Your Voice.
Your Ideas.
Your Staffordshire.

STAFFORDSHIRE YOUTH UNION

Young Person's Guide

Staffordshire Youth Union Elections 2026-27

SCVYS

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL OF VOLUNTARY YOUTH SERVICES

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Your voice. Your ideas. Your Staffordshire.

Staffordshire Youth Union

Could you represent young people in your area?

Staffordshire Youth Union (SYU) is looking for young people aged 11 to 18 who care about the issues affecting children and young people in Staffordshire.

You do not need previous experience of politics, campaigning or youth voice. You also do not need to be the loudest or most confident person in the room.

What matters is that you are willing to:

- listen to other young people;
- consider different views and experiences;
- share your ideas;
- work with other people;
- help make a positive difference.

What is **Staffordshire Youth Union?**

SYU is a group of young people aged 11 to 18 from across Staffordshire. Members are elected by other young people to represent their local area and the wider county.

They work together to make sure young people's ideas, concerns and experiences are heard by the people making decisions.

SYU is run and supported by Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services (SCVYS) who work alongside other organisations like the National Youth Agency, Youth Focus West Midlands and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to increase opportunities and impact.



The group is not connected to any political party. Members may have different views and do not need to agree on everything. SYU focuses on the issues affecting young people and creates a respectful space in which different opinions can be heard.

What could you do **as an SYU Member?**



Depending on the priorities chosen by the elected group, you could:

- represent young people from your area
- listen to young people and share their views
- meet councillors, MPs and other decision-makers
- contribute to consultations about local and national issues
- create campaigns, projects and events
- take part in youth social action
- attend regional or national youth voice opportunities
- develop your confidence, teamwork and communication skills
- learn more about democracy and how decisions are made
- make new friends and work with young people from across Staffordshire.

Each group helps decide what SYU will focus on during its term.

Who Can **Apply?**

You can apply if you:

- will be aged 11 to 18 on 1 January 2027
- live, study, work, volunteer or regularly attend youth provision in Staffordshire
- are willing to listen to and represent other young people
- can take part in SYU with appropriate support
- have consent from a parent or carer consent before your candidacy is confirmed.

Places are available for each Staffordshire District or Borough

- Cannock Chase
- East Staffordshire
- Lichfield
- Newcastle-under-Lyme
- South Staffordshire
- Stafford
- Staffordshire Moorlands
- Tamworth

There are at least four places for each area, together with additional countywide places for those who receive the most votes.



What happens in the election?

Young people aged 11 to 18 who live, study or regularly participate in Staffordshire will be invited to vote.

Each eligible voter can vote once for one candidate - this takes place online and the link is shared across schools, colleges and youth organisations for young people to vote directly.

Voting will open on Monday 7 December 2026 and close on Wednesday 30 December 2026.

Votes will be checked before the results are announced in January 2027.

Who are SYU **Representing?**



SYU Members represent...

- young people who voted for them
- young people who voted for another candidate
- young people who did not vote
- young people with different backgrounds, experiences and views
- children and young people across their district and Staffordshire.

You could do this through...

- conversations
- surveys
- visits to schools or youth groups
- consultations
- events
- online methods
- working with existing youth voice groups.

You will still be able to express your own views, but being a representative also means listening to people who may have different opinions from you.

You don't need to be an expert

and you don't need to:

A

Know lots about politics

You don't need to understand political parties, councils or how government works. SYU will give you opportunities to learn about democracy and decision-making as you take part.

B

Have been on a school council

School councils are one way to get involved in youth voice, but they are not the only way. Your ideas, experiences and interest in representing other young people are what matter.

C

Have taken part in a campaign

You do not need experience of campaigning or youth social action. SYU members will learn how campaigns work and can plan activities together with support from SCVYS.

D

Be a confident public speaker

There are many ways to contribute. You might prefer writing, listening, researching, organising, creating content or sharing ideas in a smaller group. SYU can help you build your confidence at your own pace.

E

Always know the right thing to say

Nobody is expected to have all the answers. It is okay to ask questions, change your mind or take time to think. Listening to different views is just as important as speaking.

SYU meetings include discussions, practical activities, workshops, debates and project work. SCVYS will explain how everything works, and you will be supported to take part in a way that works for you.

What is the **Commitment?**

SYU members are normally elected for a two-year term.

Members are expected to...

- take part in regular SYU meetings
- let SCVYS know when they cannot attend
- contribute to discussions, activities and projects
- listen to and respect other members
- communicate with other young people where possible
- follow the SYU Code of Conduct
- ask for support when something is making participation difficult.

Meetings may include a mixture of...

- discussions and debates
- practical workshops
- consultation activities
- skills development
- campaign planning
- guest speakers
- work with decision-makers
- social and team-building activities.

Some meetings may be in person and others may be online. Dates and arrangements will be shared with members in advance.



What support is available?

SCVYS wants the application and SYU programme to be accessible to you.

If travel, disability, communication, health, caring responsibilities or another issue may make it difficult for you to take part, tell us what would help. Asking for support will not count against your application.

In your application you can...

- ask someone to help you understand the questions
- ask someone to type your answers, as long as the ideas remain yours
- request help with your candidate profile
- ask to provide information verbally
- discuss another accessible format
- tell us about communication or accessibility support that would help you
- contact us if the online form creates a barrier

You only need to share information that helps SCVYS support you. Information about your support needs will not be included in your public candidate profile.

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STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL OF VOLUNTARY YOUTH SERVICES

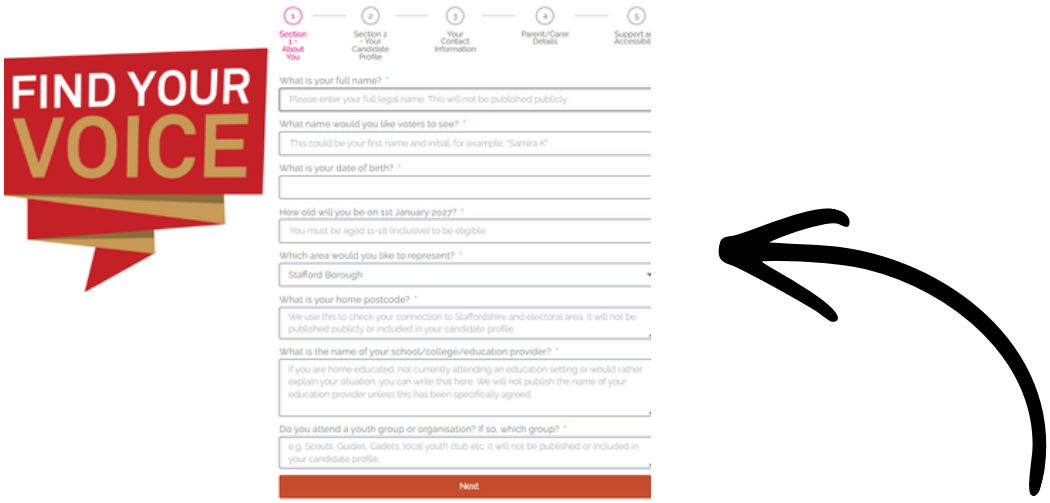
Staffordshire Youth Union is a youth voice and participation programme run by SCVYS. Contact our Youth Engagement Team with any questions.

Contact:

youth@staffscvys.org.uk

Youth Engagement Coordinator:
Sean Turner

How does the **application work?**



https://www.staffscvys.org.uk/staffordshire-youth-union/

Step 1: Complete the Candidate Application form

The application asks for...
- basic information about you
- the area you want to represent
- your contact details
- your parent or carer's contact details
- the information needed to create your candidate profile
- any support that would help you participate.

Step 2: Parent or Carer Consent

The application asks for...
- basic information about you
- the area you want to represent
- your contact details
- your parent or carer's contact details
- the information needed to create your candidate profile
- any support that would help you participate.

Step 3: SCVYS checks and confirms you as an Official Candidate

SCVYS checks:
- your eligibility; the parent/carer consent
- your publication permissions; your candidate information
- whether any personal or unsafe information has accidentally been included.

SCVYS may correct spelling, punctuation or formatting. We will not change your views or make substantial changes without checking with you.

Once all this has been verified SCVYS will contact you to confirm you are standing in the election.

Your Profile **and Voting**

Some of the information you give in your application will be used to create your Candidate Profile. This is the information about you and your priorities which will help them decide who to vote for.

Young voters will need to know a bit about you. The application will ask you to provide 4 main things...

1

About you and why you are standing
Tell voters a little about yourself and why you want to represent young people.

2

Your 3 priorities
Choose 3 issues you care about. Examples could include things like; safety, education, discrimination. These are only examples. Choose things that matter to you and the young people you want to represent.

3

The change you would like to see
Explain who is affected, why your priorities matter, or what you think could improve. Be realistic - you don't need to promise you can solve a world problem on your own!

4

How would you make sure young people's views are heard?
Think about how you could gather views from your area, or listen to young people with different experiences.

Tips for a strong profile

Be Yourself
Voters will want to hear your ideas and understand what matters to you. You do not need to sound like an adult, politician or professional campaigner..

Be Clear
Use short sentences and explain unfamiliar terms.

Keep your information safe

Do not include:

- your home address
- personal telephone number
- personal email address
- private social-media accounts
- school timetable
- information that identifies somebody else
- sensitive personal information you do not want published.

Candidate information will be shared with:

- schools and colleges;
- youth groups and organisations;
- young people across Staffordshire;
- voters through the SCVYS website and election materials.

Young people aged 11 to 18 who live, study or regularly participate in Staffordshire will be invited to vote.

Each eligible voter can vote once for one candidate.

Voting will open on Monday 7 December 2026 and close on Wednesday 30 December 2026.

Votes will be checked before the results are announced in January 2027.

Campaigning Safely & Fairly



You are encouraged to tell other young people that you are standing and explain why they should consider voting for you.

You could...

- speak to young people at your school, college or youth group
- create a poster with permission
- ask an organisation to share your approved profile
- speak at an assembly or youth-group session
- encourage young people to read all candidate profiles
- remind eligible young people to vote.

When campaigning...

- focus on your ideas and priorities
- treat other candidates with respect
- do not make false or misleading claims
- do not bully, harass or discriminate against anyone
- do not impersonate another candidate
- do not offer rewards in exchange for votes
- do not complete votes for other people
- do not pressure anyone to vote for you
- do not ask adults to vote
- keep your contact details and private accounts safe
- follow the rules of your school, college or organisation.

SYU is politically neutral. Candidate materials should not promote a political party, politician or the views of one singular group.

Serious misconduct may lead to disqualification. SCVYS will consider the circumstances fairly and provide an opportunity for the candidate to respond.

What happens
if you are elected?

If you are elected, SCVYS will contact you and your parent or carer with information about:

- the election result
- the first meeting
- joining and induction arrangements
- communication with SCVYS
- the Code of Conduct
- support and accessibility
- upcoming activities and opportunities.



The new members will work together to:

- get to know one another and the existing members
- understand their representative role
- agree how they want the group to work
- identify priorities
- explore possible campaigns and projects
- contribute to existing campaigns and projects.

The first meeting of 2027 is scheduled for Saturday 30th January.



What is
UK Youth Parliament?

The UK Youth Parliament provides opportunities for elected Members of Youth Parliament, or MYPs, to represent young people through regional and national activities.

In Staffordshire, MYPs are chosen from the elected SYU membership.

MYP opportunities may include:

- regional meetings
- national campaigns
- debates and conferences
- meeting decision-makers
- contributing to national youth voice activity.



All SYU Members have the opportunity to collaborate and support the national campaigns and projects of the UKYP. You do not need to decide whether you want to become an MYP before applying to SYU.

Becoming an MYP is optional, and interest in the role will not affect your SYU election result.

The UK Youth Parliament programme is currently under review by the UK Government - as such, it is not guaranteed that this opportunity will be available in 2027.

Summary & Key Dates

- Applications open:
Wednesday 4th November 2026

- Candidate application deadline:
Friday 27th November 2026

- Parent/carer consent deadline:
Monday 30th November 2026

- Candidates confirmed and notified:
By Thursday 3rd December 2026

- Candidate profiles shared with youth organisations/education:
From Friday 4th December 2026

- Voting opens: Monday 7th December 2026

- Voting closes: Wednesday 30th December 2026

- Votes checked and verified/Election results announced:
early January 2027 (latest 15th January)

- First meeting for newly elected members:
Saturday 30th January 2027

Ready to apply?

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