

## **Youth Select Committee 2023 - Terms of Reference Rough Draft**

### **Background to the inquiry**

In February 2022, over 430,000 11-18 year olds took part in Make Your Mark, and at the same time hundreds of Members of Youth Parliament were elected into their positions. Make Your Mark gave nearly half a million young people a voice across the UK, allowing them to select the topics that they wish for Members of Youth Parliament to debate in the House of Commons Chamber. Over 780 schools, colleges and youth groups registered to take part in the consultation.

The outcome was the prioritisation of Health and Wellbeing as the biggest issue affecting 11-18 year olds. Following this, Members of Youth Parliament ran 190 focus groups across the UK, speaking to 2858 young people throughout the summer. These focus groups took place in formal education settings, as well as informal settings such as youth clubs. Members of Youth Parliament ensured that seldom heard voices such as those of LGBTQ+ young people, young people with special educational needs and disabilities, home educated young people, and young people in care were captured.

Young people's responses in these focus groups were analysed in order to rank the top 5 Health and Wellbeing related issues, which were then debated in the annual House of Commons sitting in November 2022. The top issue was voted on as the cost of living and its impact on the health and wellbeing of young people.

Led by the Youth Select Committee, this inquiry would ensure a full and comprehensive look at how the health and wellbeing of young people is being affected, identify the key pressures caused by the rising cost of living, and offer policymakers a unique, youth-centred set of recommendations to tackle the impact of the rising cost of living.

### **How to respond**

Responses should be submitted by no later than **5pm on 8 September**.

Responses should ideally be sent by e-mail to [selcomengagement@parliament.uk](mailto:selcomengagement@parliament.uk). The body of the e-mail should include a name and contact details. It should be clear who the submission is from, particularly whether it is on behalf of an organisation or in the name of an individual. Further tips can be found [here](#).

If you would like your evidence to be submitted anonymously (posted on the website but with all personal details removed) or submitted confidentially (read by the Committee but not published online), please state this in both the body of the email and at the start of the document.

Evidence that is submitted will be published on the British Youth Council website. The Committee may take the decision not to publish individual submissions (for example, if it raises a safeguarding concern).

## Terms of Reference

### Young people's health and wellbeing

1. To what extent has young people's mental health been affected by the rise in the cost of living?
2. How has the cost of living impacted young people's relationships with friends, family and at school?
3. What further long-term impacts might there be?
4. What mental health services are available for young people? How accessible and effective are they?
  - To what extent have cuts to services affected mental health for young people?
5. How have young people's health outcomes been impacted by the rise in the cost of living? What long-term effect could this have on young people?
6. What support and advice are available for young people who are experiencing money issues?

### Free School Meals (FSM) and food security

7. How is the increase in the cost of living affecting young people's access to good nutrition?
  - What changes, if any, have you seen in eating/food patterns given the rise in food prices? Are young people, families and carers buying different foods than before?
  - How might young people on free school meals be additionally impacted?
8. Is everyone who needs free school meals getting them? Are eligibility requirements fair and suitable?
  - What is the impact on young people and their families when young people are no longer eligible or exceed the age threshold for FSM?
  - What is the government doing to ensure that there is consistent support and provision for young people on free school meals, even through holidays and term breaks?
  - What can be done to eradicate stigma around FSM?
9. Are there initiatives to address food insecurity amongst young people, and how effective are they?
  - How can we create a long-lasting, sustainable strategy to build the resilience of communities and the food system?
  - Are schools supporting families to access food banks? Is it easy enough to be referred to a food bank and do schools take an active enough role?
  - How could people who aren't in schools be supported?
10. Have food 'deserts' become worse, and is accessing fresh food getting harder?

## **Life chances and support for young people**

11. What could the long-term effects of the cost of living be on young people's life chances?
  - How has the cost of living affected young people in terms of education/employment?
  - Has the cost of living had an impact on how many young people are seeking paid work?
  - Has the cost of living affected young people's choices in applying for further and higher education?
12. What support currently exists for young people affected by the cost of living?
  - How have youth groups been supporting young people during the rise in the cost of living?
  - How have youth groups been impacted by the cost of living, and consequently, how have young people been affected?
    - Have there been any sudden changes in the number of young people engaging with youth services?
  - What can be done to ensure young people can access everything they need for school (such as textbooks and school uniforms)?
13. Have there been any local policies that have been effective in alleviating the burden of the cost of living for young people?
14. What is the impact of the two-child benefit cap?

## **Marginalised Communities**

13. How has the cost of living affected different demographics of young people (e.g., based on location, socioeconomic status, educational background)?
  - How can it be ensured that any policy solutions protect the most marginalised communities?

## **Recommendations**

14. What recommendations should be made to the government to help young people with the cost of living?
  - What non-monetary aid can the government provide to help families and young people?