

Newcastle Youth Council (NYC) – 2017 Elections

Report by: Louise Cameron, Communities Officer

Background

Newcastle Youth Council (NYC) was launched in 2010 as an independent voice for 11-18 year olds who live, learn, or work in the City. In October 2014 the hosting of NYC was brought back 'in house' and has since been supported by the Communities Team. Additional support is brought in when necessary for specific areas of activity from various internal and external partners including Democratic Services, People Directorate, NCVS and young people themselves.

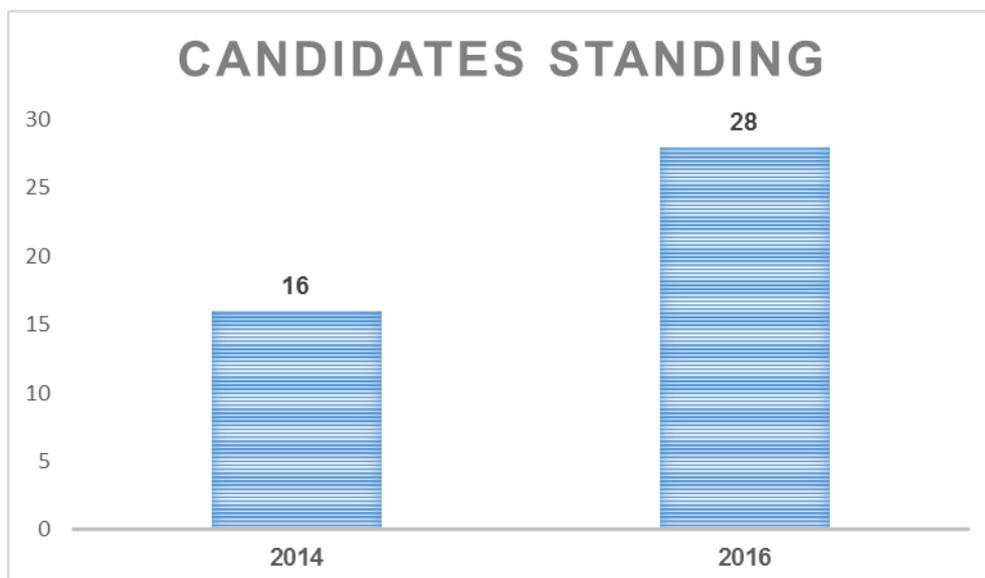
The Youth Councillors elected in 2014 actively influenced and shaped the 2017 election process.

What Changed?

Feedback from those who had participated in previous elections led to young people changing the way in which successful candidates would be selected in 2017 and future elections. The purpose of this decision was to increase representation from a wider range of schools. *"Candidates will be sorted into order of votes received, most to least. Seats will then be allocated in order of most votes, with the proviso that in the first instance no school will allocated no than 2 seats"*.

What happened?

More young people expressed interest in becoming a member of Newcastle's Youth Council in 2017; interest increased by **43%** from the 2014 election.

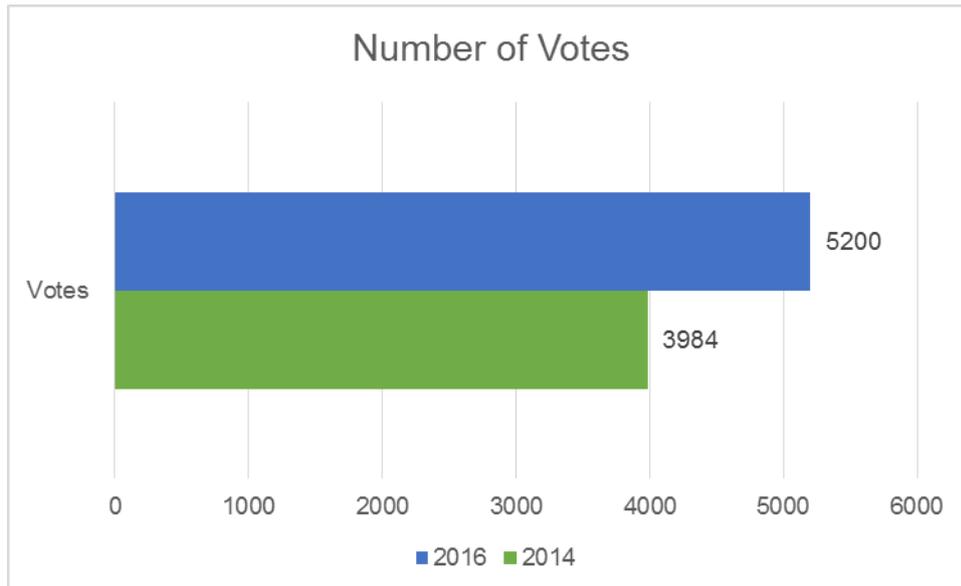


Three existing youth councillors campaigned again during the 2017 election process and two were successfully re-elected. On Election Day there were 22 voting centres spread across the city which was a **45%** increase from the 2014 election



(See appendix 1 for Voting Centres)

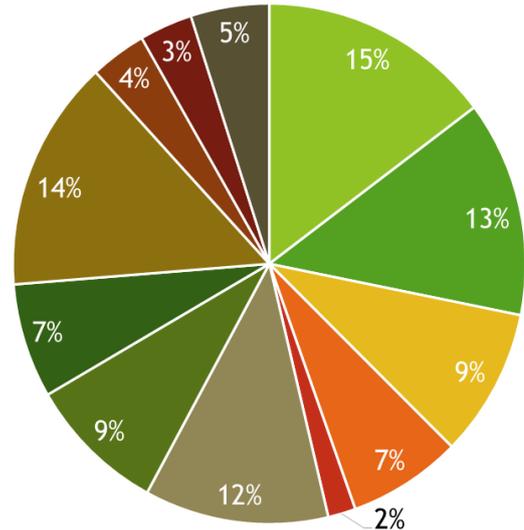
There was a significant **23%** increase of ballot papers completed by young people.



On the ballot papers young people were also asked what priorities were important to them; a simple tick box exercise was used with additional space provided at the end so young people could expand if they chose to do so.

After careful analysis the results indicated 'Transport', 'Mental Health', 'Work Experience' & 'Things to do, places to go' were important.

- Transport
- Mental Health
- Lifeskills
- Post 16 Education Choices
- Transition
- Things to do, places to go
- Safety
- Environment
- Work Experience
- Parks
- Volunteering

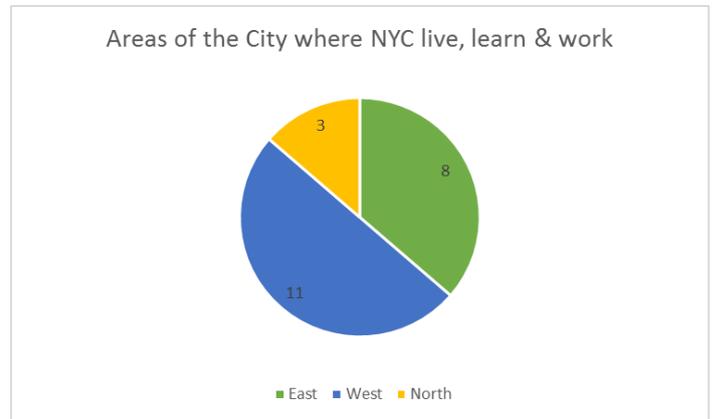


(See appendix 2 for summary)

Next Steps

Newcastle now has a newly elected Youth Council with an equal split of 11 boys and 11 girls; the young people have met twice. The group is very diverse in terms of ethnic and economic backgrounds with varying abilities; two young people attend specialist school provision. There is also representation from Children in Care.

Schools represented: There were **13** different schools from across the city represented in this year's election compared to only 8 schools in the previous.



The new NYC 2017 have debated and agreed their priorities for the next two years. <https://youtu.be/UluBDi43aTk>

- ✓ Mental Health
- ✓ Transport
- ✓ Curriculum for life
- ✓

The young people have agreed to form working groups to develop action plans. *"I like the fact we have got straight into do and are making decisions"* – Rory

UK Youth Parliament

Elections will take place on 21st March 2017 with candidates from both NYC and the Children in Care Council (Voices for Choices) expressing an interest.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Voting Centres

Benfield School	St Marys Catholic School	Walbottle Campus
College Street Centre	Westerhope Community Centre	Gosforth Academy
Pop up at Eldon Square	City Library	YMCA – Space Two
Newcastle Sixth Form College	Gosforth Central High	Pottery Bank Community Centre
Newcastle Bridges Benfield	Excelsior Academy	Sir Charles Parsons
Scotswood Community Garden	Heaton Manor School	Newcastle School for Girls
Dame Allen School	Newcastle City Learning	Discovery School
Blakelaw Community Partnership		

Appendix 2: Young People’s Priorities 2017 - 2019

Youth Council Elections 2017

The recent Youth Council Elections has showed that young people are passionate about making a difference to their local area and are aware of what issues face them currently. From over 5,000 votes on policy priorities, there were some clear indications. 15% of voters selected transport as one of their 3 choices, with responses calling for reduced fares for students and more frequent services. 13% of voters selected mental health, indicating their support for greater education and advice on issues relating to stress, bullying and anxiety. Education was also voted through as a priority for the Youth Council over the coming year. This intelligence suggests that Newcastle’s young people are enthusiastic about their learning and eager to make the most of it. While mental health, transport and education were selected as the Youth Council’s 3 priorities, youth councillors will continue to show support for other issues affecting young people in the city.

Previous Youth Councils have been successful in improving the lives of Newcastle’s young people and have met with decision makers at the local, regional and national level. Youth Council achievements have included contributing to the City Council’s budget consultations, attending debates in the Houses of Parliament and meeting the Chief Executive of the NHS trust to discuss mental health. Youth Councillors will meet regularly over the coming year and news of their achievements will follow. (*Will Grey, Newcastle University. NCC Volunteer, Feb 2017*)