

The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy

Key priorities for youth policies answers on
Participation



Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth policy, youth research and youth work.

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1 Structures of participation at the local, regional or national level

1.1 Youth parliaments

1.1.1 Local youth parliaments

UK Youth Parliament representatives generally linked into local youth councils or other representative mechanisms.

1.1.2 Regional youth parliaments

North East Regional Youth Assembly represents young people aged 12-21 in the 12 Local Authorities in the North East Region of England. <http://www.nerya.org.uk>. London Assembly has established some representative structures for young people in the region.

<http://www.london.gov.uk/> nb. Term 'youth parliament' used as convenient way to describe some form of discussion forum or council for young people.

1.1.3 National youth parliament

UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) aims to give a voice to young people aged 11 to 18 in the UK. UKYP has over 400 elected young MPs aged between 11 and 18. Each Local Education Authority (LEA) represents a UKYP constituency, and 90% of the LEAs across England are currently represented on the UKYP. Agreements are also established with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure that young people in those countries are represented by the organisation. Contact Peter Clarke, general manager: mail@ukyouthparliament.org.uk. Scottish Youth Parliament:

<http://www.scottishyouthparliament.org.uk/> - group of nearly 200 elected young people aged between 14 and 25 years, who aim to be the collective national youth voice for all young people in Scotland. It elects and supports members of UKYP in Scotland. Funky Dragon - the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales aims to give young people up to 25 the opportunity to get their voices heard on issues that affect them. Contact enquiries@funkydragon.org.

<http://www.funkydragon.org>. Northern Ireland Youth Forum aims to promote the views of young people to government, policy makers and others. Any young people between 14 and 25 can get involved in the youth forum. <http://niyf.org>

1.2 Youth councils

1.2.1 Local youth councils

There is no uniform structure for youth councils in the UK. They include both formal structures to which young people are elected by their peers and which have formal links to local authority structures, and informal youth councils or youth forums open to all young people in particular



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geographical areas, or specific communities of interests. Over 500 local youth councils across the UK are members of the British Youth Council.

1.2.2 Regional youth councils

North East Regional Youth Assembly represents young people aged 12-21 in the 12 Local Authorities in the North East Region of England. <http://www.nerya.org.uk>. London Assembly has established some representative structures for young people in the region.

<http://www.london.gov.uk/> nb. Term 'youth parliament' used as convenient way to describe some form of discussion forum or council for young people.

1.2.3 National youth councils

British Youth Council (BYC) is the umbrella organisation for young people's organisations concerned with giving young people (16 to 25) a voice. Its membership includes a broad coalition of youth organisations from across the UK, who work together to provide a strong collective voice for young people to policy and decision-makers at all levels. Contact Kathleen Cronin, chief executive at mail@byc.org.uk. <http://www.byc.org.uk/>

1.3 Others structures of participation

English Secondary Students' Association Schools Councils UK National Union of Students

2 Percentage of young people who are members of

No answers available

3 Existing actions/support, of national or regional scope, to promote the participation of young people in local life and follow-up mechanisms

Children's commissioners in each country have role to ensure that young people's voices are heard in decision-making. The Government's Learning to Listen strategy (England) requires central government departments to develop action plans for involving children and young people in decisions that affect them. Scotland: Child Strategy Statement (2000) sets out position in relation to young people and participation. Northern Ireland: consulting children and young people as part of its 10 year strategy. The National Youth Agency and Local Government Association have developed (non-statutory) Hear by Right standards for the active involvement of children and young people in decision-making and local democracy. Young people also involved in decision-making in specific sectors, for instance through the National Service Framework for the Health Service.

3.1 Legal actions to support the structures for participation of young people in local life



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UK Convention on the Rights of the Child forms the basis for some local authorities' youth strategies. Local Government Acts 1999 and 2000, and other legislation and guidance require local authorities to consult local people, including young people, about the services they provide.

3.2 Financial actions to support the various structures for youth political and NGO participation

Support for UK Youth Parliament (£11300, approx 160000 euro in 2004-05), British Youth Council (£486430 - approx 700,00 euros for 2005-08) and other youth organisations promoting participation. Consultation fund (England) 2005 - c600000 euro to support initiatives allowing young people to influence local decision-making.

3.3 Other initiatives planned in the short term

N/A

4 Do some of the existing or planned actions aim at certain specific groups of young people?

yes ~~no~~

If yes, what groups?

While actions made to involve all young people, many organisations make efforts to involve excluded young people - such as those not in education, employment or training, those from minority ethnic groups, young people in or formerly in care, disabled young people etc.

5 The vote

5.1 Obligatory?

yes no

5.2 Age of the right to vote

From 18 years old

5.3 The right to vote

British citizens over 18 on the electoral register. Those who lose the right to vote include members of the House of Lords, people serving prison sentences over 12 months, and in some cases, people with mental health problems.

5.4 Age of eligibility to be a candidate

From 21 years old

5.5 Eligibility to be a candidate



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British citizens over the age of 21. Certain professions are disqualified, such as judges, because of the need for impartiality in their work. The Electoral Administration Bill, going through Parliament in November 2005, proposes reducing the minimum age for standing for election to 18.

6 The elections

6.1 Number of young people voting between the ages of 18 (or the age of the right to vote) and 30

N/A *persons*

6.2 Number of young people between the ages of 18 (or the age of the right to vote) and 30 registered on the lists of voters

N/A *persons*

6.3 Indicators of participation related to European polls

6.3.1 In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people in age to vote who are registered from the ages of 13 to 30.

N/A %

6.3.2 In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people in age to vote registered, by age groups

18-21	22-25	26-30
N/A %	N/A %	N/A %

6.3.3 In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people in age to vote registered, by gender

female	male
N/A %	N/A %

6.3.4 In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people in age to vote registered, by rural-urban

rural	urban
N/A %	N/A %

6.3.5 In European elections, the percentage of young people's participation in relation to the total population to vote

N/A %

6.4 National indicators of participation in the polls

6.4.1 National elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people in age to vote registered

N/A %

6.4.2 National elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people in age to vote registered, by age groups

18-21	22-25	26-30
N/A %	N/A %	N/A %

6.4.3 National elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people in age to vote registered, by gender

female	male
N/A %	N/A %

6.4.4 National elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people in age to vote registered, by rural-urban

rural	urban
N/A %	N/A %

6.4.5 National elections, young people as a percentage of participation in the total population to vote

N/A %

6.5 Regional and local indicators of participation in the polls

6.5.1 Regional and local elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people in age to vote registered

N/A %

6.5.2 Regional and local elections, percentage of young voters in relation to

the number of young people in age to vote registered, by age groups

18-21	22-25	26-30
N/A %	N/A %	N/A %

6.5.3 Regional and local elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people in age to vote registered, by gender

female	male
N/A %	N/A %

6.5.4 Regional and local elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people in age to vote registered, by rural-urban

rural	urban
N/A %	N/A %

6.5.5 In regional and local elections the percentage of young people participation in relation to the total population to vote

N/A %

6.6 Number of young people (under the age of 30) who are member of the national parliament.

2 *persons*

6.6.1 Number of young people elected (under the age of 30) at the national level, by gender

female	male
2 <i>persons</i>	0 <i>persons</i>

6.7 Enter the number of young people (under the age of 30) who are member of regional parliaments or are hold the position of a regional minister.

N/A *persons*

6.7.1 Number of young people elected (under the age of 30) at the regional, level by gender

female	male
N/A <i>persons</i>	N/A <i>persons</i>

6.8 Number of young people elected (under the age of 30) at the local level

268 *persons*

6.8.1 Number of young people elected (under the age of 30) at the local level, by gender

female	male
N/A <i>persons</i>	N/A <i>persons</i>

7 Existing actions/support, of national or regional scope, to promote the participation in the system of representative democracy and follow-up mechanisms

Children and Young People's Unit (now merged into Department for Education and Skills) funded V-Vote?/Y-Not project investigating young people's attitudes towards politics and reasons for low turnout. Citizenship Education includes strand on political literacy. Range of action by the Electoral Commission, whose aims include encouraging greater participation in and understanding of, the democratic process, including dedicated website and resources, research programme, media campaign, and funding programme for pilot schemes aimed at increasing public awareness of elections and democratic systems, and increasing turnout. Electoral Commission also reported on consultation on reducing the age of voting and candidacy in 2003. Government response to retain 18 as minimum voting age, but to reduce age of candidacy to 18 (from 21).

7.1 Actions that have been undertaken this year

Electoral Commission's 'Do Politics' campaign, a programme of workshops and events supported by information and resources, to encourage young people to take part in the UK's democracy, and specifically, vote in the May 2005 General Election.

7.2 Other initiatives planned in the short term

N/A

8 Do some of the existing or planned actions aim at specific groups of young people?

yes ~~no~~

Specific target groups of young people aimed at by existing or planned actions

Electoral Commission's campaign aimed at young people in general, but some other campaigns target particular groups, such as Operation Black Vote which encourages Black and Minority



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Ethnic communities (with a focus on young people) to take part in democratic processes.

9 Learning to participate

9.1 Existing actions within the systems of formal education aiming at developing and deepening learning to participate

Citizenship education (part of the national curriculum) has three strands: Knowledge and understanding about becoming an informed citizen; Developing skills of enquiry and communication; and Developing skills of participation and responsible action.

9.1.1 Mechanisms of participation at school

Department for Skills and Learning issued guidance on pupil participation in 2003. The Standards in Scotland's Schools, etc. Act 2000, requires that each school's development plan shall include an account of the ways and extent to which the headteacher of the school will involve pupils in decision making, when decisions are made concerning the everyday running of the school. Many schools have school councils (with varying degrees of power and influence).

9.1.2 Learning of citizenship

Citizenship education in secondary schools as part of national curriculum.

9.1.3 Other actions within the systems of formal education aiming at developing and deepening learning to participate

Active citizenship in schools programme piloted by DfES - evaluation (2004) recommended national roll-out. Citizenship Education post-16 also piloted between 2001-04 in range of educational sectors.

9.2 Fields of actions and/or support # (national or regional scope, outside the formal education context) which aim at promoting learning to participate amongst young people

Youth services have central role in supporting and promoting young people's participation and involvement in decision-making, within the service itself, in local publicly provided services, and in their local communities.

9.2.1 Nature of this support

N/A

9.2.2 Concerned sector of activities: company, associations and NGOs, training bodies, municipalities, medias

At local authority level, increasing tendency for young people's participation to be developed as part of a cross-sectoral strategic partnership bringing together different sectors such as youth



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services, social services, health, voluntary organisations and commercial organisations such as transport providers.

9.2.3 Among these actions (question 9.2.1 and 9.2.2), actions that have been undertaken this year

Survey into use of Hear by Right standards, developed by the National Youth Agency and Local Government Association, found that they have recently been used by a wide range of local councils and organisations.

9.2.4 Other initiatives planned in the short term

N/A

9.3 Are there specific target groups of young people aimed at by existing or planned actions?

yes ~~no~~

The specific target groups

While participation initiatives seek to engage all young people, particular attention is paid to involving those who would not normally have a voice about services and policies.



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