

(P) Douglas Youth Council Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Douglas Youth Council (DYC) is an advisory body established by Douglas City Council to ensure that young people have a meaningful voice in local decision-making. DYC will support and encourage engagement of young people in decision making within the City and promote local politics.

The DYC will:

1. Provide a platform for young people to meet and engage with Douglas Councillors and officers.
2. Represent and act upon the collective views, issues, and priorities of young people in Douglas.
3. Act as a key consultee for Council policies, projects, and strategies that affect young people.
4. Submit written questions to Douglas City Council meetings as a collective body (subject to constitutional provisions).
5. Submit recommendations to the appropriate Committees as a collective body.
6. Submit budget spend recommendations to the Executive Committee for approval.
7. Promote greater understanding of local democracy among young people.

The Douglas Youth Council is advisory only and does not hold any decision-making powers.

2. Membership

2.1 Structure

The DYC will be made up of 12 students from participating Douglas educational establishments, including Ballakermeen High School, St. Ninian's High School and University College Isle of Man (UCM).

Places will be allocated based on balanced representation. No fixed numbers of places will be reserved for any individual school or college.

Where one establishment is unable to fill its available spaces, vacancies will be offered to eligible students from other establishments in Douglas.

2.2 Eligibility

Members must:

- Be aged 14 to 18;
- Be enrolled at one of the participating Douglas educational establishments;

- Commit to attending meetings and participating fully in DYC activities.

Douglas Youth Council aims to reflect the student body's diversity in gender, ethnicity, disability and backgrounds and would welcome applications from under-represented groups.

2.3 Term of Office

- Members will serve a one-year term.
- If a member leaves their educational establishment or fails to meet attendance expectations (three consecutive months), their seat will be vacated and refilled.
- If a member is elected as a Douglas Councillor (age 18+) their seat on DYC will be immediately vacated.

3. **Appointment Process**

1. Nominations open: September each year.
2. If the number of nominations exceeds the number of available spaces at any establishment, an internal election will be held within the school/college.
3. Elections will take place in mid-October, conducted by Democratic Services in consultation with the schools/college.
4. The new DYC will hold its first meeting (the AGM) in November.

Vacancies arising during the term will be filled through the same school-based nomination process.

4. **Attendance**

4.1 Expectations

Members are expected to:

- Attend all scheduled meetings in person;
- Participate in consultations, projects, and events;
- Represent the wider student body, not only personal views.

4.2 Loss of Seat

A member will forfeit their seat if they:

- Miss three consecutive meetings without valid reason, examples of valid reasons include illness, family emergency or school commitments; or
- Breach the Code of Conduct or safeguarding requirements.

5. Meetings and Procedures

5.1 Frequency

- A minimum of six meetings will take place during the academic year (equating to one meeting minimum per half-term) and special meetings can be called if required. Meetings will take place at 4pm, on the fourth Wednesday of the month in the Council Chamber and ad-hoc as required for input into Council led projects.
- Meetings will last no longer than one hour.
- Two Douglas Councillors, the Leader and one Councillor on a rotational basis, will be invited to attend each meeting.
- Councillors, on rotation, will receive a briefing on Youth Council protocols and safeguarding before attending.
- Meetings will take place in private.

5.2 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The AGM will:

- Be the first meeting of each academic year;
- Include the election of the Chair;
- Douglas Councillors will be invited to attend this meeting;
- Agree an annual action plan and priorities.

5.3 Chairing

- The Chair will serve for one year.
- In the Chair's absence, the group may appoint a temporary Chair for that meeting.

5.4 Quorum

A meeting will be considered quorate when at least six Members are present.

5.5 Agendas and Minutes

- Democratic Services will prepare agendas, circulate papers, and record minutes.
- Minutes will be noted by the Executive Committee, and minutes relevant to standing Committees will be referred accordingly.
- Papers will be written in youth friendly language where possible.

5.6 Voting

Voting will be undertaken using the electronic equipment in the Council Chamber. The Chair will have the casting vote in the event of a split vote.

6. Conduct and Safeguarding

6.1 Code of Conduct

All Members of the DYC will be expected to:

- Uphold the principles of public life;
- Engage respectfully with peers, officers and Councillors;
- Avoid party political activity in the name of the DYC.

DYC Members will be bound by the Council's Constitution / Councillor Code of Conduct and Employee and Councillor / Officer Relations, as appropriate.

6.2 Safeguarding

- All DYC activities will follow the Council's safeguarding procedures.
- Officers and Members supporting the DYC will undertake Enhanced DBS checks.
- Officers and Members supporting the DYC will undertake appropriate safeguarding training.

6.3 Health and Safety

- All meeting attendees will adhere to the Council's Health and Safety policy/procedures.
- Any concerns relating to own, or the welfare of others, must be reported to the relevant officer(s) immediately.

7. Budget

7.1 Financial Allocation

- The DYC will have an annual budget of up to £20,000, subject to approval by the Executive Committee to be spent in Douglas on matters that the Council has the vires to undertake.

7.2 Spending Rules

The budget may be used for developments within Douglas such as:

- Projects delivering community benefit;
- Youth engagement initiatives;
- Events, campaigns, and training.

It may not be used for:

- Personal payments to DYC Members;
- Party-political activity;

- Activities not aligned with the purpose of the DYC.

All spending requires:

- A majority vote of the DYC Members; and
- Final approval authorised by the Executive Committee.

Democratic Services will maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all expenditures, available to Members on request.

8. Support and Administration

Democratic Services will:

- Provide advisory and administrative support;
- Coordinate elections with educational establishments;
- Facilitate and record mandatory training, induction, and development opportunities;
- Ensure effective reporting to Council and Committees;
- Assist with media, communications and engagement activities.

The Council will explore whether participation can contribute to volunteering or credits for A-level, Duke of Edinburgh and UCM students.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

A one-year trial period will be undertaken. Outcomes will be evaluated based on:

- Number of seats filled;
- Attendance at meetings;
- Number of responses to Committee/Officer requests on proposed Council projects;
- Delivery of projects or initiatives;
- Satisfaction of DYC Members (through surveys);
- Member retention rate;
- Feedback from DYC, schools and Douglas Councillors.

A report will be presented to the Executive Committee at the end of the trial period with recommendations for the future of the programme.

10. Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed:

- At the end of the one-year trial period; or
- Earlier if significant procedural or constitutional changes are required.

11. Grievances/Dispute Resolution

- Disputes concerning officers/Councillors or between Members of the Youth Council should be raised, in writing, with Democratic Services.
- Issues not resolved, will be escalated to the Council's Monitoring Officer (Assistant Chief Officer (Democratic Services)).

12. Conflicts

A conflict of interest arises when a NYC member's personal, family, school, social, or financial interests could influence, or appear to influence, their ability to act impartially in NYC discussions or decisions.

All NYC Members must declare any conflict at the start of the meeting or when the conflict becomes apparent. Democratic Services can provide guidance on this matter.

13. Wider Youth Engagement and Representation

To ensure NYC Members represent the collective views of young people in Douglas, Members will:

- Seek input from peers through school forums, assemblies, surveys, and outreach sessions coordinated with Democratic Services.
- Report back summary feedback at NYC meetings and propose actions arising.

14. Communications, Media and Public Statements

NYC Members must follow Council policies on communications, branding, consent and social media use when representing the NYC. Any public statements (including press, broadcast, or social media posts) made on behalf of the NYC require prior approval from Democratic Services. Photos/video of Members will only be used with appropriate consent obtained in accordance with Council procedures.

15. Digital Access, Data Protection and Online Safety

Agendas and minutes will be circulated using an online agenda system. NYC Members will have individual logins to the system. All use must comply with data protection, privacy, and safeguarding requirements. Direct one-to-one online contact between officers/councillors and Members will follow agreed safeguarding protocols (e.g., use of group channels, adult presence, and time-bound communications).

16. Accessibility, Inclusion and Reasonable Adjustments

NYC meetings, documents and activities will be accessible. Reasonable adjustments and alternative formats will be provided where required to support Members with disabilities, neurodiversity, or additional needs. Democratic Services will liaise with schools/college to identify and meet access requirements.

17. Travel and Practical Participation

Meetings will take at 4pm after the school day. Meetings will not take place during school breaks and holidays. Where travel presents a barrier to participation, Members should raise this with Democratic Services, who will work with schools/college and parents/carers to identify suitable arrangements.