



Kent Youth County Council

Annual Report 2019/20



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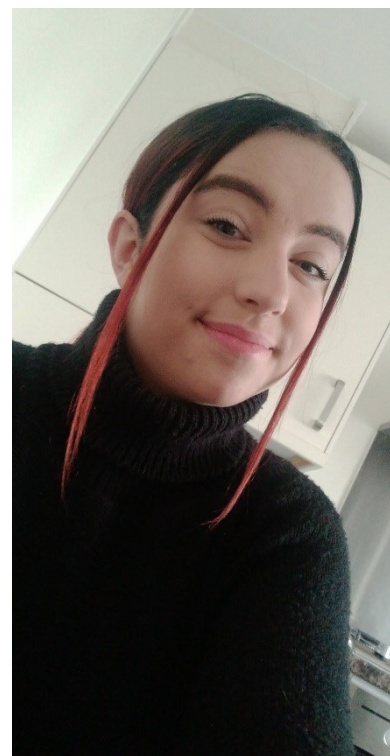
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Welcome from the Chair:

Welcome to this year's Annual Report of the Kent Youth County Council (KYCC). We have created this report as a way of highlighting all the hard work, perseverance, and dedication all of the young people within this organisation have put into campaigning on this year's elected issues. Additionally, we wish this report provides a better understanding of what we do as a youth council, inspiring you with ideas on how you can assist us within our campaigns which will ultimately aid us in making a difference to the lives of the many young people living within our county.

This year it can be seen that everyone has done so well with the change to online meetings that I'd also like to highlight that as this has been a particularly different and somewhat challenging year for us as a youth council. However, it has been a pleasure to be Chair during all of the changes. So, finally, I hope you enjoy reading about all the amazing things our young people have done this year and let it help inspire you to help make a difference in young people's lives too.



Alice Breiner
Chair, Kent Youth County Council

Introduction:

Kent Youth County Council (KYCC) is a group of young people aged between 11 and 18 who are elected to represent either their district or community on campaigns which are voted for by the young people in Kent.

KYCC aims to represent the views and opinions of Kent's young people and in turn create change within the county which can benefit all young people. Furthermore, KYCC helps young people to understand the importance of engaging in the democratic process and learn how their vote can make a difference.

Annually in November, KYCC hold elections for new members and to determine which 3 campaigns they will be working on for the year. Four young people are elected to represent each district in Kent, these young people are known as "Members" and hold a position on the youth council for 2 years. Up to four deputy members for each area are also elected, who hold a position on the youth council for 1 year. Along with the election of district seats, twelve young people are also elected to community seats which represent specific groups within Kent, including: young carers, home schooled young people, LGBTQ+ groups and young people with disabilities.

Each year the new members campaign on the top 3 issues which were voted on during the elections. In November 2019, over 21,000 young people voted on the campaigns they wanted to see the youth council work on. The top 3 issues, which we have been campaigning on in 2020 are **Mental Health, Curriculum for Life and Environmental Awareness.**

Kent Youth Voice

Kent Youth County Council have now widened out to become Kent Youth Voice meetings, welcoming in young people from the countywide SpeakOut @HeadStart Kent.

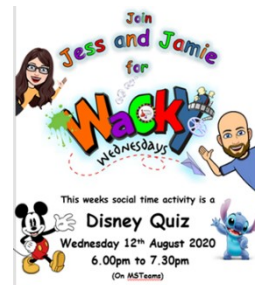
Speakout @HeadStart Kent have brought a new campaign, Building Resilience and work together with KYCC members on this campaign, the KYCC Campaigns and the joint project groups. This joint work has widened the reach of both KYCC & SpeakOut, increased levels of coproduction and joint working.

Working through Covid

This year's KYCC members have only had the opportunity to meet together three times in person since being elected last November. Online meetings started in May, with campaign groups and project groups meeting monthly using Microsoft Teams.

Since moving online:

- 62 of 99 current Youth Voice members completed consent forms to join virtual meetings
- 69 virtual sessions held from May - August including campaign meetings, project groups, social activities and our virtual summer programme with included our very own design Escape Room challenges, murder mysteries and our fortnightly Wacky Wednesday quizzes & activities
- 344 attendances at these events



What young people have said:

"Virtual meetings taking place more often than monthly face to face ones so helps to keep ball moving and get actions done and stay focused. Meeting more focused as no subgroups chatting in meetings"

"If we don't have face to face meetings at County Hall KYCC would lose what makes it special, as it's a privilege to use the Council Chamber."

"Virtual meetings are harder to build social relationships and friendships as less personal, so don't want virtual meetings to completely replace face to face ones. Virtual meetings wouldn't be very effective if face to face meetings hadn't happened first to meet people and build initial relationships."

"If you don't want to speak on camera you don't have to- you can speak in the chat and build up your confidence to speaking."

"Miss the meetings and going to my youth hub as I can get away from my family for a while, to interact with others and have fun, as I'm a young carer that's my MAIN socializing time."

"Would like to keep some 'teams' meetings when face to face meetings return as can help keep focus between meetings and get work completed between young people."

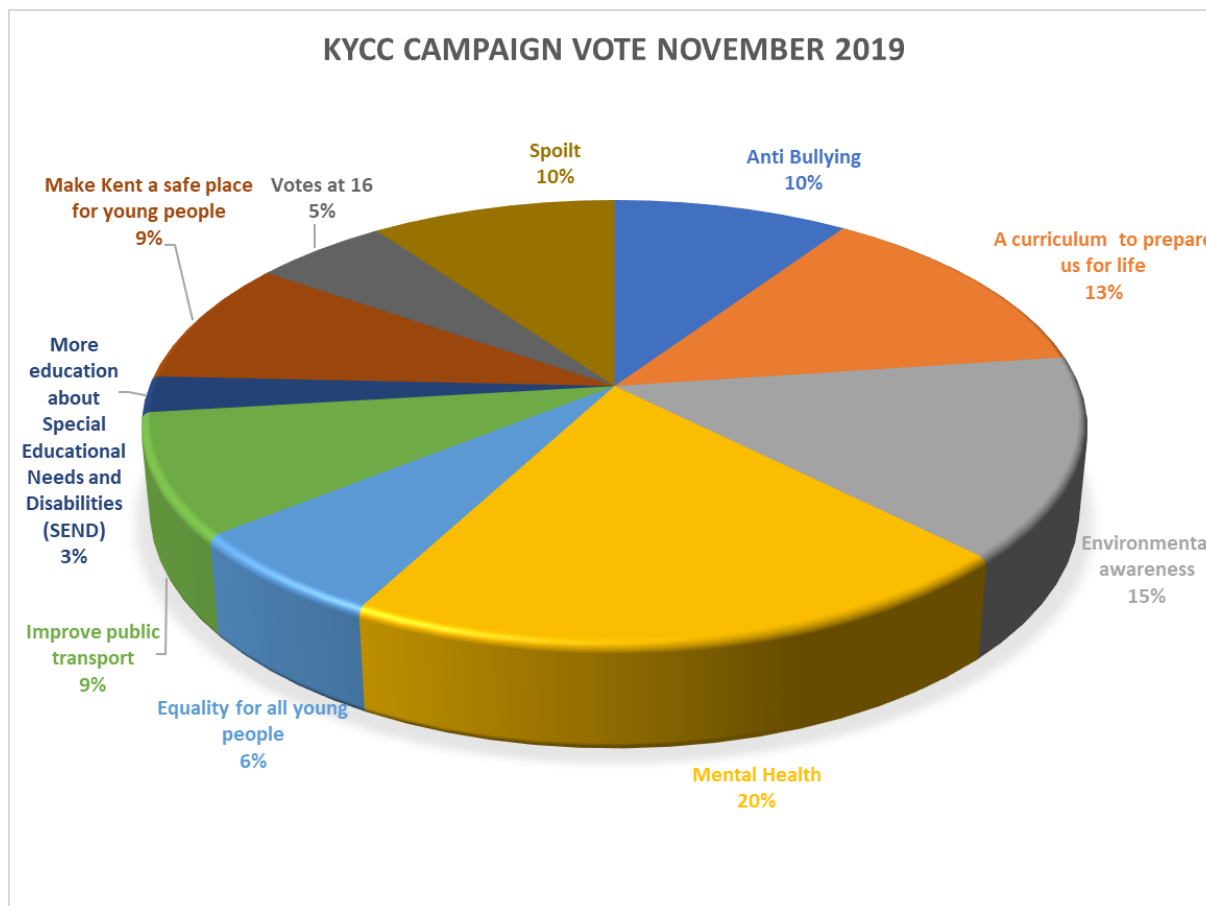


KYCC Elections Overview November 2019

The annual KYCC elections were held in November 2019, with 21,059 votes cast by young people across 85 polling stations. Voting was held within schools and youth organisations across the county as a mix of both as online and paper ballots.

Key Stats:

- 72 young people have been elected as KYCC Members and Deputies to represent young people across Kent.
- An amazing 21,059 young people voted in the elections either by online or paper ballots. The voting decided the elected members and on the top 3 KYCC Campaigns for 2020.



Top 3 issues & campaigns for 2020:

1. Mental health
2. Environmental Awareness
3. A Curriculum to prepare us for Life

Mental Health Campaign

Key Stats:

- Mental Health received 20% of the votes in the 2019 election, making it the biggest issue amongst young people in Kent.
- Mental Health also received 181,691 votes in the UK Youth Parliament's Make Your Mark ballot in 2019, making it the 2nd most important issue to young people nationally.
- 50% of lifetime mental illness begins by the age of 14.

Overall aim of campaign this year:

Our first aim within the Mental Health Campaign this year was to create visual sign posting for young people in Kent as to where they can receive help and advice regarding their emotional health and wellbeing. Due to being in lockdown, we decided to do this by creating a mixture of social media messages which went out on our social media platforms.

We also supported the work of the Emotional Wellbeing Participation workers. They asked us to feedback on several ideas which they had and gave suggestions as to how they could reach young people. We have enjoyed our work with them and feeding into their project knowing our voices had been heard.

Due to the pandemic and having to resort to virtual meetings, we also felt that it was highly important to support each other and promote the wellbeing of the group. We took part in many social and team building activities together. This helped us to feel connected and confident when working together online.

Key actions:

Host a World Mental Health question and answer session at Kent Youth Voice to make other members aware of the support and services being provided to help them.

Recommendation(s):

1. The Mental Health Group would like to be included more in plans involving the mental health of young people and how the council reaches them to gain their views and opinions.
2. We would also like to work together to help raise awareness and combat stigmas surrounding views of mental health and young people and KCC to share our mental health awareness posts on their social media accounts.

Chair: Abigail Sinstadt

Vice Chair: Riley Button



Curriculum for Life Campaign

The Curriculum for Life Campaign was set up to help educate and equip young people with the skills necessary for all aspects of life, particularly non-academic issues like mental health, interviewing techniques and finance. This campaign was elected as a priority across Kent in recent elections and, with the large amount of KYCC members who chose Curriculum for Life as their campaign this year, it is clear to see it remains of interest.

Key Stats:

- Curriculum for Life received 13% of young people's vote in the 2019 election
- In 2018, over 130,000 young people prioritised Curriculum for Life as the most important issue for them across the whole of the UK in the Make Your Mark Ballot.
- In surveying 321 pupils only 5% said their PSHE lessons were extremely useful.
- 72% of young people surveyed would like to learn more on budgeting & finance and investments & first aid.

Overall aim of campaign this year:

To create resources that can be sent out to schools and teachers- with the aim of doing this in such a way that the resources will have been made to a high enough standard that they can be taught in all schools but have been made with the input of young people.

Key actions:

- To continue contacting schools and getting help and support to build up our 'toolkit'. We want to work with teaching professionals to develop a range of lesson plans, activities and presentations that can be used by schools across Kent.
- To set up a select committee into PHSE and current provision within Kent schools. This has been delayed due to our move to online meetings, however, as this continues, we are now planning to try to run a virtual Select Committee.

Recommendation:

We recommend that KCC give support to the Curriculum for Life group by providing perhaps some meetings or opportunities to get advice from those who work in education within the KCC. We would also like to invite a KCC Member or appropriate staff member to sit on our Select Committee as it develops in early 2021.

Chair: Poppy Mansfield Jones

Vice Chair: Maria Rodrigues

Environmental Awareness Campaign

Key Facts:

1. The environmental awareness campaign gained 15% of the vote in the November 2019 elections
2. Average wildlife populations have dropped 60% in the last 40 years
3. 120,000 square feet of tropical forests were lost in 2018. This loss of tropical forest although partially due to wild fires was primarily caused by mankind for agricultural purposes such as cattle farming.

Overall aim of campaign this year:

Our initial idea as a group was to look at the logistics of our campaign group going paperless which we have achieved and would like to discuss KYCC going paperless. In addition as a campaign group our main aim for the year has been looking at how schools can be more environmentally friendly and how we can run a social media campaign as to how we can encourage people to be more environmentally friendly.

Key actions:

As a new campaign group and due to the Covid-19 pandemic we have not achieved as much as other groups may have in previous years however, we feel like we have done the best we can under the circumstances. As a group we have discussed many things we could do to benefit the environment and before the pandemic were looking at the potential for a fundraiser to educate people on the environmental issues (not just climate change) while also raising money for charities. In addition to this, we have discussed large group litter picks. We continue to look for the positive though as through the use of virtual meetings as a campaign group we have achieved our aim of paperless meetings.

Our key action this year has been looking at grants for tree planting and contacting schools with links to these grants that they can apply for.

Recommendation: Following on from Covid-19 and the increase in home working and working electronically we would recommend you also adopt a paperless scheme to prevent wastepaper, saving the environment and your resources. We would also seek any opportunities to work with KCC on environmental issues.

Chair: Ella Scarr

Vice Chair: Nathan James

Building Resilience Campaign

The building resilience group is supported by HeadStart Kent and was included last year when HeadStart's SpeakOut group was joined with Kent Youth County Council to form Kent Youth Voice.

Key Stats:

- Last year 130 young people and staff attended the Big Conversation
- 42,430 young people are benefitting universal support in 78 HeadStart Kent schools. This equates to a third of the 10 to 16 year old population in Kent.
- 40 schools have achieved the standard to receive the 'Award for Resilience and Emotional Wellbeing'.
- 5,025 school and community staff have been trained by HeadStart Kent or their delivery partners. These staff feel more confident supporting young people's emotional health and wellbeing as a result of this training.
- The young people participating and coproducing HeadStart Kent feel more supported by their peers.

Key actions:

The Building Resilience group help HeadStart staff to plan the Annual Big conversation, which is an event for young people to give information on improving their mental health and emotional wellbeing. The day includes workshops with a practical element gave an opportunity to try proven techniques to lessen anxiety.

The group decided which workshops and stall holders should be invited to attend, agreed the format of the day, including the introduction of a reverse Q&A giving professionals the opportunity to ask the young people attending questions.

Young people from the Building Resilience group write the script of the day and have the opportunity to present throughout the actual event. Big Conversation 2020 has been postponed until July 2021.

The Building resilience group also produce resources to help build young people's resilience, including PowerPoints for assemblies and are now concentrating on developing a board game.

Chair: Nikita Williams

Vice Chair: Kiera Jones

KYCC Manifesto 2020

Introduction:

Kent County Council's Manifesto tackles a wide range of topics affecting young people, from public transport to equality for all. It was created by young people, locally elected to represent the views of their peers. Kent Youth Voice members work on each of these topics as project groups, alongside their campaign work.

Anti-Bullying:

Every child and young person should be able to go to school, socialize and use social media without fear of bullying. Bullying behaviours should be addressed quickly and young people who experience bullying should be provided with support to overcome this.

We are currently developing an Anti-Bullying Pledge for schools and youth organisations to create a good standard for dealing effectively with bullying and communicating this process to young people.

Equality:

KYCC would like to see no minority to be treated as such by working with organisations to help youths know why there shouldn't be any discrimination. More Education is needed for people on discrimination.

Keeping Kent Safe:

KYCC are passionate that young people should feel safe on their own streets. Keeping Kent Safe project group would feel more education is needed on safety issues including peer pressure, knife crime and county lines.

Transport:

KYCC supports the proposed idea that bus fares should rise gradually for young people between child and adult rates so there is not a big jump in rates between child and adult fare at 16.

#BeAnAlly

The #BeAnAlly campaign group was formed in July 2020 after a demand seen by young people, to make a change in hate crime, this followed swiftly after the BLM (Black Lives Matter) campaign. However, the group will be doing work in all areas of hate crime including disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity. We have had an opportunity to work with the KCC Youth Hubs in Gravesham & Sevenoaks to work together on tackling hate crime in Kent.

At our first virtual meeting, we heard from Gravesham Young People who presented on the work they have done so far, including undertaking a survey in 2017. As a group they discussed many points including, diversity in schools and the introduction of a hate crime app where young people can remotely report cases of hate crime.

The group are looking at lots of ideas and will be leading on some research over the next year, building on the survey undertaken in Gravesham so that we can get a Kent wide picture of the views of young people on hate crime and what they know about reporting it. We also plan on meeting with The Education People's Head of Inclusion to discuss hate crime in school and how this group can help shape safer schools for the future.

Key stats:

- Kent Police recorded 4,395 hate crimes in 2018-19 - up 31% from the previous year.
- More than two-thirds of hate crime reports in Kent related to race, while 14% featured hostility towards disability.
- A report by the Crown Prosecution Service shows that the volume of homophobic and transphobic hate crime dealt with by prosecutors in Kent increased from 38 in 2017/18 to 62 in 2018/19.

Recommendations:

1. Work with us to bring together the key people, such as Kent Police, Head Teachers etc to work jointly to produce clear information about hate crime, the process of reporting hate crime and what to expect. As well as providing support to young people who have experienced hate crime.
2. Producing a communication plan for KCC so that we can share important messages, across all of the social media platforms, KCC, Youth Hubs, KYCC, open access etc quickly. Young people felt there was a lack of support shown for Black Lives Matter from all KCC social media and we need to be doing more to ensure young people know services are open and inclusive.
3. More training provided for staff across KCC ensuring awareness of all levels of hate crime and microaggressions and how to challenge these. Training should also be provided to all schools, youth organisations and available to young people.



Each year 7 KYCC members are elected from within KYCC to represent Kent nationally at UK Youth Parliament events.

This year’s members are:



Top row Left – right

- MYP Lawrence Coomber – Canterbury
- MYP Zubair Asim - Canterbury
- MYP Poppy Mansfield Jones – Canterbury
- MYP Shoniwa Chindawi – Dartford
- MYP Lydia Nottingham - Thanet

(Bottom Row left to right) MYP Alice Breiner (Swale), DMYP Holly Leggett (Dover), DMYP Millie May (Swale), DMYP Zara Kumbasaroglu (Thanet), MYP Alice MacDonald (Tonbridge & Malling), DMYP Gabby Stere (Gravesham), DMYP Charlotte Swaine (Folketsone & Hythe), DMYP Shannon Birch (Swale).

Since being elected in January 2020, the UKYP annual programme of events have not gone to plan! The national training and induction residential in April was cancelled due to Covid-19 and instead we were sent a Prezi from British youth Council to explain the processes within UKYP.



The Annual Conference which is typically held over 3 days in July did not go ahead and instead in September we took part in a 2 day virtual Annual Conference, it wasn’t quite the same but even with a few technical hitches along the way we got to take part in over 60 debates which had been put forward for the UKYP manifesto & Make Your Mark ballot which will take place in November 2020.

We are now working hard to promote Make Your mark and how we can encourage young people in Kent to take part & vote online in the national ballot. We are also looking forward to debating in the House of Commons, hopefully now scheduled for February 2021.

Key moments over the last year

Debating in the House of Commons



On 8th November 2019, Kent's 7 MYPs travelled up to London to take part in the annual Youth Parliament Sitting in the House of Commons to debate the top 5 issues from the Make Your Mark Ballot.

Kent MYP Alex McGovern was voted to represent the South East of England as Debate Lead. In this role, Alex spoke at the Despatch box on the topic of Hate Crime.

Alex's tweet following the day really sums up his experience: *"Speaking at the Despatch Box of the @HouseofCommons for Tackling #HateCrime today made me consider the clear impact of rhetoric from MPs on hate crime. Our next parliament must not normalise the language of prejudice due to the dangerous, real-world consequences that are caused."*

Alex (right) pictured with Kyle Siwek, KYCC & UKYP Member at the Despatch box

The Straits Committee launch conference, Arras, France — 5th February 2020

Alice McDonald (KYCC Vice chair 2019) was invited to attend a launch conference for the new Straits committee in France as a youth representative from the UK. The conference was also attended by several other European countries and MPs from Kent as well as KCC Cabinet Member Mike Whiting to discuss cross border working between European Countries post Brexit. The agenda covered climate change, economic development and working with and including young people.



KYCC Elections 2020

We know schools are going to be busy in the new academic year and running the youth elections will not be their highest priority. We also know from current KYCC members they do not feel they have had the best experience of KYCC this year and that they have been unable to develop their campaigns fully.

As a result, all KYCC Members and deputy members who are due to come to the end of their term of office in December 2020 have been offered the opportunity to extend their term by 1 year until December 2021.

Where there are then vacant seats on KYCC we will be recruiting young people online and holding an online election process to those seats.

And finally...we asked KYCC members what KYCC means to them:

"Respect, understanding and equality" Joseph

"It is an amazing lively place to meet new people with the same interests as you. It's important to be part of something that can change the future." Bella

"KYCC means the world to me and has changed me so much, even shaping my future career aspirations."
Alice

"I feel like I'm helping make Kent a better place for young people. I'm proud." Luke

"Being a part of Kent Voice had given me meaning. Before KYCC I lacked a sense of belonging and being a part of this group has transformed my life."

"KYCC has been an amazing opportunity, I have made new friends and learnt so many new skills I will take forward in the future." Ella

"I'm in my 4th year at KYCC. It provides Kent's young people with an invaluable opportunity to build confidence, gain experiences and make connections in a safe, welcoming environment." Lydia

"KYCC gives people without any power a chance to make a small difference however that can change can still grow into much more with the support of others." Ethan

For more information on Kent Youth County Council:

Web: www.kent.gov.uk/kycc

Email: kycc@kent.gov.uk

Or follow us on Facebook [@kentyouthcountycouncil](https://www.facebook.com/kentyouthcountycouncil) or Twitter [@kycc](https://twitter.com/kycc)