



Terms of Reference

The role of the Youth Forum is:

To provide young people with the opportunity to express their views, make changes in their community and take responsibility for decisions that affect their lives.

The purpose of the Youth Forum is to:

- Be democratic
- Give members the opportunity to represent other young people in their school or youth group and bring their views to meetings and sessions
- Have access to people who make decisions locally that affect young people's lives
- Create and maintain good links with decision makers in local and national government
- Act on issues that are important to young people and to work at its own pace

Ground rules

- Take account that everyone is different, but equal and that tolerance, mutual respect and open mindedness are vitally important
- Respect other people
- Everyone to be treated fairly
- Respect others opinions
- Don't make fun of others
- Allow people to voice their own opinions
- Listen to others views
- Don't interrupt
- Get involved and participate
- Co-operate
- Give others encouragement
- Don't be afraid to express your views
- Be yourself
- Be polite
- Don't eat or drink in the chambers
- Mobile phones to be switched off during meetings
- Enjoy it!

Structure

65 young people are elected every year through borough wide elections. The whole forum then splits in to 3 sub-groups working on specific issues. Some of these

include:

- Crime and safety
- Education
- Health
- Leisure
- Youth facilities
- Equalities
- Environment

New sub groups can be established or changed as required.

Membership

- New members/school representatives to be elected in January every year.
- 3 male and 3 female representatives to be elected from each secondary school from years 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13
- Young people aged 13 to 19 years who are harder to reach, are to be recruited (possibly without formal elections) from police checked organisations
- There is no limit to the number of times someone can be elected
- The forum is to have no more than 65 representatives each year

Election process

- Nominations to be submitted to designated teachers and youth group organisers by the end of December
- Schools have a voting day to elect representatives (during January, on a date to be determined each year)
- Launch with first full forum meeting

Chair

Full Forum

At the beginning of each Youth Forum year a Chair and Deputy Chair will be elected by current Youth Forum members.

With the support of youth workers their responsibilities include:

- Chairing full forum meetings
- Agreeing agenda items for the full forum meetings
- Encouraging participation from members
- Supporting administrative processes
- Mentoring new members

Sub-groups

Each sub group elects a chair each year.

With the support of youth workers responsibilities include:

- Leading sub groups and reporting to the full forum
- Encouraging participation from sub group members
- Feeding back at Full Forum meetings
- Mentoring new members

Meetings

- The full forum will meet 4 times a year in accordance with the agreed programme of meetings
- Unless stated otherwise, meetings will be held at Barking Town Hall 5 to 7pm
- An induction day will be held in January/February to help new members get to know each other and makes plans for the year
- A day meeting/social event will be held at the end of each Youth Forum year to celebrate young people's achievements

Attendance

All members must advise youth workers in advance, if they are unable to attend a sub group or full forum meeting.

Officer support

The responsibilities of the Engagement Team youth workers include the following:

- Coordinate the Youth Forum
- Actively seek representation on the forum from a wide range of young people within the borough
- Assist young people who have difficulties participating in the forum
- Facilitate young people to make their own decisions and press for changes they identify
- Act as an advocate for the Youth Forum and establish links with other youth and community programs and external partners
- Challenge, stimulate and support Youth Forum members
- Support the election process
- Promote the Youth Forum

The responsibilities of the Democratic Services include the following:

- Act as an advocate for the forum and interface with all parts of the council to establish links
- Support the election process
- Promote the Youth Forum at all opportunities

Councillors

- Promote the Youth Forum and generate wide support for young people's involvement in local politics and decisions
- Promote and champion the issues raised at the forum, in the assembly and other council decision making meetings

Benefits

- Certificate for participation at the end of the forum year
- An opportunity to complete an informal qualification - Youth Achievement Award
- References on request