

**Voice and influence of young people within SEND with schools**

**2023/24**

The Voice, Influence and Change Team work in partnership with schools across Leeds to provide opportunities for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to have a voice and influence on SEND services.

By taking part in the various voice and influence projects students have grown in confidence and gained valuable skills such as team working, organisational skills, employability skills, increased awareness of voting and democracy as well as making friends from across the city.

This report shares voice and influence highlights from the 2023/24 academic year.

You can view this report, previous reports and the voice and influence offer to schools on the [Leeds Local Offer website.](https://www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk/have-your-say/voice-and-influence-schools)

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For more information about any of the projects, or to register your interest in being involved contact [VIC@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:VIC@leeds.gov.uk)

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| **Raising awareness of disabilities: a project by young people** |
| We are excited to have launched our campaign: ‘Raising awareness of disabilities - A project by young people’ and now encourage you to share the key social media messages and awareness raising posters.  The communications pack can, free downloadable posters and resources be [**found here**](https://wearechildfriendlyleeds.com/raising-awareness-of-disabilities/).  An exhibition was held at a unit in the Merrion Centre to view, hear and feel the emotions and understand more about hidden disabilities and how we as a city can make a difference.  **Background to the Project**  Child Friendly Leeds, Leeds Youth Voice and Town Centre Securities PLC (TCS) partnered on a fantastic campaign to raise awareness of disabilities. This was based on listening to the voices of children and young people, ‘[Everyone’s Included: the Leeds SEND and Inclusion Strategy’](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.leeds.gov.uk%2fone-minute-guides%2feveryones-included-leeds-send-and-inclusion-strategy%23%3a~%3atext%3dThe%2520SEND%2520and%2520Inclusion%2520Strategy%2520sets%2520out%2520the%2520%273Is%27%2520%252D%2cwith%2520their%2520peers%252C%2520wherever%2520possible.&c=E,1,HOywlEh4V3wf__vOOebNdhpWyV4bYoJ3pbXBJlfy9oZ1fMCFDelXVFX-mcqUrtnTvrJLeN_-yBsWmku3C07VwW12miZZoJum9qcsEHopO5qdgE-P_Er0ScRLdg,,&typo=1), the [Child Friendly Leeds 12 Wishes](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.leeds.gov.uk%2fchildfriendlyleeds%2fcfl-the-story%2f12-wishes&c=E,1,k7t0FKWvFPw_Kuahe3C1G3lSncV0iaJxZ0nSzW0qyBKRtxHggzxjm5djFyC5xDG6gv1yjpLbhM2zFK-0WD3t3AtmbKUk4n0wQpV4XQqn1A,,&typo=1) and the project idea from our ambassador, TCS plc.  Wish number 12 for the city is: Leeds is an inclusive city for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Children and young people feel there is more awareness and understanding of different disabilities and that there are more activities and places to go that are accessible to all.  In Autumn 2023, we visited five settings with art materials sponsored by Child Friendly Leeds Ambassador [Merrion Centre](https://uk.linkedin.com/company/merrion-centre?trk=public_post-text) and [Town Centre Securities PLC](https://uk.linkedin.com/company/town-centre-securities-plc?trk=public_post-text), to understand what young people wanted to share. The five settings were John Jamieson East SILC, St John’s School, Horsforth School, Brigshaw Academy (16+) and the SEND Youth Council to find out what they would like to share with others about their disabilities, what makes them unique, and how we can make a difference. The sessions were enlightening and enabled us to collate a wide range of fantastic art work, spoken words and the feedback from young people and the staff. We used the themes, illustrations and drawings developed by the young people to design the campaign and posters. |
| **Takeover of the Leeds Area SEND and AP Partnership Board** |
| Every November students with SEND from across Leeds schools takeover the Leeds Area SEND and Alternative Provision Partnership Board. Students plan the meeting, agree what they want to share with the board and chair the meeting.  On Wednesday 22 November 2023; 11 students from St John’s School, West SILC, East SILC and Future Horizons tookover the Leeds Area SEND and AP Partnership Board as part of National Takeover Challenge.    Students consulted with 99 young people with SEND to find out which of the 12 Child Friendly Leeds wishes is most important to them, and to seek feedback about what we can do in Leeds to achieve this wish.  The top three wishes were shared with the board, and discussions took place about what could be done to work towards achieving this wish in Leeds.  The top three wishes voted by students were:   1. Wish 12 – Leeds in an inclusive city for children and young people with SEND. 2. Wish 1 – children and young people know how and where to get support for their mental health. 3. Wish 10 – all children and young people are in learning settings that meet their needs.   The full takeover report can be [downloaded here](https://www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk/have-your-say/voice-and-influence-schools). |
| **SEND Summit** |
| The SEND Summit provides an opportunity for secondary aged students with SEND to come together to give their views and opinions on service delivery and development as well as finding out about services that are available to them.  The event is a great opportunity for students to meet others, hear about services, visit Leeds Civic Hall and make a difference.  On Tuesday 14th November 2023, 36 students from Green Meadows Academy, Brigshaw Partnership, John Jamieson, Oulton Academy and West SILC attended the SEND Summit at Leeds Civic Hall.  Students took part in the Short Breaks Review consultation; Child Friendly Leeds wishes consultation and Youth Activity Fund consultation as well as having the opportunity to visit service stalls to find out what is available to them in the city.  The full event report can be [downloaded here](https://www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk/have-your-say/voice-and-influence-schools). |
| **Make Your Mark** |
| Make Your Mark is the largest youth ballot for 11 to 18 year olds in the UK. Young people have their say and begin their democratic journey by voting on the issues they want to change. The 2024 Make Your Mark voting ran between 29th January and 8th March.    In the 2024 Make Your Mark; 67 students from specialist provisions voted and democracy sessions were delivered to students at John Jamieson East SILC, West SILC and St John’s School.   **National Results** 512,606 young people cast their vote. The top issue voted for by young people was Health and Wellbeing. Members of Youth Parliament from Leeds and across the UK will be working on Health and Wellbeing as their campaign for the next 2 years.  **Leeds Results** 7,884 young people from Leeds cast their vote. The top issue voted for by young people in Leeds was Crime and Safety.  The Leeds Youth Council will work on Crime and Safety as their campaign for the next two years. |
| **Compass House** |
| In 2017; 102 students from across the SILCs took part in the Mark Your Mark ballot (largest youth consultation in the UK). From the ten issues, the students collectively voted that a Curriculum to Prepare us for Life as the top issue for them. Students took over the Leeds Area SEND and AP Partnership Board in November 2017 and spoke to the board about what a curriculum for life means to them and how they would like valuable work experience.  In response, the Compass House work experience project was set up in 2018. With support from Leeds City Council, staff from specialist schools across Leeds supported students to come together to plan and open their very own pop-up shop for one week during the month of December in Kirkgate Market. Students made all decisions about the shop (known as Compass House) including making all the products to sell.  Due to the success of the project in 2018, this has now become an annual event.  In December 2023; 68 students from East SILC, West SILC, Broomfield South SILC, Green Meadows Academy, The Lighthouse School and Future Horizons had the opportunity to work at the Compass House pop up shop, with hundreds of students contributing to making products to sell.  The full project report can be [downloaded here](https://www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk/have-your-say/voice-and-influence-schools). |
| **Consultations** |
| **Review of SEND services**  In August 2023; the Children and Families Directorate at Leeds City Council started a full-scale review of the Education Health and Care assessment and planning process.  The review was carried out by Price Waterhouse Cooper (PwC). 15 students from the Powerhouse West SILC took part in a face to face consultation session with PwC and 100 young people completed an online survey to share their experiences and feedback.    A number of recommendations were made following the review, and Leeds City Council are starting to put plans together to implement these.    All updates on the SEND and inclusion transformation programme can be [**found here.**](https://www.leedslocaloffer.org.uk/education/send-and-inclusion-transformation) |
| **2024/25 voice and influence projects** |
| **Takeover of the Leeds Area and AP Partnership Board**  The takeover will take place on Tuesday 12 November 2024, 10.30 till 1 at Leeds Civic Hall. The takeover will be delivered as an event at which students and board members will work together on the top issues raised by young people in Leeds.  **Compass House (specialist settings only)**  Planning meetings will take place in September, October and November 2025 with the pop up shop opening for one week in December 2025.  **SEND Summit**  The SEND Summit will take place on Wednesday 12 February 2025, at Leeds Civic Hall. All schools will receive an invite nearer to the date.  **Make Your Mark**  Make Your Mark is a bi-annual ballot, the next ballot will take place in 2026.  **Democracy sessions**  The Voice, Influence and Change Team offer 60-minute democracy sessions which can be delivered within the school setting at any point during the school year. The sessions focus on local democracy and introducing young people to voting.  **Consultations**  Services across Leeds contact the Voice, Influence and Change Team when they are seeking the views of young people in their service review and developments. When these requests are made the team will contact schools and offer to run consultation sessions within the school setting to provide students with the opportunity to have their voices and views heard and listened to.  ***For more information about any of the projects, or to register your interest in being involved contact*** [*VIC@leeds.gov.uk*](mailto:VIC@leeds.gov.uk) |