

EMPOWERING YOUNG CITIZENS

THE FUTURE IS NOW!

A comprehensive pack of materials for educators and community and youth leaders designed to provide the building blocks to educate young people about civic engagement.



**YOUTH
LEADS.**

GMCA

GREATER
MANCHESTER
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

ANDY BURNHAM
MAYOR OF
GREATER
MANCHESTER

**GREATER
MANCHESTER**
DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY FOR OUR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Greater Manchester has a long and proud history of standing together against injustice and discrimination in all its forms. We know, however, that some communities in our city-region still experience racial inequalities, still face barriers, and are not always properly represented in the bodies that make decisions affecting their lives.

I want to see a Greater Manchester where young people have a stake in society – where they feel comfortable and confident taking on civic leadership roles and being active community leaders. Young people, particularly those from less privileged backgrounds, don't always have access to those opportunities – or worse, don't feel that those opportunities are open to them.

I am committed to addressing this underrepresentation and empowering young people to lead the change that needs to be made. That's why I'm proud to support Greater Manchester's first Youth Civic Leadership Programme, a new and exciting initiative to tackle inequality and inspire a new generation of leaders across our city-region.

The young people who make up the Greater Manchester Youth Civic Leadership Programme have developed this excellent resource pack. It's full of essential information and advice about the opportunities out there for young people to shape and lead the organisations that make decisions affecting their communities – whether now, or later in life.

I would encourage educators, community leaders, and youth organisations to use this resource to its full potential. By doing so, we can help ensure that young people's voices are heard, and that they get the chance to play leading roles in the decision-making processes that shape our city-region.

I want to thank Youth Leads UK for partnering with us to bring the Youth Civic Leadership Programme to life. I hope it opens your mind to different possibilities and exciting leadership roles, and makes you think differently about your path and your potential going forward.

For as long as I am Mayor of Greater Manchester, we will continue to confront and tackle discrimination, injustice, and structural inequality in our city-region.

Thank you for supporting this important initiative.



Andy Burnham
Mayor of Greater Manchester



EMPOWERING YOUNG CITIZENS:

THE FUTURE IS NOW!

WELCOME

Welcome to the “Empowering Young Citizens: The Future is Now!” resource pack, designed to inspire and educate young people about civic engagement and leadership roles within their communities. This initiative is part of the Greater Manchester Youth Civic Leadership Programme, delivered by Youth Leads UK in collaboration with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).



ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Greater Manchester Youth Civic Leadership Programme aims to tackle the underrepresentation of racially minoritised people in civic roles and public life. Through this programme, we strive to encourage young people from all backgrounds to take on leadership roles such as school governors, trustees, members of neighbourhood safety panels, and more.

RESOURCE INTENTION:

This resource is intended for young people aged 14+. For education leaders, we'd recommend delivering this content in your Citizenship, Personal Development or PSHE lessons. For youth and community groups, you could deliver a separate session or build the content into your existing activity.

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**WE NEED MORE YOUNG PEOPLE IN
DECISION-MAKING ROLES, ESPECIALLY
WHEN DECISIONS ARE MADE ABOUT US.”**

– Youth Steering Group Member

YOUTH STEERING GROUP

The Youth Steering Group is at the heart of this initiative. Over 20 incredible young people from diverse backgrounds across Greater Manchester have played a pivotal role in developing this resource. Their commitment and passion have driven this project from the very beginning, ensuring that it addresses the real needs and concerns of their peers.

OUR JOURNEY

The Youth Steering Group started by understanding the landscape of civic engagement among young people. They conducted extensive research and reached out to various stakeholders, including decision-makers, educators, youth groups, and young people themselves. Through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, they gathered valuable insights on the barriers and opportunities related to civic roles such as trustees, school governors, and members of policing neighbourhood panels.

THE NEED TO EDUCATE

One of the most significant findings from their research was the lack of awareness among young people about these vital civic roles. Many young people had little to no knowledge of what these roles entail or how they could get involved. This gap in awareness was identified as a crucial area that needed to be addressed to encourage more young people to take up these positions of responsibility.

TAKING ACTION

In response to their findings, the Youth Steering Group decided to create a set of resources designed to educate and inspire their peers. These resources include a lesson plan, activities, worksheets, and definitions, all aimed at demystifying civic roles and showing young people the impact they can have in their communities. The group's goal is to empower their peers with the knowledge and confidence to step into these roles and make a meaningful difference.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The activities in this pack aim to support the knowledge and development of young people. Depending on which activities are used, young people should be able to:

- Understand the concept of civic roles.
- Define civic roles and explain their importance in society.
- Learn about different civic roles, such as school governors, trustees, and members of neighbourhood policing panels.
- Understand how civic engagement can positively affect their communities and broader society.
- Learn about the steps and processes involved in taking on civic roles, both now and in the future.
- Know where to go next to develop the key skills necessary for civic leadership, including teamwork, communication, and decision-making.
- Understand the importance of diversity and inclusion in civic roles and how it contributes to effective decision-making.
- Reflect on their own responsibilities as citizens and how they can contribute to their community.



RESOURCES YOU MIGHT NEED



A screen/laptop
(for accompanying slides)



Flipchart paper, sticky notes, & pens
(for group discussions)



Pens/pencils



Paper



Sticky notes



Markers
(for more visible group work on flipchart paper)



Printed worksheets
(for individual or group activities)



Projector
(if available & necessary for larger groups)



Access to the Internet
(for online resources or research activities)



Name tags
(for workshops or large group activities to facilitate introductions)



Timer or stopwatch
(to manage activity time effectively)



Whiteboard & markers
(for facilitating discussions and brainstorming sessions)



Accompanying slides



SETTING THE SCENE & GETTING STARTED

We know that the term 'civic' can be difficult to understand for people with no prior knowledge. We recommend starting any session with a discussion to help young people understand these roles and their part in society.

Youth Leads UK's definition: Civic roles are jobs that people do to help run your community. They make decisions about things that affect you, like schools, parks, prisons, hospitals, transport and how safe you feel in your neighbourhood.



Suggested time:
5 minutes

Depending on your young people, you can either facilitate this as a group discussion or have them pair up and discuss the questions between themselves before presenting back.



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUNG PEOPLE:

What problems in your community do you care about? If you had all the power, how would you solve them?

Encourage different answers from young people on topics that affect them such as anti-social behaviour, violence, littering, public transport etc.

What do you know about civic roles?

You could ask an alternative question about who makes decisions in society. For example, who decides how long somebody goes to prison? Who decides where a charity can spend its money.

What do you think people in civic roles have control over?

Encourage different answers from young people on things that affect them, such as addressing local issues like education, leisure activities for young people (public pools, skate parks, etc), and community safety.

ACTIVITIES

SUPPORTING SLIDES

SCAN & DOWNLOAD SLIDES TO INSPIRE
YOUR YOUNG LEADERS

BEHIND THE SCENES: CIVIC ROLES

Scan or click the code
for accompanying slides

This is primarily a show-and-tell activity. Scan the QR code for the accompanying slides. These slides showcase the experience of young people who are already in civic roles. These roles are:

- School Governor
- Youth Board Member
- Trustee

EACH CASE STUDY INCLUDES:

- A picture of a young person
- Their age
- A quote
- Their roles and responsibilities



Suggested time:
10 - 15 minutes



TRUE OR FALSE

Scan or click the code
for accompanying
worksheet

This activity is designed to demystify pre-existing thoughts about people in power. These are some suggested delivery options, depending on the needs and how best your students/young people interact:

Moving around the room – Designate one side of the room as “True” and the other as “False” and have young people move to each side depending on their answer.

Raising hands – Have young people raise their hands for “True” or cross their hands for “False”.

Worksheet – We have provided a worksheet that young people can use individually instead. The teacher/group leader can then present the answers at the end of the individual task.

We suggest that the statement is read out loud or displayed on screen, young people answer, and then the teacher or group leader sets out some context.



Suggested time:
10 - 15 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Explain the activity to explore and debunk common myths about civic roles.
2. Choose a delivery method from the list above.
3. Read each statement aloud or display it on a screen and allow your young people time to choose their answer (move, raise hands, or mark on the worksheet).
4. After each statement, reveal the correct answer. Provide additional context or explanations to help young people understand why the statement is true or false.



STATEMENT ONE – YOU NEED EXPERIENCE IN THE SECTOR TO BE IN A CIVIC ROLE

Answer: **False**

- Depending on the specific role you're interested in, you may be required to have some experience (e.g. experience working on diversity and inclusion, property, finance etc.). For example, to be a school governor, you don't necessarily need to have governing experience or be familiar with how school governing works.
- You don't need a lot of knowledge about politics.
- You will be supported by training/induction where you can build up the skills for the role.
- The role allows you to learn from others and build knowledge & confidence through opportunities.

STATEMENT TWO – YOU DON'T NEED FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS TO HOLD A CIVIC ROLE

Answer: **True**

- Most civic roles do not need specific qualifications such as a degree or GCSEs. Qualifications are always useful, and most civic roles come with training and support.



STATEMENT THREE – CIVIC ROLES ARE VERY TIME-CONSUMING AND HARD TO BALANCE WITH STUDIES.

Answer: **False**

- Voluntary Civic Roles can be very flexible.
- Most roles have around 2-5 hours of commitment each month, attending meetings.
- You can even have a normal day job alongside.
- Time commitment varies based on different roles.



BALLOT VOTING



This exercise allows young people to express their views anonymously, encouraging honest responses. It also provides a basis for discussions and understanding the group's overall sentiment about civic roles.

Give the group a statement and encourage them to vote using ballot boxes. These ballot boxes can be as simple as large containers, spare boxes or other items which can hold paper entries.



Suggested time:
10 - 15 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Prepare ballot boxes and voting slips.
2. Present each statement and have young people vote anonymously.
3. Collect and count the votes.
4. Discuss the results and ask for young people to explain their choices.

STATEMENTS FOR VOTING:

“ I understand what civic roles are.”

Yes or No

What do you think they are?

“ I know how to get involved in civic roles.”

Yes or No

If no, how could we change this?

“ I am interested in taking on a civic role in the future.”

Yes or No

Why?

“ Young people should be in decision-making roles.”

Agree or Disagree

Why?

STANDING DEBATE



This activity encourages active participation and critical thinking by having young people physically choose a side on a debate statement. It fosters engagement, promotes discussion, and allows young people to articulate and defend their viewpoints in a dynamic and interactive setting. The debate provides a public platform for young people to express their opinions and debate their viewpoints openly, helping them build confidence in presenting their ideas and engaging with different perspectives.

The room acts as an invisible spectrum; one side of the room represents 'strongly agree', and one side is 'strongly disagree' like a scale. The group is given a statement by you, and each young person must stand where their views align – or in the middle. You can then ask the participants why they feel this way.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Present the debate statement to the group.
2. Instruct young people to decide if they agree or disagree with the statement and stand on the corresponding side of the room.
3. Facilitate a discussion within each group, encouraging young people to articulate their reasons and viewpoints.
4. Ask each group to share their main points with the entire group, promoting a broader discussion on the topic.

DEBATE STATEMENTS:

'Civic roles are accessible to young people.'

'Civic roles are good for community well-being.'

'Young people don't have enough life experience to make big decisions.'

'School governors should be under 30.'

'Volunteering should be a part of the school curriculum.'

'Only local residents should serve on neighbourhood safety panels.'

TOP TIPS:

- Say that you'll invite people to share a thought or two and encourage young people to share even if they're not sure - there are no right or wrong answers!
- Choose people across the spectrum - so you hear a range of opinions.
- Read the room - pick a couple of people who put their hands up first, but then invite people who might seem like they don't want to be chosen. We find that quieter people have some of the most impactful things to say!

SESSION SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

This section helps connect the learning from the session and guides young people through what to do next. It's crucial to ensure young people understand the material and know how to apply what they've learned.

Sharing and signposting on what young people can do next is important to help close the loop.

The 'How To Get Involved' handout can be used to support this.

QUESTIONS TO CHECK UNDERSTANDING:

- What is a civic role?
- Share two examples of civic roles and describe one responsibility for each.
- Why is it important for young people to participate in civic roles?
- Which civic role interests you the most and why?

If time allows, open the floor for questions from the young people or give them a way to ask follow-up questions, such as signposting to the Youth Leads UK Civic Steering Group.

The 'What You've Learnt' worksheet can be used to record answers.

EXAMPLE SESSION PLAN

Section	Content	Time
Introduction	Briefly introduce resource origin, civic roles and the session agenda.	5 Minutes
Starter	Ask "What do you know about civic roles?" and facilitate a brief discussion.	5 Minutes
Case Studies	Present three case studies of young people in civic roles.	10 - 15 Minutes
Myth Busting	Conduct the true or false activity with the provided statements.	10 Minutes
Session Summary & Next Steps	Summarise the session and signpost to additional resources.	5 Minutes



SHARE YOUR IMPACT! & GET SUPPORT

We want to see your sessions in action! Make sure you take images and post them to your social media platforms. Tag **@YouthLeadsUK** and **@GreaterMCR** so we can repost and share your insights and experiences as a school or youth group.

Use the hashtag **#EmpoweringYoungCitizens** to connect with others participating in this initiative. Highlight key moments, engagement with young people, and any creative activities you do. **Let's celebrate your amazing work and inspire more young people to get involved in civic roles!**

Scan the QR code to fill out our **'Your Thoughts Matter'** feedback form to share success stories, quotes from young people, and any impactful moments from your sessions. Your feedback is crucial for us to understand how the sessions went, what was most engaging, and how we can improve.

Your insights help us make this initiative even better!

Scan or click the code to fill out the feedback form



NEED HELP?

Are you interested in learning more or need assistance with delivering this content? We're here to help!

Short Zoom Calls

We can arrange short Zoom calls to provide further guidance and support on using these resources effectively. Whether you need a quick walkthrough or answers to specific questions, we're happy to assist.

Youth Engagement

We might also be able to provide young people who can help deliver the content, share their stories, and engage with your audience to bring these topics to life.

Email us at info@youthleads.uk with the subject 'Civic Programme'.



BEHIND THE SCENES: CIVIC ROLES

This information sheet provides an overview of different civic roles, highlighting key responsibilities, personal insights from young people in these positions, interesting facts, and practical steps on how to get started.

SCHOOL GOVERNOR



SAMI
Age: 21

Hi! I am Sami Gichki, I am 21 and a school governor. As a school governor, I share my views and unbiased opinions and make sure the school's leaders are taking accountability for any decisions made! However, I do NOT get involved in the day-to-day management of the school.

“THOUGH I FIND BEING A GOVERNOR CHALLENGING AT TIMES, I FIND IT JUST AS REWARDING AND MEANINGFUL KNOWING THAT I HAVE AND WILL BE GIVEN ALL THE SUPPORT I NEED ALONG THE WAY BY MY PEERS.”

INTERESTING FACT:

You don't need to be a parent or education expert to volunteer as a school governor.

Roles & Responsibilities:

- Setting the school's vision, aims, and objectives
- Approving the school budget
- Appointing the headteacher
- Ensuring high curriculum standards
- Handling safeguarding incidents appropriately

How to Get Started:

- Direct Application: Schools often have vacancies for young governors that you can apply to. (Check out Education & Employers).
- Support through Training Programmes: Many schools provide governor training, making it accessible for young people without prior experience.
- Your Local Council Website: You can find out about governor vacancies and training on your council's website.

YOUTH BOARD MEMBER



HANNAH

Age: 16

Hello there! My name is Hannah Yue, I am 16 and live in Greater Manchester. I sit on a Youth Advisory Board for a charity. What this means is I can make meaningful change through my lived experience to improve how the charity supports young people.

“BEING ON A YOUTH BOARD IS EMPOWERING FOR ME AS I KNOW MY VOICE AND OPINIONS MATTER. I’M NOT TALKING FOR THE SAKE OF IT, THE CHARITY WILL TAKE ON BOARD MY FEEDBACK AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!”

INTERESTING FACT:

There is no legal age requirement to be on a Youth Board.

Roles & Responsibilities:

- Supporting the charity’s accessibility
- Ensuring youth-friendly practices
- Proper use of charity resources

How to Get Started:

- Youth Charities: A lot of youth charities will already have Youth Boards so talk to your local Youth Charity to find out.
- Check out the Young Trustees Movement.

TRUSTEE



ROUKAGIA

Age: 23

Roukagia is Co-Chair of Young Manchester and Founder of Muslim Northern Women and first became a Trustee aged 18. Trustees are volunteers who lead charities and decide how they run. They are also known as Board Members or Members of the Board.

“I TELL MYSELF I AM DOING ALL OF THIS BECAUSE IT’S IMPORTANT TO ME AND BECAUSE I WANT TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK. IN REALITY, I GET LOADS OUT OF IT AND I’VE LEARNED A LOT THAT HAS HELPED ME IN MY BUSINESS.”

INTERESTING FACT:

There are over 1 million trustees in England and Wales, volunteering their time for charities.

Roles & Responsibilities:

- Setting the charity’s vision, mission, and values
- Ensuring compliance with laws
- Fair use of resources (staff, money, etc.)

How to Get Started:

- Youth Charities: Many youth-focused charities appreciate having young trustees.
- Training & Mentorship: Organisations often offer trustee training and mentorship opportunities to guide young trustees.
- Check out the Young Trustees Movement.

TRUE

OR

FALSE



Read each statement carefully and decide whether it is true or false. Write your answer in the space provided.

1

YOU NEED EXPERIENCE IN THE SECTOR TO BE IN A CIVIC ROLE

TRUE OR FALSE?

2

YOU DON'T NEED FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS TO HOLD A CIVIC ROLE

TRUE OR FALSE?

3

CIVIC ROLES ARE VERY TIME-CONSUMING AND HARD TO BALANCE WITH STUDIES

TRUE OR FALSE?

4

YOU CAN HAVE YOUR NORMAL DAY JOB ALONGSIDE A CIVIC ROLE

TRUE OR FALSE?

5

BEING IN A CIVIC ROLE GIVES YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AND BUILD KNOWLEDGE

TRUE OR FALSE?

- Depending on the specific role you're doing, you may be required to have some experience (e.g. experience working on diversity and inclusion, property, finance etc.). For example, to be a school governor, you don't necessarily need to have governing experience or be familiar with how school governing works.
- You don't need a lot of knowledge about politics.
- You will be supported by training/induction where you can build up the skills for the role.
- The role allows you to learn from others and build knowledge & confidence through opportunities.
- Most civic roles do not need specific qualifications such as a degree or GCSEs. Qualifications are always useful, and most civic roles come with training and support.
- Voluntary Civic Roles can be very flexible.
- Most roles have around 2-5 hours of commitment each month, attending meetings.
- You can even have a normal day job alongside.
- Time commitment is based on different roles that can vary.

CIVIC ROLES – WHAT I'VE LEARNT

WHAT IS A CIVIC ROLE?

LIST TWO EXAMPLES OF CIVIC ROLES AND DESCRIBE ONE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EACH

ROLE:

RESPONSIBILITY:

ROLE:

RESPONSIBILITY:

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN CIVIC ROLES?

WHICH CIVIC ROLE INTERESTS YOU THE MOST AND WHY?

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Now you know about civic roles in society, here are some places to go for further information or to apply. You can use the notes section to write down any thoughts or steps you need to take.

1. SCHOOL GOVERNOR

Steps to get involved:

- Direct application to schools with vacancies.
- Attend governor training programmes provided by schools.
- Apply through your local council.

CHECK OUT:

Governors for Schools

National Governance Association

Notes:

2. TRUSTEES

Steps to get involved:

- Volunteer at local youth charities.
- Join trustee training and mentorship programmes.
- Become a member of the Young Trustees Movement.

CHECK OUT:

Young Trustees Movement

Trustees Unlimited

Notes:

3. NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY PANELS

Steps to get involved:

- Contact local community safety organisations.
- Attend community safety meetings and forums.
- Volunteer for local safety initiatives.

CHECK OUT:

Greater Manchester Police Independent Advisory Group

Notes:

4. COUNCILLORS

Steps to get involved:

- Engage with local political parties.
- Attend council meetings and community events.
- Volunteer for local campaigns and projects.

CHECK OUT:

National Association of Local Councils

Local Government Association

Notes:

5. MAGISTRATES

Steps to get involved:

- Apply through the local magistrates' court.
- Attend informational sessions and open days.
- Complete required training programmes.

CHECK OUT:

[Become a Magistrate](#)

[Magistrates Association](#)

Notes:

6. NHS TRUST GOVERNORS

Steps to get involved:

- Contact local NHS trusts for vacancies.
- Attend public meetings and forums.
- Apply for governor positions via NHS websites.

CHECK OUT:

[NHS Youth Forum and Advisory Network](#)

Notes:

7. YOUTH BOARDS

Steps to get involved:

- Join local youth charities with existing youth boards.
- Participate in youth leadership programmes.
- Engage with the Young Trustees Movement.

CHECK OUT:

[Search: Youth Advisory Board Opportunities Online](#)

Notes:

8. STUDENT BOARDS

Steps to get involved:

- Participate in school or college student councils.
- Volunteer for student-led initiatives and events.
- Attend leadership workshops and training.

CHECK OUT:

[National Union of Students](#)

[Student Voice UK](#)

Notes:

9. YOUTH COUNCILS AND YOUTH MPS

Steps to get involved:

- Contact your local council about the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) or Youth Council's.
- Stand for election as a Youth MP.
- Join a Youth Council.

CHECK OUT:

[@youthgreatermcr on Instagram](#)

Notes:

10. THE YOUTH LEADS LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Steps to get involved:

- Read more about the programme on our website.
- Register your interest.
- Become exposed to new opportunities.

CHECK OUT:

[Youth Leads UK Website](#)

[Leadership Programme](#)

Notes:

YOUTH LEADS.

YOUTH LEADS.

ABOUT YOUTH LEADS UK

Youth Leads UK is an award-winning, youth-led charity supporting underprivileged and underrepresented young people aged 12-25 across Greater Manchester and beyond.

Our mission is to enrich their skills, help them reach their potential, and influence positive change. Through peer-led programmes of volunteering, social action, and learning experiences, we amplify young people's voices with key decision-makers.

GMCA

GREATER
MANCHESTER
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

ABOUT THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY (GMCA)

The (GMCA) brings together the ten local councils of Greater Manchester: Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan. Alongside the Mayor of Greater Manchester, these councils work collaboratively with local services, businesses, and communities to improve the region and create a better future for all its residents. GMCA's vision is to make Greater Manchester one of the best places in the world to grow up, get on, and grow old.



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