

# Stroud District Youth Council



# MANIFESTO

## 2023/24

*Approved at the SDYC Main Group Meeting on 22 May 2023*

# **Manifesto 2023/24**

## **Introduction**

The following statements reflect the official position of Stroud District Youth Council (SDYC) on matters of concern to them and those young people whom they represent.

The statements have been decided upon democratically by members of SDYC and typically stem from discussion, debate and research carried out by the members.

They were approved at the SDYC Main Group Meeting on Monday 22 May 2023.

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## **Section B - Theme Statements**

### **1. Disability, Learning Difficulties & Neurodiversity Awareness**

*SDYC believes that the stigma and lack of teaching in and around disabilities, learning difficulties and neurodiversity including ADHD, Dyslexia and Autism, must be addressed. We believe that people should be learning about these, especially in schools, in which to reduce the discrimination and ignorance that surrounds them. We must promote, acceptance and inclusivity, at all times.*

### **2. Environment, Carbon Neutral and Climate Emergency**

*As the lead youth voice organisation in the district, SDYC will continue to encourage young people and all educators to be actively involved in the efforts to become carbon neutral and address climate and ecological emergency by 2030.*

### **3. Improving Sexual Health Services**

*SDYC believe that young people should be able to access good quality sexual health education and services. SDYC calls upon all commissioners, service providers and decision-makers to ensure that improvements are made to sexual health services and there is a reduction to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's). SDYC will work with commissioned providers to act as consultees on their service.*

### **4. Improving School Nursing**

*SDYC believes that students should have access to good quality school nursing and calls upon the commissioners, service providers and decision-makers to improve access and frequency to this provision.*

### **5. Influencing SDC Decision Making**

*SDYC will strive to have greater involvement in SDC decision-making on matters of concern to young people.*

### **6. Lowering Voting Age to 16**

*SDYC believes that the voting age in local and national elections and referenda should be lowered to aged 16 and subsequently supports the national Votes at 16 campaign.*

### **7. Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing**

*Positive mental health and emotional wellbeing is integral to young peoples continued development and learning. Their futures depend on access to good services and support. SDYC calls upon all commissioners, services providers and decision-makers to recognise Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and ensure that provision of services are effective, to the best possible standards. SDYC also believes that all young people should be offered mental health first aid training on an annual basis.*

## **8. Promotion of Racial Equality**

*As a group of diverse young people that function in a representational role, Stroud District Youth Council are acutely aware of the need to educate everyone in our communities about social matters. Young people can face many forms of prejudice and inequality as they grow up – which is unacceptable. However, we recognise that just because of their ethnicity and skin colour, those with a Black or Asian heritage or any ethnic minority background, can face additional discrimination their whole life – this should not be happening. We look to institutions in our society to properly work together, to ensure equality and justice consistently improves for everyone. The opportunity to enable young people from all cultures and ethnic origins to be part of this change, should not be missed. Equality and justice are not lone destinations, but a combined lifelong journey for all of us.*

## **9. Statutory Youth Voice**

*SDYC call on the government to make provision of a youth voice vehicle, a statutory requirement for every local authority (including county, district, unitary, metropolitan districts and London boroughs in England and Wales; local councils in Northern Ireland; and unitary authorities in Scotland). We will also lobby local authorities in Gloucestershire to follow the example of Stroud District Council in creating a youth voice vehicle in their respective geographical area.*

## **10. Voter Registration**

*SDYC believes that reform of the voter registration system should take place - principally moving from a current 'opt-in' system to one that enables people to 'opt-out'.*

## **11. Youth Friendly GP Surgeries**

*SDYC will work with NHS Integrated Care Board and local GP Surgeries to update and implement a framework that enables surgeries to meet the needs of young people.*

## **12. Young People's Rights within Education**

*SDYC advocate the accreditation of the United Nations (UN) Rights Respecting Schools programme. We call upon local schools to commit to becoming a Rights Respecting School.*

## **13. Youth Rights, Youth Voice, and Safeguarding**

*SDYC believes that children and young people cannot be adequately safeguarded, unless they know their rights and are able to exercise all their rights according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). We call upon the education sector and local authority safeguarding partnerships, to reform their policies and practice accordingly.*

## **Section C - Social Action: Projects and Campaigns**

Member led 'social action' type projects and / or campaigns support each of the themed statements above – these will be at varying positions of progress.

Many projects and campaigns are interdependent on the relationship with adult led organisations and decision-makers – this means the pace of progress can be determined by those stakeholders involved, as well as by the voluntary capacity of young people involved as members of SDYC.

All projects and campaigns are assessed by members on an annual basis.

The work of SDYC is supported by Stroud District Council's Youth Service.

