

Democracy Friendly Schools update

Giving our young citizens a voice, July 2020

We think that all our young citizens should have the opportunity to learn about – and get involved in – local democracy and civic life. Earlier this year we were excited to announce our new [Democracy Friendly Schools](#) programme and to start receiving expressions of interest from schools across Kirklees who want to take part. Since then, lots has changed for our children, young people and school communities. It's a difficult time for everyone.

It's now more important than ever that our young citizens can have a voice in the things that affect their everyday lives. Understanding what local democracy is and how we can get involved really matters for all of us who want to have a say in what happens next. So with the support of our pilot schools, we're restarting our programme.

We just wanted to tell you a little about our journey so far, and to let you know how your school can get involved, when you are ready.

Thank you to all the local schools in Kirklees who have already signed up.



We are Democracy Pioneers

In March we were delighted to be named by NESTA as one of [19 Democracy Pioneers award winners](#), for our Democracy Friendly Schools programme. The award recognises organisations who are working in fresh and creative ways to shake up democracy and civic participation in the UK, to reconnect people meaningfully to democracy and help people to influence the issues that affect our everyday lives.

This is well deserved recognition for the pioneering work of our young citizens in Kirklees who are helping to make our schools Democracy Friendly. Two of our Young Commissioners, Evie and Vaneeza, collected the award. We've been sharing ideas with the other participants this summer.





Working with high schools in Kirklees

Also in March, we chose two pilot high schools to be the first to try out our programme. Since then we've been working on our planning and preparation, including putting the first version of our "train the trainer" pack together. After our unavoidable delay, we're now aiming to pilot this training in the week beginning 14th September.

[Meet our Democracy Friendly pilot schools](#)

Working with primary schools in Kirklees

We've invited our first two primary schools to share their stories and to work with us on the guidelines for what makes a democracy friendly school. We are also putting together our menu of activity options for primary schools. We'll start to share these with schools as soon as we can.



Everyday democracy activities for schools

Inspired by the creativity of our schools during lockdown, in May we shared some suggested creative activities for exploring local democracy with children and young people. We've connected with all the schools we can via twitter to share these. You can try the creative activities out at any time. You'll be helping us to learn what's useful for our full programme, and you can have some fun too.

[Everyday democracy – activities for schools](#)



If you've expressed an interest in being a Democracy Friendly School

We're aiming to open the programme up to all interested high schools early in 2021. We'll keep in touch with you to let you know how things are going. We are also hoping to get our primary schools programme up and running later this year. Please get in touch if you've any questions or suggestions in the meantime. You can email us at: Democracy@Kirklees.gov.uk

If you want to be a Democracy Friendly School

We know this is an uncertain time for you. Our programme is flexible – it's very much about doing what works for each individual school. So we'll keep listening to you and together we'll work out how best to do things.

We have an expression of interest form on our Democracy in Kirklees website, which you are welcome to complete at any time to let us know that you'd like to join in (you don't need to be sure when you can start). You can also find out more about the benefits of taking part:

[How schools for ages 11 to 16 can get involved](#)

[How schools for ages 5 to 11 can get involved](#)

We've been so inspired by the positive response to our programme from schools, and by seeing how people in our school communities are looking out for each other at such a difficult time. Our young people are our inspiration for this programme. We promise to do our best to get things started, in a safe way, as soon as we can.

Thank you for staying with us.



We're growing a stronger local democracy:

www.democracycommission.org.uk



[@kirkdemocracy](https://twitter.com/kirkdemocracy)

[@KirkleesYC](https://twitter.com/KirkleesYC)

[#DemocracyFriendly](https://twitter.com/DemocracyFriendly)

