

Democracy Friendly Schools update

Giving our young citizens a voice, September 2021

We know the past 18 months have been an uncertain time for everyone - that's why we've been working hard to develop a flexible approach to our Democracy Friendly programme. We hope this will make it easier for schools to get involved now that our full programme is getting under way. We've learned that 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. Together we can help all our young citizens to learn about – and get involved in – local democracy and civic life.

[Our recent activities - video](#)

Working with our pilot schools



We're delighted to say that, despite all of the challenges, we've been able to run our first "Train the trainer" session with staff at Ethos College. We learned how we can adapt our training to help more young citizens learn about local democracy.

We also have the huge honour of introducing you to our new Kirklees Youth Councillors from Newsome Academy (Formally Newsome High School) - the first ever young people to complete our Democracy Friendly Schools training programme.

Although the recommendation in our [Growing a stronger youth council](#) report was to provide the training for our teachers, we learned that this wasn't going to be possible at Newsome Academy due to the additional responsibilities our teachers currently have. Together we decided to deliver the training directly to the eight young people who were keen to become members of Kirklees Youth Council.

After their training, our new youth councillors were so enthusiastic that they have recently recruited and trained a group of year 9 students from their school, "peer to peer" style. They were supported by their teachers and the Headteacher to make this happen.



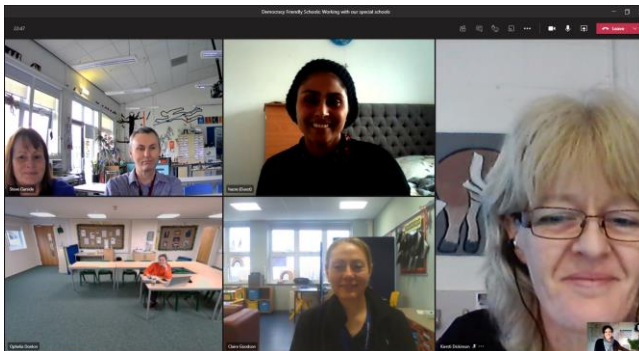


Developing our programme

Working with our special schools

We're working with all six of our special schools: Ravenshall School, Castle Hill School, Fairfield School, Southgate School, Woodley School & College and Joseph Norton Academy.

Together we're exploring which activities, resources and support will help them to become a Democracy Friendly School. All of our special schools agree that it's important that they take their time and work together to test things out during the next school year.



"There's a perception that young people in our school might not want to, or be able to, engage. It's important that they do learn about democracy, learn how to get involved and know they do have a voice. It's important, and appropriate, that they have an opportunity to learn just as young people in a mainstream school do". [Member of staff]

Everyday Democracy Activities for schools

We're always keen to share the experiences of our children and young people. That's why we've created [Everyday Democracy Activities for Schools](#) to help you support children and young people to share their recent experiences of living in their local place, learn about local democracy and meet their local councillors.

We've invited schools who have expressed an interest in our programme to help test our pack out for us.



These schools are also helping us to celebrate the creativity of our young citizens, as well as exploring which activities children and young people might find useful as part of our Democracy Friendly Schools programme.

“We used the resources prior to our House Captain elections in May and we used the PowerPoint across the school to explain what democracy is.”

[Luck Lane Primary School, Paddock]

[Gripping News - House Captain Elections](#)



Fairfield School, in Batley supported students to explore their local area and had fun decorating the word democracy.

[Everyday Democracy Activities for Schools - video](#)

Meet your councillors sessions for schools



We’re supporting our councillors to safely re-engage with young people in schools in their ward. We’re offering a flexible one hour session that will help children and young people to learn what councillors do, share how they feel about life in their local place right now, and explore opportunities to work together with councillors on community projects. Councillors will hear how our young citizens are feeling and will learn what children and young people would like some help with to improve their local place.

Our thanks to the staff and pupils of Hillside Primary School and to the Newsome ward councillors, who were the first to try out our new style “Meet your councillors” session.



We talked about what councillors do, what life in lockdown and beyond has been like for young people, and things that we can work together to change in our local area.

We've shared their story to help you learn more about how it works...

[Meet your councillors at Hillside Primary School](#)



We also held a special 'Meet the councillors' session to celebrate International Women's Day 2021.

Young people learned what councillors do, shared their recent experiences of living in their local place and shared some suggestions for how their local area could be improved.

Working with others

NCS

Last summer we were really pleased to be able to work with the NCS leaders at Huddersfield Giants Community Trust and Huddersfield Town Foundation to help young people learn about, and get involved in, local democracy. We ran customised versions of our two day local democracy training for young people which helped us learn how we can deliver our training in a flexible way.

- [Helping young citizens to keep doing democracy with NCS](#)
- [Working with NCS to find out what makes young people proud of where they live](#)
- [Local democracy and life beyond lockdown - hearing from young citizens at NCS](#)



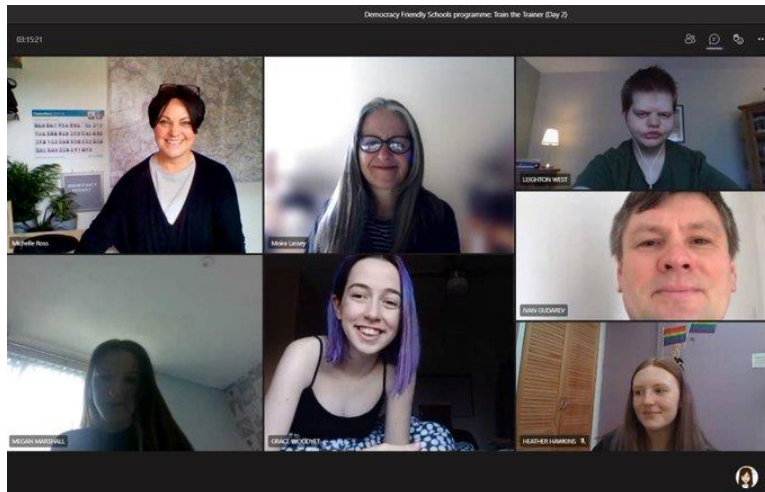
This year we're testing out how young citizens can learn about local democracy in our parks and other open spaces.

We're delivering a one hour 'Introduction to local democracy' for young people taking part in the NCS programme - outside. We're also using this learning to make the sessions available for others in our communities.



Kirklees College

We know that our young citizens want to learn about local democracy - including those aged 16+. To help us to learn how our programme can support young people beyond school age we delivered Democracy Friendly Schools "Train the trainer" sessions to members of Kirklees College Student Union and their tutors. We learned a lot from each other.



The participants are now planning to share their learning with other students in all Kirklees College settings.

"I had no idea about politics before. I understand much more now." [Participant]

"I really appreciate this, really helpful and informative. I think other colleges should do this. Thank you" [Participant]

Do you want to be a Democracy Friendly School?

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 learned from our young citizens and teachers that 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 for you.

Thank you for staying with us.

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