

Newcastle Youth Council and Youth Parliament Elections 2024

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is a Youth Council?

Youth Council is a Citywide model of Youth Democracy and a way for young people in the City to have their voices heard and acted on by decisions makers. It provides a collective voice for the elected Youth Councillors, where they can tackle the issues that matter to young people across the City together. In Newcastle we are keen that our process mirrors the adult election where possible. This FAQ guide should provide all of the information you need about this.

What is Youth Parliament?

Youth Parliament is a national organization coordinated by British Youth Council. It allows two young people from Newcastle to represent the City on a national level, which includes debating at the House of Commons.

Does Newcastle not already have a Youth Council?

No, our last Youth Council came to an end in 2021 and was paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless we have continued to work with groups of children and young people across the city, including our Youth Panel that makes decisions on the youth projects that the Council funds.

When will the Youth Council and Youth Parliament elections take place?

Work in preparation for the Youth Council and Youth Parliament elections has already started. It will continue up to Thursday March 14th, 2024, which is the proposed voting day.

Who can stand for election?

To be eligible to stand for election young people must:

- Live, work or study in Newcastle OR be looked after by Newcastle City Council
- Be aged 11 – 17 on the election date – Thursday 14th March 2024.

Young people standing for election should also:

- Be interested in issues that impact on young people in the city
- Be able to dedicate at least couple of hours a month for two years
- Be able to travel into Newcastle for monthly meetings.

If young people are interested in finding out more they should complete the following Expression of Interest that is now live <https://forms.office.com/e/kxuWLP CZMM>

How many seats will there be?

There will be 19 seats across the two groups. Of these, 16 will be directly elected through the election process and a further 3 young people will be nominated from the Council's existing Children's Social Care and Special Educational Needs and Disability groups.

The successful candidates will be announced at an event on the 15th March 2024 following a formal count.

What are the other ways young people can get involved?

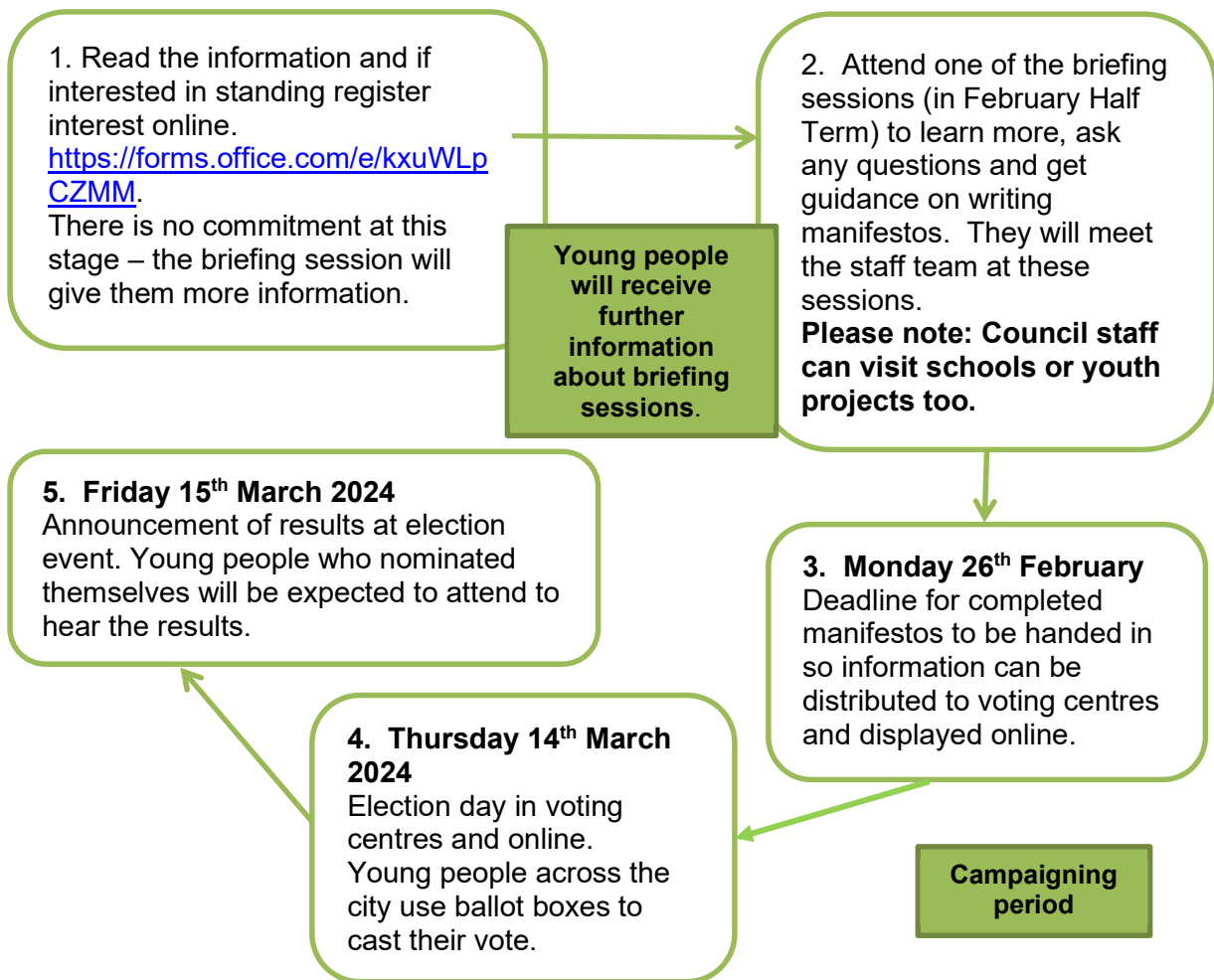
We hope to work with schools and youth organisations across the city to ensure every young person knows about the opportunity and is encouraged to get involved. Getting involved might mean standing as a candidate, listening to what candidates have to say, and ultimately voting. If young people or partners have other suggestions on how to help young people get involved please just let us know.

We want as many young people to stand in the elections as possible so that we have a Youth Council that celebrates the diversity and variety of skills of young people in the City.

What are the benefits for young people involved?

- Have their voices heard and make change
- Meet new people and make friends
- Volunteering experience to add to CV
- Increase their confidence and develop other skills such as public speaking
- Learn more about how democracy works
- No cost to young people or their families – all travel and event costs met.

What is the process?



How can schools and youth organisations get involved?

We hope to work with schools and youth organisations during the election period and in the longer term to ensure the Youth Council and Youth Parliament is a success, and that it creates more opportunities for young people to influence decisions across the city. At this stage we would like to work with you to:

- Encourage young people between 11 and 17 to become candidates and stand in the election.
- Whilst we recognise standing for election does not suit all young people, we would like your help in encouraging every young person in the city to vote
- To help encourage every young person to vote it would be helpful if your school or organisation could volunteer to be a voting centre.

Should we volunteer to be a voting centre?

Yes! By volunteering to be a voting centre you are helping the young people you work with to get involved in the election process.

All schools, youth centres, youth projects and other venues are encouraged to become a voting centre during the elections. This is so young people have a number of options of where to go to vote for their preferred candidates.

All voting centres will be provided with all the equipment they need including ballot boxes, candidate information, voting slips and promotional materials as well as voting rules and expectations. All materials will be delivered to you and collected again at the end of the process. We will contact you directly with more information about how this will work nearer the time. They must also provide all young people who attend the center with an opportunity to be able to vote on the day of **Thursday 14th March 2024**.

If you would like to be a voting centre please let us know either by contacting Vicky.hartley@newcastle.gov.uk or by completing the attached form <https://forms.office.com/e/eV5JykwyeN> by **Friday 16th February**.

What support is available from the Council?

Colleagues from the Council's Voice and Influence team are leading on the development of the new Youth Council and Youth Parliament. They can answer any questions, attend your school or youth group to share information and/or discuss the opportunity with young people.

What happens to young people who do get elected?

They will become Members of Youth Parliament or Youth Councillors. We will support them through an induction, training and team building process over the Easter Holidays and beyond. They will then meet as a formal group at least once a month and will also have the opportunities to get involved in other activities, depending on their individual capacity and other commitments,

What happens if candidates don't get elected?

We would encourage young people who don't get elected to continue to work with us through our Locality Youth voice group. This would allow them to be involved in lots of opportunities, including event planning, interviewing staff and having say about their local area. If a place became available on the Youth council over two years, they could have another chance to get a seat.

Please note: If you have a young person who doesn't want to stand in elections but wants to have their voice heard welcome to join our Locality Youth Voice groups which are informal, unelected groups that anyone can join at any time.

What are the main dates and deadlines I need to be aware of?

The table below summarises important dates for young people and professionals:

Late January / early February	Teams Briefing for Teachers / School Staff and Youth projects who are interested and want to find out more.
February Half Term (date tbc)	Information session for young people and manifesto writing workshops
Friday 16 th February	Deadline to register as a Voting Centre
Monday 26 th February	Deadline for young people to submit manifestos
Thursday 14 th March	Voting Day
Friday 15 th March	Count and Announcement of Results

Who can I contact for further information?

If you have any questions or would like more information please contact vicky.hartley@newcastle.gov.uk

We would also encourage appropriate Teachers from schools and staff from Youth Projects to attend our teams sessions to informally find out more and ask any questions. These will be advertised soon.