

Barnet young citizen of the year nomination

This nomination is for the incredible young people from Barnet's youth forums who were instrumental in the design and launch of the council's My Say Matters strategy and who continue to participate fully and impactfully within the borough to make sure youth voice is affecting important decision-making.

The My Say Matters strategy explains how young people will be involved in the decision-making processes of the borough and how their crucial input will help shape and improve Barnet's services for all residents. Youth forums give their time, creativity, and ideas to make the My Say Matters strategy a success. They set out their views, priorities, and a framework for how collaboration can continue productively. They make the values of equality, diversity, and inclusion paramount, as this enables everyone to share their views and express their beliefs. This demonstrates their fantastic commitment to making sure every opinion is valued and has the space to be heard.

Achievements over the last year include:

- The youth forums influenced the My Say Matters campaign's design by creating the MSM branding and logo and filming a video to engage more young people within the borough to take part in democracy and decision making. A number of young people submitted inspiring mood boards that influenced the final design and took part in writing the script for the film and even took on acting parts.
- Young people unveiled the strategy at Hendon Town Hall, the event was delivered entirely by young people who planned all the content and arrangements themselves, including writing all the speeches, planning refreshments and hosting adults from partner agencies.
- They have supported the development of a My Say Matters partnership with Camden Council youth participation project, this involved undertaking a field trip and exchanging ideas.
- Young people from all cultural backgrounds met with council members and senior leaders to plan Barnet's Black History Month, which was an amazing success culminating with a show case event attended by many local families.
- They opened a full council meeting In July 2022 for the first time in Barnet Council's history and explained the My Say Matters strategy and what young people have to add to the democratic process. Additionally, they shared with the council their hopes for the future in terms of what working with the council

should look like. In the most recent meeting in November 2022, the young speaker was asked specifically to comment on the death of Queen Elizabeth II and the legacy of the Royal Family in relation to youth, as well as the need to tackle climate change.

- One of our forums, Barnet Youth Board, have also been involved in the creation of the Violence Against Women and Girls and Sustainability Strategies. Their insights on sustainability and climate change informed the communications campaign and the Sustainability Strategy Framework final report. They also worked on The Schools Food Standards Project with Barnet Public Health. Their contribution was included in the School Food Evidence Report and helped promote the health of young people.
- BING our Special Educational Needs and Disability youth forum created a brilliant campaign video for 2021's International Day of Persons with Disabilities. They highlighted issues prevalent for SEND students in schools, including bullying, support, and punishment and how schools can improve SEND student experiences, most importantly by making sure they are listened to. The video was sent to SENCOS with the hopes they will get involved with this day, as well as make improvements to their SEND provision in schools. The video was well received by Barnet Education and Learning Service and SENCOS and feedback was received about concrete changes that will be made as a result.
- Our children in care council BOP (Barnet on Point) have opened and led a conference for 400 family services staff members – our first in person conference since the pandemic. For this event, BOP created a recipe task for their ideal individual that works with/for children – in the form of a gingerbread person. It included the characteristics of this individual and what the young people felt they needed the person to do for them. They went on stage with inspiring confidence and shared the task with a packed conference room, encouraging them to all take part in devising their own recipe, then share their fantastic ideas. One family services colleague was so inspired she turned it into a song! Afterwards, BOP shared their own recipe. Their efforts at the conference were amazing and we have received fantastic feedback about their presentation as the day helped staff reconnect to one another and our purpose in working for young people.
- Barnet Members of Youth Parliament attended a full sitting of the Youth Parliament in the House of Commons in November 2022 when they chose the cost of living as their top priority campaign. Barnet MYPs and Youth Ambassadors who chair youth board have also attended the Children and

Young Peoples Partnership Board and Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee where they have presented their campaigns on things like the safety of LGBTQI students and mental health to professionals and council members.

As shown by the above achievements, their work shows an outstanding commitment to their community, in making sure everyone works together to make Barnet an amazing place to live.