brighter Futures for Children social media accounts.
- 4.2.3 Brighter Futures for Children may request a change to the social media presence of Reading Youth Council, which must be discussed and voted upon by Reading Youth Council before being accepted or rejected with relevant reasoning.
- 4.2.4 Brighter Futures for Children youth workers have a responsibility to safeguard all members of Reading Youth Council online and may be required to contribute to any online activity if deemed necessary.

4.3 Expectations of members online

- 4.3.2 Members are expected to be tolerant and respectful while online.
- 4.3.3 Members who are in executive positions should have social media platforms on:
 - X, formerly Twitter
 - Instagram
 - Facebook

- 4.3.4** Members are encouraged to actively use social media if they have consent from their parents to do so
- 4.3.5** Members personal accounts are not required to have a neutral political stance but cannot use Brighter Futures for Children or Reading Youth Council to espouse their views.

5 Political Views

- 5.1** Reading Youth Council must present as neutral on political issues.
- 5.2** Members cannot use Reading Youth Council to represent political views so as to not exclude members from across the spectrum.
- 5.3** Members should withhold personal and political views within the Reading Youth Council.

6 Equalities Policy

- 6.1** Reading Youth Council promotes that everyone, irrespective of background, should be allowed a voice and representation within Youth Council.
- 6.2** This includes:
 - Building anti- discriminatory structures into our systems.
 - Free speech for all members.
 - Work towards reducing hatred and discrimination across Reading

7 Procedures

7.1 Meetings

- 7.1.1** Meetings will occur fortnightly during term time.
- 7.1.2** If additional meetings must be scheduled, the Chair should arrange this either online or in person.
- 7.1.3** If a guest is invited, they will be allowed to voice opinions and observe the meeting processes but will not have voting rights.

7.2 Attendance

- 7.2.1** If a member is unable to attend, must leave early or must leave late, then this must be informed to the Chair / Deputy Chair / Secretary (see 2.4)
 - If a member is consistently late, then an email will be sent asking for an appropriate explanation.
 - If it is an issue with timing, they will be caught up during meetings and if this is a widespread issue, timings may be adjusted accordingly.
- 7.2.2** If sufficient notice, which means at any point before the meeting, is given then non-attendance is acceptable.
- 7.2.3** If a person is unable to attend consistently and does not give notice or reason for not attending meetings the procedure will be as follows:
 - If they miss three meetings with no prior information, they will be sent an email by the Chair.
 - If this email is ignored, a meeting will be set up to talk to the member to give them the opportunity to explain.
 - If no explanation or involvement is given, then they will be terminated formally via an email from the Chair.
- 7.2.4** Members may take leave from Reading Youth Council if they give reason for doing so.

- 7.2.5** If a member would like to leave, then the Secretary and Chair should receive written confirmation of this, which they should respond to.

7.3 Absence of key figures

- 7.3.1** When there is an occasion where certain key members are not present, then each of the key members have separate protocol that is to be followed.
- 7.3.2** If there is an absence of the Chair:
- The Deputy Chair will chair the meeting.
 - If the Deputy Chair is unavailable, then there will be a temporary Chair that will be appointed and will set up the agenda for the meeting once given adequate information.
 - Where possible, notice of absence for the chair and deputy chair should be given 24 hours prior to a meeting to ensure there is adequate leadership in place
- 7.3.3** If there is an absence of the Secretary then a temporary Secretary will be appointed to record and send minutes after the meeting.
- 7.3.4** If the MYP is unable to attend:
- The DMYP will inform us of activities either they or the MYP have taken part in.
 - If unable to attend, then the DMYP/MYP will have to send adequate information to update the Youth Council on their activities.
- 7.3.5** If the Treasurer is not present then:
- The treasurer should provide any appropriate updates in regards to the budget.
 - The Chair will read such updates.

7.4 Invitation of external guests

- 7.4.1** If a member would like to invite an external guest then the following procedure should occur:
- The member should send an email to both the Chair and the support staff in attendance, requesting an invitation from a guest and explain the purpose.
 - If this invitation is granted then they should continue in communications while using the CC function in email for the Youth Worker in attendance for safeguarding purposes.
 - If a date is finalised, the secretary and the Chair should be informed and it should be integrated into meetings.
- 7.4.2** If a Youth Worker is approached by a guest, then the Chair should be informed via email. Confirmation should be given by the Chair to make sure the meeting is free.

7.5 Voting on issues within meetings.

- 7.5.1** *Note: This is separate from elections* If there is an issue to be voted upon within Reading Youth Council meetings in person then the following procedure is to be used:
- Heads will be put down and a show of hands requested for the solutions to the issue.
 - From this show of hands, a count will be done and the most popular solution taken into account.
 - An alternative solution is to use an online form platform (e.g. Google or Microsoft Forms), set up by the Chair.
- 7.5.2** If there is an issue to be voted upon within Reading Youth Council meetings online, then:
- The members must type their agreement/disagreement in a chat box or verbalise it if access is not possible.
 - An alternative solution is to use an online form platform (e.g. Google or Microsoft Forms), set up by the Chair.

- 7.5.3** There should be an expectation of a quorum of 50% of the Reading Youth Council is present at any given time, in order to make sure voting is fair and unbiased.
- 7.5.4** In the event of a tie, the Chair will intervene and decide. If a member would like to leave, then the Secretary and Chair should receive written confirmation of this, which they should respond to.

7.6 Grievances

- 7.6.1** If a member of Reading Youth Council has a concern or grievance they would like to air, then an email should be sent to the Chair and, if preferred, a meeting could be set up.
- 7.6.2** This should then be given consideration by the Chair.
- 7.6.3** If this is of serious concern, then Youth Worker must be informed, and further action will be taken.
- 7.6.4** If the grievance is minor, then it should be informed to the Chair to be rectified immediately and added to appropriate protocol.

8 Applications & Elections

8.1 External Applications

- 8.1.1** External applications take place annually.
- 8.1.2** Running for previous applications unsuccessfully does not disqualify a young person from running again.
- 8.1.3** Candidates will be required to complete an online application form.
- 8.1.4** The applications will be reviewed by Members of the Reading Youth Council, with a “blind manifesto read”, which means that only the manifesto will be shown to the Council, along with an assigned number to identify the application.
- 8.1.5** There is an upper limit of 40 members. The terms for each of these members is 2 years from the date of election onwards.

8.2 Internal Elections for Roles within the Reading Youth Council

- 8.2.1** Internal elections take place with every new intake of members to the Reading Youth Council in the interests of fairness.
- 8.2.2** Every role listed above in “Reading Youth Council Officer Roles” and “Reading Youth Council Executive Roles” is voted on by Reading Youth Council members
- 8.2.3** Both the MYP and the Deputy MYP must be an elected member of the Youth Council.
- 8.2.4** Voting is done democratically with a space for a one minute speech of each candidate per role before any voting takes place.
- 8.2.5** Voting is taken by secret ballot.
- 8.2.6** The ballot then will be reviewed by a member of the Brighter Futures for Children and results of the election will be announced by them.
- 8.2.7** Members may run for multiple roles at once, but if elected to more than one role, they may only choose one role to take on.
- 8.2.8** Internal elections require at least 50% of the Reading Youth Council to be present before a vote is made.

9 Budget

9.1 Projected Budget

An estimated maximum budget is laid out as follows; this is subject to change within each year and at reviewed each financial year.

	Estimated annual cost
United Kingdom Youth Parliament & British Youth Council Incorporating annual fees and travel to venues for annual sitting, annual conference, regional meetings.	£1250
Annual conference costs Incorporating catering and venue hire and printing costs	£2000
Annual venue hire Based on hiring RISC for 3 hours a fortnight over 21 weeks	£700
Elections To cover printing, publicity, and other sundries towards external elections	£500
Campaigns Split evenly between each	£2400
Activities To be used for team building activities when each newly elected group begins	£1000
Contingency To be used in case of emergency in campaign or activities work	£250
TOTAL PER YEAR	£8100

9.2 Use of budget

- 9.2.1** The budget is available to be requested rather than open to be used immediately according to our wishes.
- 9.2.2** The budget is available to be requested rather than open to be used immediately according to our wishes.
- 9.2.3** 10% of the activities and campaign work budget should be kept separately as a contingency fund.
- 9.2.4** Any major spending should be voted on by the Reading Youth Council when at least 50% of the members are present to ensure fairness.
- 9.2.5** The budget can also be used for projects spanning multiple campaigns or the entirety of the Reading Youth council if approved by a vote.
- 9.2.6** If a percentage of the budget is used for projects spanning multiple projects or the entirety of the Reading Youth Council then the money diverted from campaign work should be taken from each of the three campaigns equally to ensure fairness.

10 Code of Conduct

The members of Reading Youth Council are expected to follow these agreed ground rules and codes of conduct at all times.

- 10.1 Responding to communication by the given deadline
- 10.2 Respecting other members of the Reading Youth Council as well as visitors
- 10.3 Listening to other people's ideas without silencing contribution
- 10.4 Treating the interests of every school equally

- 10.5 Limiting phone use, unless relevant
- 10.6 Upholding a degree of formality
- 10.7 Using valuable meeting time productively
- 10.8 Upholding punctuality and starting meetings on time
- 10.9 Alerting either the support staff, Chair or the secretaries of absence via email or WhatsApp
- 10.10 Respecting other meetings taking place in the building.
- 10.11 Keep yourself muted when you are not speaking online.
- 10.12 Members should be encouraged to take part in discussions.
- 10.13 Members should not attend meetings without support staff to maintain safety at all times.
- 10.14 Safeguarding the brand of Reading Youth Council within meetings and outside of meetings.
- 10.15 Using appropriate language within meetings
- 10.16 Members must ensure they are representing the views of all children and young people in Reading at all times

Signatories

Print Name Signature

This constitution will be reviewed every three years